

Identity Politics of South Asian Enclaves —The (In)adequacy of (In)authenticity and Multiculturalism in Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani**

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Abstract

Reading Gautam Malkani's debut novel *Londonstani*, this article explores questions of place, identity, and ethnicity with a focus on the (in)adequacy of (in)authenticity and multiculturalism. I argue that, even if, on the surface, the concentration of South Asian immigrants in Hounslow may reflect ethnic segregation

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and support the critique of the end, or failure, of multiculturalism, if read in depth, through the portrayal of the diversity of subcultures, the nuances of South Asian diasporic identity, and the rudeboys' use of hybrid language in the ethnic enclave, Malkani's novel challenges the supposed "failure" of "multiculturalism" as a policy based simply on ethnicity identity politics. More importantly, the novel redefines multiculturalism and points out that, in contemporary London and Britain, even in an ethnic enclave, it is evidently a common, everyday practice for people to identify and interact with others across the borders of ethnicity, culture, and nationality.

Key Words: *Londonstani*, authenticity, identity, South Asian ethnic enclaves, multiculturalism