WHAT HYBRIDITY STAMMERS TO SAY:
BECOMING OTHER THAN *ONESELF* IN HANIF KUREISHI'S "MY SON THE FANATIC"

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Abstract
The intensification of cultural global flows and contacts has precipitated the acknowledgment, and to some degree the acceptance, of hybridity as a social fact. Acknowledging hybridity's possibilities for new social and cultural formations we insert our analysis in the potentially destructive psychosocial process of *becoming hybrid* constitutive of cultural productions and human relations. Turning to Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic", we read the inner conflicts confronting diasporic communities struggling to negotiate hybrid identities. The insights arising from our micro literary analysis are set upon the present global social scene where we suggest that literature and practices of close reading can possibly support various collectives coming to terms with the unspoken and potentially excessive violence producing hybridity.

Keywords
affect; diaspora; hybridity; literary analysis; pedagogy

> But of course, as the narrative unfolds, I feel uneasy with the way things are going: I want some things to happen, and some other developments not to materialize.
> *R. Radhakrishnan*, "Adjudicating Hybridity"

Hybridity has become a widely accepted trope of human existence in the advent of global cultural flows and social media technologies. Hybridity becomes normative as human beings, subject to mass displacement and encounter, at all levels of psychosocial existence, are put upon to manage and negotiate unfamiliar languages and worlds with and against their own imagined home identities. As flows of otherness zigzag across the globe, face-to-face and virtual social relations at *home* and *away* reconstitute, en masse, individual identities (APPADURAI, 2006).

Dominant representations of hybridity, as encountered by R. Radhakrishnan in the epigraph to this paper, are anxiously felt by the human lives they are meant to encapsulate. Viewing the production of cultural hybridity in the form of a South Asian film, Radhakrishnan becomes uncomfortable, unsatisfied with the film's surface treatment of the historical, political and cultural conflict constitutive of transnational hybridity. The film's celebratory framing of hybridity potentially produces a gross misrepresentation of the inherently conflictual processes and productions of hybrid states. He worries that viewers, through their rapid consumptive engagements with cultural fusions, unthinkingly internalize commoditized versions of the hybrid. Something deeply unsettling resides within the presentation of the *new* human existence in our contemporary world; the fluidity and ease of various cultural fusions seem to erase the contradictory dimensions of hybridity in a world where boundaries and boundary policing continue to have deep consequences (PIETERSE, 2001). With hybridity's emergence as commodity fetish there is little demand to grapple with the colonial histories and nation-state-centered practices penetrating hybrid existence.

Our approach in this paper is neither to diminish the empirical reality of hybridity nor to isolate and rehearse arguments on the potential for its ethical and productive agency in third space. Rather we demonstrate that hybrid subjectivity is complex and potentially fracturing when particular incommensurables within hybrid existence remain stubbornly in tension as others become reconciled. Becoming other than *oneself* then, as Hanif Kureishi demonstrates in his novella "My Son the Fanatic," can be deeply unsettling and potentially destructive without a mediated *learning to* become hybrid. Indeed, we draw upon this artful literary representation to engage the complexity of postcolonial hybridity and also, following Radhakrishnan, gesture towards a pedagogy of social difference[1] that is attentive to what hybridity stammers to say.

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[1] Deborah Britzman conceptualizes a "pedagogy of social difference" as an analysis of the unconscious and conscious psychosocial process by which the self becomes subject to onto-epistemological categories of gender, race, economy etc. through pre-formative education. See Britzman (1998), "Queer pedagogy and its strange techniques" in *Lost Subjects.*

The social conflicts constituting hybrid cultural formations at the levels of nation-state and (diasporic) cultural groups can be read at the micro-levels of human interactions. *Affective* readings of human existence, Jean Francois Lyotard (1991) insists, can reveal an internal psychical strife that gives rise to and threatens human capacities for becoming. Hybridity is theorized in this paper as a violent process of re-education that affectively reassembles subjects and communities. We feel hybrid or split apart when we are impressed upon in an ordinary and extreme sense by the competing desires and demands of another. Hybridity, as a culturally inflected educational process, repeats that of natality where human existence is dependent on an authoritative other. Through her dependence on adult others, Melanie Klein (1984) theorizes, the infant feels and becomes other than herself. Jean Luc Nancy (1996) conceives the inchoate experience of becoming an other-embodied self as a "*stammering*, crude humanity in the process of giving itself shape" (1996, p.73, italics added). Turning to the social, Sneja Gunew (2004) finds that stammering characterizes hybrid formation where one is impressed upon to inhabit "the foreignness of another culture at the same time that one destabilizes their own cultural assumptions and certainties in producing meaning" (GUNEW, 2004, p.126). In the cross-cultural dislocation of self one temporarily loses one's psychical and real sense of self compelling one to defensively reorganize to make intelligible the self's scattering contents. Hybridity then is a state of undoing a self to integrate a foreign and externally imposed other with which one is set upon to manage and come to terms. Reconciling our selves to the difference within, instituted by the other's existence, is the difficult source of our human becoming (KLEIN, 1984, p. 331).

Engaging a fictional representation can bring insight into the deeply affective, pedagogical process of becoming hybrid in global times posed to collectives living in-between worlds. Processes of hybridity are affective because the investments we make in identity are imbued with unconscious and conscious feelings of need and desire constitutive of our life histories and personal relations. Feeling internally pulled or compromised by shifting attachments is the hallmark of affective response. Feeling, Rei Terada (2001) writes, is affective because it is registered and not yet known until feeling makes its way into a symbolic form with which one can reckon. Hybridity may be imposed through political, social and economic institutions and structures but its effects are affectively negotiated and lived out in the everyday lives and relations of individuals on the ground.

In this regard Hanif Kureishi's short story "My Son the Fanatic" (1994) is instructive. In the story, Kureishi offers an intimate portrait of the difficult inner process of an immigrant family's becoming hybrid under the waning authority of cultural, colonial and diasporic force. Drawing insights from Kureishi's story we imagine how the subject and community reckon with becoming something other than they once were, often despite, or in spite, of their wish to be *themselves*. Rather than view hybridity as a necessarily positive or nega-

tive, benign or cancerous outcome of a rapidly globalizing world, we argue, closely following Kureishi's novella, that hybridity poses perpetual feelings of intense loss and renewal of self in the process of violent or violating becoming. Socially mediating these affective dynamics of loss and renewal and their effects is critical to the formation of reflexive human subjects seeking co-existent meaning and sustainable living with others.

Symptomatically reading Kureishi's text, we analyze the psychosocial violence imposed upon the self in becoming a hybrid self/other, violence that is imposed externally and discursively by being born, as Derrida (1998) reminds us, into a world already formed by colonizing history and language. We demonstrate how psychical violence, sometimes projected outwards as physical violence, is managed and mismanaged through the material dynamics of kinship relations and ethnic conflict. We suggest that authoritative institutions and individuals attend to the less visible processes of becoming other than oneself in the pedagogically mediated cultural scene. If left to fester, as it does in Kureishi's story line, hybridity's internal conflict can be projected terribly out onto others. In *Imaginary Maps*, Spivak (1995) characterizes the form of violence that hybridity begets as "enabling", which we interpret as something and somewhere in-between enabling and disabling, both devastating and creative. We look towards the social and its institutions for pedagogical support and critical interventions in the violating processes of hybridity producing the subject's altered sense of self and community.

The insights arising from our micro literary analysis are set upon the present global social scene where we suggest that literature and practices of close reading can possibly support various collectives coming to terms with the unspoken and often excessive violence producing hybrid formation. *Coming to terms* with repressed grief, anger and despair arising from violent imposition can tentatively found, what Radhakrishnan (2001) terms, the ethico-political project of "learning to teach and learn diasporic hybridity." Radhakrishnan articulates this project in the form of a question: "Who am I and who are We?". In global times the social project of learning to teach and learn diasporic hybridity can be resourced by postcolonial histories and literatures to situate and unravel contemporary hybrid existence in its colonial and/or multicultural frames.

When we speak of hybridity in this paper we are most often speaking culturally in terms of the dynamics of subjectivation under the auspices of the nation and traumatic colonial histories. Hybridity in its common postcolonial theorization is of and in between *two* — colonial and colonized, dominant and minority, national and diasporic. However, the hybrid is always already split and so hybridity is not easily theorized as symmetrical opposing entities that fuse seamlessly together into a new formation or give rise to a third space. Homi Bhabha (1994) further suggests that within the margin of the hybrid reside "incommensurable elements — the stubborn chunks — as the basis of cultural identification" (1994, p.313). Bhabha theorizes this in-between space

as an open question to the future or the possibility of newness that the emergence of hybridity instantiates. So this in-between space of irreconcilable difference is also potentially one of devastation and breakdown, deferring the future as open.

We are arguing that what is pedagogically potent about hybridity is exactly what is suppressed by emerging global representations: its excessive complex of ambivalent feeling. Hybridity exceeds its dominant representation as a fixed set of social characteristics to which individuals and collectives cling in the bid to bestow their lives with existential meaning. Because representations of hybrid experience are approximated, through the imagined psychosocial dynamics of human relation, the feeling of being hybrid can leave the divided or ruined subject longing and searching for meaning for the *whole* across a lifetime. Perhaps, being hybrid is captured most profoundly by literary and visual artistic form; with the acceleration or collapse of time-space and the *queering* of a normative hybridity-as-seamless-fusion, the self can find the distance and disturbing impetus with which to observe itself. Only after distancing oneself does one recognize symbolically the self's or community's crisis. Hybridity might best be analyzed in the emotional after-time of narrating the feeling of watching the self in crisis; one can see this deferred reflection in Radhakrishnan's (2001) need to revisit later his affective reactions to the film. As Hannah Arendt (1993) once suggested, it can be hard *to think* in the moment of feeling.

Fiction can provide a way to think through intense moments of feeling. Closely reading Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic" (1994), we analyze the emotionally wrought process of becoming hybrid against the politically fraught backdrop of diasporic-nation-state tensions and riots occurring in many Western nations. Specifically, we aim to illuminate how pathos-infused moments of familial, ethnic or national civil conflict, and their contentious histories, ground and reflect hybrid states in becoming. These sporadic moments of social unrest bursting through the symbolic, both between and within collectives, seem to demand of the self or community something that can be quite painful and impossible to do — to hear what the hybrid is saying to us in the precariousness of self-other conflict. Radhakrishnan's (2001) question of *who* the hybrid is and *from where* does she arrive mirrors the conflict that communities confront when faced with irreconcilable aspects of displaced, transnational, cross-cultural existence. At these moments of self or collective crisis, hybridity can require us to jealously sort through the incommensurable chunks of self worth keeping and worth giving up. Choosing sides and making claims of and on the place or places from which one has arrived is fraught with ambivalence. This crisis of feeling in being torn between conflicting worlds can fuel mass participation in social unrest and violence within and across collectives.

In our engagement of Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic" (1994) we follow a son's and his father's differentially situated crises of becoming hybrid, crises that repetitively animate conflict within and between each character and pit the demands of one against the desires of the other. The interior and exterior

worlds of both son and father become fractured, leaving each to break and break with the other. We draw parallels between this intimate and painful depiction of hybrid becoming and those of many youth, particularly diasporic, racialized males struggling to find existential meaning and a place in Western multicultural societies that seem impervious to difficult cross-cultural conflicts explosively held within.

Becoming other than oneself in "My Son the Fanatic"

Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic" first made its appearance on the world stage in the March 28, 1994 edition of the New Yorker. Several editions of the story appear in postcolonial literary anthologies and the story was adapted into film in 1997. The short story is teeming with affects that stage and embody hybrid existence. Cecile Sandten (2005) writes that rather than realistically depict hybrid states Kureishi's literary style translates for the reader the subjective process of becoming hybrid. Bart Gilbert-Moore (2001) further notes that Kureishi resists the constraints of a politics of identity and ethnicity producing essential or authentic notions of hybridity. Instead Gilbert-Moore finds that Kureishi inserts the reader into the in-between, becoming space, of what Bhabha (1994) terms, "hybridization." While not imperious to the cultural politics of hybridity that circulate in literary and cultural sites of production, Kureishi's creative thought and affective literary language circumvents a historically, colonially and politically over-determined experience of what hybridity is and may be in the unique lived situations of individuals and communities.

In Kureishi's narrative the reader experiences, in various degrees of emotional and somatic intensity, the psychosocial dynamics of self-other relations in the fraught relationship between an immigrant father, Parvez, and his English born and raised son, Ali. The conflict is classically yet postcolonially Oedipal, where the ex-colonial, immigrant father's desire to be English clashes with those of his resistant son, who reaches back for a religious and cultural authenticity he deems absent in his father. The conflict is *postcolonially* Oedipal because the British raised son's desires to be ethnically and religiously authentic clash with his Pakistani-born father's wishes for him to be a modern English subject. The classic, familial drama is played out against a self-other ambivalence animating the British multicultural imaginary, an imaginary informed by its colonial elsewheres and its ambivalent internal receptions of immigrants primarily from the Commonwealth, ex-colonies. Following Parvez's inner feelings of suspicion, despair, sadness and anger the story emits the father's affects of immense confusion in head-on collision with the son's outwardly distressing behaviors. The narrative wavers on the borderline of unspoken psychical material circulating between father and son finding form in Parvez's faltering monologues. Warring feelings implode symbolically in phrases fraught with incomprehension. "I can't understand it" bursts out Parvez to his prostitute-

mistress Bettina[2] early on in the story, a feeling with which the reader can sympathize as she attempts to grapple with the conflicted meaning presented in Parvez's conflicted thoughts (KUREISHI, 1994, p.92). Inserted in the midst of Parvez's immense confusion, Kureishi's characters and readers are emotionally caught in a tangle of misrecognition. Through a felt depiction of ambivalence accompanying hybrid formation the story actively disrupts the global narration of hybridity as the synthetic fusion of disparate states. In the intensifying dispute between father and son, Kureishi unveils the historical, political, religious and relational asymmetries invisibly structuring hybridity as these blurring asymmetries materialize in the fraught contest of competing cultures waged between Parvez and Ali.

"My Son the Fanatic" depicts the process of becoming hybrid as psychically overloaded and helplessly spilling over and into breakdowns in meaning made by father and son. Kureishi recycles the tragic-comic colonial relations of mimicry and subversion into the Western multicultural iteration of hybrid relations with hauntingly similar, elements of pathos, pleasure and punishment. Father and son are only able to recognize each other in the distorted caricatures each makes of the other. For the son, Parvez is complicit with the "Western oppressors" guilty of "groveling to the Whites" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95). Ali views his father as having fallen into the West's "sink of hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug users, and prostitutes" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94). For Parvez, Ali has become the immigrant foreigner, unable to reap the gift of plenty afforded to him in the modern world and mindlessly lost to the religious dictates of the old world from which the father is only too glad to be released (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95). Hybridity makes strangers of each other. The text's painful depiction of the tragic-comic dynamics of misrecognition constituting the hybrid relations of father and son ominously alerts the reader to the possible psychosocial effects of becoming hybrid.

The narrative pulls the reader down a tense line drawn between Ali and Parvez. The reader becomes immersed in the complex psychical and social processes of formation undergone and undone by each yet made focal in the conflicted thoughts of the father. Focalizing the youth's struggle through the inner musings of the father troubles a straightforward reading of narrative events. Kureishi might appear to direct the reader's attention and sympathies

[2] As is mostly the case in dominant theorizations and depictions of the colonial and hybrid relation, women play a secondary role in the hyper-masculine drama of cross-cultural conflict. Women are often portrayed as cause for or as mediating warring masculine relations, as being the "provocateur" or "handmaiden" of combative culture wars waged between men. Within diasporic representation women are rarely depicted as agentic, selves reckoning with hybrid effects according to their particular lived experience. Both Ali's silenced mother and Bettina have stories to tell that are left untold in the narrative (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94). While a nuanced analysis of spoken and unspoken gender relations is beyond the scope of this paper and, perhaps, the imaginary of this particular story, the role of women in the difficult mediation of postcolonial relations between men as presented in the novella and theorized in the work of Gayatri Spivak (1995), for example, calls out for further examination.

towards the father's interpretation of their conflict, to be on the side of the father. However, the son's treacherous silence continually defers, interrupts and disconcerts both the father's thoughts and the reader's attempt to align with Parvez's side. As Parvez attempts to make sense of his son's unfathomable behaviour, he too becomes hyper-aware of his growing inability to trust his own thoughts in the face of his son's determined resistance. With each of the father's attempts for understanding rejected by Ali, Parvez's capacity to be sure of himself is shattered. He feels relentlessly tested by his son who returns,

> his father's long looks with more than a hint of criticism, of reproach, even — so much so that Parvez began to feel that it was *he who was in the wrong*, and not the boy. (KUREISHI, 1994, p.93, italics added)

In the unwieldy contest of competing desire of father for son and son for father the narrative makes unreliable the character's interpretations of each other. Overwhelmed with fickle, fleeting, unreliable feeling, the uncertain narrative instead forces the reader to read the dispute from more than one side troubling Parvez's first-person perspective as it confronts the tense, angry discourse of the son. In the intense emotional landscape that Kureishi blandly paints their conflict of existence can be a uniquely familiar one for immigrants and their children recognizing their own existential suffering. But the story is also universally recognizable to anyone who is set upon the task of growing up and apart from one's family in adolescence or coming of age where one finds oneself reckoning with what it means to become someone other than the child they once were.

On one side of Kureishi's tale of two hybridities is a male youth who is struggling to not become secularly British in returning to a denied, lost religious existence. On the other is the immigrant father willfully embracing Britain's secular, materialist multiculturalism to become everything English. Looming throughout their straining relationship are the questions of whether and how to be or not be English. Their existential problems are complicated by British multiculturalism's ambivalent, if not hostile, reception of immigrants from former colonies. The figures of authority that vex Ali's sense of self are not only of the England he has come to loathe but also that of the father who Ali sees as pathetically implicating himself in England's multicultural refusal of racialized Islamic immigrants. "The Western materialists hate us," he tells his father, "Papa, how can you love something which hates you?" (KUREISHI, 1994, p. 94). Ali shows particular contempt for what he views as his fathers 'fall' into the immoral, seductive prison-house of Western material activities of life, a seduction that his father conversely views as liberating him and his family from religious constraint and cultural doctrine.

Defying his father's wish for his family to *fit in* to English life, Ali categorically refuses to perform the thoughts and habits, of what he considers to be, a degenerating, materialist and secular civilization (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94). He fails to acknowledge Parvez's "twenty year" labor "on the night shift" work-

ing as a "taxi driver for the same firm" so that Ali will have a better life and "get a good job, marry the right girl, and start a family" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.92). Ali's rejection of the fruits of Parvez's hard-won labour deeply threatens the father's long-held "dreams doing well in England" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.92). And as with many immigrants who defer their own desires and give up their birthright to offer their children a 'better' life in a Western nation they imagine to be imbued with material and creative possibility, Parvez fixates on why his son refuses to comply: he blames himself for not knowing "where he had went wrong" (KUREISHI, 1994p.92). Feelings of failure consume him and reach unbearable proportions. At the height of his despair Parvez determinedly obsesses with how to put Ali back on the right track, how to forcibly reach his increasingly unreachable son. In a desperate bid for reconnection, Parvez begins bombarding Ali with a barrage of vaguely posed questions potent with the haphazard content of parental desires, expectations and wishes and furthered intensified by a diasporic existence. Ali passively resists each and every overture his father makes to win him back over to his side. His son's stubborn silence is finally broken when Ali can no longer take his father's punishing demands to know: "What has made you like this?" "Is there a particular event which has influenced you?" Without wavering, Ali retorts, "Living in this country" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95). Ali's unthinkable disclosure leaves Parvez stumbling and "unable to see straight" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95). He cannot fathom how the England "he loves" is the source of their mounting conflict (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95).

A growing recognition of the unbridgeable divide residing within and between them coupled with Ali's unthinkable admission leaves Parvez shaken to the core. Ali's newfound adherence to Islamic rituals, his dedication to prayer and his disgust with his father's Western indulgences of bought women and booze unnerve Parvez. Parvez's investment in becoming English is diminished by each of his son's disavowals of the father's material enjoyment and freedom.

Parvez's resolve is ultimately tested when Ali finally abandons his English education, the very symbol of *making it* for many immigrants in the Western world. For Ali, a Western education is no longer tenable because as he tells his stunned father, "Western education cultivates an antireligious attitude" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95). Intentionally forfeiting the father's dream for the son to become an accountant, Ali informs his father of his decision to commit his time and talent, "to work in prisons, with poor Muslims who are struggling to maintain their purity in the face of corruption" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95). Ali's found calling to Parvez's willfully abandoned religious origin is too much for his father to bear. Despairingly, Parvez tells Bettina, his prostitute mistress, "I feel as if I've lost my son" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95).

A profound feeling of irreparable loss to the self, which Parvez experiences and Ali acts out, is what Bhabha (1994) terms the incommensurable aspect of existence or what our paper senses hybridity *stammers to say*. Global forms of hybrid cultural production often efface, through their celebratory moves, the

devastating aspects of hybrid formation that make the subject feel ruined as if one can no longer exist in the way one was meant to be. If the hyphen remains, marking the spot where the subject thought it was, it does so without reference to the quality of that loss. We can be South-Asian-Canadian easily through a hyphenated existence; however, the hyphen contains and reminds its subjects of its loss through a nagging feeling that there is nothing easy about living in the margins of estranged worlds.

The intense ontological conflict of the story implies that becoming hybrid can lead one far from the possibilities of cosmopolitan co-existence that hybridity often claims to promise. If left undelivered, meaning unmediated, the promise of hybridity can dangerously spiral back onto its violent source, with the wounded self helplessly regressing into fundamentalisms and new nationalisms. If there is a reparative possibility of reconciling the self to internalizing the other's violating difference, it comes through what Eve Sedgwick (1994) terms the "arduous" work of symbolizing the violent dis-ease that marks hybrid existence. Allowing some psychical and symbolic space for diasporic communities to work through incomprehensible loss might allow collectives time and resources to manage altered existence in shared space. But left unattended this dis-ease at the margins might also produce unanticipated, melancholically, destructive outcomes. Kureishi's tale is a caution in global times. The story warns us not to mistake hybridity's promise of newness as given. We might not anticipate what forms of new life hybrid formations produce when individuals and collectives are forced or fail to assimilate the losses to the self in imagining or refusing to become something other than what they thought they once were.

The startling climax of "My Son the Fanatic" depicts dire outcomes for personal and collective life brought about by becoming unthinkingly hybrid. Locked in opposition to his unbending father, Ali exhibits "withdrawal," "mood-swings," accompanied by "facial expressions" revealing his "disgust," "censure" and "hatred" of the father (KUREISHI, 1994, p.92-95). Parvez, overwrought by his son's projective ambivalence, becomes filled with a somatically articulated confusion and is beside himself with incomprehension. He is pushed to the brink of violence, "losing his temper" and throwing "a plate to the floor" when his son refuses to consider his side (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94). He is bewildered by Ali's allegiance to the Pakistani "village" he "doesn't know" over his English birthright (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94). As his conflict with his Ali intensifies, Parvez "stammers", "burps", "chokes", "becomes annoyed", "shouts", "staggers", "falls down" and "bleeds" his confusion (KUREISHI, 1994, p.92-96). Despite his father's obvious suffering, Ali refuses to be swayed by each of Parvez's desperate moves. Ali offers his father neither relief nor respite even when Parvez is stricken senseless and stumbling to the ground, floored by Ali's refusal of Parvez and England (KUREISHI, 1994, p.95).

If the father is given no relief from the son's refusal, the son is also offered nothing from the father in the way of emotional existential support. Parvez's

inability to consider his son's position is striking. Ali's various appeals to omnipotent forms of Islamic doctrine and slogan fall on Parvez's deaf ears. Parvez fails to take his son's conversion seriously. He dogmatically refuses to takes responsibility for his own presentation of lack of authentic self and authority and the role it plays in Ali's turning away. When Ali, finally and clearly articulates his problem with his father's "downfall, infidelity, debauchery" as threatening his Islamic birthright and the possibility of an Islamic existence in England, Parvez is dumbfounded. In the light of Ali's revelation: "If the persecution doesn't stop, there will be jihad. I, and millions of others, will gladly give our lives for the cause," Parvez is reduced to tears of incomprehension and despair: "But why, why?" he cries but is unable to ask (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94).

Scholars in postcolonial studies have come to see the borderlands, interstices, and in-between transitional space as a place of possibility or flight from the essential and discriminating discourses of identity. However this space, as Kureishi powerfully sketches, can also enact impasse. The marginal hybrid existence contains what Radhakrishnan terms a "double whammy" because the very grievance it contains, and by which hybridity is produced, perpetually threatens to project the warring, nonsensical axes of hybrid existence back onto the stricken self and community.

Finding themselves caught in panic-stricken space of incommensurable desires for self and other, father and son turn on each other in a spectacular show of passive-aggressive force. Their ontological conflict climaxes when Ali projects his anger and disgust for his father's chosen way of life onto Parvez's prostitute mistress Bettina.[3] In a determined show of strength against his father, Ali lashes out at Bettina to the horror of both. Ali's transgression against the English thing he loves most enrages Parvez to furious proportions he can no longer contain:

> Parvez kicked him over. Then he dragged the boy up by the front of his shirt and hit him. The boy fell back. Parvez hit him again. The boy's face was bloody. Parvez was panting; he knew he was unreachable, but he struck him nonetheless. The boy neither covered himself nor retaliated; there was no fear in his eyes. He only said, through his split lip, "So who's the fanatic now?" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.96).

The story abruptly finishes with father, son and reader reeling in abject violence erupting from warring hybrid existences. In the unthinkable end hybridity is figured as a physically violent, deeply psychical wounding that cannot completely be reigned in by the social and its symbolic representations. If hybridity is a borderline experience of possibility, the margins can also be a place of brokenness, violence and loss from which something new might be

[3] Bettina allegorizes everything Ali despises about the "immoral, whoring, consumerist" West (KUREISHI, 1994, p.94). She also, paradoxically, stands in for the liberation Parvez finds in being English.

produced but also where something old and interminably wounded lies in wait threatening to destroy newness. Parvez and the reader are left with Ali's last word bled through the boy's[4], "split lipped" question: "So who's the fanatic now?" (KUREISHI, 1994, p.96). Hanging in the fragile, seemingly irreparable, imbalance is the mournful open wound of their reeling hybrid existence.

Kureishi's novella seems to both anticipate and respond to contemporary questions facing hybridity through its intense portrayal of hybrid existence as unbearable psychical suffering stammering itself out unpredictably into human relations. We are left to rely on overwhelming feeling illegibly spoken for the hybrid, in these sparse pages narrating the unwieldy discharge of affective material between father and son. Kureishi's grief-stricken, battered end to the possibility of hybrid existence leaves the reader and the characters shaken and without recourse to resolution. Within hybridity's lack and excess the reader is left, wanting for meaning, longing for repair.

Bhabha (1994) terms the borderline experience as an affective moment of panic in which chunks of one's existence that were once distinguishable are no longer; panic sets the self spinning into question:

> The margin of hybridity, where cultural differences 'contingently' and conflictually touch, becomes the moment of panic which reveals the borderline experience. It resists the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups, sipahis and sahibs, as homogeneous polarized political consciousness (1994, p.207).

If the margin of hybridity resists the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups it does so uneasily and sometimes with great psychical injury to the self's learned desires of wanting to be whole, authentic, stable or pure. Through his depiction of selves and communities in various states of panic as they negotiate, resist, mediate and reject the imposition of becoming something other than they once were, and on terms not of their own making, Kureishi shows that becoming hybrid is an intensely difficult process. In doing so he exposes our folly in uncritically accepting hybridity as the synthetic fusion of social difference. Ali finds Parvez's wish that Ali accept his Englishness in a racist society to be as constraining as the orthodox Islamic doctrine that Parvez wants Ali to leave behind in the Pakistani village. Hybridity contains its other as distinct and that otherness can be taken as a dire threat posed to the self. Kureishi carefully demonstrates in the minutiae of human relation, how the unmediated process of becoming hybrid can potentially lead to new essentialisms and fundamentalisms.

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[4] The affective insertion of the nameless, faceless word "boy" where once was Parvez's beloved son Ali rhetorically works to situate their conflict in the colonial scene. The colonial appeal to and use of abject, dehumanizing violence to ultimately secure the his son's/the other's compliance to an altered state of existence makes a fleeting, haunting appearance in the story's final scene.

Returning to the epigraph by Radhakrishnan (2001) that opens this paper, we are unsettled by the version of hybridity that Kureishi presents in the novella. The story ends with a dystopian vision of what one might become in becoming hybrid. In the violent devastated ruins of the father/son relation, we are left with hybridity's unfinished story and with its celebratory discourse under siege.

Hybridity has fast become the dominant form of being in a rapidly globalizing world. As we are told in theory and through corresponding images, we can be more than one thing and are often required to be in a fast-paced society. In his book, entitled *Hybridity or The cultural logic of globalization*, Marwan Kraidy (2006) takes hybridity to be the language by which social difference is negotiated and rewritten. Forms of life and being that were once thought of as strange or contaminated are now commonly embraced in many locations about the globe. Clearly much of the acceptance of the hybrid rests on global capitalism's reach and capacity to absorb and promote diversity (JONES, 1998, p.149-150).

Perhaps the formalizing of hybridity through dominant narratives, metaphors and images is a heartening sign that difference can be accepted, tried on, taken in and shaken up. However, deeply suspect is the consumptive manner by which hybridity is internalized by individuals across the world. Global networks and flows of capital, knowledge and people invoke hybridity in an a-historical, a-political grab for the source of its power: *recognizing others*. Hybrid cultural production capitalizes on human existence not through collectively reworking and revising Western modernity's authority or institutions but through the auspices of *including* previously excluded others within modernity's violating ontologies. Incorporating others in the global project of instituting Western modernity, with its attendant ontology of self-serving being, sustains the operations of global capitalism while reorganizing social hierarchies and organizations into new inclusions-exclusions based on shifting assemblages of race, gender, language and social class. As a result, hybridity increasingly imbricates a messy process of mixing up what was formerly thought of as otherness into Western-referenced forms of hybrid cultural production. These forms of cultural production are rewritten as global where there is no need to give citations for the oppressive historical and colonial antecedents that, in the first place, give way to the violent modes of cross-cultural relation that produce hybrid cultural forms. And more ominous, as Radhakrishnan (2001) signals, the technologically-driven, rapid rise of hybrid cultural forms is judged to be the *real* of our times without analyzing the intensely fraught pedagogical process by which these forms emerge or their material effects on the psyches of the *real* subjects and souls they summon to address and seduce to re-make.

> As Parvez and Ali terribly learn in Kureishi's short story, hybridity is not something easily given or taken in. Many individuals, particularly young people, cannot easily negotiate the warring aspects of competing existences wi-

> thout the loving support of their family, community and society. Particularly pressing for teachers and parents then is Radhakrishnan's (2001) startling question: "So, how does one learn the diaspora? How does one teach the diaspora? How does one learn and teach the diaspora from within the living experience of the diaspora?" (9, l.1)

A pedagogy of social difference insists that individuals and institutions with authority analyze the processes by which cultural rituals and requirements coercively impress upon an individual's uniqueness and right to be. Cultural hybrid productions, such as a Bollywood film or a literary novella, can stage the more psychical and unconscious of these processes in ways that empirical or *realist* representations often foreclose. Literary language provides a supplement to social analysis from which we can learn how hybridity manifests itself particularly in distinct social and historical space. For example, Parvez is presented with a series of signals of his son's discontent that he reads and the narrative depicts in an arche-typical way as the son's resistance and disobedience toward the father's expectation and wishes. However, the depth of Ali's crisis signals more than this obvious interpretation. If we push ourselves below the symbolic surface of the narrative's familial, familiar rhetoric deep into the internal recesses of the writer's formal and aesthetic strategies we might feel out other sources for the son's distress. Reading affectively, Deborah Britzman (1995) writes, can imaginatively teach us how to feel for the others' stammering existence and in doing so support our social capacity to imagine and feel for the unthinkable lives of others. Or as Diana Brydon (2004) suggests, reading can support us to inhabit and manage the imposition of the other's social difference circulating in unintelligible spaces of contamination that blur our sense of time, space, culture and identity. Reading as an intense practice of self-other communion, Daniel Coleman (2009) finds might also develop in us a deeper capacity to hold the others' precarious existence in abeyance within the self. And for youth caught in the cross-confusion of culture clash, as is Ali desperately searching for relation to and meaning within his split self, the father's and society's social holding and indiscriminate support is necessary. The extreme existential shifts symptomatically exhibited by Ali reveal that he is dangerously struggling to become something other than he once was or thinks he was. His risky behaviors signal a need for Parvez and the community to support Ali rather than propel him further into an outright refusal of his father and of England. In her paper entitled "Risking a relation," Jen Gilbert (2007) writes that adolescence is a fragile period of re-identification for youth where they engage in risky behaviors in an attempt to find and make relations with others outside of the authoritative confines of the family scene. For Gilbert, adolescence is a time where we lose and find new attachments to make sense of a self that has outgrown its previous familial container. The process can be particularly fraught for immigrant youth caught in between worlds and struggling to find ways to negotiate warring aspects of their identity. Our

young people and their parents need support and imaginative responses at fragile moments of diasporic existence to negotiate the difficult challenges they face. Abandoning newcomers to make their own way on unfamiliar terrain is deleterious. Literature and education offers us supportive resources for youth to begin to engage with shifting self-concepts in a precarious time of their development.

We cannot take for granted that the acknowledgement of hybridity will make a better, more just world. Conceptual frameworks of human co-existence can also work to efface, deface or further suppress colonial and traumatic human histories particularly where those histories become blurry as they often do in so-called multicultural, hybrid or Creole societies. The events of 11th September, the London bombings (for example) and the rise of global media narratives depicting fundamentalist youth as the new threat against Western civilization are a sign that processes of hybridity and diaspora are neither well received nor supported in second and third generation youth in many communities. The recent proliferation in texts[5] wondering where *multiculturalism went wrong* seem to find themselves echoing Parvez's incapacity to understand his son's preference for the fundamentalism of an authentic life against the illusory *free* existence of a, at times, non-meaningful secular, isolated multicultural existence. Hybrid existence can also leave one's self broken, fueling resentment and loss for newcomers difficultly attempting to negotiate new identities in unwelcoming multicultural space.

With immigrant youth unrest surfacing in Western multicultural countries, Kureishi's short literary tale seems uncannily prophetic, as if the novelist can predict contemporary historical inevitabilities. However, as Kureishi states in an interview conducted by Johann Hari (2009), the seeds of the story are autobiographical, resounding in Kureishi's own difficult adolescence as a young European/Pakistani boy of a mixed marriage, negotiating the warring influences of cross culture coming to him from everywhere and nowhere. In his writing Kureishi seems to affectively reanimate his previously held challenges of conflicted identity while seeking reparation for his inner grievances against hybrid becoming. Kureishi's stories, as Hari (2009) notices, are overrun by the ghost of his disappointed and despondent immigrant father. Kureishi recounts how the death of his father in the 90's leads him back to Islam and its discontents and, eventually, to his writing of "My Son the Fanatic." Seeking out solidarity from the loneliness brought forth by his father's death, Kureishi

[5] There is a proliferation of media and scholarly texts geared at giving reasons for immigrant youths' violent conflict in multicultural societies. In the Canadian context, see Alan Gregg's "Identity Crisis". In the British context, see Matt Seaton's "My Son the Fanatic." For a more nuanced analysis of disaporic youth conflict in France see Julia Kristeva's *This Incredible Need to Believe* (2009). While the finding of each of these works is different, each analysis focuses mainly on the troubles of or with the diasporic community. Our paper suggests that parents and dominant society members must work concertedly to support diasporic youth's difficult negotiation of cross-cultural identities.

sought solace in a space peripheral to his father's rejection of Islam. In his affirmation of his father's rejection of Islam, Kureishi sought the love, he thought denied by his father, in the mosques of Britain. Instead he found,

> "a cult of hate." He says: "The mosques in those days were extraordinary — you'd have these flamboyant preachers walking up and down making incredibly inflammatory speeches. I would hear the most rancid rants about women, gays, the West, liberalism." He was bemused to see the rich rhetoric of liberation end "on its knees, in prayer. Having started to look for itself, it finds itself… in the eighth century." (HARI, 2009, p 23, l 1-5)

In the interview Kureishi describes how he leaves the mosque shattered by his ruined illusions of Islam and the dead dream of the father to head straight down to the nearest pub to drink to "remind myself I was actually in England."[6] Working through his own experience of hybrid ambivalence, Kureishi began writing startling narratives about the unthinkable inner journeys of young Muslim men, figured by characters like Ali. These narratives reveal what terrible truths reside within the conflict of being made to live, paradoxically by one's beloved parents, in-between conflicting and competing worlds, desires and interests. Writing also gave Kureishi a productively creative outlet for his own identity negotiation as a young, queer man caught between irreconcilable worlds.

Meaningful, collective negotiations of incommensurable aspects of hybrid existence are critical to the life of multicultural societies. Individuals on the ground as embodied in the fictional characters of Ali and Parvez often have little recourse to think through the dynamics of conflict placing immense demands on their existence that can eventually estrange members of one's beloved family or community. Some are left reeling in the aftermath of hybridity's violent undoing of themselves. Perhaps the affective experience of *reeling* aptly describes a generation of youth caught in the crossfire of a panic-stricken marginal space where cultures explosively touch. To teach and learn diaspora is to produce and mediate a productive third space we imagine in pedagogical sites of culture, learning, literature and living to lovingly support the formations of loss that young people exhibit and wage out on themselves and others. In doing so we might learn to feel for and hear what the hybrid affectively stammers to say.

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[6] Parvez uses the same phrase when attempting to comprehend Ali's explanations given for his return to origins.

TARC, A. M.; TARC, P. O QUE O HIBRIDISMO HESITA EM DIZER: TORNANDO-SE OUTRO QUE SI MESMO EM "MEU FILHO, O FANÁTICO", DE HANIF KUREISHI

Resumo

A intensificação dos fluxos e contatos culturais globais levou ao reconhecimento e, até certo ponto, à aceitação do hibridismo como um fato social. Reconhecendo as possibilidades do hibridismo para novas formações sociais e culturais, inserimos nossa análise no processo psicossocial potencialmente destrutivo de "tornar-se híbrido", constitutivo de produções culturais e relações humanas. Baseando-nos em "Meu filho, o fanático", de Hanif Kureishi, analisamos os conflitos internos característicos de comunidades diaspóricas lutando para negociar identidades híbridas. As constatações de nossa micro-análise literária são aplicadas à cena social global atual, onde sugerimos que a literatura e práticas de leitura crítica podem ajudar várias comunidades a lidar com a violência inaudita e potencialmente excessiva que acompanha o hibridismo.

Palavras-chave

afeto; diáspora; hibridismo; análise literária; pedagogia

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