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Yazışma Adresi
Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Rektörlük Binası Kat: 2
Kınıklı Yerleşkesi 20070 Kınıklı – DENİZLİ / TÜRKİYE
Tel. + 90 (258) 296 22 10 Fax. +90 (258) 296 23 47
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MIMICRY AND IMITATION: HYBRID IDENTITIES IN RUSHDIE AND KUREISHI

Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL* - Baysar TANIYAN**

Abstract

After 1950s, with the beginning of decolonization, new forms of migrations have emerged. These occurred either from the newly liberated colonies to the imperial centre or from the imperial centre to the newly liberated colonies. Causing a high degree of cultural interaction and clash, these population flows have created in-between spaces in which both the colonizer and the colonized enter into a serious dialogue for identity formation. The in-between space brings together crucial elements for the formation of the hybrid identity (past/present, tradition/modernity, localisation/globalisation). In the in-between space, hybridisation of the identity finds its medium in mimicry and imitation; the colonized takes the colonizer as his model and aspires to be like him. However, the colonized has to surpass his indigenous culture (although he cannot). On the other hand, in mimicry and imitation the colonizer is objectified and hence his subject position is threatened. This aspect of mimicry and imitation disturb the previous fixities of the subject and create an ambiguous in-between space for hybridisation of the identity. This study aims to analyse the in-between spaces in Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* in which the protagonists of the novels reflect the struggle for acquiring a hybrid identity through mimicry and imitation

Key Words: *The Midnight's Children, Kureishi, The Buddha of Suburbia, In-Between Space, Identity, Hybridisation, Mimicry, Imitation, Postcolonial Literature.*

ÖYKÜNME VE TAKLİT: RUSHDIE VE KUREISHI'DE MELEZ KİMLİKLER

Özet

1950'lerden sonra, sömürgeciliğin sona ermeye başlamasıyla yeni göç biçimleri ortaya çıktı. Bu göçler ya bağımsızlığını yeni kazanan sömürgelerden imparatorluk merkezine ya da imparatorluk merkezinden bağımsızlığını yeni kazanan sömürgelere doğru gerçekleşmiştir. Yoğun kültürel etkileşime neden olan bu nüfus akımları, hem sömürgeci hem de sömürge kültürlerinin kimlik oluşturmak amacıyla ciddi bir diyalog içine girdiği kültürel aradalık mekânları[1] yaratmıştır. Bu mekânlar melez kimlik oluşumu için gereken önemli öğeleri (geçmiş/şimdiki zaman, gelenek/modernite, yerelleşme/küreselleşme) bir araya getirir. Aradalık mekânlarında, kimliğin melezleşmesi öykünme ve taklit yoluyla gerçekleşir; sömürgeleştirilmiş sömürgeciyi kendine model olarak alır ve onun gibi olmaya öykünür. Ancak sömürgeleştirilmiş olan uluslar yerel kültürlerini aşmak zorundadırlar; fakat bunu hiçbir zaman başaramazlar. Öte yandan öykünme ve taklit sırasında sömürgeci nesneleştirilir ve bu yüzden öznenin konumu tehdit altına girer. Öykünme ve taklidin bu yönü öznenin daha önceki yerleşik kalıplarının düzenini bozar ve kimliğin melezleşmesi adına muğlâk bir aradalık mekânı yaratır. Bu çalışma Salman Rushdie'nin *Geceyarısı Çocukları* ve Hanif Kureishi'nin *Varoşların Budası* adlı kitaplarındaki başkahramanların öykünme ve taklit yoluyla melez bir kimlik elde etme mücadelelerini yansıtan aradalık mekânlarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Rushdie, Geceyarısı Çocukları, Kureishi, Varoşların Budası Arada Mekân, Kimlik, Melezleşme, Öykünme, Taklit, Sömürgecilik Sonrası Edebiyat.*

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*Yrd. Doç. Dr., Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, DENİZLİ
e-posta: macelikel@pau.edu.tr
**Arş. Gör., Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, DENİZLİ
e-posta: btaniyan@pau.edu.tr

[1] Kültürel aradalık mekânları siyasi, tarihi veya ekonomik olarak yakın etkileşim içerisinde bulunan farklı kültürlerin, içerisinde o kültürlere ait değerlerin, temsillerin ve tecrübelerin birbirleriyle tepkimeye girip yenilerini sunduğu kesişim kümesi gibidir. Bu yüzden, Bhabha'ya göre, bu mekanlar "millet olmanın tecrübesinin, toplum çıkarının veya kültürel değerin müzakere edildiği … işbirliğinin yenilikçi mahalleridir" (1994, 1)

Identity and its relation to space have become a serious field of study in the contemporary world, especially in the second half of the twentieth-century thanks to the rise of novel, social movements, de-colonization, globalization and migration by which diverse cultures of the world, both in the centre and the periphery, find a complicated space for interaction, dialogue and negotiation. The meeting spaces of the cultures of the colonized and the colonizer both within the centre and the periphery are perceived as the battle ground for the colonized to establish his own identity (mimicry, adaptation, communicating the past to the present) and for the colonizer to claim his influence (within the new forms of economic, politic and cultural imperialism). "Home", known as the sacred place of one's private sphere, cannot escape such influence as the mechanisms (media, internet, even a fridge) of the late-capitalism (also known to be wild) vulgarly enters into this sacred temple, and later, creates a space for cultural invasion for the ruling ideology. In this confrontation, the identity of the inhabitant, previously shaped by his authentic culture, enters into a dialogue with the hegemonic culture and hence, acquires a new hybrid form. The home then becomes an "in-between" space "in the realm of *the beyond*" where the identity acquires plural positions (Bhabha, 1994: 1). This idea of home is often depicted in postcolonial novels. In this study, the home and the metropolitan city as an "in-between spaces" in Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* will be analysed within the terms of "mimicry" coined by Homi Bhabha.

The identity problem in the cultural studies is generally thought within the relationships of binary oppositions. Bhabha, on the other hand, does not perceive this relationship as fixed but points out an ambivalent interaction. Firstly, he transfers the problem into the realm of the *beyond*:

> *The '**beyond**' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. … Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the **fin de siècle**, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond'; an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words **au-dela** – here and there, on all sides, **fort/da**, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha, 1994: 1)*

Bhabha points out that the old established myths of identity dissolved in the *fin de siècle* creating a realm (*beyond*) in which space and time meet to come up with complicated forms of hybrid identity. In the realm of the *beyond*, "the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories" are bypassed, which, as a result, give birth to "an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world" (Bhabha, 1994: 1). The basic categories of identity fail to provide a satisfactory explanation for the further complicated identity crisis in the shadow of the decolonization period, a time which has given shape to many "in-between" spaces through migration, globalization and new forms of communication, transportation and, of course, imperialism and capitalism. Therefore, according to Bhabha, the "in-between" spaces constitute the location where the answers for the questions related to the complicated hybrid identity can be found:

> *These "in-between" spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new sign of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. … It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of **nationness**, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. (Bhabha, 1994: 1-2)*

The *beyond* is "a space of intervention in the here and now" in which there is "a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaniety" (Bhabha, 1994: 7). In order "*to touch the future on its hither side*", the art in the period should welcome "newness" with an effort to "create a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation" (Bhabha, 1994: 7). This cultural translation is also referred to by Rushdie in *Shame* where the migrants are compared to "translations" (*Shame* 26) which implies the migrant's presence as a "metaphor" that moves away from its original meaning in their past. The past should be refigured as "a contingent

'in-between-space'" with a reference to the present (Bhabha, 1994: 7). Reminding the risk of fetishism and referring to Fanon, Bhabha proposes homogenizing the history of the present by past which again will take place in the *beyond*:

> *The negating activity is, indeed, the intervention of the 'beyond' that establishes a boundary: a bridge, where 'presencing' begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world – the unhomeliness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. (Bhabha, 1994: 9)*

In the *beyond*, the idea of belonging is jeopardized. As the cultural heritage which secures the idea of belonging is transformed or even erased with the intervention of the intruding culture, the security of home is also disturbed. The displaced home, afterwards, becomes "sites for history's most intricate invasions" as "the borders between home and world becomes confused" (Bhabha, 1994: 9). The identity at home is, thus, stripped of its authenticity leaving its place to a political one designed and hybridized by the conflict between the past (indigenous culture) and the present (hegemonic culture). As Bhabha asserts, nations are like narratives and they "lose their origins in the myths of time" (1990: 1). Thus, the migrants' past becomes their alienated origin. As the superiority of the colonizer over the colonized continues even in the decolonization, in the formation of this new politically designed hybrid identity *mimicry* is employed, which Bhabha believes to be "one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge (85). Through mimicry, the colonizer attempts to create a model out of the colonized Other, "*as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha, 1994: 86). This is one aspect of the ambivalence of mimicry; there should always be a difference, an excess or a point which will never be reached by the colonized.

> *The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: 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. (Bhabha, 1994: 86)*

Transformation of the identity through mimicry results in uncertainty and ambivalence which makes sure that the colonized will always remain as "a partial presence" of the colonizer; he is destined to be 'incomplete' and 'virtual' (Bhabha, 1994: 86). As the colonized tries to emulate the manners of the colonizer, he is paradoxically trapped; he has to disavow his indigenous and authentic cultural heritage (which he can never perform) and he has to assume the morals and the standards of the colonizer (again impossible to achieve due to the everlasting difference). Through mimicry, the colonized attempts to adopt the life standards of the colonizer; especially the national middle-class families who can afford such expenses. The spaces they live, their homes, should also be arranged in accordance with the colonizer. Obviously, Fanon is quite pessimistic on this issue:

> *The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions, and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country. (Fanon, 2003: 156)*

Rushdie, in *Midnight's Children* gives a clear depiction of such families. Through the confrontation of Doctor Aziz and Tai at the very beginning of the novel, the reader finds the opportunity to observe the past (Tai) and the present (Dr. Aziz) of India. While Tai symbolizes Kashmiri tradition and lower classes, Dr. Aadam Aziz is the modern man of India, educated abroad; "Tai-for-changelessness opposed to Aadam-for-progress" (*Midnight's Children* 143). His years in Germany "have blurred so much else" (*Midnight's Children* 8). Tai, on the other hand, becomes an ahistorical entity who resists change; in other words he embodies the tradition of Kashmir:

> *Nobody could remember when Tai had been young. He had been plying this same boat, standing in the same hunched position, across the Dal and Nageen Lakes ... forever. … Tai himself cheerily admitted he had no idea of his age. (Midnight's Children 10)*

With his supernatural existence as an ageless, static and unchanging old man, Tai becomes the perfect embodiment of pure Indian cultural heritage. On the other hand, being equipped with the values of the Western world thanks to his past in Germany as a medical student, Aadam is a man of change. As his name also suggests, Aadam's arrival at Kashmir is significant because he brings with himself the modernity of the Western world which contrasts the tradition.

> *One Kashmir morning in the early spring of 1915, my grandfather Aadam Aziz hit his nose against a frost-hardened tussock of earth while attempting to pray. Three drops of blood plopped out of his left nostril, hardened instantly in the brittle air and lay before his eyes on the prayer-mat, transformed into rubies. Lurching back until he knelt with his head once more upright, he found that the tears which had sprung to his eyes had solidified, too; and at that moment, as he brushed diamonds contemptuously from his lashes, he resolved never again to kiss earth for any god or man. This decision, however, made a hole in him, a vacancy in a vital inner chamber, leaving him vulnerable to women and history. Unaware of this at first, despite his recently completed medical training, he stood up, rolled the prayer-mat into a thick cheroot, and holding it under his right arm surveyed the valley through clear, diamond-free eyes. (Midnight's Children 4-5)*

In the national identity formation of India, these two opposing forces are at play with each other. Aadam/Tai opposition is the allegory of the past/present opposition; the national identity of India depends on the inter-play of the tradition and the present. However, Aadam cannot fully adopt himself to the Kashmiri tradition and he swears "never again to kiss earth for any god or man". However, in him appears a hole which would never be filled. When Tai and Aadam meet, Kashmir should function as the realm of the *beyond* where the modernity/present of Aadam could negotiate with the tradition/past of Tai. Kashmir as a space is bound in tradition and Tai's figure resists such transformation. When the family moves to Buckingham Villa in Methwold Estate, however, the space necessary for the transformation will be provided:

> *The estate creates a simulacra of England, and becomes an icon representing the Englishman's homage to his origins. Before selling the villas, Methwold carefully selects the new inhabitants to inherit his imaginary England projected on Indian landscape. In compliance with colonial mentality, Methwold first asserts his power on Indian landscape through his capitalist means, restructures the land to alter its character to make it appear like **home**[2], names his property after English fashion, controls the reterritorialization of space among the Indian residents, and finally continues to exert his power through cultural indoctrination. (Gorra, 1997: 131)*

As Gorra mentions, the Methwold estate appears like home. When the family inhabits the space as their *home*, they undergo certain changes. They do not totally disavow traditional Indian culture, but they *mimic* the manners of the colonizers. Neil ten Kortenaar also points out that Methwold Estate is at the heart of Rushdie's novel "where the Indian heirs of the colonizers affect British accents, live in houses called Buckingham, Sans Souci, Escorial, and Versailles" (*Midnight's Children*, 168). As the time of power exchange gets closer, an Englishman, William Methwold sells his houses to the distinct families with quite reasonable prices, but on two conditions: "that the houses be bought complete with every last thing in them, that the entire contents be retained by the new owners; and that the actual transfer should not take place until midnight on August 15th" (*Midnight's Children*, 126). The families voluntarily "permit a departing colonial his little game" (*Midnight's Children*, 126). This little game will deeply affect these families as they will experience identity transformation in relation to the space. The departing colonial, however, still claims his superiority over the colonized families:

> *Hundreds of years of decent government, then suddenly, up and off. You'll admit we weren't all bad: built your roads. Schools, railway trains, parliamentary system, all worthwhile things. Taj Mahal was falling down until an Englishman bothered to see to it (Midnight's Children, 126-127)*

While the colonial is proud of his legacy through the spaces like roads, railway tracks, the home as the private space causes, at first,

[2] Emphasis

conflict; Methwold Estate, as *the home* of the new settlers who are to take place of the colonizer, generates a cultural crisis:

> *"… And look at the stains on the carpets, janum; for two months we must live **like those Britishers**![3] You've looked in the bathrooms? No water near the pot. I never believed, but it's true, my God, they wipe their bottoms with paper only! …" (Midnight's Children, 127)*

As the interaction between the indigenous culture (the families) and the hegemonic culture (Methwold Estate) continues the crisis gradually evaporates; Ahmed Sinai's voice changes, "in the presence of an Englishman it has become a *mockery* of an Oxford drawl" (*Midnight's Children*, 127, italics added). Bhabha explains, "the area between mimicry and mockery" is the place "where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double" (1994: 86). In the "presence" of the English Methwold, Ahmed Sinai's presence becomes what Bhabha calls "partial" presence, both incomplete and virtual (1994: 86). The Methwold Estate becomes an "in-between space" with the last little game of the departing colonial. As the crisis is surpassed, the process of hybridization quickens:

> *But now there are twenty days to go, things are getting **blurred**, so they have all failed to notice what is happening: the Estate, Methwold's Estate, is changing them. Every evening at six they are out in their gardens, celebrating the cocktail hour, and when William Methwold comes to call they slip effortlessly into their **imitation** Oxford drawls; and they are **learning** about ceiling fans and gas cookers and the correct diet for budgerigars, and Methwold, **supervising** their **transformation**, is mumbling under his breath. … All is well. (Midnight's Children, 131)*[4]

While Lila Sabarmati learns to play pianola, Ahmed Sinai finds a cocktail cabinet in Buckingham Villa. While he is "discovering the delights of fine Scotch whisky" he cries, "with our ancient civilization, can we not be as civilized as he?" (130-1). In this role shift (attempts, at least), while the colonized aspires to behave like the colonizer, transforms the colonized into an object; hence the colonizer as the subject is relegated to the colonizer as the object. On the other hand, as it is impossible for the colonized to achieve the role of the subject, eventually, he turns out to be only a *mimic*, an imitation which needs *supervising* of the colonizer, Methwold. This is what Bhabha calls the *menace* of mimicry, that is "its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (88). Things get blurred in the Methwold Estate which embodies the private sphere as *the home*. While the confrontation of the indigenous and hegemonic cultures occur in the in-between space of *the home*, the interplay of the past and the present in this private sphere results in the formation of a hybrid identity designed by mimicry.

While Rushdie portrays those who remain within the borders of colony, Kureishi, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, depicts the other side of the medal. Within the decolonization period, newly-liberated people migrate to the imperial centre leaving their homes in search of adopted ones. There they become exiles or immigrants which signify their disturbed connection with the imperial centre; the immigrants become the minority which ultimately forms the community:

> *Community is the antagonist supplement of modernity: in the metropolitan space it is the territory of the minority, threatening the claims of civility; in the transnational world it becomes the border-problem of the diasporic, the migrant, the refugee. (Bhabha, 1994: 231)*

The immigrant finds himself in the in-between spaces where, again, his cultural heritage coming from his past enters into a play with the hegemonic culture. As late capitalism and globalization blur the borders that separate the public sphere (outside) and the private sphere (home), the formerly colonized becomes more and more vulnerable to the forces that aim to give shape to his identity. Those who resist become the alienated, outcast, or in the novel even the victim. Uncle Anwar (may well be parallel to Tai of *The Midnight's Children*) tries strictly to keep his promise not to become a "pork-eater" and to survive in his secluded and protected private sphere (i.e. *home* or his shop). His resistance to the hegemonic culture is apparent when he goes on a hunger strike to force his daughter to marry the man he

[3] Emphasis
[4] Emphasis

wants. Tai may be ahistorical and changeless, but Uncle Anwar, the embodiment of cultural resistance, cannot survive in the metropolitan London, and, in a tragi-comic way, he is killed by a dildo (*Buddha*, 211). In this cosmopolitan space, only those who can adapt to the new environment, like Haroon and Karim, survive.

The in-between spaces – hybrid spaces – again play a crucial role in the formation of the hybrid identities. In the novel, Karim moves from the suburbia to the centre of London, then to New York. As he moves from the periphery to the centre his perception of identity develops. To remain in the space of the suburbs means safety and security but also dullness; "[i]n the suburbs people rarely dreamed of striking out for happiness. It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the rewards of dullness" (*Buddha*,8). In the suburbs, Karim generally leads a life of submission and acceptance: "If people spat at me I practically thanked them for not making me chew the moss between the paving stones" (*Buddha*,53). Venturing to go out of the boundaries determined by the suburbs means breaking the burden of the monolith identity and creating occasions to form a hybrid identity. As a previously-colonized, Karim cannot escape mimicry; he has his Charlie the hero as a model to be imitated:

> *And Charlie? My love for him was unusual as love goes: it was not generous I admired him more than anyone but I didn't wish him well. It was that I preferred him to me and wanted to be him. I coveted his talents, face, style. I wanted to wake up with them all transferred to me. (Buddha,15)*

However, he cannot fully realise his dream since he lacks one side of the double-vision in which a hybrid identity can be built. In Bhabha's terms, Karim becomes a cultural translator as he is reduced to a mimic. He tries to disavow his Indian heritage completely and to form his identity solely with reference to Charlie:

> *'You've got to wear less.'*
>
> *'Wear less, Charlie?'*
>
> *'Dress less. Yes.'*
>
> *He got up on to one elbow and concentrated on me. His mouth was close. I sunbathed under his face.*
>
> *'Levi's, I suggest, with an open-necked shirt, maybe in pink or purple, and a thick brown belt. 'Forget the headband.'*
>
> *...*
>
> *I ripped my headband off and tossed it across the floor.*
>
> *'For your mum.'*
>
> *'You see, Karim, you tend to look a bit like a pearly queen.'*
>
> *I, who wanted only to be like Charlie – as clever, as cool in every part of my soul – tattooed his words on to my brain. Levi's with an open-necked shirt, maybe in a very modest pink or purple. I would never go out in anything else for the rest of my life. (Buddha, 16-17)*

Karim reduces himself to a mimic man, solely imitating the colonizer and denouncing his cultural heritage completely. However, as he moves towards the centre gradually he develops new tactics of identity formation as he finds new spaces of interaction: "London seemed like a house with five thousand rooms, all different" (*Buddha*, 126). London is the site with diverse cultural interaction and also racial hostility. However, London offers him numerous *homes*; "there were five places for me to stay: with Mum at Auntie Jean'; at our new empty house; with dad and Eva; with Anwar and Jeeta; or with Changez and Jamilia" (*Buddha*, 93). The metropolis, then, becomes a home for Karim where he can establish his identity.

> *The city blew the windows of my brain wide open. But being in a place so bright, fast and brilliant made you vertiginous with possibility: it didn't necessarily help you grasp those possibilities. I still had no idea what I was going to do. I felt directionless and lost in the crowd. I couldn't yet see how the city worked, but I began to find out. (Buddha, 126)*

Being previously directionless, he lacks one side of the double vision – his Indian-self – offered by his hybrid identity. However, the city provides him with fresh possibilities of existence. In the city, Karim finds a chance for a part in a play directed by Shadwell. What is ironic is that his part is to play Mowgli based on Shadwell's stereotype perception of India. For the sake of authenticity, Shadwell forces Karim to wear a costume, "a loing-cloth and brown make up" as Karim is not darker enough (*Buddha*, 146). Karim, who has imitated Charlie to a certain extent, takes Changez as

his model which frustrates and disturbs his friendship with him. Thanks to his success, a new producer, Pyke offers him a role in which he plans to imitate Anwar. He imitates Chagez to be acccepted and welcomed in the theatre company, while he ironically imitates Charlie to integrate into English society. So, an analogy is created between Charlie and Changez. Charlie's admiration for Karim's father functions as the reversal of Karim's mockery of Changez, which, in retrospect, also recalls a mutual mimicry. Karim's act of imitation, when perceived as foregrounding of stereotypical white racial prejudices, is criticised by Tracey, a black actress in the theatre troop:

> *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 then you go on and have Anwar madly waving his stick at the white boys. I can't believe that anything like this could happen. You show us unorganized aggressors. Why do you hate yourself and all black people so much, Karim. (Buddha, 180)*

Then, Karim decides to imitate Changez who, in turn, warns him not "to steal" him (*Buddha*, 185). This assertion of Changez deeply affects Karim; he develops a sense of conscience regarding his deeds:

> *If I defied Changez, if I started to work on a character based on him, if I used the bastard, it meant that I was untrustworthy, a liar. But if I didn't use him it meant I had fuck-all to take to the group … As I sat there I began to recognize that this was one of the first times in my life I'd been aware of having a moral dilemma. Before, I'd done exactly what I wanted; desire was my guide and I was inhibited by nothing but fear. But now, at the beginning of my twenties, something was growing in me. … now I was developing a sense of guilt of how I appeared to others, but of how I appeared to myself. (Buddha, 186)*

Karim does not only understand his offensive deeds towards his people but also he perceives his inner self. London, as a metropolis, offers him possible in-between spaces where he can calculate the particularities of his identity; as he saves himself from the monolith space of the suburbs and moves into the metropolitan space where he can be in contact with different cultural codes within his five places, or homes. In his mother's home, he experiences his Englishness; with Anwar, he perceives his Indian heritage; in Eva's home, he finds opportunities to meet English bohemians; with Changez, he realizes the alienated mood of the colonized in the imperial centre. Finally he comes to understand all aspects of his identity or his hybrid identity given shape by the double vision of the colonial discourse:

> *But I did feel, looking at these strange creatures now – the Indians – that in some way these were my people, and that I'd spent my life denying or avoiding that fact. 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. (Buddha, 212)*

The missing half was the Indian part of his indigenous cultural identity which he previously tried to avoid, deny or disavow. Mimicry was his solution, yet he understood that he had been collaborating with his white enemies who wanted him to mimic them to be their "partial" representation. By acknowledging his Indian heritage and incorporating this aspect of his identity with the distinct cultural codes present in metropolitan in-between spaces he achieves a sense of hybrid Identity. Therefore, in-between spaces present in London accompany Karim's quest of identity formation.

While the in-between space in the previously colonized country (periphery) provides an identity both incorporating the past and the present as observed in Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children*, Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* takes the issue into the centre, to the imperial centre where distinct cultural codes are in play with each other in the formation of the hybrid identity. As the idea of a homogenous British identity fades as the Empire dissolves, the nation is forced for a redefinition of national identity. While the mass migrations that flow from the periphery into the centre have created a multicultural society, fresh subject positions appear. Likewise, decolonization offers new in-between spaces in the periphery as the colonized aspires to the roles of the colonizer. So, in-between spaces both in the periphery and in the centre become powerful source of hybridized identity formations incorporating the past and the present and coming up with the synthesized identities of post-colonial discourse.

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