

PILGRIMAGE: ON HANIF KUREISHI'S THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA

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ABSTRACT

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* fulfills two basic requirements. On the one hand, the novel works as a kaleidoscope of British society at the end of the XXth century. It lets us have a look at such aspects racist violence, the birth and development of punk music, or the situation of theatre in London by the end of the 1970s, just to name a few subjects Kureishi deals with. On the other hand, *The Buddha of Suburbia* is an account of Karim Amir's pilgrimage to find himself, bearing in mind he is a half-bred born in a split-up family in the middle of a society that is in a crisis.

Trying to qualify a novel by attaching to it any given label is a way of cutting it down and constricting its scope. I definitely agree with Shirley Neuman and Robert Wilson when, in the introduction to their *Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch*, they reflect on the complexities of Kroetsch's writing and the pleasure those complexities can generate. The vast possibilities appear under the appearance of "voices," and referring to them Neuman and Wilson say:

The voices (...) are fragmented by the labyrinth they build: doubleness is in the origin and the end, in the material and the form. The pleasure of such mazewalking is in the unexpected glance, in the elusive quickness of insight, in the sudden shifts and twists of discourse that open before us at each turn, each intersection.¹

Certainly, we are dealing with two quite different writers, Hanif Kureishi and Robert Kroetsch. Nevertheless, the basic idea of the above-quoted fragment, that is the quasi-illimitable possibilities we find in Kroetsch's works, must be applied to any worth-reading author. Kureishi is no exception to this rule.

I feel I must insist a bit more on this idea because, with the development of postcolonial theories in the last ten to fifteen years, I am afraid some literary critics have invented a new jumble box. In this box they put together many different books which seem to have in common the fact of having been written by authors who, coming from former colonies, criticize their respective metropolises. Behind this statement one might have the impression that this is the only or the basic theme so-called postcolonial writers deal with. Needless to say that I find this assumption, in the least, quite disputable.

The basic danger of this approach is the effect of obliterating all the differences that make every work of literature a unique piece. In this sense, I agree with Mukherjee's analysis, "Whose Postcolonialism and Whose Postmodernism?," when saying,

When postcolonial theory constructs its centre/periphery discourse, it also obliterates that the postcolonial societies also have their own internal centres and peripheries, their own dominants and marginals. It erases the Bakhtinian "heteroglossia" (...) of literary and social discourses in post-colonial societies that arises from conflicts of race, class, gender, language, religion, ethnicity and political affiliation. When it focuses only on those texts that "subvert" or "resist" the colonizer, it overlooks a large number of texts that speak about those other matters.²

I am not saying, nevertheless, that it would be an error for us to make a postcolonial reading of *The Buddha of Suburbia*. What I want to emphasize is that such a shortsighted approach tends to be rather impoverishing. Hence I return to the idea of the multiple voices.

The multiplicity of voices leads us to multiple readings of a work. This is precisely what we find in Kureishi's novel. In principle, it may well be classified as picaresque. After all, the protagonist, Karim Amir, can be presented as a modernized version of the Lazarillo de Tormes. The whole of *The Buddha of Suburbia* is full of fine instances of humour, irony, sex, and violence, all of which are elements that appear in the Spanish classics, as well. Nevertheless, there is still another point of coincidence of greater importance between these two novels.

El Lazarillo de Tormes is an account of the protagonist's misadventures with all the different masters he works for. Above all, however, the novel is a kaleidoscope, an accurate depiction of Spanish society in the XVIth century. This is exactly what Kureishi has done in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, transposing the whole situation to Britain by the end of the XXth century. However, I think Kureishi has introduced a significant variation.

Karim, apart from a rogue, is a questing hero. He has embarked upon a pilgrimage, a journey that is going to take him from a suburb to the busiest part of London. His life there will take the form of a hectic paraphernalia. Notwithstanding, underneath all the pain and laughter, Kureishi is showing us the experiences of a young man who is looking for himself.

In this sense, Kureishi is not that different to other postcolonial writers (even though I do not feel comfortable with the label 'postcolonial'). This is what, quite appropriately, Pico Iyer has noted:

The one archetype of all postcolonial writing is, ironically, one of the great literary monuments of colonialism, written almost a century ago, Rudyard

Kipling's *Kim*. (...) And the questions that keep tolling through the novel are the ones that haunt all transcontinental fiction: "Who is Kim-Kim-Kim?" "I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?" Many of the heroes of World Fiction are Kims in disguise: the artful dodger at the heart of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, for example, is an Indian's son who can more or less pass as a Briton-Kim, one might say, in reverse.³

As we can see, then, in *The Buddha of Suburbia* there is a double process of pilgrimage. The first one is merely geographical, as the protagonist moves from one place to another. However, there is also what we could call a spiritual pilgrimage, at the end of which Karim not only wants to improve his social status, but also and above all to have a deeper understanding of life. It is this double search what he has in mind when saying,

I knew it did me good to be reminded of how much I loathed the suburbs, and that I had to continue my journey into London and a new life (...)⁴

This urge for clarification of one's position in life, which is perfectly understandable in any human being, is even more so if we bear in mind Karim is a half-bred. The very first paragraph of the novel is quite illustrative in this sense:

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, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care—Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. 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.⁵

Although his father, Haroon, was born a Pakistani, and, consequently, a muslim, Karim has not been educated as such; he does not even speak his father's mother-tongue. However, on the other hand, Karim cannot forget he belongs to a very specific community, and he is familiar with a number of cultural references, even if he does not live in accordance with them.

Karim realizes he is living all the time in contradiction. He has lost touch with Eastern culture, but he knows only too well British society does not accept him as one of their own. "Belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere,"⁶ Karim lives through the drama of trying to find his place in the middle of two cultures, of making his rights be respected, and, above all, of trying to make some sense out of his life.

Karim and all those like him belong to a new breed called 'hyphenated people.' Nobody is exclusively English, Spanish, or Canadian any longer, but 'something' plus 'something else.' Transcontinental writers like Hanif Kureishi are aware of their hyphenated condition. They know it can be used as a source of racial discrimination. However, they also know their cultural scope is wider, and thanks to their richer heritage they can offer a fresh perspective of the world.

As I have already mentioned, his having organized *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a pilgrimage makes it very easy for Kureishi to show us his vision of British society. He is quite critical throughout the novel, and he concentrates basically on two aspects, namely racism and the evolution of the young people from the end of the 1970s up to now, showing us how fake they can become.

There is no doubt racism is the aspect of British society Kureishi most fiercely criticizes. I think what makes his criticism really valid is the fact that, although he is a Pakistani living in London, it is not difficult for us to see the same thing may happen to an Algerian in Paris, or to a Moroccan in Madrid.

(Let us remember Kureishi has also written the scripts for *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1986) and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1988), and the social background we find both in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and in these films is the same).

British people, and Europeans in general, have inherited a kind of imperial pride that still makes them regard immigrants as second-class citizens. Many waves of immigrants coming from former colonies have arrived in Western Europe since the 1950s or so. The process has gathered momentum, in a way, in the last ten years. For better or worse, some people feel the Empire is conquering the metropolis. Out of pure paranoia, racism is sprouting everywhere.

Living in suburban ghettos under conditions that are no better than those of any 'bidon-ville' of the Third World, immigrants are in state of siege both physically and psychologically.

In this sense, what is really ironic is the fact that many 'pure-laine' English actually live in poverty, the same as immigrants, and many may well have less culture than them. Even so, however, they will never accept strangers as equals. In their opinion, immigrants are merely exotic creatures and/or savages from the underdeveloped world. After having lived in England for thirty years, Haroon knows what he is talking about when saying,

The whites will never promote us, (...). Not an Indian while there is a white man left on the earth. 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.⁷

On top of this, although there are laws that, on paper, protect immigrants, civil authorities do not encourage hard measures to stop racist violence. Quite on the contrary, they seem to delight in that. One tends to think that privately they agree with neo-nazi groups in their statement that immigrants are to blame for the rise in unemployment and delinquency. Laws are too benevolent with immigrants to the detriment of 'true patriots,' (or so they say). Thus, after having obtained a role in a play, Karim is seen as a spoiled child by a white actor who wanted that role, as well:

If I weren't white and middle class I'd have been in Pyke's show now. Obviously mere talent gets you nowhere these days. Only the disadvantaged are going to succeed on seventies' England.⁸

Obviously, what this man seems not to remember is that immigrants do not work precisely in blue-collar jobs most of the times.

Anyway, be it because of age-old racism or recession, British society is growing increasingly violent. However, although the situation is grave 'per se,' what is even more alarming is the fact that the younger generations frequently are the protagonists of the unleashing of violence.

This link between violence and the young ones is what we are going to find in the birth of the punk movement, which is the first element I am going to deal with as I have a look at Kureishi's view of the youth.

Punk is the musical reflection of what was happening in Britain by the end of the 1970s. It was not only the economic system that was reaching a crisis at that time; rock and pop music were also in crisis. The old dinosaurs had nothing new to offer. (With the label 'old dinosaurs' I am referring to bands like Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, The Who, or Genesis). There began to appear new bands eager to innovate. Some of them created what musical critics now call NWBHM (New Wave of British Heavy Metal); others, 'underground' or 'garage' music, and some others 'punk.' Although quite different in their respective styles, what all of them had in common is that they meant a radical depart from what music had been up to then.

Charlie, Karim's friend, as the lead singer of his own band, had been imitating the musical style, the lyrics, and even the "pose" of the old bands. It is easy for us to imagine the shock he must have felt when seeing a punk concert for the first time. Karim's words reflect that feeling:

When the shambolic group finally started up, the music was thrashed out. It was more aggressive than anything I'd heard since early Who. This was no peace and love; here were no drum solos or effeminate synthesizers. Not a squeeze or anything 'progressive' or 'experimental' came from those palid, vicious little council estate kids with hedgehog hair, howling about anarchy and hatred. No song lasted more than three minutes, and after each the carrot-haired kid cursed us to death. (...) I knew London was killing us as I heard, 'Fuck off, all you smelly old hippies! You fucking slags! You ugly fart-breaths! Fuck off to hell!' he shouted at us.⁹

Charlie's comment at the end of the whole thing reflects what was really happening. Certainly, "The sixties [had] been given notice [that night]. Those kids (...) assassinated all hope. They're the fucking future."¹⁰

As I noted before, punk culture is a reflection of what is happening in overcrowded cities in the Western World. In these cities we can find suburbs where social services are conspicuous by their absence, illiteracy reaches its highest peaks, infant mortality is far worse than in most places of the Third World, and unemployment is a chronic malady. Their condition is even more insulting if one compares it to what happens in the most affluent parts of the city just half an hour from those suburbs. All the ideals of renewal and equality that marked the revolutionary movements of the 1960s have evaporated.

As a consequence of all these factors people feel betrayed and react violently. Beneath that violence there is not only anger and hatred against the rest of society, but also, and above all, despair.

There is, however, another reaction at social crisis that has nothing to do with violence. This other reaction I am referring to is mere indifference, or even the pretence that nothing happens.

This is precisely Karim's initial attitude, and according to his own words, it is the attitude we find in a significant percentage of young people. Although Karim is referring to the end of the 1970s, this tendency, far from having disappeared, is spreading today more and more:

(...) the spirit of the age among the people I knew manifested itself as general drift and idleness. We didn't want money. What for? We could get by, living of

parents, friends or the State. And if we were going to be bored, and we were usually bored, rarely being self-motivated, we could at least be bored on our own terms, lying smashed on mattresses in ruined houses rather than working in the machine.¹¹

This is, approximately, the reaction we can find in Allie, Karim's younger brother. For him, nothing is really happening, or, what is almost as bad, nothing really matters. Allie appears as a boy with no brains, just sawdust in his head. Lacking in any critical attitude towards life, all that is not glamour and fashion is of no importance to him. He is the perfect embodiment of Western society at the end of the XXth century: only appearances and nothing else behind the façade. In a way Allie is like Charlie. However, Charlie is an even more extreme case.

Charlie is a rock star, a god-like figure whose popularity is based exclusively on appearances, on keeping a given "pose" as long as it is fashionable. This is precisely what he does with punk as his own band grows more and more popular. A grotesque circus is organized around his figure overnight, and he really enjoys it:

[Charlie] was continually being chased by national papers, magazines and semioticians for quotes about the new nihilism, the new hopelessness and the new music which expressed it. (...) he learned that his success (...) was guaranteed by his ability to insult the media. Fortunately, Charlie had a talent for cruelty. These insults were published widely, as were his other assaults on hippies, love, the Queen, Mick Jagger, political activism and punk itself. 'We're shit,' he proclaimed one night on early evening television. 'Can't play, can't sing, can't write songs, and the shitty idiot people love us!¹²

What is really sad in what Charlie is doing is that he is giving the multinationals and the mass media precisely what they want. In the end he is going to be famous, and this is the only thing that really matters to him. He has prostituted punk, since there is nothing under his punky appearance, not even punk's original rage.

Up to now, I have been dealing with Kureishi's sociological analysis, concentrating in the last part of this analysis on the figure of Charlie. This interest in Charlie has two reasons. First of all, as I have already said, Charlie represents a social prototype. In addition, and partly linked to the first reason, Charlie is one of Karim's poles of attraction; and it is not only a matter of Karim's being in love with him.

Karim knows only too well Charlie is an opportunist. Nevertheless, Charlie is also the embodiment of the person who is living all the time up to the limit. He wants to experience all the different sensations cities like London or New York can offer to him as new multicultural capitals. This is precisely what Karim wanted:

In bed before I went to sleep I fantasized about London and what I'd do there when the city belonged to me. There was a sound that London had. It was, I'm afraid, people in Hyde Park playing bongos with their hands; there was also the keyboard on the Door's "Light My Fire." There were kids in velvet cloaks who lived free lives; there were thousands of black people everywhere, so I wouldn't feel exposed; there were bookshops with racks of magazines printed without capital letters or the bourgeois disturbance of full stops; there were shops selling all the records you could desire; there were parties where girls and boys you didn't know took you upstairs and fucked you; there were all the drugs you

could use. You see, I didn't ask much of life; this was the extent of my longing. But at least my goals were clear and I knew what I wanted. I was twenty. I was ready for everything.¹³

This is, then, as I say, one of the poles Karim feels attracted to. However, there is still another pole, namely Jamila, but in order to understand what her figure means we must take a look first at her position in the community of people of Indo-Pakistani origin, which is Karim's most immediate point of reference.

Among those people belonging to the Indo-Pakistani community we find characters like Changez, Jamila's husband, and also Princess Jeeta, Jamila's mother. Nevertheless, there are other characters of greater importance as far as Karim is concerned. I am referring to Haroon, Karim's father; to Anwar, Haron's best friend and Jamila's father; and to Jamila herself, Karim's former girlfriend. Each of these characters represents a very specific attitude, and Karim shows quite different reactions at each of those attitudes.

After more than twenty years in London Haroon has begun to return to oriental philosophy. This change will lead him to question his life. As a result of this, and after having met a woman called Eva, Charlie's mother, he leaves his family. Karim decides to go with him simply as a way of being able to live in London and of not having to stand his maternal aunt Jean.

However, there never seems to be a good understanding between Karim and Haroon. It is not only that Haroon has decided to abandon his wife, Margaret, whom Karim loves. Basically, Karim feels he cannot trust his father, who, in his opinion, has been walking aimlessly throughout his life. Sometimes, there seem to be hints of true wisdom and clarity of ideas in Haroon's words, as when he tells Karim he has decided to quit his job:

(...) The years I've wasted in that job (...) Now I'm going to teach and think and listen, I want to discuss how we live our lives, what our values are, what kind of people we've become and what we can be if we want. I aim to encourage people to think, to contemplate, to just let go their obsessions. (...) I want to help others to contemplate the deeper wisdom of themselves which is often concealed in the rush of everyday life. I want to live intensely my own life!¹⁴

As the action of the novel moves, Haroon gains a certain notoriety as a kind of spiritual counsellor using his knowledge on Buddhism, Suffism, Confucianism, and Zen. Certainly, all that philosophical basis is underlying Haroon's words, but Karim is not sure up to which extent is Haroon being really sincere. Rather, he has the impression his father has lost touch with reality. After all, he has heard Haroon say more or less the same things for years, and thanks to his advice many people have solved their problems. Paradoxically, however, Haroon has not been able to mend his life on his own, simply because throughout his life somebody else has taken the effort to make things easier for him. For a person like Karim, who is trying to shape his life the way he wants, Haroon's approach is not the appropriate one.

In this respect I cannot agree with critic Alamgir Hashmi when saying that both Karim and Haroon are living through a process of self-discovery and self-improvement¹⁵. Even when Haroon says to his son, "We're growing up together, we are,"¹⁶ Karim does not believe in his words. As he himself declares,

What I wanted to see was whether, as he started to blossom, Dad really had anything to offer other people, or if he would turn out to be merely another suburban eccentric.¹⁷

By the end of the book, when Haroon tells Karim about his plans for the future, one tends to share Karim's impression that there is more of an eccentric than of a really wise man in Haroon. Whereas Karim has walked quite a long distance, Haroon has hardly moved.

Anwar does not set an attractive example, either. In Karim's view, Anwar is basically a loser. He has been living in England for the same period of time as Haroon, but his life has been even less successful than his friend's. In addition, rampant racism makes him feel insecure. On top of this, Anwar has the impression he has lost command of his own family. His daughter, Jamila, who has strongly feminist and leftist ideas, refuses to marry the man Anwar has chosen for her. Consequently, he decides to cloister himself in his inner world.

At what he sees as his daughter's stubbornness and lack of respect for him, Anwar starts a hunger strike, which reminds us of what Gandhi used to do. However, Anwar's reasons for such a drastic measure seem so ridiculous that in the end the whole thing should be qualified more like a tantrum than a dignified answer to an insult that does not exist. In the last months before his death Anwar begins to visit the local mosque again; he even would like to return to Pakistan, actually. For Anwar, Pakistan symbolizes tradition, strict religious observance, absence of fear, the return to our loving mother's arms... In brief, the image of a country that no longer exists, except in his imagination.

(Anwar's attitude can be partly understood as the typical reaction of immigrants after many years in a foreign country, specially if they have not succeeded).

Out of the persons I mentioned before, that is Haroon, Anwar, and Jamila, I have decided to leave Jamila to the end because, in a way, Karim will try to mold his actions in accordance with her attitude.

There is no doubt Jamila is by far the most self-assertive character in the whole of *The Buddha of Suburbia*. She has to go over many more obstacles than any other person. First of all, she is a woman born in a Muslim family. In addition, her race makes her conspicuous to the eyes of the rest of society. On top of this, she is not precisely a well-accomodated person. Bearing this information in mind it is easy for us to see she has had to stock up quite a lot of determination to succeed in life.

Thus, apart from working at her father's shop, she keeps herself fit and studies really hard in her spare time in a rather autodidactic way. Her quarrel with Anwar places her in an extremely difficult position. In spite of that trial, she survives, even after marrying Changez, the man chosen by her father. She ends up living in an anarchist commune, having a woman as a lover after having had a baby with another man.

As we can see, Jamila is always keeping her ideals and her aims as her first considerations. She will not betray her beliefs even if she has to abjure the traditions of her family's culture, as she does.

Karim feels he is lacking in Jamila's courage, which is why he admires her so much:

As I watched Jamila I thought what a terrific person she'd become. (...) there was in her a great depth of will, of delight in the world, and much energy for love. Her feminism, the sense of self and fight it engendered, the schemes and

plans she had, the relationships –which she desired to take this form and not that form– the things she had made herself know, and all the understanding this gave, seemed to illuminate her tonight as *she went forward, and Indian woman, to live a useful life in white England.*¹⁸

This last phrase I have underlined is the perfect summary of the extent of Jamila's victory.

(This attitude of looking at England face to face is also an essential part of the post-colonial discourse. Needless to say that Jamila's case would be the most appropriate one for us to make a post-colonial reading of *The Buddha of Suburbia*.)

If we wanted to draw a comparison between Charlie and Jamila, Karim's two closest friends and models, it would not be difficult for us to see where the differences lie. Charlie is merely a façade with nothing behind supporting it. Certainly, in a short period of time he has become a famous star, and he is leading a luxurious way of life in New York. However, he has lost all his former friends, and there is only a legion of admirers chasing him all the time simply because he is famous. In fact, Charlie is terribly alone, trapped in the web he himself created:

And fame gained you goods mere money couldn't obtain. Fame was something that Charlie had desired from the moment he stuck the revered face of Brian Jones to his bedroom wall. But having obtained it, he soon found he couldn't shut it off when he grew tired of it. He'd sit with me in a restaurant saying nothing for an hour, and then shout, 'Why are people staring at me when I'm trying to eat my food! (...)' The demands on him were constant. The Fish ensured that Charlie remained in the public eye by appearing in chat shows and at openings and galleries where he had to be funny and iconoclastic.¹⁹

He does not care about other human beings, and, what is even worse, he does not care about his self-esteem.

Jamila, quite on the contrary, shapes her life in accordance with her ideals, and, even more importantly, she cares about other people; she is not a selfish person like Charlie at all. So, looking at where each of these models can take you, Karim decides to follow Jamila's. It is not difficult for us to see why.

When the novel opens up Karim is, metaphorically speaking, at a crossroads. First of all, he has to face the dilemma of being a bisexual. Secondly, he knows his family is splitting apart, and whatever the steps he takes it will hurt. In addition, once he is living in London, he realizes that life there, although funny, can also be quite inhumane. Everybody, his own father included, will try to take advantage of him. To avoid the danger of manipulation he should live alone or not to care about anybody else; but he feels he cannot do that. In the end, at the bottom of all these things, Karim is half-bred in a racist society. He wants to integrate in "white England," as Jamila does, but before going somewhere he needs to know where he comes from.

What I am referring to is Karim's cultural heritage, something he finds missing in his life and that he wants to discover:

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. Partly I blamed Dad for this. After all, like Anwar, for most of his life he'd never shown any interest in going back to India. (...) He wasn't proud of his past, but he wasn't unproud of it either; it just existed. (...) So if I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to create it.²⁰

The answer to his problems appears when he starts to work for Pyke, a theatre director. Karim has some serious problems with him, but he also learns quite a lot of things as an actor and as a person during the time he works for Pyke. For the first time in his life he is really enthused by something. He is turning into a creator, Charlie's nihilism is no longer attractive to him. There is definitely some meaning in what he is doing:

... I saw that creation was an accretive process which couldn't be hurried, and which involved, patience and, primarily, love. I felt more solid myself, and not as if my mind were just a kind of cinema for myriad impressions and emotions to flicker through. This was worth doing, this had meaning, this added up the elements of my life. (...) I was prepared to pay the price [to be] a romantic, an experimenter. [I] had to pursue what [I] wanted to know and follow [my] feelings wherever they went (...) ²¹

His new aim in life as an artistic creator provides Karim with a totally new perspective of what he has had to go through:

I could think about the past and what I'd been through as I'd struggled to locate myself and learn what the heart is. Perhaps in the future I would live more deeply. (...) I thought of what a mess everything had been, but that it wouldn't always be that way.²²

After all, he has found his own place in the world. The pilgrimage is over.

After having read *The Buddha of Suburbia* one does not have the impression that Hanif Kureishi has written it bearing Indian classics in mind. He is not destroying any formal canon of Western literature, either. As Karim, Kureishi's mouthpiece states, he knows he belongs to a hybrid culture, partly Indian, partly English. He is a "divided child,"²³ all of which is clearly reflected throughout the novel.

Kureishi, the same as Karim and most of the characters in the novel, is a pilgrim, a representative among many others of a new culture in which traditional boundaries no longer exist. I must resort again to Pico Iyer's words when saying,

(...) the new transcultural writers are something different. For one, they are the products not so much of colonial division as of the international culture that has grown up since the war (...) They are the creators, and creations, of a new post-imperial order in which English is the lingua franca (...) Most of all, they make a virtue of their hyphenated status. Instead of falling through the cracks, they hope, through their Janus-faced perspective to straddle different worlds, and pick and choose from all traditions. (...) All are situated at a crossroads from which they can reflect, and reflect on, the new forms (...) of our increasingly mongrel, increasingly mobile global village.²⁴

Quoting another critic, Joanne Akai, "It's a time for hybrid cultures. I think this is all going to grow into a huge 'métissage' literature."²⁵

Notes

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3. Iyer, Pico (1993) "The Empire Writes Back," *Time International*, February 8, 1993, p. 48.
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6. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 141.
7. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 27.
8. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 165.
9. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 131.
10. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 131.
11. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, pp. 94-5.
12. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 153.
13. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 121.
14. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 266.
15. Hashmi, Alamgir (1992) "Current Pakistani Fiction," *Commonwealth Novel in English*, 5:1, Spring, p. 59.
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17. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 22.
18. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 216.
19. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 251.
20. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, pp. 212-3.
21. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, p. 217.
22. Kureishi, Hanif *Ibidem*, pp. 283-4.
23. Iyer, Pico *Op. Cit.*, p. 46.
24. Iyer, Pico *Ibidem*, p. 48.
25. Akai, Joanne (1993) in "The Call of Soil and Blood," in Ray Conlogue, ed. *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday, January 30, p. C1.