

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

Pei-Chen Liao

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Cheng Kung University
No. 1, University Road, Tainan 70101, Taiwan
E-mail: pcliao@mail.ncku.edu.tw

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

Received December 16, 2013; accepted September 4, 2014; last revised July 15, 2014

* Proofreaders: Yi-Hsin Lai, Han-Ju Yen, Hsih-Keng Yen

Part of this article was presented at the international conference “Landscape, Seascape, and the Spatial Imagination” held at the Center for the Humanities, National Sun Yat-sen University, on November 2-3, 2012. I am indebted to the members of the research group “Border Narrative and Space Discourse” for their constructive comments on my proposal of the research project “London City Novels and South Asian Enclaves” in 2011. I especially wish to thank Professor Kim-Tong Tee, who kindly invited me to join the research group, and Professor Yu-cheng Lee, who is always an inspiration to me. Finally, I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers. My revision has benefited a lot from their invaluable comments and suggestions.

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

In her introduction to *Imagined Londons*, Pamela Gilbert comments on the different faces of London at different historical times and to different people:

London: world city, global city, capital of empire. Literary London. The East End. Jack the Ripper. The Beatles. Beefeaters. The Tower. Village London. Merry Olde London. The London of St. Paul's and the Millenium Dome, the London of the Fire, of Dickens, of Blake. The London of Elizabeth, of Victoria, of tourists, of Londoners. The Londons of the Imagination. (2002: 1)

In particular, while underscoring the plurality of London, Gilbert draws the reader's attention to the fact that, because of its long history as the cultural, socio-economic, and political center of Britain, London has been depicted in literature for centuries. Nevertheless, as a literary setting, London has appeared not only in the works of white British writers such as Dickens and Blake, but also, more recently, in the works by Black and Asian British writers. According to John Ball, London can be said "to be the single most frequently used geographical signifier and setting" in "all English-language fiction from the postcolonial Commonwealth" (2004: 5). It can be attributed to the fact that London is a global city and was once the capital of the British Empire. Thus, as Fatimah Kelleher points out, "ethnic minority groups are always heavily concentrated in the urban centres, with nearly half of the total population in London alone" (2005: 241). Here Kelleher appears to agree with Ball's statement above when she argues that, "since 1991, everyday London tales are very much becoming stories that once belonged on the fringes of society" (2005: 241). Postcolonial and post-imperial as it is, contemporary London has become a multicultural city where immigrants and ethnic minority groups live with one another as well as with the host society.

In contemporary South Asian British literature, not only the inner city of London, as exemplified more recently by Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), but also its suburbs have been depicted in a string of novels. Although, as Rupa Huq maintains in "Darkness on

the Edge of Town,” Hanif Kureishi “probably ranks the best-known documenter of suburban Asian London, particularly in his debut 1970s-set novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990),” successive writers, such as Nirpal Dhaliwal in *Tourism* (2006), Nikesh Shukla in *Coconut Unlimited* (2010), and Gautam Malkani in *Londonstani* (2006a), are given credit for showing “multiple versions of Asian suburbia” (Huq, 2012: 7, 9). While depicting suburban Asian London, these novels, on the one hand, subvert “the usual stereotypical depiction” of the suburb as “boring, white and middle-aged,” and, on the other hand, by focusing on second-generation South Asian diaspora, they “place youth culture and the city’s outer limits at their centre, thus revisiting familiar themes of identity, migration and diaspora” (Huq, 2012: 10).

Among the post-Kureishi novels that depict suburban Asian London, Malkani’s *Londonstani* was a “much-anticipated debut” well before its release (Clark, 2005). The novel is reported to have “gripped many editors amid the clamour of the recent Frankfurt Book Fair” in 2005 because of its “freshness and urgency” (Rickett, 2005). Dubbed the “new Zadie/Monica” and the “Muslim Irvine Welsh,” Malkani is said to have received a six-figure advance from the publisher, Fourth Estate, who was eager to secure the manuscript, as it believed that the novel “catapults you into a world you’ve never read about in fiction before” (Sethi, 2005). Although the novel ended up not selling as well as the publisher expected, in more recent reviews, it is argued that it is “more representative of current demographic trends than the usual inner-city=[sic] ethnic area clichés” because it narrates a tale “from the outer reaches,” namely suburbia, which “many second generation Asians—the children of suburbia—have actively chosen” “as their residential location on becoming adults themselves” (Huq, 2012: 12). Centered on second- and third-generation Indian British youths, the novel is set in the ethnic enclave of Hounslow, West London, where the author, who is of Indian origin, was locally born and raised. Close to London’s

Heathrow Airport, Hounslow borough “lends its unique character to *Londonstani*,” for “[i]t’s an in-between kind of place where sixty percent of the population comes from the Third World and where most people have their eyes fixed on the airport, whether for cheap trips abroad or for its links with the home country” (Basu, 2007).

Hounslow is a diverse community notorious for the disengagement of local youth from mainstream society, providing evidence, to some critics, of the “failure” or the “end” of multiculturalism (Cantle, 2012: 53; Elia, 2010: 8; Gabriel, Gomez, & Rocha, 2012: 271; Murphy, 2012: 1-2).¹ In 2003, the first UK-based suicide bomber to strike in Israel was from Hounslow; since then, a couple of Hounslow youths have been subject to investigation about their involvement in the London bombings and

¹ According to Cantle, however, the notion of the failure of multiculturalism “has confused rather than assisted a debate about how we learn to live together in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world” (2012: 53). The notion is perilous when one confuses multiculturalism as a descriptive reality for most immigrant countries around the world with multiculturalism as state policies and blame immigrants for threatening the security and solidarity of the host country. It is thus important to make the distinction between state policies and social reality and to know that “[t]he reference to ‘failure’ is based on the perception that the *policies* of multiculturalism have been an inadequate response to the changing composition of societies” (2012: 53; emphasis original). In his book, Cantle proposes “interculturalism” as a new model and encloses “failure” inside the quotation marks to emphasize his special use of the word as a reference to the failure of state multiculturalism which is based on ethnicity identity politics and which advocates color-consciousness. Murphy has also limited his discussion of the “failure” of multiculturalism to policies and political philosophy (2012: 1, 3). I take my cue from these critics for my reading of Malkani’s novel. I argue, on the one hand, that the “failure” of multicultural policies in Britain paradoxically proves the inadequacy of ethnicity and the need to redefine multiculturalism that “is now much more complex” and that is “no longer simply revolving around majority/minority visible distinctions” (2012: 5). On the other hand, I perceive the “failure” of multiculturalism as an irony and attempt to point out how easily and popularly the notion is manipulated to equate the failure of multicultural policies to the failure of multicultural society.

the UK terror plot in the summer of 2006.² Having set the novel around the neighborhood of Hounslow, Malkani delineates the lives of a gang of Indian British teenage boys headed by body-builder Hardjit. Just as Huq has pointed out, “Whereas Karim is a rarity in Kureishi’s historical account of 1960s/70s Bromley, in *Londonstani*’s twenty-first century Hounslow, Asians are the norm” (2012: 9). These youths call themselves “rudeboys,” a slang which, in contemporary Britain, refers to the youths who are involved in street culture like “gangsta” or to “tough, style-conscious male” (Malkani, 2006a: 340), although the term is originally from Jamaica and was used in the 1960s for juvenile delinquents and criminals. In the first thirteen pages of the novel, these rudeboys beat a white boy, whom they claim called them “Paki.” While retaking their A-levels, the rudeboys often skip classes to hang out on the street and find trouble with “goras”—white males—and with “coconuts”—South Asian immigrants who have assimilated into white British society and

² For more information, see Hounslow Council (2007). It is the report of a study commissioned by the Hounslow Council “to consider the underlying causes of youth disengagement from mainstream society and the significance of any tendency to support extremist views and turn to extremist organisations” (5). The report is available online at http://www.hounslowhomes.org.uk/a_window_on_extremism.pdf. Although it is true that extremist groups operate in Hounslow, the issue is, as the report makes clear, “not unique to Hounslow,” but “a reality for many cities throughout Europe” (3). Most importantly, the report cautions people not to link “the discussion of ‘community cohesion’” with “tackling violent extremism and counter-terrorism,” for “[s]uch an approach will do even more to marginalise certain groups in our communities and increase the resentment about apparently unequal treatment” (6-7). Even if the official report attempts to strike a note of caution in the beginning, it continues to point out how problematic “clustering” is, namely “people choosing to live with or near those of similar backgrounds,” when clustering “creates or gives rise to ignorance, fear, and hostility towards ‘others’” (6). As I will elaborate later in the article, it is against such fear of clustering and hostility towards others that *Londonstani* can be read as an attempt to redirect the reader’s attention from the problems of clustering to the diversity that people can often find in an ethnic enclave and to the vitality that ethnic minority groups can bring to the city.

culture (2006a: 5-6). At the same time, they make money secretly and illegally by unlocking stolen cell phones and, later in the novel, unknowingly become involved in some serious crimes.

If we may judge a book by its cover, the “desi” (from Sanskrit for “countryman”), consisting of these rudeboys and other characters who share an Indian diasporic cultural identity, may be judged by their houses. Door decorations clearly reveal residents’ religious beliefs, as some houses “had got Om symbols stuck on the wooden front doors behind glass porches,” others “had Khanda Sahibs,” and still others “had the Muslim crescent moon” (Malkani, 2006a: 17). Furthermore, the first-person narrator Jas informs us, when there is no symbol on the front door, “you could still tell if it was a desi house if there was more than one satellite dish. One for Zee TV an one for Star Plus, probly” (2006a: 17). These indicators of cultural identity are visual and, to critics skeptical of the practices of Orientalism in the West, these may appear as superficial and stereotypical as the “daal an subjhi smell” that the narrator believes “can tell if someone was home” (2006a: 17). And yet, hearing from Jas, who has claimed to be a desi himself and joined the other rudeboys in beating the white boy in the opening scene, most readers may be liable to believe that these identity indicators are adequately self-evident and authentic. The irony, as the reader is surprisingly informed in the last three pages of the novel, is that the narrator, Jas, is actually not a desi, but a white British teenager who, while aspiring to a sense of belonging with the rudeboys, is assimilated into the desi culture of Indian diaspora. The constructed desi identity that the white narrator Jas performs and plays with in the novel may thus lead one to question what is an “authentic” desi identity. More importantly, Jas also serves to challenge the policies of multiculturalism that, since their early development in post-World War II Britain, “have then been built upon, and are a response to, racial and other visible differences” (Cantle, 2012: 77).

Interestingly, some reviewers’ criticisms of Malkani’s

inauthentic representation of street boys are just as controversial as the authenticity of desi, or more generally South Asian identity, portrayed in the novel.³ Some reviewers, for example, misread *Londonstani* as belonging to the black urban novels set in inner city estates, or the ghettos, and as being about the violence of street boys and gangs, or at least expect the novel to be of such a character because of the author's ethnic minority identity.⁴ In some initial critical reviews, as pointed out in James Graham's interview, Malkani is criticized for not providing the street boys with an authentic voice, and for having little understanding of the ghetto, inasmuch as the novelist himself is Cambridge-educated and the Creative Business editor of the *Financial Times* (Graham, 2008a). In a sense, this kind of criticism implies an association of the clustering of immigrants with the ghetto, violence, and poverty; it may also, to some extent, strengthen the popular, yet rather misleading, view that "it is indeed the very presence of people from many different backgrounds that somehow poses a threat to social stability and solidarity" (Cantle, 2012: 53). In response to such criticism, Malkani first argues that "[t]he authenticity hurdle that reviewers have required me to jump implies Thomas Harris should have been disqualified from writing 'Silence of the Lambs' because he's not an authentic cannibal or serial killer" (Graham, 2008a). Secondly, "[i]t also implies that there's a single authentic British Asian experience and that authentic experience can't be shared" (2008a). Most importantly, and also paradoxically, Malkani argues

³ For a sampling of criticisms, see Manzoor (2006) as well as Malkani's interview with James Graham, especially Malkani's answers to the interviewer's questions 4 and 7.

⁴ One of the most well-known ghetto novels is the crime story *Yardie* (1992) by the Jamaican British writer Victor Headley. Following Headley's success, there are a number of writers who, when writing about London, write with a perspective that Andy Wood has called "a ghetto perspective" (2002: 18). The examples include Courttia Newland's *The Scholar* (1997) and *Society Within* (1999), both of which are set on the fictitious inner city housing estate of Greenside in West London and depict Afro-Caribbean immigrants' poverty, segregation, and lower-class life.

that there is no question of authenticity in his novel because the novel is actually about a group of boys who pretend to be gangsters living in a ghetto, whereas in fact they are mommy's boys and live in five-bedroom houses. What is at issue in the novel is thus "inauthenticity" rather than authenticity. That is, instead of fixing the cultural identity of desis purely in terms of race and ethnicity, as the early forms of multicultural policies did, *Londonstani* can be read as a literary attempt to redefine multiculturalism and to illustrate the multifaceted nature of contemporary identity when, through the everyday practices of the desi characters, the author portrays how other differences such as gender, age, and class impact the roles desis play in the ethnic enclave.

In this article, I attempt to explore the political implications of some reviewers' expectations that they will discover the ghettoized nature of disaffected, urban, Asian youth in an almost self-segregated London suburb, and to examine Malkani's literary strategies of irony in characterizing an earnest desi narrator, who turns out to be a white, and in recreating a pseudo-ghetto world in the novel. I suggest that, in so doing, the novel can be read as a parody of the stereotyped tale of Asian immigrants growing up in the midst of poverty and violence in the ghetto, and living in separation from the host society. While exploring the questions of place, identity, and ethnicity with a focus on the (in)adequacy of (in)authenticity and multiculturalism in the novel, I further argue that, even if, on the surface, the concentration of South Asian immigrants in Hounslow may reflect ethnic segregation 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, it 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.

I. The “Failure” of Multiculturalism, the Ghetto, and the Asian Gang

In *Londonstani*, when the rudeboys’ teacher asks them: “Have you watched the news? Are you familiar with the debate around multiculturalism?,” Hardjit, the leader of the gang, replies: “Forget it, man, dis politics shit” (Malkani, 2006a: 125). Nonetheless, the novel’s complex pseudo-ghetto world lends itself to the debate on the “failure” of multiculturalism, which I shall approach at two levels. First of all, the “failure” refers to the decline of multiculturalism as a set of governing practices for dealing with community relations when the political climate in Britain began to change in early twenty-first century. In Britain, multicultural policies were developed in the 1950s and 1960s as a response to the post-war influx of non-white immigrants. Commentators have commonly taken the speech given by then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in 1966 “to signal the moment of the beginning of British multiculturalism” (Gabriel et al., 2012: 268). At a time “when racism and intolerance was leading to real community tensions” (Cantle, 2012: 65), Jenkins’ speech offered a nearly positive vision of multiculturalism: “Integration is perhaps rather a loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture. [. . .] I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process, but as equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance” (as cited in Cantle, 2012: 65). Clearly, just as the politics of ethnic identity developed during the late 1960s were viewed “as an attempt by those with little power to affirm their threatened identities and to assert their claims for material resources and political clout” (Leach, Brown, & Worden, 2008: 759), the goals of the early and defensive forms of multicultural

policies were “both to protect minorities from the hostility and racism they faced and to stake a claim for fairness and social justice” (Cantle, 2012: 88). However, as Cantle further points out, even if it “established strong support for the concept of cultural pluralism and the need to maintain the heritage of distinct communities” (2012: 172), “this approach depended upon a preoccupation with ‘race’ and mostly concerned the extent and nature of accommodation of minorities [. . .] based on a static conception of culture that is positioned on a linear ‘segregation to assimilation’ pathway” (2012: 88).

Although it could be argued that ethnic identity politics and race-based multiculturalism, as the policies of the post-war period, were “right for that time” and appropriate to tackle racism and discrimination (Cantle, 2012: 56), they have come under increasing attacks from critics concerned with the rise of ethnic separatism and a retreat from the shared values that define Britons of all races and cultures. It is here that the notion of the “failure” of multiculturalism becomes confusing and treacherous. Instead of seeking a new model in which the diversity of identities could be acknowledged, Britishness redefined, and government policies differently operationalized, many people in Britain attribute the “failure” entirely to immigrants, and thus reproduce racism. Over the past decade, for example, there has been considerable debate among politicians and scholars about whether or not self-segregation or ghettos exist in the country. On the one hand, the report by the Community Cohesion Review Team (2001) accounts for the British government’s, and some people’s, increasing worry in the new millennium about the formation of ghettos in British cities, especially after the race riots in the north and northwest of England, as seen, for example, in the cities of Bradford, Oldham, and Burnley, where South Asian immigrants have congregated. The report states: “[M]any communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any

meaningful interchanges” (2001: 9). Furthermore, on September 22, 2005, following Michael Poulsen’s (2005) research and in response to the bombings on July 7 in London,⁵ Trevor Phillips, then Director of the Commission for Racial Equality, asserted in a speech that “Britain was sleepwalking into segregation” and “that cities like Bradford and Leicester were comparable in their levels of ghettoization to Chicago” (Peach, 2009: 1381). On the other hand, as Cante points out, “much of the denial” of self-segregation is “based upon the view that the very idea is tantamount to ‘blaming minorities’ for the problems of multiculturalism” (2012: 59). The geography scholar Deborah Phillips argues, for example, that, central to the Community Cohesion Review Team’s assertion of “a series of parallel lives” is “the claim that people of South Asian origin, particularly British Muslims, are failing to be active citizens by withdrawing from social and spatial interactions with wider British society” (2006: 25).

The area defined as a ghetto has changed slightly over time, although several common characteristics have been strongly etched into people’s impressions, and especially strongly associated with ethnic minority groups. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “ghetto” was “formerly a street, or quarter, of a city set apart as a legally enforced residence area for Jews” (ghetto, 2014), and one of the earliest “forced segregations” of Jews can be traced to Muslim Morocco in 1280, when Jews “were transferred to segregated quarters called *millahs*.” Although the ghettos for Jews were no longer enforced in Western Europe after the 19th century, and were only briefly “revived by the Nazis during World War II,” the meaning of the ghetto as “enforced residence area” has been retained, and “more recently the term ghetto has come to apply to any urban area exclusively settled by a minority group.” The most

⁵ The bombings on July 7 in London were a series of coordinated suicide attacks using the public transport system, which resulted in the deaths of 52 commuters. Three of the four suicide bombers were of Pakistani descent and from Leeds—where Pakistani immigrants have become concentrated over time.

prominent examples in the United States, as cited by *Encyclopedia Britannica*, are the African Americans who “have been compelled to live in ghettos, not so much by legal devices as by economic and social pressures.” In general, “ghetto” in both its historical and current usage has been a negative and derogative term, meaning that the residential areas are segregated and that the residents are of ethnic minority groups, poor, underprivileged, and unwelcomed in mainstream society. Moreover, as previously discussed, in contemporary Britain and, in particular, after the race riots in 2001, and the bombings in 2005, residential segregation in British cities has been increasingly associated with British people’s fear of extreme violence stemming from the ghettoization of ethnic minority groups.

Is residential segregation equivalent to racial segregation? Is assimilation the only way to deal with race relations and enhance community cohesion? What are the risks of confusing racial segregation as an ideology, that is, “a politically constructed problem,” with racial segregation as a practice, namely “a feature of the material world” (S. J. Smith, 1993: 129)?

In *Londonstani*, except that the residents of Hounslow are mostly desis, Malkani clearly represents no ghetto at all. His desi characters are, firstly, not poor, nor do they belong to the lower or working class. They drive luxury cars, such as Benzes and BMWs, and wear designer clothes, shoes, and the watches of famous brands. Hardjit’s father, for example, is a successful businessman, running “nine twenty-four-hour local convenience shops in partnership with two a his cousins” (Malkani, 2006a: 71), and Ravi’s father has been “offering financial advice from behind an IBM Thinkpad” and has “made good bucks by it” (2006a: 73). Also, in sharp contrast to the decayed, deprived, and over-crowded council estates where ghettos are often found in many parts of the world, the house of Amit, another desi boy in the novel, has “expensive coffee tables with the golden legs” and “expensive silk an satin sheets that’d been laid down especially to protect the

carpet” (2006a: 79). Ironically, it is the self-degraded and physically weak Jas—the white boy who tries so hard to imitate the rudeboys in the ways he speaks, walks, and behaves and to assimilate himself into the desi culture by learning Punjabi, Hindi, and a little Urdu—who has a father who needs to work around the clock to make a living in his small shop selling mobile phones. Here, through the contrast between Jas’ lack of self-confidence and the desi boys’ wealth, physical strength, and linguistic prowess, the novel has an almost inverted reversal of the Orientalist stereotypes of weak, poor, and inferior colored immigrants.

Secondly, the desi rudeboys in the novel are not gangsters as much as they are mommy’s boys. Hardjit and the other desi boys may swear and act like gangsters, but their overly exaggerated words sound awkward and hilarious at times. The following words, spoken by Jas during the scene when Hardjit, Amit, and Ravi verbally and physically abuse the white boy, demonstrate very well how Jas is aware that their gang identity is simply a performance:

To make up for my useless shitness I decided to offer the followin, *carefully crafted comment*: Yeh, bredren, knock his fuckin teeth out. Bruck his fuckin face. Kill his fuckin . . . well, his fuckin, you know, him. Kill him.

This was probly a bit over the top but I think I’d got the tone just right an nobody laughed at me. (Malkani, 2006a: 9; emphasis added)

Here, and in several other places in the novel, as Michael Mitchell points out, language is “a fabric” worn by Jas “like a costume as a conscious part of his performance” (2008: 332). Hardjit and the other desi rudeboys may not be as self-aware as Jas of their “inauthentic” gang identity, but their self-claimed gang identity is likewise a performance and an expression of their hyper-masculinity. A huge gap can be detected between what they say and what they do. For example, on their way to an expectedly violent fight with Tariq, a Muslim boy in the neighborhood, whom they

are going to teach “a lesson or two for going out with a Sikh girl and then trying to convert her to Islam” (Malkani, 2006a: 77), Hardjit and his rudeboy gang stop by a supermarket to run errands for Amit’s mother, but when they arrive, they find Tariq late because he “[h]ad 2 go 2 some supermarket wid his mum, innit, help her carry da shopping bags” (2006a: 99). In the end, as Ruvani Ranasinha argues, the desi rudeboys’ aggressive gang identity is faked and performed only ironically to express their “hyper-masculinity [. . .] in opposition to the overpowering presence of their mothers who rule the roost” (2009: 302).

While making the rudeboys’ violence and swearing all a performance, the novel subtly challenges and satirizes, I suggest, white British people’s fear of Asian gangs as a consequence of residential segregation. According to Claire Alexander, the prevalent use of “the Asian gang” to describe Asian youth actually follows the media’s report of “the arrival of this new ‘folk devil’ on the urban landscape” and “in the wake of tales of burgeoning ‘Asian’ criminality and civil unrest” (2000: xiii). The derogatory appellation “shares with its more embracing generic counterpart the assertions of threat, of anger, of alienation, of violence” (2000: xiii). Moreover, in the post-9/11 context, and particularly after London was hit by suicide bombers in July 2005, “the Asian gang” narrative worked hand in hand with “Islamphobia” to make South Asian British youths, especially Muslims, scapegoats for turning London, the capital of Britain, into “Londonistan.” According to Omar Nasiri, “Londonistan”—a term first coined in the mid- to late-1990s—is “a title provided by French officials infuriated at the growing presence of Islamist radicals in London and the failure of British authorities to do anything about it” (2006: 16). Aware of the word as “a mocking play on the names of such state sponsors of terrorism as Afghanistan” and its suggested criticism of London as “the major European center for the promotion, recruitment and financing of Islamic terror and extremism,” Melanie Phillips—a British-born Jewish author who was voted “the 2003’s Most

Islamophobic Media Personality” (Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2003)—deliberately entitled her book *Londonistan* (2006: x-xi). In *Londonistan*, Phillips targets South Asian immigrants and “the concentration of Muslim immigrant communities” (2006: xx) to blame for terrorism in Britain. Published in the same year as Phillips’ highly racist book, Malkani’s *Londonstani*, whose title is uncannily like, but unlike, Phillips’ *Londonistan*, deconstructs the myth of the Asian gang and shows it to be as artificially constructed as the desi boys’ gang identity.

Commenting on some reviewers’ expectations that the novel would be about the ghetto, and their refusal to let go of the idea, Malkani believes that it is “an almost willful misinterpretation” (Graham, 2008a). It is certainly a misinterpretation, but, to Malkani, this misinterpretation is willful, as if the reviewers had wished for it. “The obvious subtext was that,” as Malkani points out, “as far as they were concerned, the only authentic British Asian experience is that of the ghetto and anything more complicated than that is invalid” (2008a). Malkani does not make it explicit, but it is clear that racism is at work in the reviewers’ insistence on assigning South Asian immigrants to racialized ghettos. To some extent, the reviewers’ willful misinterpretation of *Londonstani* as an example of ghetto fiction mirrors some politicians’ (like T. Phillips’) and geographers’ (like Poulsen’s) manufacturing of the ghettos in certain areas of concentrated ethnic populations in British cities. As opposed to the ghettos of reality, Ludi Simpson sees “ghettos of the mind” in these anxieties about other people’s color and origins (2007: 423).

Susan Smith uses a phrase similar to Simpson’s “ghettos of the mind”—the “imagery of ‘racial segregation’” (1993: 131). The phrase is coined to underline the fact that imagined racial segregation expresses and simultaneously reproduces racism in Britain. It is true, as Ceri Peach points out, that some ethnic groups have concentrated in certain urban areas of Britain, and yet, the reality of residential differentiation should not be confused with

racial segregation (1996: 232). According to S. J. Smith, in reality, “[t]he origins of this iniquitous division of space can be traced” first to “the economics of labour migration” and to “the politics of social (including housing) policy” (1993: 128). It is thus too simplistic, as well as unfair, to claim that residential differentiation is a racial issue and that immigrants are self-segregating and unwilling to assimilate into the mainstream society and culture. Despite the complexity of the factors involved, and the fact of social inequality implied in residential differentiation, Smith attempts to shift our focus of attention from the reality of residential differentiation to the political imagery of racial segregation because she believes that it is necessary “to recognize that the ideology of racial segregation informs the legislative process in ways which further undermine the status of racialized minorities” (1993: 129). When spaces are divided along racial or ethnic lines, people can easily align the racialization of residential space with the racialization of immigration, as exemplified by the long history of the “practice of imposing discriminatory immigration controls in Britain,” especially on colored immigrants (1993: 129). On that condition, Afro-Caribbean and South Asian immigration can then be “constructed as a threat to the integrity of Britain’s cultural landscape” (1993: 132).

Furthermore, when the rationale is accepted, individuals can be assigned to “‘racial’ categories as much because of where they live now as because of their presumed migrant status,” as seen, for example, in the so-called “inner city” that is “so conveniently indexed by ‘ethnic mix’ or ‘racial concentration’” (S. J. Smith, 1993: 133-134). Along a similar line of thought, critical reviewers of Malkani’s novel associate Hounslow with South Asian immigrants and South Asian immigrants with the ghetto, as if place, identity, and race define and complete one another. These reviewers’ idea of self-segregation in racial and spatial terms demonstrates that “all spatialities are political because they are the (covert) medium and (disguised) expression of asymmetrical

relations of power” (Keith & Pile, 1993: 38). Although often read as a suburban Asian London novel, it can be argued that, through the invention of a white teenager as the narrator of the story, *Londonstani* poses a challenge to such “hegemonic constructions of place, of politics and of identity” (1993: 38). Although Jas is a white Briton, locally born and raised in Hounslow, he loves desi culture to such an extent that he prefers the desi name “Jas” to his first name “Jason” (Malkani, 2006a: 24) and continues working on his Punjabi though he proudly claims, “I reckon I already know more than most coconuts do” (2006a: 67). When Jas chooses to become a desi, and passes so successfully that he makes the reader believe it until the surprising revelation at the end of the novel, he deconstructs the authenticity of desi identity in light of the inherited traditions of Indian or South Asian diaspora. In opposition to the policies of multiculturalism built upon race and ethnicity, he exemplifies the important role that freedom plays in a truly multicultural society in which, as Amartya Sen argues in *Identity and Violence*, cultural practices are not “imposed in the name of ‘the culture of the community,’” but rather “freely chosen by persons with adequate opportunity to learn and reason about alternatives” (2006: 152). Similar examples in the novel are “coconuts,” also called “gora lovers” or “gorafied desis,” who, as Jas has observed, “made a choice just like I made a choice when I started kickin bout with Hardjit” (Malkani, 2006a: 22-23). On the other hand, as the mediator, or the transgressor, between the white British culture and the South Asian culture, the in-between positionality of Jas as well as the “coconuts” in the novel showcases the multiplicity of Hounslow, which cannot be reduced to either purely white or brown. In other words, Hounslow provides and represents an in-between and dynamic space, not only for South Asian immigrants, but also for white British people to reshape their identities and to resist the dominance of any hegemonic power of control.

II. The Ethnic Enclave and Interculturalism

Not only can it be argued that *Londonstani* presents a mockery of the racist ideology of wider British society, both through the characterization of a desi-loving white narrator, and through the creation of a group of affluent middle-class Indian youths who, in the heavily segregated residential area of Hounslow, pretend to be a gang living in a ghetto. The novel also provides an alternative perspective from which to rethink the question of residential segregation in terms of the ethnic enclave as opposed to the ghetto. According to *Merriam-Webster* and *Oxford Dictionaries*, the word “enclave” entered English in mid-19th century as a jargon of diplomacy, whose etymology can be traced to the French word *enclaver*, with a sense inherited from the Latin phrase *inclavare*, meaning literally “in key” or “to lock up” (enclave, 2014a, 2014b). In political geography, an enclave is a country, or part of a country, mostly surrounded by the territory of another country, or wholly lying within the boundaries of another country, such as Vatican City, within the city of Rome, Italy, or the Kingdom of Lesotho, in South Africa. More generally, however, as defined in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, an enclave refers to “a distinct territorial, cultural, or social unit enclosed within or as if within foreign territory” (enclave, 2014a), such as an ethnic enclave, inside which an ethnic community resides. Chinatown, in San Francisco, and Little Havana, in Miami, are well-known examples of ethnic enclaves. Despite the fact that “ethnic enclave” has already entered into very common usage in English, in current scholarship, as David P. Varady points out, “[f]ar less attention has been given to what is considered a more positive form of residential segregation—the ethnic enclave—defined as segregation by choice” than that given to the ghetto (2005: vii).

Even though, as discussed previously, Hounslow is an in-between place for the white British, as well as the South Asian diaspora, it is also true that, in Malkani’s novel, the majority of the

residents are desis who appear to have lived in this suburban area of London for generations. And yet, instead of empowering the South Asian diaspora by observing the dichotomy between the majority and the minority, and that between the dominant and the dominated, the novel suggests a move beyond the assimilationist melting pot model, which is often adopted by mainstream white British society to assimilate the ethnic minority groups. More significantly, unlike some critics “who are intent on dismissing any notion of segregation as a problem and seem to see almost any discussion of segregation as part of ‘the myth and the litany’ about race and immigration” (Cantle, 2012: 59), Malkani’s novel makes an attempt to understand the reasons that particular groups congregate in housing and other terms, and the assets that such ethnic concentrations may bring to urban vitality.

It is paradoxically through representing the changing identities by which the desi characters identify themselves and others in the ethnic enclave, that the novel echoes the “failure” of multicultural policies. The subtle arrangement of the novel in three parts—ordered in terms of “Paki,” “Sher,” and “Desi”—demonstrates the political transition in Britain, where, following a number of race riots in northern England in 2001, the concept of “community cohesion” has been gradually developed in place of the multicultural model as a way “to build understanding between different groups and to build mutual trust and respect by breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about the ‘other’” (Cantle, 2012: 91). In “What’s right with Asian boys?,” Malkani compares the three parts of the novel to the South Asian youth’s three-stage evolution of identity-assertion:

And so the Asian boy as victim (represented by the word “paki”) may have given way to the aggressor (represented by the names of some gangs such as Shere Panjab, where the word “Sher” translates as lions or tigers). And, in turn, that may have led to a social equilibrium between victim and aggressor implied by “desi.” (2006b)

The first two stages correspond to the views of defensive multicultural policies and those of their opponents regarding ethnic minority immigrants as either victims to be protected, or as aggressors to be feared. The third stage—the social equilibrium between victim and aggressor implied by “desi”—can be argued to be developing in Malkani’s novel in the more recently formed ethnic enclave in Hounslow, a suburb in West London. Although enclaves “have traditionally been viewed as existing only in inner cities,” as Mark Abrahamson points out, “communities with all the features of enclaves have recently formed in otherwise conventional suburbs” due to the fact that “the metropolitan areas around cities have grown in size and complexity” (2006: 2). In general, the suburban enclaves “tend to be newer, physically more attractive, with wealthier residents, and more economic opportunities” (2006: 2). Malkani similarly notices in his reading guides on the website of the Penguin group that, in comparison with the better known South Asian community in East London, as seen, for example, in the Bangladeshi ethnic community in Ali’s *Brick Lane*, the desi community in West London is “more economically affluent, thereby reducing the role of class or racial struggle” (n.d.). Thus, although the novel opens with a beating scene, the narrator Jas has actually verbally exaggerated it, for, as he later admits, “[y]ou hardly ever saw a brown-on-white beatin these days, not round these pinds anyway” (Malkani, 2006a: 12).

It is not only because the “[r]ising levels of education and income have enabled upwardly mobile Blacks [and Asians] to choose where to live rather than having the choice imposed on them” (Varady, 2005: xiii) but also because the internal diversities formed in Hounslow’s ethnic enclave give its residents a wider sense of belonging that the novel attests to the emergence of interculturality in contemporary British society. According to Cantle, as opposed to the earlier forms of multicultural policies, “interculturalism” can be adopted as a new model to accommodate the super diversity of the more complex multicultural society in

contemporary London and Britain. In Cattle's words, "the key feature of interculturality, and what differentiates it from multiculturalism, is its sense of openness, dialogue and interaction between cultures" (2012: 157). The first step of interculturalism as a new model is to regard "culture" as "a dynamic concept" that is "constantly being made and remade" and to understand that "the way individuals see their identity and the way particular groups and communities represent themselves will change over time" (2012: 173). Although Malkani's desi characters live in an ethnic enclave and, as Cattle maintains, "it is not surprising that people seek to congregate with others who share the same idea of themselves and have a common bound of personal and collective identity" (2012: 60), *Londonstani* manifests that this common bound is not to be "regarded as primordial and 'natural,'" and to be "preserved at all costs" (2012: 60). Rather than having singular identities, the desis in the novel are shown to establish connections and bounds with others in a way that demonstrates their differences in, for example, class, age, and gender and that reflects the impact of diaspora, capitalism, popular culture, and globalization.

Indeed, it is true that, in the novel's depiction of the desi enclave, for the first generation, like Amit's parents, the desi lifestyles and values are represented by their customary foods, wedding traditions, and religions. In Amit's living room, for example, Jas has watched "all the aunties in their pashmina shawls, sittin on the floor, sayin all the usual prayers, singin all the usual bhajans an singin prayers in the form a bhajans" (Malkani, 2006a: 78). Amit's mother is also "a won-der-ful hostess" who serves her desi guests customary Indian foods, "putting just the right amount a masala in the teapot, serving just enough pakoras" (2006a: 79). Most importantly, she takes an uncompromising stand for a traditional wedding when her elder son, Arun, gets engaged to a Hindu girl, Reena. She feels disrespected when Reena's family "ain't doin all da work n stuff dat da Girl's Side's s'posed to do,"

such as phoning or visiting the Boy's Side and buying and picking up champagne cases (2006a: 88). Whenever Arun argues with her, she replies: "But beita, it's the way things are done, it's the way things are done. All da time, all da time, It's the ways things are done" (2006a: 88). It is the traditional cultural practices of a Hindu wedding that she insists upon, and expects other desis to follow. And yet, traditional as Amit's mother is in terms of cultural and religious devotions, Jas also notices that she is a materialist, and shares materialism with her desi friends. As Jas speculates, "[s]he could go to bed that nite feelin in her heart an in her soul that both God an her high-society satsang guests had been impressed by how she displayed her devotion to the finest furniture an forks an stuff that her husband's money could buy" (2006a: 79). Here, by juxtaposing the devotion of Amit's mother to the finest furniture with that to God, and comparing her high society guests to satsang, namely "spiritual gathering for communal worship" (2006a: 340), Jas, as the narrator of the novel, leads the reader to see that, for first-generation Indian immigrants like Amit's mother, a sense of belonging to the community comes not only from cultural and religious practices but also from materialist worship.

Likewise, and to an even greater degree, for the British-born second- and third-generations of immigrants like Hardjit, Amit, and Ravi, their shared values and distinctive ways of life in the enclave are not entirely based on ethnicity or religion. With respect to cultural traditions, they even come into conflict with the first generation. Arun, for example, most unfortunately dies of an aspirin overdose at the end of the novel because he has a mental breakdown trying to deal with his "complicated family-related shit," which in part results from his mother's insistence on traditional Hindu wedding customs, and his more "Westernized" idea of wedding (Malkani, 2006a: 273, 258). In terms of religion, the fact that Hardjit is a Sikh, and his bosom friends Ravi and Amit Hindus, does not inhibit them from forming a group, nor does ethnicity when they take in the white boy Jas as a member of their

group.

For the desi gang led by Hardjit, rudeboy rules matter much more than religion and ethnicity. This is exemplified by Jas' detailed explanation of the seven rudeboy rules, which include: "stay outta trouble with the police" (rule #3) and have "the blingest mobile fone" (rule #2) because "fones were invented for rudeboys" (Malkani, 2006a: 40-41). And yet, although Jas has tried to stick to most of the rudeboy rules, he is kicked out of the gang at the end of the novel because he is found out to have secretly dated the Muslim girl, Samira Ahmed, who, gorgeous as she is, is disliked by the desi rudeboys. She is disliked because Samira's easy attitude in chatting and hanging around with guys makes it "too easy for her to break other rules an slip into being the way they din't want any desi sister to be—whether she was Muslim, Sikh or Hindu" (2006a: 64). This emphasis on the rudeboy rules signifies two points. First of all, by detailing the rudeboy rules, the novel provides a groundbreaking portrayal of the rudeboy subculture that transcends ethnicity and religion. The novel can thus be distinguished from other immigrant fictions that may similarly deal with second-generation immigrant issues, such as Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). As Graham claims in "This In't Good Will Hunting," *Londonstani* could be argued to be "the first novel to present the world of British Asian rudeboys to mass-market audience" (2008b: para. 13). Secondly, the rudeboy rules demonstrate how gender plays an equally, if not more, important role than ethnicity in shaping a desi's identity. On the one hand, as discussed previously, the rudeboys represented in the novel are mommy's boys in that their attachment to their mothers decides, or influences, who they are and how they behave. On the other hand, even though they show respect to their mothers, they appear to have limited and overly conservative views of girls, leading them, especially the most macho, Hardjit, to discriminate against Samira, no matter whether she is a Muslim, Sikh or Hindu. All in all, the rudeboy subculture in the novel demonstrates that

ethnicity does not rule everything in an ethnic enclave, and that, in forming their group identity, the desi youth may be as much influenced by their gender perspective as by their cultural traditions.

If, as Abrahamson argues, “[t]he existence of a subculture generally presupposes an emotional attachment to a group” (2006: 4), the sense of belonging to different subcultural groups portrayed in *Londonstani* defines South Asian diasporic identity in terms of its internal diversity in an enclave, rather than in opposition to the white British society, or in the dichotomy between the perpetrator and the victim. Moreover, through the example of Jas, the novel shows that “races integrate, not just over time, but as the subculture matures” (Graham, 2008a). Thus, set in the ethnic enclave in Hounslow, where desis interact mostly, but not simply, with desis, the novel, instead of representing a monolithic ethnic community, brings to the fore the intergenerational, religious, and gender differences of the desis, henceforth highlighting the inadequacy of ethnicity as the basis of multicultural policies. This also explains very well the aforementioned issue of “inauthenticity” as a central theme of the novel. In *Londonstani*, inauthenticity not only refers to the faked or performed gangster identity of the desi rudeboys, who pretend to live in a ghetto, but, more importantly, it underlines the fact that there is no authentic or essentialist South Asian or desi identity.

The multiple statuses with which the desis in the novel identify themselves can also find evidence in their use of patois, which furthermore entails an analysis of the way the organization and the nature of the enclave have generally changed with respect to transnationalism in an age of globalization. This also serves as a good example to illustrate that, “to be successful in an era of globalisation and super diversity,” interculturalism would also have to recognize “the dynamic nature of difference and that it includes wider geo-political and international components” (Cantle, 2012: 168). In the novel, except for Jas, who, in his inner thoughts, or at

home with his parents, tends to speak more standardized English, the desi rudeboys in the novel use a hybrid form of language. According to Sarah Brouillette, their hybrid language blends “foul language, cockney slang (‘innuit’) and text-message shorthand (‘b’ for ‘be’ and ‘em’ for ‘them’)” and “in later pages incorporates vocabulary and locution from a global hodgepoege of hip hop, reggae, and South Asian street cultures” (2009: 3). Actually, it is not uncommon to find subversive use of patois in post-World War II Asian and Black British novels, such as Sam Selvon’s *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) and Victor Headley’s *Yardie* (1992). Malkani’s creation of the patois in this 21st-century urban fiction is, however, unique in two aspects. First of all, instead of claiming authenticity by mimicking realistically the way that Indian immigrants talk in Britain, the urban creole in the novel is actually carefully constructed by the novelist himself. The hybrid language is so intricate that the novel provides a glossary in the end for the reader’s reference. On his own website, Malkani explains his reasons to construct hybrid language in the novel:

What I didn’t want to do was capture an exact picture of the way people talk by writing it just as I was hearing it [. . .] because slang changes all the time and words and phrases would’ve been out of date by the time the book was published (if it ever got published). Creating a kind of futureproof, timeless slang—instead of taking a snapshot at any particular moment in time—basically meant taking popular words from different years that have already stood the test of time and then stitching them together. [. . .] So, just, like every other aspect of the characters’ identities, their seemingly random slang is actually carefully constructed and contrived. (2009)

This “linguistic performance,” to quote Graham (2008b: para. 19), adds another dimension of inauthenticity to the novel. Most obviously, it echoes the inauthentic identities of the desi characters as well as the inauthentic ghetto that the rudeboys pretend to inhabit, and that certain race-biased reviewers expect the enclave

to be. Secondly, in addition to the obvious fact that it is subversively different from the standard language of English in Britain, Malkani's "futureproof, timeless" hybrid slang in the novel is meant not only to serve as the rudeboys' unique language of communication, but, more importantly, it reflects how South Asian youth subculture and ethnic enclave was, still is, and will always be influenced by the transnational impact of information technology and popular music and by the local residents' transnational connections with their country of origin. Although the desi enclave in Hounslow may have originally been formed on the common basis of ethnicity, through the use of hybrid patois, the novel highlights the incredible diversity of a contemporary multicultural society under the impact of globalization. That is, living at will in the enclave, the desis are constantly crossing borders to interact with others in the home country, the host country, and other countries and cultures.

III. Conclusion: Hounslowstani or Londonstani

Even though Hounslow is where the desi enclave is located, instead of entitling his novel "Hounslowstani," Malkani has carefully chosen "Londonstani" as the title. This choice is not without controversy. Many reviewers believe that Hounslow is at best a part of suburban London, and argue that the novel should not be read as an urban fiction, as seen in the following review by Sophie Harrison:

"Londonstani" takes place way out west. West of Monica Ali's "Brick Lane," farther west even than Brent, the location for Zadie Smith's "White Teeth." To reach the London borough of Hounslow, where this similarly hyped first novel is set, you need to take a Piccadilly Line tube train from central London and stay on three-quarters of an hour. Some would argue that by now you're barely in London at all, but as a title "Hounslowtani" is a little lack in bling. (2006: 11)

Here, Harrison makes two points. One is about the border between the city and the suburb, and the other is about the author's marketing strategy in using "Londonstani" as the book title. In response to such criticism as Harrison's, Malkani maintains that "I would never have thought that I was writing a book that could be called Hounslowstani" (Graham, 2008a). He further explains that it is more broadly the London metropolis, rather than the narrow and local area of Hounslow, with which his novel is concerned. To make such a comment is, however, not to conform with Harrison's and several other critics' arbitrary dichotomy between the urban and the suburban, but to point out the fact that "London is just made up of loads of different suburbs" (2008a). For Malkani, "[t]he tourist guide London, the Leicester Square, Westminster, Piccadilly kind of area—that really is for tourists" (2008a). Set in an enclave in Hounslow, *Londonstani* is illustrative of Malkani's point that "[r]eal Londoners are not really in Zone 1" (2008a).

Another controversy about the title is that, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on July 7, 2005, many people have assumed that the title "Londonstani" refers to the debate about the city's radicalized Muslims, as reflected in Phillips' *Londonistan*. Actually the word "Londonstani" has been used long before it was applied to radicalized Muslims and has had a more positive meaning. When it was used in the 1990s by some South Asian British youths as a desi slang for "Londoners," "Londonstani" was a self-referential term which was meant to be "a celebration of London's multiculturalism rather than a criticism of it" (Malkani, 2009). As represented in *Londonstani*, the diversity of identities and the intercultural interaction between different communities across the border of nation state and ethnicity demonstrate that what is failing in contemporary London and Britain are the multicultural policies based purely on ethnicity identity politics, rather than the multicultural reality that people from different backgrounds live together.

References

- Abrahamson, M. (2006). *Urban enclaves: Identity and place in the world*. New York: Worth.
- Alexander, C. (2000). *The Asian gang: Ethnicity, identity, masculinity*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Ali, M. (2003). *Brick Lane*. London: Doubleday.
- Ball, J. (2004). *Imagining London: Postcolonial fiction and the transnational metropolis*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Basu, A. (2007). *What price identity? Gowanus*. Retrieved from http://www.gowanusbooks.com/Sanjay_Suri_Gautam_Malkani_Basu.html
- Brouillette, S. (2009). The creative class and Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani*. *Critique*, 51, 1: 1-17.
- Cantle, T. (2012). *Interculturalism: The new era of cohesion and diversity*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Clark, A. (2005, December 31). 2006: The best books to look out for. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/jan/01/bestbooksoftheyear.bestbooks>
- Community Cohesion Review Team. (2001). *Community cohesion: A report of the independent review team*. Retrieved from <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/Default.aspx?recordId=96>
- Dhaliwal, N. (2006). *Tourism*. London: Vintage.
- Elia, A. (2010). Multiculturalism and contemporary British fiction: Londonstani and the islamist. *Epiphany*, 4: 1-12.
- enclave. (2014a). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/enclave>
- enclave. (2014b). In *Oxford dictionaries*. Retrieved from <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/enclave>
- Gabriel, S., Gomez, E. T., & Rocha, Z. (2012). Between policy and reality: Multiculturalism, the second generation, and the third space in Britain. *Asia Europe Journal*, 10: 267-285.

- ghetto. (2014). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232679/ghetto>
- Gilbert, P. (2002). *Imagined Londons*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Graman, J. (2008a). An interview with Gautam Malkani: Ealing Broadway, 6th November 2007. *Literary London*, 6, 1. Retrieved from <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2008/graham.html>
- Graham, J. (2008b). 'This in't good will hunting': *Londonstani* and the market for London's multicultural fictions. *Literary London*, 6, 2: 23 paras. Retrieved from <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/september2008/graham.html>
- Harrison, S. (2006, July 23). Rude boys in Hounslow. *New York Times Book Review*, p. 11.
- Headley, V. (1992). *Yardie*. London: X-Press.
- Hounslow Council. (2007). *A window on extremism: Young people in Hounslow—A study of identity, social pressures, extremism and social exclusion*. Retrieved from http://www.Hounslowhomes.org.uk/a_window_on_extremism.pdf
- Huq, R. (2012). Darkness on the edge of town. *Wasafiri*, 27, 4: 3-14.
- Islamic Human Rights Commission. (2003). *Press release: IHRC announces winners of 'the annual Islamophobia awards' 31st May 2003*. Retrieved from <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/7320-press-release-ihrc-announces-winners-of-the-annual-islamophobia-awards-31st-may-2003>
- Keith, M., & Pile, S. (1993). Introduction part 2: The place of politics. In M. Keith & S. Pile (Eds.), *Place and the politics of identity* (pp. 22-40). New York: Routledge.
- Kelleher, F. (2005). Concrete vistas and dreamtime peopledscapes: The rise of the Black urban novel in 1990s Britain. In K. Sesay (Ed.), *Write Black, write British: From postcolonial to Black British literature* (pp. 241-254). Hertford, UK: Hansib.

- Kureishi, H. (1990). *The Buddha of suburbia*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Leach, C. W., Brown, L. M., & Worden, R. E. (2008). Ethnicity and identity politics. In L. Kurtz (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of violence, peace, and conflict* (pp. 758-768). New York: Academic Press.
- Malkani, G. (2006a). *Londonstani*. London: Penguin.
- Malkani, G. (2006b, April 21). What's right with Asian boys? *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/9f2bb9fc-d03b-11da-b160-0000779e2340.html#axzz1WUsZxou6>
- Malkani, G. (2009). *About londonstani*. Retrieved from http://gautammalkani.com/about_londonstani.htm
- Malkani, G. (n.d.). *Reading guides*. Retrieved from <http://www.penguin.com/read/book-clubs/londonstani/9780143112280>
- Manzoor, S. (2006, April 30). Why do Asian writers have to be 'authentic' to succeed? *Observer*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/apr/30/1>
- Mitchell, M. (2008). Escaping the matrix: Illusions and disillusions of identity in Gautam Malkani's *londonstani* (2006). In L. B. Korte, E. U. Pirker, & C. Reinfandt (Eds.), *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New perspectives in literature, film and the arts* (pp. 329-340). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Murphy, M. (2012). *Multiculturalism: A critical introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nasiri, O. (2006). *Inside the Jihad: My life with Al Qaeda, A spy's story*. New York: Basic.
- Newland, C. (1997). *The scholar: A west side story*. London: Abacus.
- Newland, C. (1999). *Society within*. London: Abacus.
- Peach, C. (1996). Does Britain have ghettos? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 21, 1: 216-235.

- Peach, C. (2009). Slippery segregation: Discovering or manufacturing ghettos? *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35, 9: 1381-1395.
- Phillips, D. (2006). Parallel lives? Challenging discourses of British Muslim self-segregation. *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24: 25-40.
- Phillips, M. (2006). *Londonistan*. New York: Encounter.
- Poulsen, M. (2005, August 31-September 2). *The 'new geography' of ethnicity in Britain?* Paper presented at the annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, London.
- Ranasinha, R. (2009). Racialized masculinities and postcolonial critique in contemporary British Asian male-authored texts. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 45, 3: 297-307.
- Rickett, J. (2005, November 4). The bookseller. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/nov/05/featuresreviews.guardianreview28>
- Selvon, S. (1956). *The lonely Londoners*. New York: Longman.
- Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. London: Penguin.
- Sethi, A. (2005, November 13). The curse of being labelled the 'new Zadie.' *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/nov/14/pressandpublishing.bookscomment>
- Shukla, N. (2010). *Coconut unlimited*. London: Quartet Books.
- Simpson, L. (2007). Ghettos of the mind: The empirical behaviour of indices of segregation and diversity. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A*, 170, 2: 405-424.
- Smith, S. J. (1993). Residential segregation and the politics of racialization. In M. Cross & M. Keith (Eds.), *Racism, the city and the state* (pp. 128-143). London: Routledge.
- Smith, Z. (2000). *White teeth*. New York: Random House.

- Varady, D. P. (2005). *Desegregating the city: Ghettos, enclaves, and inequality*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Wood, A. (2002). Contemporary Black British urban fiction: A 'ghetto perspective'? *Wasfiri*, 17, 36: 18-22.

南亞族群聚居區的認同政治：
高泰姆·麥卡尼《倫敦地下少年》中
身分真實性與多元文化主義的爭議

廖培真

國立成功大學外國語文學系

70101 台南市大學路 1 號

E-mail: pcliao@mail.ncku.edu.tw

摘 要

本文閱讀高泰姆·麥卡尼的處女作《倫敦地下少年》，由空間、身分認同與族裔的觀點來探討小說中身分真實性與多元文化主義的爭議。筆者認為，南亞移民在豪士羅的群聚表面上反映種族隔離，並呼應有些批評家對多元文化主義已死或已敗的主張，但是透過描繪族群聚居區多樣的次文化、南亞離散身分認同的細微差異，以及地下少年混雜的語言使用，麥卡尼的小說從更深層的層次挑戰所謂「已敗的多元文化」其實是單純以族裔認同政治為基礎的政策。更重要的是，小說重新定義多元文化並且點出，在當代倫敦與英國，即使在族群聚居區內，跨族裔、文化與國族疆界的身分認同與互動也是顯而易見的日常生活實踐。

關鍵詞：《倫敦地下少年》、真實性、身分認同、南亞族群聚居區、多元文化主義