

## Neither Eastern nor Western: Cultural Hybrids in Modern British-Asian Fiction

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**Abstract:** The concept of cultural hybridity has been widely discussed since the 1980s, especially within cultural and postcolonial studies. Hybridity directly results from cross-frontiers movements of migrants and cross-cultural flows that in Britain extended beyond WW II. It opposes the idea of limited or even closed identity and cultural bonds. The notion of hybridity has mainly been related to second-generation immigrants who were brought up in between two different worlds and two societies: the ethnic and the dominant ones. The paper focuses on first-generation immigrants of South Asian origin portrayed in literary works by Monica Ali and Hanif Kureishi in terms of the phenomenon of hybridity and the level of the immigrants' assimilation into the host community.

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Second generation immigrants of South Asian descent tend to develop hybrid identity, which results from the fact that they grow up in Britain but are still affected by their parents' culture of origin. The aim of this paper is to outline the process of hybridisation undergone by the characters of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). The article focuses on the identity formation of two middle-aged men, Chanu and Haroon, who represent the first generation of South Asian immigrants in Great Britain.

The term *hybridity* originates from natural science, where it means making new combinations by cross-pollination or grafting one kind of plant onto another. With time the term began to be related to humans, initially, in a mostly negative sense as an attribute of "racial impurity" resulting from the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized (Wisker 2006, 190). The term was mainly used to describe a person born to mixed-race parents. Historically, however, hybridity is an old phenomenon which emerged as early as the pre-colonial period. In colonial and post-colonial times hybridisation soared and was considered a threat to national and cultural purity; the term became associated with a homogeneous group of people who steered clear of potentially dangerous strangers. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Rudyard Kipling warned against any social intercourse with people who did not belong to one's ethnic community. He stated: "A man should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race and breed. Let the White go to the White and the Black

to the Black. Then, whatever trouble falls is in the ordinary course of things—neither sudden, alien, nor unexpected” (Kipling 2009, 189). According to Spencer (1857), continuous exposure to foreign influences led to their interfusion and change from homogeneous to heterogeneous, which was an inseparable part of cultural progress. Hybridisation, then, became an unavoidable phenomenon and a significant element of human progress and the development of communities.

Hybrids are perceived as the final product of acculturation and the consequence of interaction between cultures. One of their sources is the colonial encounter; hybridisation is a direct result of social mobility, when the self and the other begin to culturally contaminate each other. It may lead to dialogical linguistic, cultural and political relations “in which the global mongrelization or *métissage* of cultural forms creates complex identities and interrelated, if not overlapping, spaces” (Lionnet 1995, 7). Interfusion of different traditions is the moment when, as Ashcroft (2001, 24) notes, hybridity comes into being. The other source of hybridisation relates to adaptation to new surroundings: it can also result from being rootless, since individuals leave their homes and move to a new place where they live in between two worlds: their homeland and the host area, to neither of which they feel real attachment. On the one hand, they are uprooted from the place that used to be their home. On the other hand, they fail to adjust to the predominant society in their new place. As a consequence, they may experience what Salman Rushdie (1991, 124) calls the union of two selves, i.e. the union of their original identity and influences of the host community. Living in between two worlds, then, requires some common space where the dominant and ancestral traditions can be reconciled. Individuals like Chanu and Haroon, the two literary characters to be examined in this article, who spend their life in this heterogeneous space and are exposed to culturally various influences, establish multiple identities.

Hybridity, then, directly relates to the combination of different behaviours, lifestyles and practices. Stuart Hall (1992, 311), for whom hybridity is a “cut-and-mix” process, argues that such mixes have a very positive meaning because thanks to their creative force completely new forms are created. Hall’s observations seem very apt since the characters of the novels I shall discuss are no longer authentic in their Asianness, though they are still not considered British. Their hybridity opposes essentialism and casts doubt on the credibility of any fixed identities, at the same time promoting change and lack of social pigeonholing. In no way does hybrid identity depend on purity or fixed boundaries because within them it would be moot. Ali’s and Kureishi’s characters adopt hybrid identities which are, as Bhabha notes, a mix of the colonizer and the colonized (Rutherford 1990, 211). They are far from being static and will never become fully established because the characters are exposed

to different influences which make their identities undergo constant changes. Hybridity, which Bhabha terms the Third Space, blurs the limitations of fixed borders and questions established categories of identity (cf. Bhabha 2006). It is the dynamic production of a new cultural meaning, where the old is translated into the new, as is evident in the case of both characters.

Chanu, one of the main characters of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, arrived in London in the 1970s with the aim of earning a lot of money, making a political career, and returning to Bangladesh as a successful and highly respected man. He wanted to earn enough to buy a house in Dhaka and provide his son with good education. Contrary to his expectations, he is neither given an enthusiastic welcome nor offered a worthwhile and responsible job that he has intended to find. Like other Bangladeshi immigrants, he has to join the Bangladeshi diaspora residing in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, despite being a degree holder from Dhaka University. However, he tends to present himself as a sufficiently educated, open-minded man and underestimates those Bangladeshi immigrants who have not received proper education. This is what he says about Razia and her family:

[...] I would not call [her] a respectable type. [...] Her husband does some menial sort of job. He is uneducated. He is probably illiterate. Perhaps he can write his name. If he can't write his name, he will put a cross. Razia cuts her hair like a tramp. [...] Her son is roaming around the estate like a vagabond, throwing stones [...] When I spoke to him he put his fingers in his nose. (Ali 2003, 67)

Chanu takes pride in his country of origin and its heritage, but he resents generalization and being regarded as one of Bangladeshis. His irritation with the British view of Bangladeshi immigrants as a homogeneous community arises every time he talks about himself and the uneducated inhabitants of Tower Hamlets. He states: "[t]hese people didn't know the difference between me, who stepped off an aeroplane with a degree certificate, and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only the lice on their heads" (26).

Chanu's mind is overpowered by a long period of colonisation, which has made a superior-inferior relationship natural for him. Like other formerly colonized people, he is settled in his inferiority and treats White British as superior to him. Preferably, he would become one of them because only then would his social status be high enough to satisfy him. Chanu's pursuit of the host society's approval results from what Frantz Fanon calls an inferiority complex. In his outstanding work *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1986, 25) states that the inferiority complex is a direct consequence of colonisation, deeply rooted in the minds of the colonized. It is very intense

among the best educated who copy the host group's way of behaving and dressing, speak their language and use characteristics of their social intercourse in order to feel equal with them. Although Chanu cultivates Bangladeshi tradition at home, he tends to adopt the western rather than eastern code of behaviour. He drinks alcohol and his wife never sees him pray, which is uncommon among Muslims. Unlike others in the diaspora, he never haggles because he does not want to "'abase' himself, or act like a primitive" (Ali 2003, 73). Fanon (1986, 17) also emphasises the great power of the majority language, which can make a person of different ethnic origin "more white" and closer to the host community. Ali seems to share Fanon's view on the significance of the majority language and makes Chanu a fluent English speaker. He is strongly convinced that his excellent command of English and a degree received in Britain are the best ways to gain a high social position and a post in the British Civil Service.

Chanu finds it difficult to completely shake off the identity of the colonized. By following western ways of thinking, he seeks the acceptance of the host community. Among numerous examples of his westernisation is his unfavourable attitude towards unskilled Bangladeshi immigrants whom he depicts as unambitious, narrow-minded peasants cut out for menial jobs only. He sees himself as distinctly superior to those Bangladeshis who "are peasants. Uneducated. Illiterate. Close-minded. Without ambition" (Ali 2003, 21). He also does not object to his wife's waged employment although, according to traditional norms, the woman should only be responsible for household chores. Furthermore, Chanu turns a blind eye to Nazneen's extramarital affair with Karim, which is inconceivable in the traditional value system.

Jane Hiddleston (2005, 58–59) points out that Ali's characters live "at once within and outside British society and [their] cultural practices continue to provoke bafflement and alarm". Chanu is a good example of being inside and outside the host community since he always follows dual standards. He tries hard to copy British patterns of thinking and codes of behaviour, whereas at home he exercises his typically Asian patriarchal authority over his wife and daughters. He considers Nazneen inferior and limits her freedom as if he wanted to make up for his own subordinate position in the new society. Initially, Chanu makes decisions concerning the household on his own. He discourages his wife from further education, working and even going out, and always walks one step ahead of her. He requires Nazneen to cut his hair and treat his corns, while his daughters are told to arrange his pillows and pull the curtains. Although all the duties are performed properly, Chanu is usually dissatisfied with their execution, as if he wanted to show his supreme authority to his family. He may not want to lose his patriarchal status in the Bangladeshi community since he has no authority within the white society.

On the one hand, he condemns colonisation, though he sometimes treats certain aspects of the colonizers' world as superior and more reliable. While lecturing his daughters on the history of Bangladeshi people, he approvingly quotes what Sir Warren Hastings said about the colonized: "Do you know what Warren Hastings said about our people? [. . .] 'They are gentle, benevolent...' So many good qualities he finds. In short, he finds us 'as exempt from the worst properties of human passion as any people on the face of the earth'" (Ali 2003, 152). He seems to be delighted with these words as though they increased his self-esteem and made Bangladeshis a really gentle and benevolent nation.

On the other hand, he constantly emphasises the importance of his own cultural roots and takes pride in his Bangladeshi origin. This echoes Fanon's idea of reconstruction of identity through turning to one's own heritage. Fanon claims that people who are reminded of their great heritage preserve their national feeling. Glorification of the nation and its history is also a way to deny the lies that colonizers told about the barbaric and primitive colonized only to demonstrate their own superiority (Fanon 1963, 212). Chanu often recalls the golden age of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Bengal which at the time was called the Paradise of Nations. He also acknowledges the significance of his country in the colonial era, saying that Bengal used to be the centre of trade and "[i]t provided—we provided—one third of the revenues of Britain's Indian Empire" (Ali 2003, 153). Chanu is steeped in his tradition and by clinging to the past, he preserves a bond with his ethnic group. He tries hard to make his family respect community norms, including those referring to language and dress, and attaches great importance to preserving Bengali culture at home. He wants his children to feel a bond with Bangladesh because "[i]f you have a history [. . .] you have a pride" (151). He contends that the loss of pride is the worst thing that an individual can experience (153). It is pride in his roots that, as Jean Phinney (1991, 193) states, boosts his self-confidence, which later decreases when he fails to find a satisfying and well-paid job.

Chanu lives in between two entirely different worlds, where he tries to redefine his identity. On the one hand, Britain impresses him and its superiority is ingrained in his mind. When he gives up the Open University course, he promises himself to devote more time to his first love, that is, William Shakespeare. He says: "English literature at its finest. You've heard of William Shakespeare. Yes, even a girl from Gouripur has heard of Shakespeare. [. . .] Have you heard of King Richard II?" (Ali 2003, 74). On the other hand, he is proud of his own origin and returns mentally to his past in order to redefine his identity. Chanu intends to return to his homeland to protect his children from being as spoilt as the British youth, as well as from any form of racial discrimination: "I don't want him [son] to grow up in this racist society.

I don't want him to talk back to his mother. I want him to respect his father" (91). He builds an idealized picture of Bangladesh and considers it to be the place where he will gain respect and find happiness. He admits that "[h]ere I am only a small man, but there..." (108). He feels he could live a happier life in Bangladesh and finds nothing he could miss in Britain. According to him, British life boils down to "[t]elevision, pub, throwing darts, kicking a ball" (210). Chanu asks his daughters, who do not share their father's enthusiasm for returning to Bangladesh: "When you go there [to Bangladesh], what will you lose?" and says bitterly: "Burgers and chips and [ . . . ] tight jeans. And what will you gain? Happiness" (290).

Despite having lived in Britain for over 20 years and recognizing the superiority of British culture, Chanu has never succeeded in fully integrating with the host community. He speaks English and mimics the British code of behaviour but integrates with the British only as much as it is required at work. When he fails to find a satisfying job, he retreats into his own Bangladeshi world. His decision to return home may be his desperate attempt to defend male honour and save face. Chanu's plan to return to Bangladesh makes him reclaim his Bangladeshi identity and visualise himself as a successful Bengali who has never stopped declaring his unrequited love for Bangladesh.

Haroon, one of the first-generation characters of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, is a first-generation immigrant of Indian origin who was born into a rich, upper-class family in India. He lived in India during colonial rule, and this is where he encountered English people for the first time. He attended good schools and became well-educated in British literature and language. During his studies, he would go round to London pubs with the aim of discussing Lord Byron's literary works with English students. Surprisingly, they knew hardly anything about this great poet not to mention reading his poems. Like Chanu, Haroon was taken aback by the fact that young British people were often much worse educated than he was, though he had spent his childhood and teenage years under colonial rule in India. Haroon is disappointed with real life in Britain because it sharply contrasts with countless examples of English superiority that he was taught back in India. He admits to considering every Englishman a superior being, and to never having seen one who lived in severe poverty or on a very poor diet. Apparent weaknesses of the British strike him and he comes to the conclusion that they are as numerous as those found among Indian people. It becomes clear to him that White British develop the same vices as they attributed to the colonized earlier. Therefore, when he faces grim reality, he feels disappointed because it does not correspond to the image of happy, rich, and spotless people that has been ingrained in his mind. Karim admits that his father

[. . .] had never seen the English in poverty, as roadsweepers, dustmen, shopkeepers and bar-men. He'd never seen an Englishman stuffing bread into his mouth with his fingers, and no one had told him the English didn't wash regularly because the water was cold—if they have any water at all. (Kureishi 1990, 24)

Despite Haroon's disappointment with real life in England, he makes an attempt to adjust to the new world, but this proves unsuccessful. No matter how hard Haroon tries to integrate with the prevailing society, he remains a stranger—an Indian immigrant who arrived in London. His fluency in English and vast knowledge of English tradition and literature do not increase his chances to become one of "them". Like Chanu, he is of the opinion that the failure to get promoted in his clerical job, where he earns a mere £3 per week, results from racial intolerance. He admits bitterly: "The whites will never promote us. [. . .] Not an Indian while there is a white man left on the earth. [. . .] they still think they have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together" (27).

His attempts to behave and look like an Englishman do not yield any results. Haroon regularly reads the *Daily Mirror* and every day before going to work, he carefully selects his shirt, tie and cufflinks, puts on his brushed suit and finely polished shoes. He prepares his garment every Sunday and cleans it himself. These are the duties that he, as a member of the upper class, never performed back in India. "He'd never cooked before, never washed up, never cleaned his own shoes or made a bed. Servants did that. Dad told us when he tried to remember the house in Bombay he could never visualise the kitchen: he'd never been in it" (23). The fact that he does these tasks now proves his determination to become part of the dominant society. Haroon tries hard to look like an Englishman in order not to stand out from the crowd, but despite his efforts he will remain a short Indian immigrant in an elegant suit and polished shoes. He will not be able to dispose of his otherness because it is not his professional look but his skin colour that determines the way he is perceived. As Bhabha (2004, 114) puts it, skin colour is "the cultural / political sign of inferiority". During the party in Haroon's mistress' house, one of the Englishmen wonders: "Why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?" (Kureishi 1990, 12). Whites see him as an uneducated immigrant from a distant exotic country who deals with magic. During the same meeting with Eva's guests, one of them ironically asks: "And has he got a camel parked outside?", and the other answers: "No, he came on a magic carpet" (ibid.). The fact that he is a dark-skinned stranger makes Haroon occupy an inferior and underprivileged position.

Haroon comes to London as a young man with the aim of studying law. He marries an English woman from the lower middle class and settles down in the suburbs,

dividing his time between his family life and a dead-end clerical job. Like Chanu, he follows a western code of behaviour in order to integrate with the mainstream society. He spends a lot of money to look like an Englishman and often wears black clothes that he buys in posh shops in Bond Street. However, this is the image that he creates so that the outside world could accept him. At home, he does not shake off his Indian identity but holds onto the Muslim system of values, despite being married to an English woman. Haroon is a faithful follower of the customary order at home. His subdued wife, Margaret, works in a shoe shop but after returning home, she does all the household chores: "But Mum did all the housework and cooking. At lunchtime she shopped, and every evening she prepared the meal" (19). Although his wife prepares meals every day, Haroon often chooses a traditional Indian dish for himself. His son recollects: "More normally, he handed Mum his supper: a packet of kebabs and chapattis so greasy their paper wrapper had disintegrated" (3). It is not that he does not like his wife's cuisine but he rather finds it difficult to eat something that is not traditionally Indian. Haroon also preserves his Indian identity in his interests. He is fond of eastern philosophy and, at his lover's suggestions, he starts to run yoga and meditation classes for Londoners. It soon becomes a successful business which attracts people with its exoticism, because at the time India was associated with spirituality and profound traditional wisdom (Bald 1995, 77).

Haroon's mistress Eva Kay, whom he meets at writing classes, encourages him to take up yoga and to share his meditation skills with her friends. She believes that his ethnic origin is a great advantage because it will make his teachings more authentic and credible. When his business becomes successful, Haroon soon undergoes self-transformation from an underpaid ordinary civil servant into a popular yoga trainer and oriental mystic. His return to his cultural roots may be a consequence of the trends in the 1970s, when preserving them was in fashion. As Kureishi puts it,

[. . .] in the sixties [. . .] the idea was that you should become as English or as American as you could if you were an immigrant. You would strip yourself of the past, of your identity [. . .] Then through the seventies and eighties there was a sense of holding on to your own culture, whatever that was. (Kaleta 1998, 17)

Haroon becomes a spiritual counsellor—the Buddha of Suburbia, who teaches his "students" of the necessity of searching inward for higher potential and better self-understanding. His intention is to show them "the Way. The Path" (Kureishi 1990, 13). In his red and gold waistcoat and pyjamas, he wins the respect of rich Londoners who regard him as the source of eastern wisdom and a person who can



solve their problems. With time, the sessions fill him with confidence and give him the new identity he had been looking for. The fact that he did not manage to blend into the dominant community before does not matter much now, because due to his originality and Indian descent, he has won social respect.

Wearing the colourful, dripping-with-gold outfit, he is not authentic but mimics the Indian way of life. He employs such teachings of Indian philosophy as are suited to the conception of Indianness held by the participants in his yoga sessions. Haroon realizes that he gains social acceptance only when he adjusts to the demands of the whites. That is the reason why he never reveals that he was born into a Muslim family and grew up within the Muslim tradition. He does not know much about Buddhism because he has always followed Muslim religious rules. He is more like "a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" because his own knowledge of Buddhism comes from the books on Buddhism, Zen, Confucianism and Sufism that he bought in an oriental shop (16). However, the participants are not aware of this because they have little knowledge of India, which they stereotypically associate only with exoticism and bright colours. Haroon exaggerates his Indian accent, makes his voice sound deep and hisses occasionally but sees nothing wrong in mimicking his ancestral tradition as long as it provides him with social respect and a decent income. The change of his identity seems strange and unexpected to his son who remembers "[his father] had spent years to become more of an Englishman" (21). Haroon makes use of his ethnicity but is not authentic in what he is doing; rather, he becomes a caricature of himself. Graham Huggan perceives this type of behaviour as a need not to be marginalised. He asserts: "Minorities are encouraged, in some cases obliged, to stage their racial/ethnic identities in keeping with white stereotypical perceptions of an exotic cultural order" (Huggan 2001, 95).

Haroon switches his Indian and English identities, sticking solely to neither of them. He is a hybrid who combines the elements of both, which, as Lois Tyson states, is a natural process for each immigrant. She claims: "[P]ostcolonial identity is necessarily a dynamic, constantly evolving hybrid of native and colonial cultures" (Tyson 2006, 422). On the one hand, Haroon tries hard to look and behave like an Englishman, wearing casual black shirts or sweaters, a jacket made from imitation leather and Marks and Spencer trousers. Unlike other Indian immigrants, he is an intellectual who reads English dailies and speaks fluent English but also keeps a mini-dictionary in his pocket to learn more sophisticated vocabulary. He also cares about his intellectual development and joins a writing-for-pleasure course, where he meets Eva Kay. Like other dark-skinned people, he puts on a white mask in the hope that it will make the fact of his otherness vanish. However hard he tries to adopt the British way of life, or, as McLeod puts it, "don the white mask of civilisation that will cover

up the 'uncivilised' nature indexed by [his] black skin", he will never be regarded as one of the whites (McLeod 2000, 21).

On the other hand, Haroon's pursuit of whiteness fades away when he turns to exoticism and takes on the mystic appearance of the spiritual guru. He develops multiple identities, but none of them is authentic. He used to mimic the stereotypical British code of behaviour and worked hard on losing his Indian accent. When he becomes the Buddha, he abandons his previous efforts to sound authentically English. This is surprising because he "spent years trying to be more of an Englishman, to be less risibly conspicuous" (Kureishi 1990, 21). His adoption of a new identity of the pseudo-spiritual guide does not involve returning to his cultural roots. It is yet another example of his lack of authenticity and mockery. Susie Thomas (2005, 66) states that "Haroon starts off as the mimic Englishman and, when he fails, he becomes a mimic Indian". He mimics what is Indian because his ethnicity, which once was a burden, now becomes a useful asset. His mimicry has nothing to do with his identity, but, to use Ball's (2004, 233) observations, it is rather a display of artifice. Haroon has not given up his efforts to assimilate into the predominant community; he has only changed the way to gain social acceptance. When he discovers that by mimicking Englishness he will not win the acceptance of the host community, he makes use of his otherness to achieve his goal.

His hybridisation also touches Haroon's attitude to religion. He was brought up as a follower of Islam but got married to a Christian woman from London. When the necessity arises, he begins to study Buddhist literature and becomes a Muslim who regularly practises Chinese Buddhism. When he is making love with his mistress, his son hears him crying out "Oh God, oh my God, oh my God" (Kureishi 1990, 16) which is another evidence of how confused his religious identity is. The fact that he established a hybrid identity is also evident in his family life. He mimics English way of life but, concurrently, he follows the traditional code of Muslim values that was ingrained in his mind when he was a child: "Dad had firm ideas about the division of labour between men and women" (19). He often behaves like "a little household tyrant" and never helps his wife, Margaret, with the housework because it is her duty to do it.

In the end, Haroon intends to return to his cultural roots. While talking to a journalist, he states: "I have lived in the West for most of my life, and I will die here, yet I remain to all intents and purposes an Indian man. I will never be anything but an Indian" (263). Such an attitude results from his belief that British society is soulless and that, contrary to his own heritage, it has nothing to offer.

Intercontinental migration is a painful experience for both Chanu and Haroon since it is always accompanied by displacement and being uprooted. They settle

down in a new place and try to adapt to the mainstream lifestyle, which is not easy, as it often collides with their own cultural norms. The characters live in between two worlds: their past and the present; their homeland and their new place of settlement; their ethnic community and the host society. Their identities undergo constant changes because they are exposed to different cultural influences: they feel the bond with their own ethnic group but they also encounter new norms and practices that they treat as superior to their ancestral culture. They still carry the colonial stigma and are not able to break off the domineering-oppressed relationship. They go as far as mimicking the British in order to win social acceptance but they never completely deny their own heritage. At times, they turn into caricatures of themselves but they do not mind this as long as they are socially accepted. Both Chanu and Haroon go through the process of hybridisation because they are influenced by different cultures. They are neither Asians nor Europeans, neither Muslims nor Christians, but become a new cultural construct in which both eastern and western traditions intermingle.

Hybridity has been a widespread phenomenon because of large-scale migrations and that uprootedness that follows upon displacement. Living in a cosmopolitan metropolis, people have to respond to unfamiliar practices and take part in the process of the interaction of cultures. In recent years, hybridity has also become a response to rapid globalisation. In fact, we all can be called cultural hybrids because currently, as Bhabha puts it, each culture lacks its primordial fixity and is not free of external influences. Hybridisation, then, is unavoidable in today's globalized world where different cultures interact on daily basis.

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**Ei ida ega lääs: kultuurihübriidid tänapäeva Aasia päritolu Briti kirjanike teostes***Dorota Rygiel***Märksõnad:** hübriidsus, Briti-Aasia ilukirjandus, esimese põlvkonna immigrandid

Kultuurihübriidsuse mõiste üle on eriti just kultuuriuuringute ja postkoloniaalsete uuringute vallas laialdaselt arutletud alates 1980. aastatest. Artikli alguses mainitakse hübriidsuse kõige olulisemaid definitsioone, sest see mõiste koondab väga paljusid ideid. Kõigepealt selgitatakse mõiste bioloogilist tähendust, kirjeldatakse hübriidiseerumise allikaid ja liigutakse tunnustatud teoreetikute Stuart Halli ja Homi Bhabha pakutud definitsioonideni. Hübriidsus on migrantide piireületava liikumise ja kultuuride vaheliste mõjude otseseks tulemuseks, sellele vastandub piiratud või lausa suletud identiteedi idee. Tegemist on vana nähtusega, mis tekkis juba kolonialismieelsel ajajärgul, kuid muutus järjest üldisemaks sõjajärgsel perioodil, kui Suurbritannias toimus massiline immigratsioon endistest kolooniast. Termin on peamiselt seotud teise põlvkonna immigrantidega, nagu näiteks Suurbritannias elavad Lõuna-Aasia maade päritolu inimesed, kes kasvasid üles kahe erisuguse maailma ja ühiskonna – oma etnilise ühiskonna ja domineeriva ühiskonna vahel. Tuleb märkida, et tavaliselt teevad just teise põlvkonna immigrandid läbi hübriidiseerumise protsessi. Mis toimub esimese põlvkonna immigrantidega? Kuidas mõjutab nende identiteeti fakt, et nad elavad oma kodumaast kaugel?

Artikkel püüab vastata küsimusele, kas Suurbritannias elavaid esimese põlvkonna Lõuna-Aasia maade päritolu immigrante võib ka hübriidsetena identifitseerida. Keskendutakse identiteedi formeerumisele kahel tegelasel, kes esindavad Lõuna-Aasia immigrantide esimest põlvkonda Suurbritannias: Monica Ali raamatu „Brick Lane“ („Telliskivitee“, 2003) tegelane Chanu ja üks Hanif Kureishi raamatu „The Buddha of Suburbia“ („Äärelinna Buddha“, 1990) peategelasi, Haroon.

Chanu saabus Londonisse 1970. aastatel eesmärgiga teenida palju raha, teha poliitilist karjääri ja pöörduda eduka ning lugupeetud mehena tagasi Bangladeshi. Ta lõpetas Dhaka Ülikooli, kuid otsustas Inglismaale emigreeruda, kus ta lootis leida tasuvat ja vastutusrikast tööd. Ta kavatses teenida piisavalt palju, et osta Dhakas maja ja anda oma pojale hea haridus. Vastupidiselt tema ootustele ei lange talle osaks mingit eeliskohtlemist, vaid ta peab minema elama teiste Bangladeshi immigrantide juurde Londoni Tower Hamletsi linnaossa. Hoolimata sellest, et ta elab Londonis, ei unusta Chanu kordagi oma kultuuripärandit ja peab oma kultuurilist tagapõhja äärmiselt tähtsaks.

Haroon käis koloniseeritud Indias korralikes koolides ja sai hea Briti kirjanduse alase hariduse. Nagu Chanu, lahkus temagi kodumaalt, et osa saada Inglismaa kõrgest elustandardist. Tegelik elu Inglismaal ei vasta aga ta ootustele. Tema hea inglise keele oskus ja suured teadmised inglise kultuurist ja kirjandusest ei suurenda tema võimalusi saada enamusühiskonna osaks. Ta üritab igati valdavas ühiskonda integreeruda, kuid jääb siiski võõraks – üheks paljudest Londonisse jõudnud India immigrantidest. Ühest küljest unistab ta vastuvõtva ühiskonna täieõiguslikuks liikmeks saamisest, teisest küljest aga ei loobu ta oma kultuurilisest tagapõhjust. Niipea, kui ta mõistab, et tema India päritolu võib osutada eeliseks, käivitab ta omaenda äri, mis tõmbab valgeid inglasi ligi eksotitsismi ja müstikaga.

Artikkel analüüsib mõlema tegelase identiteeti kujundavaid elemente ja kirjeldab, kui suurel määral neil õnnestub vastuvõtvasse ühiskonda assimileeruda. Artikli viimane osa võtab kokku nende iden-

titeedi formeerumise protsessi ja vastab küsimusele, kas Suurbritannias elavaid Lõuna-Aasia päritolu esimese põlvkonna immigrante võib nimetada kultuurihübriidideks. Samuti selgitatakse lühidalt hübridsuse rolli tänapäevases maailmas.

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