The Polyphonic Appeal and the Subversion of Stereotypes: Hanif Kureishi's "We're Not Jews" and Leila Aboulela's "The Museum" as Case Studies

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Abstract

Hanif Kureishi's "We're Not Jews" and Leila Aboulela's "The Museum" explore the notions of cultural differences and the feelings of otherness which cross-cultural encounter generates. Writing from the British diaspora, both Kureishi and Aboulela have linked these notions with the ambivalent feelings of their characters. How can double-consciousness act as a strategic power of subversion of the British Empire's claim to homogeneity? The research will answer this question. Moreover, it shows how interracial mixing, which often produces conflicting feelings for whoever displays visible signs of difference such as skin color in the supposedly homogeneous culture of Britain, can motivate some characters to configure themselves as culturally similar to, yet different from, the British .

The research underlines the contradictory nature of colonial encounters which can have a dual effect on both the colonizer and the colonized. It highlights the subversive significance of these intersecting experiences in relation to the notion of performativity of culture. It addresses cultural in-betweenness in an attempt to rethink cultural identity and deconstruct the myth of racial homogeneity that the British Empire propagates.

The research shows how cultural hybridization is represented by Kureishi and Aboulela as being a disempowering and an empowering experience through applying the theories of community and the deconstruction techniques, which are introduced by Homi Bhabha, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Jean-Luc Nancy, to the selected texts under study.

Keywords: The British Empire, Hanif Kureishi, Heterogeneity, Homogeneity, Leila Aboulela, Polyphony, Subversion

I. Introduction

As cultural products of two Anglophone immigrant writers, Hanif Kureishi's "We're Not Jews" and Leila Aboulela's "The Museum" demonstrate how the monolithic ideologies perpetuated by the British Empire can be deconstructed in the light of the theories of community and the deconstruction techniques that are introduced by Homi Bhabha, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Jean-Luc Nancy.

Having extended post-structural tenets __such as contesting the concept of fixed identity, undermining binary oppositions, and emphasizing the power of language __ into the discourses of colonialism and nationalism, Homi K. Bhabha has contributed to our understanding of cultural studies and power relations (Habib, 2005, 750).Culture's in-between, Bhabha notes, performs the act of translation between cultures that must ultimately affect the process of identification and result in producing a cultural subject who is the outcome of similarity and difference at the same time or to use Bhabha's words "the articulation of baffling alikeness and banal divergence"(1996, 58). In sites of transcultural encounter, disrupted identities will be produced. I is a place that is characterized by a tension between demand and desire with the native fantasying himself/ herself in the master's place. Accordingly, Bhabha concludes:

the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy _ it is always the production of an image of identity and transformation of the subject in assuming that image. The demand of identification_ that is, to be for an Other_ entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of Otherness. Identification… is always the return of an image of identity which bears the mark of splitting in that 'Other' place from which it comes… The atmosphere of certain uncertainty that surrounds the body certifies its existence and threatens its dismemberment (Bhabha, in Fanon, 1986, xxix)

For Bhabha, past memories will refigure as contingent in-between spaces. Accordingly, he rejects all essentialist tendencies that view third-world countries as having a homogenous identity (Bressler, 2011, 205). Deploying a poststructuralist repertoire, he has introduced and promoted ideas such 'colonial ambivalence', hybridity, and mimicry wherein to be used for analyzing aesthetically intercultural relations within the context of British Empire. Furthermore, he shows that necessity not to conceive difference in representation as the projection of a pre-given ethnic trait and fulfills his goal of exposing cultural metaphors and discourse. Affected by Jacques Lacan, he argues that "identity is only ever possible in the negation of any sense of originality or plentitude; through the principle of displacement and differentiation… that always renders it a liminal reality"(Groden et al., 2012, 62). Like all forms of power, colonial authority is apt to be destabilized in the sense that it, with no intention, can instigate , to use Michel Foucault's words, "refusal, blockage, and invalidation"(1978, 11)when attempting at subjugation and can never thus be made able to achieve its project of control.

Bhabha finds in colonial ambivalence a force that combats ethnocentrism and maintains the currency of colonial stereotype (1994, 66).

Mikail M. Bakhtin has significantly contributed to the development of discourse, sociology, and psychology. In 1929, the thirty four year old Bakhtin had witnessed two important events: the release of his book on Fyodor Dostoevsky titled *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* in which his revolutionary concept of dialogism or polyphony was introduced for the first time to the world. In almost all his writings, he gives an account of the carnivalized self that is built on a notion of the social division of society. According to Bakhtin, it is through the dialogical relations and moments that historical and ideological forces, which are already at work, can be reshaped. By means of dialogism, he increases one's awareness of everyday discursive phenomena which until now have passed community by.

Bakhtin illustrates the importance of two psychological topics namely, memory and attitudes. He discusses them in relation to new discursive and rhetorical social psychologies. Traditionally believed to happen inside or inwardly, memory and attitudes as processes are prefigured and relocated "in the outward communicative activities occurring between [individuals]"(Bell and Gardiner, 1998, 17) by Bakhtinian-Voloshinovian psychological project. Bakhtin notices that when one speaks (thinks internally), a dialectic tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces will characterize the utterances (thoughts) produced. Unlike traditional structural linguists and psychologist, he doesn't overlook this complexity and the two-sidedness that mark human languaged-activities and psyches (Bell and Gardiner, 1998, 17). Thinking that a language is alive and is in a process of change, Bakhtin doesn't work with binary opposition for they are behind "the fragility and ineluctably historical nature of language, the coming and dying of meaning"(1981, xviii). Bakhtin celebrates dialogism or the dialologic model for it is characterized by its strength: this model is able to listen, recall, differentiate, and "hear a dozen voices embedded in every utterance and personality behind each voice… [be] all conscious and laden with memory"(Groden et al., 2012, 36). This model is meant to reflect on hierarchies and absolutes that characterize carnivalesque high culture like Britain. Related to the idea of dialogism is the concept of polyphony which Bakhtin has developed in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* to account for the description of the multivocal narrative. In relation to feminism, Bakhtin's dialogism and concept of carnival resist the monologizing discourse of phallic authority and enable woman writers to occupy authoritative position in the literary world. Bakhtin's relation to deconstruction is also significant in the sense that he focuses on the

language's social nature which is responsible for deconstructing official discourses and ideologies.

Jean-Luc Nancy has his own philosophical postulates with regard to the deconstruction of community and discourse. He argues that finitude lies in the communication between and among singularities. In other words, finitude, as an originary phenomenon more than any other as Nancy calls, can't be exposed in the absence of another being; there must be a co-appearing and a kind of ecstasis among singular beings for this finitude to compear (Luszczynska, 2012, 57-58). For Nancy, any claim to originality is meaningless. He reflects on this in his text entitled L'intrus. He describes how the expropriation of another's heart, having been subjected to a heart transplant, is not just a unique experience, but also as fundamental to his very being: "There is always an intruder,… which not only constitutes every contact I (will) have with myself, but also immediately deconstructs such a contact."(qtd. in Devisch 2013, 92).

Touched by something other than his but present in him, Nancy's body (self), when constituted during the operation, must have already presupposed a crossing by the other. Feeling that his body is always that of another, Nancy acknowledges the necessity to "develop a thought capable of attending to this reception of the stranger in ourselves, a stranger whose otherness remains other"(Devisch, 2013, 92). Through this example, he clarifies how ontological openness does precede every self-constitution of the world whose identity is to be "supplemented from the outset by the undetermined multiplicity of origins"(Devisch, 2013, 94). Presenting the image of face of a newborn baby as a singular origin that fades away with every passing, it is not surprising for Nancy to consider coexistence as "the ontological foundation out of which [he] thinks ontic plurality and the community"(Devisch, 2013, 96). As an exponent of post-deconstructive realism, he has given a space to the infinite plurality of singularities whereby the deferral or difference of Derridean differance is to be rethought of even in terms of his writing to be rendered realistically "as a form of communication of sense between, with, and among things" (Gratton and Morin, 2012, 5). The constitution of a being or a discourse will discursively be affected by every singular act, moment, event, and rupture which might occur in a flash whose context does exist, overlap, and add meaning.

In terms of language, Nancy remarks that coexistence can't be revealed in the narrative discourse through the third-person narrative for it gives no space to the subjective pronoun I and has no external point of reference that connects it to first person, indicating that there is no relation among "a being and a

being-with of beings, one with the other" (2000, 33). Therefore, the kind of narrative that Nancy advocates is the third-person singular in the first person, or what he calls the first-person plural which allows a being to speak of itself through humanity for all beings (we); which in turn exposes how a being in essence can only exist by being-essentially with.

II. Transcultural Encounters and the Politics of Hope

One ever feels his two-ness, …; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder… In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. (Du Bois, 2007, 8)

Du Bois' above quote about double consciousness as a state of being and becoming (or a discursive condition of identity) is pertinent to our understanding of the politics of hope especially in sites of transcultural encounter. In their stories, Kureishi and Aboulela undo the myth of homogeneity by employing various strategies that make possible for difference to be celebrated in spite of sharing together or being the same. Moreover, both writers have made use of the principle of dialogicity to produce a fabric where cross-cultural interactions exist. The research will show how the short stories under study offer a space where new identities emerge through the subversion of traditional or unitary notions of community or discourse.

As a British Asian writer, Hanif Kureishi has played a leading role in developing contemporary black British literature in the sense that he deconstructs monocultual notions of community claimed by the British Empire and promulgates the concept of national identity as inclusive and pluralistic through his oeuvre as perceived in his postethnic short story which is under study. He presents alternative options of community constructions (Jansen, 2018, 117-118). Celebrating diversity and hybridity, he manages to break the fixed notion of monolithic representation of ethnic groups and redefine 'Englishness' which Westerners try to restrict to white people other than new ethnicities of 1980s (Nasta, 2002, 174-175).

Recalling his father's memories, Kureishi has become able to speak for and re-present British-Asian diasporic male characters that bear the weight of a hyphenated existence (Horzum, 2017, 52-53, 65-6). His father's disappointment and failing attempt to become a writer impacts Kureishi's sense of self-worth. The invisibility of Kureishi's father is articulated in Kureishi's works. Unlike his father, Kureishi succeeds to establish himself as an English writer in Britain. In an interview with Colin MacCabe, he reflects on his father's migratory experience to England where he is treated

differentially not as an Indian, who is regarded as more aristocratic than Pakistani, but as a Paki. Kureishi says that to be called a Paki is to feel that he is worthless. He remembers how Britain had been hostile rather than a hospitable culture to his father. Therefore, his father's great expectations hadn't been acknowledged. In moving to England, Kureishi's father dreamt of living in a cultured and democratic place. However, Kureishi ends his interview with the concluding remarks that he can't escape the feeling that he is a mere Paki (MacCabe, 2004, 45). Against all sides, Kureishi manages to break away from his sense of inbetweenness.

In "We're Not Jews", Kureishi presents the tormenting experience of the Anglo-Pakistani schoolboy named Azhar who gets abused verbally by Big Billy and his bully son, Little Billy during his bus journey. The Big Billy was said to have" been a Ted [wearing] a drape coat and …a sculpted quaff [hairstyle]…[with] black bitten-down fingernails and a smear of grease across the forehead"(Kureishi, 1997, 42) yet he ironically "had shared [with Azhar's parents] the same air-raid shelter during the war"(Kureishi, 1997, 42). While on the bus, Azhar closes his eyes the moment he acknowledges the presence of the two Billys. This indicates that he fears their presence and their scornful and abject attitudes implicated in the story's striking title. The mother too tries to ignore the Billys by pretending not to be afraid of them, ironically by looking at the outside world through the bus's window. The window helps her to avoid looking into their eyes and getting oppressed more and more. Yvonne's "subdued" (Kureishi, 1997, 42) voice, as she starts talking about her son's success in school in an attempt to tease the Billys, reveals her inner apprehension. Moreover, when Yvonne questions Azhar if he is still "the best reader in the class"(Kureishi, 1997, 42), Azhar, rather than answering her strongly and confidently, reacts with a hesitant voice:"S'pose so"(Kureishi, 1997, 42) His difference makes him quite aware of his problematic situation. This indicates that he is not that naïve child as Kenneth Kaleta has viewed him.

According to Kaleta (1998, 162), "We're Not Jews" is a story about an Anglo-Pakistani innocent child who gets disillusioned by Londoners' exclusionary treatment based on difference. The white Billys or Teddy boys start to view Azhar and his family members as strangers who have no space "in their Union Jack"(Gilman, 2003, 173). With England's claim of homogeneity, the ex-Teddy boys have turned the bus into a site of power imposition on Azhar for being the offspring of intercultural marriage (Gilman, 2003, 173). According to Jean-Luc Nancy (1991, 7), the bus has become a locus of cultural differences where combats on racial bases as

much as bonds among racially different groups are recurrent scenes. In such a cultural encounter, different singularities intersect with each other and a more complicated new way of being British can be recognized. Moreover, the possibility of acceptance and rejection are simultaneously felt or perceived at any moment whether inertly or not. Accordingly, one, consciously or not, is either made to feel one with others or different from others. In a place like train, Nancy continues, it becomes possible for passengers to accidentally seat themselves beside others. Though not connected, they share quite the same setting spatiotemporally. There, they can get disintegrated or aggregated at any time. Because of such a suspended possibility, Nancy describes the notion of 'being-with' as "a relation without relation, or rather, being exposed simultaneously to relationship and to absence of relationship" (1991, 7).

In Azhar and Yvonne's encounter with the Billys, both class and race come into an intersection in varying degrees. The Billys show their hatred towards Azhar and his mother in terms of racist and envious attitudes they hold towards them. Regarding Azhar as a mulatto, the son of mixed ancestry, Big Billy teaches his son, Little Billy to be offensive towards Azhar. Though they consider Azhar as being a monkey because of his colored skin, Big Billy tends to be envious of Yvonne having escaped poverty and ascended the social ladder by marrying Azhar's father. She takes pride in her Pakistani/Indian and intellectual husband (Jansen, 2018, 122). Climbing the social hierarchal structure, Yvonne appears concerned about Azhar's education and boastful that he is "the best reader in the class"(Kureishi, 1997, 42). This makes Big Billy envy her and call her disdainfully "little lady"(Kureishi, 1997, 44). Naming represents an exercise of power and does have a more adverse psychological effect on Azhar than his mother. These abusive and insulting names and remarks are used by Big and Little Billy with the intention of arousing Yvonne and Azhar's anxiety. Azhar used to go to his mother so as to get new words that counter Little Billy’s fluid renewal of remarks (being changed continually). He often remains silent or voiceless and comes out defeated in his battle against Little Billy due to his mother's failure to support him with more new humiliating words. He is in need of more phrases that are as forceful as the phrase "you're common -common as muck!"(Kureishi, 1997, 43).This magical epithet, though it was not uttered loudly by Azhar, had been powerful in the sense that it counterattacks Azhar’s rival and silences him. The struggle between Azhar and Little Billy, which comes to include even their family members, is captured in the following:

[Yvonne] was surprised that Azhar took it so hard. He should ignore the childish remarks: a lot of children were cruel. Yet he couldn't make out what it was with him that made people say such things, or why, after so many contented hours at home with his mother, such violence had entered his world…Mother had taken Azhar's hand and instructed him to reply, 'Little Billy, you're common…Azhar held onto the words and repeated them continuously to himself. Next day, in a corner with his enemy's taunts going at him, he closed his eyes and hollered them out… Little Billy perplexed as Azhar by the epithet. Like magic it shut his mouth. But the next day Little Billy came back with the renewed might of names new to Azhar: sambo… Azhar returned to his mother for more words but they had run out. (Kureishi, 1997, 43).

It is worth noting that the racial encounter between Azhar and Little Billy has strengthened Azhar as it enables him to speak (even if sometimes with a low voice) and counterattack his rival with more powerful insulting remarks. It proves "that transaction of the post-colonial world is not a one-way process in which oppression obliterates the oppressed or the colonizer silences the colonised in absolute terms… [for in] practice it rather stresses the mutuality of the process"(Ashcroft et al., 1995, 183). Bhabha rejects binary oppositions. He is of the point that they are to be denounced for they are metonymically used to represent biased perceptions in favor of the West. He proposes cultural hybridity to deconstruct the representations of the West that are based on negative stereotyping.

It becomes possible therefore for both Azhar and Yvonne to survive oppression that cultural differences give rise to through their ability to develop "new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth"(Ashcroft et al. 1995, 183). Encountering their oppressors, Azhar and his mother try their best not to look like Gayatri Spivak's subaltern (the passive object). They rather act discursively to be in power in becoming more offensive and verbally violent. This encounter makes the Billys look unsettled (as indicated by the words perplexed and shut) and anxious for their colonial power is brought into question. Hence, Azhar's school acts as site of power as it enables him to make the Billys feel afraid of losing control. To use Bhabha's words, such a site can operate strategically for it disrupts
the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze ofthe discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the

site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory - or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency (1994, 112).

In this light, this setting can terrify the colonial subject as his/ her authoritarian image will be dispossessed and strengthen the colonial object as its power or voice will be heard and come into being. Moreover, such a location represents Bhabha's 'Third Space' for diversity and otherness can be celebrated. Flexible in its performance, this place can be destructive and productive (decolonizing) in effect. Because of such ambivalence, it is no wonder why Michel Foucault has described "visibility [as] a trap"(1977, 200). The mimetic power of visibility is what makes it a trap. In Azhar's school, power relations are mimicked and the powerless is made powerful. Azhar is brought by the mechanism of mimicry, even if he doesn't wish to be hostile, to shut little Billy's language up. Internalizing the discourse of power (the colonizer's gaze) by being subjected to the terrain of visibility, Azhar becomes more in control of the means of self-regulation. Azhar's power (his desire to be visible) functions automatically. Hence, the dyad of the colonizer (watcher) and colonized (watched) is disrupted. With the disruption of these binaries, it becomes possible for the colonized Azhar to correct, regulate, and improve his self-image.

Azhar's mother doesn't feel to be on a stable ground. She appears ambivalent in her attitudes toward others. To defend her son as a descendent of Asian background against the pervasiveness of racism in London, Yvonne ironically disparages the Jews. With this deprecation, Yvonne shows her subscription to Eurocentrism that the Billys embrace. Even if she has not meant it, Yvonne's protesting remark is reflective of the persecution of Jews due to their ethnic difference. Yvonne holds prejudicial perceptions about immigrants. Moreover, she ranks the Jews below other immigrants whom she stereotypically describes as "illiterate tiny men with downcast eyes and mismatched clothes"(Kureishi, 1997, 45).

The pronoun we, in the title, includes the English mother and all those who occupy the same position as that of Azhar's family. Yvonne shared with other Indian-based people or Pakis like her husband a disorderly and unhygienic flat. In their jammed flat, they all appear "squashed together like, and stinkin' the road out, eatin' curry and rice [which they simmered] in the kitchen so people eat when they wanted"(Kureishi, 1997, 44). Though she is aware of her husband's different culinary behaviors which the Billys criticize, she doesn't take her Indian husband to be an immigrant or one of Britain's ethnic minorities perhaps because he isn't stereotypically represented by Kureishi as uneducated or illiterate, but rather as an intellectual person and a writer of

novels: Azhar's father is distinguished hierarchically "from the Jews [whom Yvonne] has been brought to believe are intruding immigrants"
(Kaleta, 1998, 163). Azhar points to his mother's fear and her physical inability to adjust to her husband's South Asian landscape and its food dieting practices when he hears his father speaking of his prospective plan to make Pakistan his family's future home: "How could she go 'home' when she was at home already? Hot weather made her swelter; spicy food upset her stomach; being surrounded by people who didn't speak English made her feel lonely"(Kureishi, 1997, 46). Azhar's father feels that his family is "in the front line" of the racists' attacks and the "gassing"(Kureishi, 1997, 45) campaigns that cause neighbors to slaughter each other. Therefore, he expresses his desire to escape the terrifying current landscape and go to his original homeland, Pakistan. Here, the father's reference to structural racism is meant to show his disapproval of the West including the British people whom he has claimed to be "actively involved in the Holocaust…the horrors of the Second World War and the atrocities Nazi Germany committed "(Jansen, 2018, 123). Azhar has been conscious that his mother, who has masked her worries to look still as a tree, is inwardly anxious about their being surrounded by the hostile Billys in spite of their Britishness. Yvonne's marriage to a Paki makes it difficult for her to accept her husband's food or dieting practices. Kureishi has referred to food and clothes to reflect on his characters' conflicting cultural alliances. Indian food is linked to the colonial enterprise of the British Empire. Food-related norms of certain ethnic groups living in diaspora are not welcomed: politically speaking, British-based community has been hostile towards immigrants and their ethnic food behaviors. Accordingly, some feel ashamed of practicing their culture (ethnic food /identity) the way they used to or even tend to hide these practices, i.e. tend to practice them secretly away from the Western eye. However, others stick "to their culinary capital" (Nowak, 2013, 518) or food patterns to ideologically counterattack mainstream communities and preserve their ethnic identities. When she is outside home, Yvonne veils her weakness for fear that she and her son will be bullied by the Billys. Inside the bus, Big Billy has been aggressive and derisive of Yvonne and Azhar. In an attempt to show his disgust, Big Billy holds his nose and starts referring to the bad smell on the bus. This smell, readers come to know from Azhar, relates to their living in a flat "all squashed together like, and stinkin' the road out, eatin' curry and rice!' "(Kureishi, 1997, 44). Yvonne is treated with racial prejudice ironically the way she treats the Jews. Her marriage to Azhar's father causes Westerners like the Billys to marginalize her as if she was a Jew. With Shoah

incidents remembered, Azhar's father becomes quite conscious of their position in London: like Jews, they are in the forefront line of racial persecution and can be victimized easily at any moment because of their cultural difference, the potential according to which Yids are persecuted: "The Shoah defines a difference that is not merely victimhood, but an odd sort of Orientalism, that casting of the exotic East as the place from which those who are inherently unassimilated come"(Gilman, 2003,174). Nurtured by his interethnic parents who convince themselves of belonging to a unitary community in terms of their birth, Azhar is shocked by the racial bombardments which disrupt his sense of belonging whether on the bus or in his school. Color-blind, Azhar wonders why he is violently and cruelly treated by his classmates. Moreover, he gets horrified to know from his mother about the tyrannical system of apartheid of South Africa and the painful outcomes of its policy of segregation:

[T]here the people with white skins were cruel to the black and brown people who were considered inferior and were forbidden to go where the white went. The coloureds had separate entrances and were prohibited from sitting with the whites. This peculiar fact of living history, vertiginously irrational and not taught in his school, struck his head like a hammer and echoed through his dreams night after night. How could such a thing be possible? What did it mean? How then should he act? (Kureishi, 1997, 45)

In the above quotation, Kureishi's use of the word 'coloureds' is meant to account for the articulation of "a word from Yvonne's vocabulary, which is ambivalently either a reference to the derogatory British term, or a slippage into the classificatory language of apartheid, in which 'mixed-race' Azhar would indeed be designated as 'coloured'"(Thorpe, 2021, 131).

The bullied Azhar is a semi-autobiographical portrait of Kureishi the child who had been racially treated with prejudice during his early childhood stages. Like Kureishi, Azhar feels that apartheid was not only as a peculiar fact in the past. Rather, it is "an uncanny fact of living history"(Thorpe, 2021, 132). Haunted by horrors of apartheid South Africa in the present, Azhar asks his mother how he should react to the assaulting racist remarks and harrowing treatment of the bullying neighbors. Since his childhood, Kureishi had felt Britain's intolerance. Kureishi's autobiographical essay "The Rainbow Sign" (1986), which was written a decade before "We're Not Jews", reflects on his desire to get rid of his blackness that makes him feel ashamed. Like Azhar, Kureishi is bullied mercilessly. He has been unable to tolerate his Pakistani self (Moore-Gilbert, 2001, 13). Tormented by racism of England in the sixties and troubled by his complex personal background,

Kureishi has found in writing the means to vent out these feelings: "I came from two worlds…There was my Pakistani family, my uncles, aunts and so on. Then there was my English family, who were lower-middle or working class. My grandfather had pigeons and grey-hounds and all that. And having an Indian father… So, finding my way through all that… I wrote all these books to make sense of it" (qtd. in Moore-Gilbert, 2001, 14) .

In "We're Not Jews", Kureishi questions the possibility of "a mythical golden age of British tolerance"(Thorpe, 2021, 132) to exist. He is trying to redefine Britishness which claims to have a monoracial identity and considers ethnic minorities as a threat to its mythical homogeneity and hegemonic authority (Ahmed 2009, 27). With Azhar's questions, the essentialist values adopted in mapping this chasm between the white and the black South Asians are challenged. Origin-based perceptions of community are deconstructed, proving their being socio-historically discursive constructions. Furthermore, Azhar is shocked to see his mother denigrating the Jews on religious and ethnic bases for being different: "Mother's lips were moving but her throat must have been dry: no words came, until she managed to say, 'we're Not Jews'(Kureishi, 1997, 45). Kureishi keeps making references to Yvonne's lips: whenever she and her son experience social exclusion and are emotionally insulted and physically abused by the Billys, the mother's lips are captured moving (indicating that she is alive) in spite of the inner damage (she is dead inside) she tries to hide by staying in front of her mirror and covering it with makeup. She does so to show that she hasn't been adversely affected in her battle against her enemies. The following conversation between Yvonne and their elderly British neighbor and retired teacher, in whom Azhar's father confides and sends his English writings to correct, draws a clear picture of the mother's fear and concern about the future life of her presently alienated Azhar:

It was all right, for now. But tomorrow Azhar would be for it, and the next day, and the next. No mother could prevent it.

'He's a good little chap,' the teacher was saying, of Father.

'But will he get anywhere?'

'Perhaps,' he said. 'Perhaps. But he may be a touch-' Azhar stood on tiptoe to listen. 'Over hopeful. Over hopeful.'

'Yes,' she said, biting her lip.

'Tell him to read more Gibbon and Macaulay,' he said.

'That should set him straight.' (Kureishi, 1997, 49)

In spite of her Britishness, Yvonne seems to be emotionally displaced as much as her Indian husband and their son. The mirror drives her to use

powder and comb to hide her feelings of anger caused by the inhuman voices that surround them: “For long time she examined herself in the mirror, powdering her face, replacing her lipstick and combing her hair. There were no human voices, only rain on the metal roof, which dripped through onto their heads” (Kureishi, 1997, 50). Treated inhumanely, all of Azhar's family members experience exclusion in varying degrees. The only human voice that represents hope in the story has been of their British helpful retired teacher and neighbor. He can be taken as an epitome of homing-desire to Azhar's father as he used to support him in correcting his "mish and mash"(Kureishi, 1997, 47) writings (his language which is neither English nor Bombay marks him different and problematizes belonging) that he frenetically typed during his working hours "in a factory that manufactured shoe polish"(Kureishi, 1997, 46). His anger and expected riot against the white capitalists are hinted at by Kureishi: the angry voice produced by the typing machine is compared to a gunfire which keeps drumming" into the [British owners’] heads"(Kureishi, 1997, 46).

Azhar's father continues protesting that the British are responsible for his failure to be a writer and achieve economic prosperity. He accuses them of killing his determination "to make money from the articles on sport, politics and literature which he posted off most days, each accompanied by a letter that begun, 'Dear Sir, Please find enclosed"(Kureishi, 1997, 47) to the point that when his pieces continued to be "regularly returned in the self- addressed stamped envelope that the Writers' and Artists' Yearbook advised"(Kureishi, 1997, 47), he tore them, swearing in Urdu that they "were barring him"(Kureishi,1997, 47). Here, Kureishi is pointing to the fact that Azhar's father has no place in Britain not only because of his South Asian descent and skin color, but also because of his position in terms of social class and his failure to be a writer. The British elite fear the middle-classes' riot and anger, which like the gunfire, start to hammer into the heads of factory owners. In spite of the teacher's assistance, the writings of Azhar's father remain hybrid (nearly similar, but not the same). His writings grant him no space or chance to rise into economic power. They are usually sent back to him with advices: not to write them using two different voices. However, the white capitalists have helped Azhar's father to 'carnivalize' difference socio-economically. They enable him to relate to the socio-economic structure through commodification or what Peter Barry calls “the process of reification” (2009, 151). Azhar's father is treated by the superstructure as a commodity to be exchanged. The shoe polish factory confers a better social status (sign exchange value) on a worker like Azhar's father in the sense that it enables him to share with the

superstructures "the means of production, distribution, and exchange"(Barry, 2009, 150).To avoid any possible clashes, the superstructures enable the working classes of various ethnic origins to be integrated within the management and have relative autonomy in a carnivalesque industrial capital like Britain.

Following the bus bombing incident, Yvonne's eyes scorch Azhar's face to the point that he realizes that he must make no mention of this incident to his father and notices how she is pretending to be "normal, but the very effect betrayed her, and she didn't kiss Father as she usually did"(Kureishi, 1997, 50). Had the father been informed of this terrifying incident, Yvonne feels assured, the mother's position in Britain will be threatened in the sense that the father will insist on leaving Britain and going back to original homeland, Pakistan. However, the feeling of anxiety caused by the Billys is translated to readers through Azhar's awareness of his mother's emotional withdrawal from her husband. The story ends with Azhar's feelings of bewilderment and disorientation. Ironically, he tries to grasp what his parents are talking about:

They were talking loudly in Urdu or Punjabi, using some English words, but gesticulating and slapping one another in a way English people never did… Azhar was accustomed to being with his family while grasping fragments of what they said. He endeavoured to decipher the gist of it, laughing, as he always did, when the men laughed, and silently moving his lips without knowing what the words meant, whiling, all the while, in incomprehension.(Kureishi, 1997, 50-51).

Kureishi communicates the split in their relationship in terms of language: the loud utterance of words in Urdu or Punjabi and some other words in broken English speaks of a perpetual war between two incompatible forces. Azhar's unsteadiness and his desire to achieve equilibrium are captured metaphorically by the way he appears standing on his tiptoe while he is talking to his mother. Such an experience is empowering in the sense that it can pave the way for him to achieve transition after going through "the space of 'thirdness' [which] introduces [him to] a structure of ambivalence… [and] tension peculiar to borderline experiences"(Bhabha, 1994, 217-18). Azhar's progression of his personality is hinted at in the discourse: the elderly retired British teacher advises his mother to make him "read more Gibbon and Macaulay"(Kureishi, 1997, 49). Such an advice will make Azhar more confident of himself and strong: the authentic historical writings of these two historians, the teacher says, "should set [Azhar] straight."(Kureishi, 1997, 49). Relaying on the mechanism of memory, these historians will make Azhar realize the truths behind the British Empire's colonial legacy and

acknowledge the past authentically. He will be able to cast the fallacies out when he encounters biased Westerners. Moreover, he will be able to depart any sense of inferiority that the British desires to impose on him due to his cultural difference.

Leila Aboulela's "The Museum" also negotiates Shadia's traumatic feelings following her transcultural journey to Scotland. Shadia is a smart Sudanese student who has moved to Scotland to study for the MSc in Statistics. In the academic environment of Aberdeen College, she soon feels disorientated. There, Shadia's self-esteem, self-efficacy (potential), confidence, and the optimism she first celebrates as a new sojourn are undermined. Shadia suffers from what is described as "one of the saddest types"(De Angelis et al., 2014, 8) of heterotopias where the centripetal forces (represented by the racist and Orientalist overtones) are exercised against her as a non- European student. Feelings of being different from Western students make her start doubting that she can pass her classes. Moreover, the feelings of insecurity, fear, and worry overwhelmingly rule all who have engaged in the conversation:

The course required a certain background, a background she didn't have. So she floundered, she and the other African students, the two Turkish girls and the men from Brunei. As this congregation from the Third World whispered their anxieties in grim Scottish corridors, the girls in nervous giggles, Asafa, the short, round-faced Ethiopian, said in his grave voice, 'Last year, last year a Nigerian on this very same course committed suicide. Cut his wrists'.

Us and them, she thought. The ones who would do well, the ones who would crawl and sweat and barely pass. Two predetermined groups. …'These people think they own the world"(Aboulela, 2018, 158, 160).

Aboulela sheds light on the xenophobic reaction and physical violence of hostile Scots towards Muslims and Third world immigrants who experience cultural differences inside and outside university campus: Badr, Shadia's Malaysian classmate, mentions how foreign or overseas (international) students have been marginalized in Scotland. He refers to the Scots' racist attitudes, whispering: "yesterday, our windows got smashed; my wife today is afraid to go out"(Aboulela, 2018, 160). Shadia is portrayed as a woman of faith who is stricken with guilt when she realizes that she has forgotten to pray one morning: "Guilt was cold like the fog of this city. It came from everywhere. She reached the bus stop and realised that she hadn't prayed. That morning folded out like the nightmare she sometimes had, of discovering that she had gone out into the street without any clothes"(Aboulela, 2018, 162). Shadia's devoutness to Islamic faith drives her to practice it voluntarily abroad. It helps her to be close to whoever shares

her interest in Islam as a religion. Reading Aboulela's fiction, Geoffrey Nash concludes that Aboulela has dealt with the idea of faith without any attempt "to deconstruct the West's image of Islam, but rather to Islamicize the process of 'writing back' "(2012, 46). Through her Muslim woman characters, Nash continues to say, Aboulela manages to get non-Muslim readers to be engaged imaginatively with a "religious identity that is becoming more deeply rooted in their midst"(2012, 49).

Bryan's openness to Islamic faith encourages Shadia to befriend him. While they are having coffee at the university, it happens that she discusses with him the idea of travelling to Mecca. He seems to be aware of what Islam is. He tells Shadia that he is introduced to Islam in school: 'We did Islam at school,' he said. 'Ah went on a trip to Mecca.' 'He opened out his palms on the table.' 'What!' 'In a book.' 'Oh.' 'Why don't you become a Muslim then? 'He shrugged, 'Ah wouldnae mind travelling to Mecca; ah was keen on that book.' (Aboulela, 2018, 172-173). Bryan's use of the collective pronoun 'We' resonates with what Jean-Luc Nancy (2000, 33) advocates: it is a discourse that foreshadows the possibility of coexistence.

Before going to the African museum in Scotland, which places Shadia outside the Western community, Shadia and Bryan also discuss the landscape of Sudan and her homesickness which she relates to Islamic practices that she misses most: "The Nile is superior to Dee. I see your Dee, it is nothing, it is like a stream…Things I should miss I don't miss. Instead, I miss things I didn't think I would miss. The Azan, the Muslim call to prayer from the mosque… At dawn it used to wake me up. I would hear 'prayer is better than sleep' and just go back to sleep"(Aboulela, 2018, 172).

Shadia appears weak and too tired to make Bryan aware of the power of Orientalist discourse that Western society and the local museum yield. Having decided to marry her fiancé, Freed in spite of her feelings for Bryan, Shadia's cross-cultural friendship is impeded. Unlike Shadia, Bryan appears transparent and is ready to change: "Bryan sat a row a head which is why she could always look at his hair. But he had cut it… Shadia looked at Bryan and he was different, different without the earing and the ponytail, transformed in some way"(Aboulela, 2018, 168-169). According to Geoffrey Nash, Bryan's readiness to know about Islam and the transformation of his appearance could be interpreted "as a subtle exercise in counter-acculturation"(2002, 30). However, such a counter-acculturation is not actually accomplished because of Shadia and Bryan's visit to the museum. The artifacts are displayed to appeal to the Scottish audience and to justify their ancestors' imperial endeavors in Africa and this impedes Shadia and Bryan's intercultural

connection. Through the transparent character of Bryan, Aboulela has shown how Islamic practices are desired needs as much as forms of "love or even alimentation"(Zanchettin, 2013, 48). Aboulela is sending a message that Bryan's willingness to understand Islam can't be fulfilled overnight: "Museums change, I can change…He didn't know it was a steep path she had no strength for. He didn't understand"(Aboulela, 2018, 181).

First, Shadia feels hesitant to ask Bryan, a Scottish student who has achieved First Class Honors in his undergraduate studies, for the notes of his graduate year. Finding him alone in the classroom, she gathers her strengths and asks him for his notes. Soon after her question, Bryan's blue eyes turn so blank. This makes Shadia ask herself some questions that foreground her unsafety: "What was all the surprise for? Did he think she was an insect? Was he surprised that she could speak?"(Aboulela, 2018, 160). However, Shadia manages to befriend her Scottish classmate, Bryan who helps her to overcome the difficulties and obstacles she faces in her studies. Shadia's relationship with Bryan causes her to be chocked with a sense of guilt which is as heavy as "a hard-boiled egg stuck in her chest. A large, cold egg" (Aboulela, 2018, 175). Her sense of guilt is caused by her belief that she is breaking the rules of Islam by befriending Bryan while being engaged to Fareed. Eager to know more about her country (Sudan), Bryan invites Shadia to pay a visit to an African museum in Aberdeen, a disruptive place of intercultural encounter or to use Michel Foucault's term a heterotopia of time: a site that is beyond time and space where distinct objects from different times are brought with the intention of enclosing and protecting the totality of time (past or heritage) from erosion. However, the museum falls into contradiction twice for attempting to maintain "infinite time in a finite space, and is both a space of time and 'timeless' space seeking to freeze time in 'period rooms' that slice time into 'set pieces' "(Sudradjat, 2012, 31). Therefore, the museum functions metaphorically as a mirror, manifesting and inverting reality simultaneously (De Angelis et al., 2014, 7). As an archeological space, a museum is supposed to celebrate and affirm cultural diversity. However, the museum has become a crisis heterotopia due to its symbolic function. Discursively, it enables lies and false representations to come to the surface. This is exactly what happens in Aboulela's "The Museum" whose narrative end foreshadows the handicap of any intercultural relationship: "He (Bryan) didn't know it was a steep path(to acknowledge the lies the museum is telling) she had no strength for"(Aboulela, 2018, 181). Discovering the false representations of her mother country (Sudan), Shadia experiences disappointment and scotomization, a feeling responsible for

"structur[ing] a new concept of the unconscious as an absolute other…. borrowed from ophthalmology to explain the psychic mechanism that produced schizonoia….[and] was originally derived from the Greek word for darkness or obscurity"(Dean, 2022, 98, 107-108) to be later become analogous to scotoma or visual blindness. Although Shadia experiences sometimes a sense of split of identity, yet she is able to become more dynamic and achieve autonomy. When she reads all of the posters on the walls inside the museum, she wishes she had been blind to them. According to Foucault, the museum, as any heterotopias, can operate discursively. In Aboulela's story, it again functions, to use Foucault term, as a dispositif (De Angelis et al., 2014, 10) that practices colonial power (for supporting the grand narratives of the British Empire and downplaying and marking non-existent others that are African in origin). Such representations threaten her ego, national pride, and her current position as a new sojourn both in the museum in specific and in hosting/hostile Scotland at large. Emphasizing in italics the fallacies of the West, Aboulela through "a neutral voice"(Arora, 2021, 4) draws the reader's attention to what a poster reads:

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, north-east Scotland made a disproportionate impact on the world at large by contributing so many skilled and committed individuals…In serving an empire they gave and received, changed others and were themselves changed and often returned home with tangible reminders of their experience. (Aboulela, 2018, 177)

In the colonial context, museums are described as the Empire's tools and the powerful strategies wherein power relations between the colonizer and the colonized can be visualized (Arora, 2021, 2). Because of its historically determining role, Carol Duncan (1995, 8-10) describes the museum as a machine that has the potential to define identity__ through its secularly disguised rituals__ enforce selfhood of particular powers in society, and determine who shares the heritage of the community greater than others. In such an unpredictable, unstable, and chaotic situation, the colonial subject represented by Shadia is prone to change and subvert her role and identity: the peripheries are, as bell hooks (2015, 148-149) observes, the exact sites where transformation brings people who desire not to perform the role of 'exotic other' to disrupt spaces that are radically open. hooks explains the ethical and aesthetical significance of this disruption. Though difficult to locate oneself in such an unsecure place like a periphery, such an exercise is ethically crucial if one desires to survive and creatively show resistance:

Black folks coming from poor, underclass communities, who enter universities or privileged cultural settings unwilling to surrender every

vintage of who we were before we were there, all 'sign of our class and cultural difference,' who are unwilling to play the role of 'exotic other,' must create spaces within that culture of domination if we are to survive whole, our souls intact. Our very presence is a disruption. We are often as much an 'Other', a threat to black people from privileged class backgrounds who do not understand or share our perspectives, as we are to uninformed white folks (148). Aboulela's "The Museum" exposes the lies that Western modernity fabricates wherein its cultural institutions can function as apparatuses of difference and be exhibited as dispositifs at the service of its civilizing mission or regulating pedagogy of both bodies and discourses. Just as they can be as hostile 'technologies of power' to silence and oppress, so too can these experimental museums nevertheless be productive and hospitable sites. Therefore, as disruptive places where intervention or intersection is always possible, these museums (though modernized) succeed to undo the mono-cultural perspectives propagated by the West (De Angelis et al., 2014, 12-13). The museum brings Shadia to feel her otherness and invisibility_ a message best sent to her after perceiving her country's stolen cultural heritage: "The first thing they saw was a Scottish man from Victorian times. He sat on a chair surrounded by possessions from Africa, overflowing trunks, an ancient map strewn on the floor of the glass cabinet… A hero who had gone away and come back, laden with looted treasures, ready to report" (Aboulela, 2018, 176). Reduced to smallness and voiceless-ness and defined as an outsider by the Western culture represented by the museum, Shadia has lost the ability to translate for Bryan the truth about her country: "If she was strong she would have explained and not tired of explaining. She would have patiently taught him another language …. She would have showed him that words could be read from right to left. If she was not small in the museum, if she was really strong, she would have made his trip to Mecca real, not only in a book"(Aboulela, 2018, 182). Appalled to see how the artifacts the museum displays are out of place and time, how her people are represented stereotypically as childlike, and how her history is humiliated by the imperialists whom Bryan regards as heroes and adventurers (committed to civilizing mission rather than benefiting themselves by bringing back cotton), Shadia desires "to escape the horrible weather"(Aboulela, 2018, 179) or metaphorically the museum. Towards the end of the story, Shadia realizes the imperial enterprise: the museum stirs in her negative emotional and bodily reactions: "she shivered despite the wool she is wearing, despite the layers of clothes. Hell is not only blazing fire_ a part of it is freezing cold, torturous ice and snow. In Scotland's winter you live a glimpse of this unseen world, feel the

breath of it in your bones"(Aboulela, 2018, 180). However, Aboulela's portrayal of Shadia as weak and small can be taken as one way to signify the impact of the power of grand narratives on her which are simultaneously demystified by Shadia's exposition of truths. In description of such a moment, it is worth quoting Homi Bhabha's words with regard to the act of memory: "It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present….It is through the effort to recapture the self and to scrutinize the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world"(1986, xxxv).

In "The Museum", nostalgic memory is used by Aboulela to connect what is left behind with the present and enable her traumatic character to get healed through remembering. In the story, the protagonist Shadia has made a visit to the African museum with great expectations of looking at "photographs of the Nile, something to appease her homesickness, a comfort, a message"(Aboulela, 2018, 178), but she soon gets disappointed as Aboulela makes a shift in narrative voice__ moving from autodiegetic (as if Shadia appears as autodiegetic narrator speaking to herself while depending on narratorial memory) to the authorial (third-person narrative) __to account for Shadia's desperation: "*Love my country so much*. She wanted to see minarets, boats fragile on the Nile, people. People like her father"(Aboulela, 2018, 179). Such rupture in narrative voice is made possible by infusing a sentence with a possessive pronoun (my) which Aboulela, with intention, has differentiated typographically(the sentence is written in italics). Aboulela reflects on Shadia's psychic condition by enabling her past recollections, which capture a vanished world she longs to belong to, to intervene with the present. As an interstitial space or in the words of Brenda Cooper "an amalgam of different cultures and languages"(2008, 7), the museum instigates Shadia's recalling of what has been left behind and connects it to her traumatic present experience: " The tangible reminders were there to see, preserved in spite of the years. Her eyes skimmed over the disconnected objects out of place and time…. Nothing was of her, nothing belonged to her life at home, what she missed. Here was Europe's vision, the clichés about Africa: cold and old"
(Aboulela, 2018, 177). As contact zones where collision occurs, these museums are also made use of narratives of the past and the present which are constructed by memorialization or the act of ongoing memory (Arora, 2021, 1). In her book, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness*, Dorrit Cohn analyzes succinctly the role of memory in the autodegetic retrospective novel:" [the first-person narrator's] retrospection

depends on ... the "telescope leveled at time" of which Proust speaks, and by which he means a "real" psychological vision conditioned by memory. This frequently prompts a first-person narrator to mention the plausibility of his cognition"(1978, 144). Aboulela embeds past landscapes in her characters' present diasporic settings by means of cultural memory. Through this ongoing narrative strategy, she shows how her diasporic identities have achieved recovery (whether psychological or spiritual) and well-being. Through this mechanism, her transcultural characters are offered ways of negotiating continuously with multiple spaces and times. They also are enabled to be situated in matrices of ecological and sensory textures (remarkably the soil, plant, air, river, food, scent, childhood) while living in the British diaspora. Aboulela has made a link between different real configurations of everyday life in different landscapes and the working of the metropolis as a power. She relates transnationally two cultures, managing strategically to capture the contradiction of the importance of insignificant daily events by focusing "on concrete objects, through which interactions with the environment and with other people take place"(Cooper, 2008, 7) and emphasizing how it is through these solid objects, possessions, and events her characters embed themselves in both spatially and temporally (Cooper, 2008, 7). In *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, Laura Marks (2000, 28) states that it is necessary to account for the meanings the geographical and archeological symbols encode. In Aboulela's "The Museum", the exposure of the characters affiliations with their surroundings invites readers to read history authentically or to quote Marks' words: "to sort through the rubble created by cultural dislocation and read significance in what official history overlooks"(2000, 28). By analogy, these living objects and events__ no matter how minute or even insignificant they are__ represent the rubble or the history that imperialists have plundered and disrupted in the name of their civilizing mission. Western writings usually refer to the rubble (bringing modernization to colonized cultures) so as to justify the use of the metaphor of the dominant culture. For Aboulela, the meaning of these objects (i.e. the toxic objects displayed in the museum that signify the breakdown of cross-cultural relationships in the African museum in Aberdeen) can't be decoded in separation from the original materiality or the real physical world where they uncorrupted are first found in (Sudan). Through such a mechanism, these concrete objects can be represented as "metonyms rather than metaphors"(Cooper, 2008, 7) wherein Western fallacies and looting by imperialist forces i.e. the ugly realities of the colonialism be placed in a post-modern narrative written in hybrid language

(textual homing-in). Shadia's sense of being out of place is also translated to readers through Aboulela's reference to Aberdeen's damp weather which damages Shadia's hair. According to Zanchettin, Shadia's hair stands for "her freedom and ease"(2013, 43). This weather makes Shadia look repeatedly into the mirror so as to put it in shape and feel comfortable: "The damp weather made it frizz up after she straightened it with hot tongs…She didn't like this style, her corrugated hair, and in the mirror her eyes looked too large…This is the face of someone with HIV. She had written about this mirror to her sister… But she hadn't written that mirror made her feel as if she had left her looks behind in Khartoum" (Aboulela, 2018, 161-162). The mirror scene pictures the effects of the West on Shadia. The mirror blurs Shadia's self-image. The blurring of her image reflected in the mirror has resulted from her unconscious desire to 'carnivalize difference'. She is said to have toiled over her frizzy hair to make it straight and look like other Western women. She suffers from an inner-conflict. She soon experiences the feelings of uncertainty and unpredictability.

At the end, Shadia expresses to Bryan her desire to leave the museum with an outcry that Africa is not that barbaric and backward culture that has no computers, cars, and 7-Up. The 7-Up bottle, as Cooper maintains, challenges the "stereotype of a pre-modern Africa steeped in tribal goods"(2008, 60). Shadia's outcry is a call to fancy the museum in a different eye: not to perceive it as being a barren place where there is no possibility of rebirth and reworking of memory. Such a wish is accomplished, as Anupama Arora (2021, 6) suggests, by re-thinking of and writing about Africa as in a way whereby not only a single story (as that perceived stunningly by Shadia in the colonial museum and is usually found in Western writings), but also other counterpoint stories (as the stories of Shadia's past life in Khartoum which Aboulela has infused by means of memorialization) are included in the narrative. Through this device, the representation of Africa in the supposedly African museum (European) in Aberdeen can be reversed.

Conclusion

Hanif Kureishi's "We're Not Jews" and Leila Aboulela's "The Museum" address the physical and the metaphorical journeys that their protagonists go through. They map and remap the identities of their immigrant characters especially after they start to grapple with a kaleidoscope of diverse human experience in an ever-changing globe. Both writers allow for the projection of plural singular identities, identities that are open to otherness and uncertainty and whose subjects are denied a singular/ unitary identity. Moreover, stereotypical representations and stances of power are reversed

and deconstructed in their short fiction. The migratory experience proves to be a transformative experience. Kureishi and Aboulela's stories reveal that Britishness can never be taken as a homogenized experience. Britishness operates dynamically to include a network of ethnic groups. A liminal place can craft a hybrid or hyphenated identity that is capable of representing power by acting discursively. In hybridized settings, it becomes possible for the tables to turn topsy-turvy or for a shift to occur wherein the colonized persons (or even places) configure subject positions and achieve liberation from the shackles that the monolithic British Empire inscribes on them.

It is possible to use cultural hybridity for the sake of measuring the impact of interracial mixing as well as challenging regulations, normalization, and categorizations. It is a theoretical framework that helps in understanding the transcultural turn, the interplay between culture and politics, and the intervention of apparently unrelated histories, yet dependent on each other (the two melodic lines that seem distinct, yet often convene and share one place or note and create harmony in spite of their divergence). Moreover, agency can be theoretically conceptualized with regard to community for minority groups can depend on hybridization or polyphony as strategic means for liberation, the erosion of boundaries, and the deconstruction of stereotyping ideologies. As two postcolonial short storytellers, both Kureishi and Aboulela are preoccupied with the question of ethnic identity and the means of decolonizing it. Some of the characters that populate their stories appear to celebrate in-betweenness. This stance speaks of their ‘singular plural’ being: through ‘plural singularity’ or ‘singular plurality’, an individual will preserve what marks him /her distinct while engaging openly or transparently with other people characterized by cultural differences. Kureishi and Aboulela deserve to be described as postcolonial storytellers. This is not because of their ethnic origin, but also due to their literature which describes the diasporic experience of many of their characters. They manage to contest the Eurocentric myth of British homogeneity that the British Empire aspires to promulgate and subvert the stereotypical representations of other cultures. Mirrors are used by both authors to account for the notion of representation which has been performative. In Kureishi's "We're Not Jews", lost and unstable Yvonne, whenever she gets insulted and racially bullied, goes to the mirror to cover the insulting remarks which are culturally inscribed on her face, with makeup. Mirrors connect the characters' past with their present (their consciousness with their unconscious). In Aboulela's "The Museum", Shadia's reflection in the mirror gets culturally blurred: she has seen herself as a woman suffering from HIV. Such a new reflection has

substituted her past looks which she yearns to recapture. However, she appears aware of her desire to hide her curly hair. Here, the mirror reveals Shadia's ambivalence. Hence, mirrors communicate the ideologies that are at play. They reflect the characters' perceptions and preferences that are either curbed or celebrated for their well-being especially after their movement into a new landscape.

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جمالية التعدد الصوتي وكسر الصور النمطية : "نحن لسنا يهودا" لحنيف قريشي و"المتحف" لليلى أبو العلا كدراسات حالة

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مستخلص البحث

تناقش قصة "نحن لسنا يهوداً" لحنيف قريشي وقصة "المتحف" لليلى أبو العلا فكرة الاختلافات الثقافية والمشاعر التي يولدها اللقاء بين الثقافات. وقد ربط كل من قريشي وأبو العلا هذه المفاهيم بالمشاعر المتناقضة لشخصياتهما أثناء تواجدهما في الشتات البريطاني.

يهدف البحث إلى ايجاد إجابة عن التساؤل الآتي: كيف يمكن للوعي المزدوج أن يعمل كقوة استراتيجية لتفكيك التجانس الذي تزعمه الإمبراطورية البريطانية؟ سيعرض البحث كذلك كيف أن يمكن أن يحفز الاختلاط بين الأعراق بعض الشخصيات،- والذي غالباً ما يولد مشاعر متضاربة لدى كل من تظهر عليه علامات اختلاف واضحة مثل لون البشرة - على تمثيل أنفسهم ثقافياً على أنهم متشابهون و مختلفون عن المواطنين البريطانيين في بريطانيا التي تَدعي التجانس.

يؤكد البحث على الطبيعة المتناقضة للمواجهات الاستعمارية التي يمكن أن يكون لها تأثير مزدوج على كل من المُستعمِر والمُستَعمَر. كما يسلط البحث الضوء على الأهمية التفكيكية لهذه التجارب المتقاطعة وعلاقتها بالوظيفة المتغيرة للبيئة المجتمعية بتناول فكرة الإزدواجية الثقافية في محاولة لإعادة التفكير في الهوية الثقافية وتفكيك إسطورة التجانس العرقي التي زعمتها و نشرتها الإمبراطورية البريطانية. يكشف البحث كذلك عن قيام كل من قريشي وأبو العلا في تصور عملية التهجين الثقافي على انها تجربة من شأنها إضعاف و تنمية شخصية الفرد من خلال تطبيق نظريات المجتمع و أدوات التفكيك التي قدمها هومي بابا ، وميخائيل باختين ، وجان لوك نانسي على نصوص البحث المختارة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإمبراطورية البريطانية، حنيف قريشي، الإختلاف، التجانس، ليلى أبو العلا، تعدد الأصوات، عكس الأدوار.