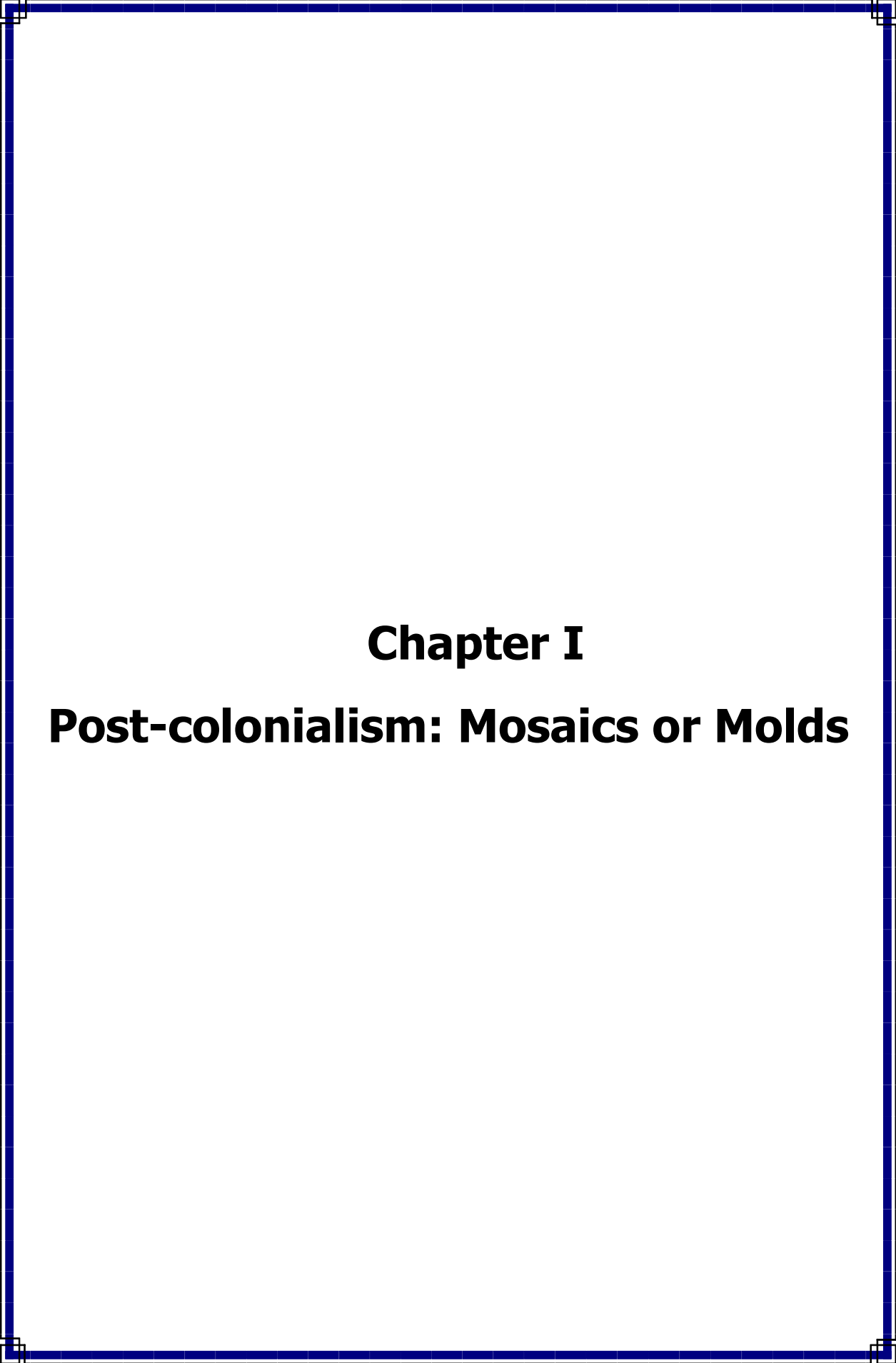


Introduction



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Ain Shams University
Faculty of Al-Asun
Department of English



**The Quest of the Immigrant Self in Hanif
Kureishi's Plays:
Borderline (1981), *Birds of Passage* (1982),
My Beautiful Laundrette (1985)
and *London Kills Me* (1991)**

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of English
In Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

By

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Under the Supervision of

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ABSTRACT

El Shazly, Dina Shazly. The Quest of the Immigrant Self in Hanif Kureishi's Plays: *Borderline* (١٩٨١), *Birds of Passage* (١٩٨٢), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (١٩٨٥) and *London Kills Me* (١٩٩١). M.A. Thesis. Faculty of Al-Asun, Ain Shams University, ٢٠١٠.

This dissertation attempts at examining the nature of the relationship between the (ex-) Colonizer and the (ex-) Colonized residing in contemporary Britain. Post-colonialism, respectively, represents a crucial importance for this study. Concurrently, the immigrant, who is acknowledged as the emblem of the twentieth century, is the main focus of this thesis. It is the immigrant, and not the emigrant, who is the interest of the thesis. Generally, minority literature is indirectly brought into focus.

The study tries to highlight and reflect the duality embedded in the post-colonial identity together with identifying the possible opportunities for the immigrant figure. Juxtaposing the first immigrant generation and the second immigrant generation, the playwright under question exposes, in his plays, how the immigrant's possibilities exceed the complicated routes of the post-colonial.

Discussing concepts of Race, Class and Gender as related to Identity during the Thatcherite era, the thesis explains that the Mother country is intensely fitting as a post-colonial society. Aspects of hybridity and multiculturalism, introduced by the Black in Britain, are established as both abundant and influential in the country. Henceforth, a process of re-mapping the English society and a re-definition of Britishness take place. The re-organization of Space appears as pivotal to the post-colonial studies.

Keywords: Post-colonialism, Immigrant, Assimilation and Acculturation, Blackness, Britishness.

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List of Abbreviations

Birds of Passage (BP)

Borderline (B)

London Kills Me (LKM)

Look Back in Anger (LBA)

My Beautiful Laundrette (MBL)

Outskirts and Other Plays: The King and Me, Borderline, Birds of Passage. (OOP)

The thesis aims at studying the condition of the Pakistani immigrant in Britain. It proposes that the mainstream England does not perform in terms of a multicultural society. The study identifies Hanif Kureishi's 'post-oriental' treatment by which the playwright presents a new concept of being British through the deconstruction of relationships monitored by binary opposition. Attempting to trace the problematic of the post-colonial identity in the late twentieth century, the thesis highlights the immigrant figure as a representative of the post-colonial theory. The immigrant, the main object of the study, incarnates, as suggested by Susie Thomas and Kenneth Kaleta, the spirit of the twentieth century. More precisely, the immigrant mostly reveals the multi-layeredness attributed to identity. His/Her double-sided perception of the surroundings, in addition to the idea of nostalgia, summons the history of pre-/post-/colonial epochs. The thesis investigates the immigrant as negotiating his/her own concept of identity.

The thesis is a study that originally depicts the late twentieth century identity with reference to the post-colonial condition as perceived by and reflected on identities of the third world. Such feature is evidently traced in Kureishi's plays. Primarily, it is Kureishi's concept of the post-colonial identity which greatly embodies, and, henceforth; reflected in his work, the politics of inter/dislocation distinctive of the late twentieth century Britain. Kureishi's condition as a descendant of a Pakistani immigrant represents a rich experience of an insider/outsider. Highly appreciated for his work, Kureishi nearly presents a novel approach, which one may call post-orientalism. In contrast to Edward Said's Orient, Kureishi establishes new frontiers for that Orient. Instead of having been feeble and subjugated,

Kureishi's 'Orient' is stout escaping victimization. Kureishi presents a different Orient and Occident who interchange roles and locations. In so doing, Kureishi foregrounds the panoramic victimizing discourse underwent by both sides; illustrating the post-modern globalizing status quo.

Hanif Kureishi is generally considered a controversial writer. His work is mainly dedicated to the British Asian society and problems, yet, he is welcomed as an outspoken commentator on multicultural Britain. His plays are largely an attempt to enable the traditionally marginalized figures, together with other subordinate constituents of society, to be noticed, heard and seen. Kureishi's drama is taken mostly as politically subversive. Although Kureishi's theatre does not reflect many of the elements of fringe theatre, it secures the situation of:

‘fringe’: ... a third space, between mainstream and minoritarian theatre ... enabling Kureishi to address the majority ethnicity without excluding a minority audience ... in fringe theatre, Kureishi was endorsing the ‘cultural politics of the in-between position’, planting the ethnic worm in the body of white theatre. (Thomas ١٧-٨)

Starting from racism, citizenship, prejudice till unemployment, Thatcherism and identity problematic, Kureishi heavily attempts to topple the greatest part of the Canon. He largely embraces notions of interchange and dislocation, which coincides with the assumption that border-crossing, provides the hybrid an “opportunity for new subject positions, identities, and social relations that can produce resistance to and relief from the structures of domination and oppression” (Giroux ١٨). Kureishi, who refuses racism and separatism for generating stereotyped caricatures, declares “... I saw racism as unreason and prejudice, ignorance and a failure