

**T.C.
ISTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**THE FUNCTIONS AND VARIETIES OF POSTCOLONIAL SATIRE IN V.S
NAIPAUL'S *THE MYSTIC MASSEUR*, HANIF KUREISHI'S *THE BUDDHA OF
SUBURBIA*, AND NOVIOLET BULAWAYO'S *GLORY***

Master of Arts Thesis by

Berfin Özlem ERDEN

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Department: English Language and Literature

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JULY 2024

PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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02.07.2024

University : Istanbul Kültür University
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Department : English Language and Literature
Program : English Language and Literature
Supervisor : Dr. Ayşegül Turan
Degree Awarded and Date : MA- July 2024

ABSTRACT

THE FUNCTIONS AND VARIETIES OF POSTCOLONIAL SATIRE IN V.S NAIPAUL'S *THE MYSTIC MASSEUR*, HANIF KUREISHI'S *THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA*, AND NOVIOLET BULAWAYO'S *GLORY*

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This thesis examines the various forms and functions satire fulfills in three different postcolonial novels. As a mode of writing, satire can offer unfiltered critique and take varying shapes and forms. With its openness to take different shapes or forms, satire lends itself easily to the purposes of postcolonial fiction. The various uses of satire in the chosen novels; namely V.S. Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory*, demonstrate that postcolonial satire is often characterized by the flexibility of both postcolonial condition and satire. The satirical elements of all these novels also remove the authorial expectations of a "postcolonial author" as satire is oppositional by nature, which parallels similar resistant attributes of postcolonial writing. Consequently, using satire allows these authors to make criticisms with regards to the postcolonial realities they know, from an ironic distance. The ironic distance allows these authors to freely criticize the postcolonial realities in question. Hence, all these novels can be regarded as products of the authors' personal reflections on these postcolonial realities. In *The Mystic Masseur*, Naipaul's employment of satire enables him to show his ambivalent point of view on his homeland, Trinidad. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the satire of the novel subverts the conventional expectations of a *Bildungsroman*. In *Glory*, Bulawayo makes use of satire's openness to capture the diverse voices of Jidada, a fictionalized version of her homeland of Zimbabwe. All these novels make critiques of these contexts through satirical ridicule, irony, parody, and exaggerations from clearly subjective perspectives. Moreover, these novels also question the performative nature of postcolonial state and identity politics. This aspect is a common thread in all three of the texts. Colonial mimicry is oftentimes similar to parody, and the novels illustrate this idea through the performative roles the characters take on. Through the analysis of the stylistic features of these novels, this thesis aims to show how the satire and the satirical elements of the chosen novels function as means to reveal the absence of truth behind these acts of performativity.

Key Words: Satire, Postcolonial, Performativity, Colonial Mimicry, Parody, Irony, V.S. Naipaul, *The Mystic Masseur*, Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, NoViolet Bulawayo, *Glory*



Üniversite : İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi
Enstitüsü : Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü
Dalı : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Programı : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Tez Danışmanı : Dr. Ayşegül Turan
Tez Türü ve Tarihi : Yüksek Lisans- Temmuz 2024

ÖZET

POSTKOLONYAL HİCİN V.S. NAIPAUL'UN *MİSTİK MASÖR (THE MYSTIC MASSEUR)*, HANIF KUREISHI'NİN *VAROŞLARIN BUDASI (THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA)*, VE NOVIOLET BULAWAYO'NUN *GLORY* ROMANLARINDAKİ İŞLEVLERİ VE ÇEŞİTLİLİKLERİ

Berfin Özlem ERDEN

Bu tez hicvin üç farklı postkolonyal romanda yerine getirdiği form ve işlevleri incelemektedir. Bir yazın türü olarak, hiciv sansürsüz eleştiri sağlayabilir ve çeşitli biçimler alabilir. Bu uyum niteliğiyle, hiciv postkolonyal kurguların amaçlarına oldukça elverişlidir. Seçilen üç romanda; bunlar V.S. Naipaul'dan *Mistik Masör*, Hanif Kureishi'den *Varoşların Budası* ve NoViolet Bulawayo'dan *Glory* olmak üzere, hicvin çeşitli kullanımları, postkolonyal hicvin genellikle hem hicvin hem de postkolonyal koşulların getirdiği akışkanlıkla karakterize olduğunu göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda, bu romanların hicivsel elementleri bir “postkolonyal yazar” olmanın getirdiği beklentileri de ortadan kaldırmaktadır. Hicvin doğası gereği muhalif olması postkolonyal yazındaki benzer muhalif tutumlara paralellik oluşturmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, hiciv kullanımı bu yazarların tanıdıkları postkolonyal gerçeklikler hakkında ironik bir mesafeden eleştiriler yapmalarına izin vermektedir. Bulundukları ironik uzaklık bu yazarların söz konusu postkolonyal gerçeklikleri özgürce eleştirmelerini sağlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, tüm bu romanlar yazarlarının bu postkolonyal gerçeklikler üstündeki kişisel izlenimleri olarak düşünülebilir. *Mistik Masör* 'de Naipaul'un hiciv kullanımı yazarın vatani Trinidad üstüne olan çelişik bakış açısını gösterebilmesini sağlamaktadır. *Varoşların Budası*'nda romanın hicvi *Bildungsroman*'nın getirdiği klasik beklentileri yeniden yazmaktadır. *Glory*'de Bulawayo hicvin açıklığını kullanarak vatani Zimbabwe'nin kurgusal versiyonu Jidada'nın çeşitli seslerini kaydetmektedir. Oldukça belirgin öznel bakış açılarıyla, tüm bu romanlar hicivsel taşlama, ironi, parodi ve mübalağalarla bu bağlamlar hakkında eleştirilerde bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu üç metinde de postkolonyal devlet ve kimlik politikalarının performatif doğası da benzer bir nokta olarak sorgulanmaktadır. Kolonyal taklitçilik çoğu zaman parodiye benzerlik göstermektedir ve romanlar bu fikri karakterlerin üstlendiği performans gerektiren roller aracılığıyla ele almaktadır. Romanların biçimsel özelliklerinin analizi aracılığıyla, bu tez seçilen romanların hicvi ve hicivsel

elementlerinin bir araç olarak nasıl bu performatif eylemlerin arkasındaki gerçeğin yokluğunu ortaya koyduğunu göstermeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hiciv, Postkolonyal, Performatif, Kolonyal Taklitçilik, Parodi, Ironi, V.S. Naipaul, *Mistik Masör*, Hanif Kureishi, *Varoşların Budası*, NoViolet Bulawayo, *Glory*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor Dr. Ayşegül Turan who has been a revered mentor and guide in my academic journey at İstanbul Kültür University since the start of my university education. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Işıl Baş for her endless wisdom and guidance during my education at İstanbul Kültür University.

It would be amiss if I did not mention the support my family has shown me, not only throughout the process of this thesis, but also throughout my whole life. Writing this thesis would not have been possible without their patience and encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to give special mention to two of my dearest friends, Elif and Özge, whose continuous friendship has helped me immensely during this process.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Whether it is perceived as a genre or a mode of writing, satire has been a foundational approach in literature since antiquity. Since these ancient beginnings, satire has evolved and has given shape to many different genres of texts throughout the Western literary canon. This thesis examines how satire as a mode of writing functions as a literary device in postcolonial novels. In this regard, the three chosen postcolonial novels will be analyzed in terms of what role satire and satirical elements play in the novels. One of the most essential functions of satire is to expose a truth by ridiculing and questioning certain vices in the society. Since what one regards as a vice changes throughout history and among different sociocultural backgrounds, and even person to person; the point of view of a satirist is almost always a subjective one. However, this subjectivity can also bring some of the most authentic encapsulations of whatever sociopolitical reality the satirists present in a text. Since satire is often born out of immediate responses to the present, the satirist usually creates without necessarily filtering or censoring themselves. Thus, the satirical narrative can be an outlet for an author to express his critique of the sociopolitical conditions of his time without adhering to certain political responsibilities, which gains further implications for postcolonial authors. When all these ideas are put into a postcolonial lens, and the responsibilities of being a "postcolonial author" are considered, we can see how satire functions as a tool for the chosen authors to reveal their own personal critiques specific to the postcolonial realities they represent in their novels. Analyzing V.S. Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory* as examples of satirical postcolonial novels, the aim of this thesis is to question what role the authors' various usages of satirical voices play in these novels. In that regard, the novels call the arbitrariness and corruptness of the politics of these colonial/postcolonial contexts into question, especially by exposing the performative nature of being a political or influential figure, or simply having to deal with the identity politics of such contexts through various usages of satirical comedy and parody.

1.1 Satire: History and Definitions

Within Western literary canon, we encounter satire in many different shapes and forms from poems to serio-comical prose to mock epics. It is possible to see satirical elements even in texts that largely cannot be classified as satires since this mode of writing can also be used as a device that gives the reader or the audience a break of levity. Many theorists of satire have discussed this flexibility, variety, and openness of satire and it is these exact attributes that make satire as a concept so hard to define. Jonathan Greenberg, for instance, suggests that “critics and students alike have put the definitional questions to one side and simply gone ahead with the work of analysis. After all, maybe not all satires in all periods and cultures work the same way or do the same things” (12). This variety, then, is one of the key elements in understanding satire. Since satire appears in many different shapes and forms throughout Western literary history, it becomes difficult to define the shape satire itself has, if it has one. This may also be why its definitions are more inclined to call satire a mode of writing rather than a genre of its own. Thus, in many of satire’s definitions, the focus is on how it functions and for what purpose it is used rather than what it is.

Historically, what we do know is that satire’s origins are thought to come from ancient Rome with names such as Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal as the first and foremost originators. According to William Scovil Anderson, while Lucilius is known as the inventor of satire, it was Horace who formalized its usage (13). Terminologically, the word “satire” is known to derive from “satura”. As Gilbert Highet explains in his book *The Anatomy of Satire*, “the name “satire” comes from the Latin word *satura*, which means primarily “full,” and then comes to mean “a mixture full of different things”” (231), or as he puts it simply, “*satura* is variety” (Highet 237). Similarly, Dryden suggests that “this word *Satura* has been afterward apply’d to many other sorts of Mixtures” (“A Discourse”), and highlights the notion of satire’s association with “variety”. As Highet also notes, the origin of the word satire is often thought to be as *satyr*, a mythical creature known for its tendency to cause chaos, although it evidently is not so as discussed firstly by the likes of Isaac Casaubon and Dryden. As Jonathan Greenberg explains in *The Cambridge Introduction to Satire*, “Although the false etymology was debunked by Isaac Casaubon in 1605, the erroneous association

persisted because its assumptions about satiric aggression seemed logical, and early modern poets often called their verses “satyres”. (Greenberg 11). Thus, even today, the figure of satyr comes to mind because of the incidental shared attributes between the two.

Apart from the definitions related to the term’s origin, satire has also been categorized in terms of its most well-known classical users as Horatian, Juvenalian, and Menippean. The first noticeable difference between these categories is perhaps the formal shapes these texts have as Horatian and Juvenalian satire is written in verse whereas Menippean satire is written in prose. In more contemporary forms of satire, because verse is often not in use, it is easier to classify them as originating from Menippean satire, which according to likes of Bakhtin, for instance, can even be seen as one of the originators of the novel. In his discussion of Menippean satire, Northrop Frye perceives these forms of satire as a genre of its own rather than a mode of writing. As a result, he has a more rigid outlook on satire that somewhat discounts its flexible merits. As opposed to Bakhtin, Frye draws a border between the novel and Menippean satire as genres and suggests that Menippean satire “differs from the novel in its characterization, which is stylized rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent” (Frye 309). Dustin Griffin notes that these descriptions of Frye have “not proved critically useful” (32), especially because he sticks to rigid categorizations that disregard the evolvement satire has undergone, and the variety it can bring as *satura*.

In addition to the mentioned formal differences, there are also tonal differences between these different types of satires. Dustin Griffin, for instance, suggests that Horatian satire is usually characterized by “its gentle humor” and with “a stern moralist” outlook (8), and Juvenalian satire with its “asperity, vehemence, and vigor” (11). These differences among them once again have been a topic of discussion for thinkers such as Isaac Casaubon and John Dryden. As Emmett Stinson explains: “The distinction between Horatian and Juvenalian traditions of satire became particularly important for early modern satirists, and this distinction continues to be re-inscribed in contemporary criticism of satire” (Stinson, “Satire”). For Griffin, Dryden’s “A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire” can be regarded as “the most prominent theoretical document in the great age of English satire” (Griffin 14), and it is also quite influential

in the sense that “our reigning notion of satire as a moral art and as a carefully constructed and unified contrast between vice and virtue” (Griffin 15) has also taken its shape with Dryden’s presentation of satire in it. As Dryden notes the tonal differences and the effects Horatian and Juvenalian satire have on the audience; he demonstrates how whereas “*Juvenal* is the more delightful Author” (“A Discourse”), Horace is “somewhat the better Instructor of the two” (“A Discourse”). Hence, Dryden’s writing too exemplifies how satire can be adopted to fulfill different aims. It can provoke delight while also instructing the reader, but the satirist is not obligated to commit to one specific purpose. With its ironic and comedic workings, reading satire also evokes pleasure for the reader though for Dryden, Horace’s more instructive way of satiric writing is more preferable because Horace’s tendency towards instruction is “socially useful” (Stinson, “Satire”). Evidently, this moral obligation Dryden prescribes to the satirist is the primary concern of his definition in the essay too. He writes:

Under this Unity of Theme, or Subject, is comprehended another Rule for perfecting the Design of true Satire. The Poet is bound, and that ex Officio, to give his Reader some one Precept of Moral Virtue; and to caution him against some one particular Vice or Folly: Other Virtues, subordinate to the first, may be recommended, under that Chief Head; and other Vices or Follies may be scourg'd, besides that which he principally intends. But he is chiefly to inculcate one Virtue, and insist on that. (Dryden, “A Discourse”)

According to Dryden, a satirist’s main goal should be “to give his Reader some one Precept of Moral Virtue; and to caution him against some one particular Vice or Folly”; meaning that the purpose of satire is to try and teach the readers moral lessons. As he cites Pope and Swift, Greenberg similarly talks about how some eighteenth-century satirists were interested in these moral purposes: “Pope said that satire “heals with Morals what it hurts with Wit” (262), Swift that he wrote “with a moral View designed / To cure the Vices of Mankind” (634)” (qtd. in Greenberg 15). Like Dryden, Pope and Swift also express that satire can “heal with morals” and “cure the vices of mankind”. Samuel Johnson also expresses a similarly ambitious sentiment, as he puts it plainly in his famous 1755, *A Dictionary of the English Language* definition, with satire as “a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured”. All these definitions attribute the

purpose of correcting the vices among the society to satire. Thus, here we can see both the common neo-classical outlook on how to define satire and how the defining factor of satire becomes its purpose of use.

When we come to more contemporary definitions of the 20th and 21st centuries, this defining factor still remains, but the definitions also get a more postmodern edge as ascribing a purpose to a mode of writing that is as varied as satire becomes even more complicated. As Greenberg puts it, "over the last half-century, waves of literary theory have challenged and complicated the old consensus. Most crucially, scholars have become more skeptical about characterizing satire as a necessarily moral mode" (15). Moreover, he then argues, "even when a moral purpose can be discovered, this purpose rarely spurs reform" (Greenberg 16). Griffin exemplifies this notion with the moral questions of Jonathan Swift's satires and writes:

No one can doubt that *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal* are "moral" satires. Yet it would take a confident critic to declare that we can draw from Swift's work clear conclusions and moral directives: for example, that we should all simply strive to be like Don Pedro, or that the solution to Ireland's problems is to adopt the "other expedients" that Swift pretends to dismiss. (Griffin 27)

As Griffin argues since satire works through wild exaggerations, it is often not possible to take actual useful advice from them in the moral inquiries they present, or at times pretend to solve, as is the case of Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. What should we make of it then if this moral purpose subscribed to this genre rarely ever comes to substantial fruition?

For some contemporary theorists, the play itself, then, becomes the satirist's purpose. Authors such as Griffin explains the rhetoric of satire as "inquiry and provocation" as well as "display and play". As he points out, "from its beginnings satire has had an association with food and festivity, from the overflowing *lanx satura*, the Roman saturnalia, the symposium or philosophical dialogue, and the convivial banquet or Petronian *cena* to Pope's 'feast of reason, and flow of soul'" (Griffin 84), and argues that satire can be regarded as a "play with moral ideas that do not have the same status they have in philosophical discourse; play with real people who are transformed into something else when they enter the satiric game; playful insult and invective that is

teasing, competitive, or even genial; and the intellectual play of irony and fantasy” (Griffin 84). Greenberg also determines a similar purpose of satire and suggests that “many elements of satire are playful: humor, wit, exaggeration. The canonical model of satire relegates play to secondary status, a means of illustrating norms. Yet the indulgence of play can just as easily be seen as satire’s real ‘purpose,’ and the moral justification or judgment as merely a “method” of launching that play” (Greenberg 20). The notion of play, then, is a prominent aim of satire and other satirical forms. However, this same notion can also create confusion in making a distinction between satire and parody as play is a prominent feature of parody too.

In an interview, when he is asked to differentiate between satire and parody, Vladimir Nabokov states that “satire is a lesson, parody a game” (qtd. in Greenberg 33). Following his quotation of this same statement, Greenberg points out that “this distinction is equally delicate, since satire, as we’ve seen, is playful as well as purposeful, and the games of parody can turn out to offer lessons” (34-35). Then, if we also consider parody as a commonly used satiric style, their purposes also often combine and overlap with each other. The act of parodying itself can be regarded as a naturally satirical one from this perspective. According to Gilbert Highet, some satires

are parodies. Here the satirist takes an existing work of literature which was created with a serious purpose, or a literary form in which some reputable books and poems have been written. He then makes the work, or the form, look ridiculous, by infusing it with incongruous ideas, or exaggerating its aesthetic devices; or he makes the ideas look foolish by putting them into an inappropriate form; or both. (Highet 13)

From Highet’s point of view, the act of parodying, as he describes in the passage, become a satirical one when there is also a purposeful pretense of telling a truth (15). In that sense, the exaggerations and the ridicule become intentional tools to provoke not only laughter, but also to make the reader face an, often ignored, truth within the society at large. Thus, what might make a distinction between parodic and satiric play could be simply the purpose behind the act. Parody just for the sake of laughter may lack the societal criticism that is expected of satire. For the likes of Linda Hutcheon, for instance, it “is on the pragmatic, as much as the formal, level that parody today differentiates

itself, not only from satire, but from those traditional definitions that demand the inclusion of the intent to ridicule” (*Parody* 49). She suggests that whereas satire has a “corrective intent” (*Parody* 54), the same cannot be suggested of parody. Hutcheon sees parody’s targeting as a social and satire’s targeting as a moral function. Yet, she also affirms that these concepts often come together as “satirical parodies” or “parodical satires”, and in both of these conventions, irony is a highly used tool (Hutcheon, *Parody* 63). Thus, for Hutcheon, “the interaction of parody and satire is a complex one, but it is not a confused or confusing one, given their different “targets” (intra- and extramural) and their different affinities with the rhetorical trope most common to both: irony” (*Parody* 104), and ultimately, “parodic satire and satiric parody enable parody too to be “worldly”” (*Parody* 104). Then, satirical play and its moral questionings often go hand in hand, especially when parody is also added into the mix. Satire does not use play just to raise laughter, in fact, there is a common view that satire does not necessarily have to be “comedic”. Satire is very purposeful in the sense that the audience is made to question the truth or reality behind the target, or, perhaps in a more postmodern sense, the absence of these ideas.

In addition to this inclination of play, then, satire can also be characterized by the satirist’s desire to tell a “truth”; to expose a real problem behind the ridicule of its target. This desire can be recognized even in the oldest examples of satire. Horace writes:

Of course, I will not slight my criticisms
with jokes, like those who write wry witticisms,
but can’t we laugh when we reveal a truth
like teachers bearing treats who bribe a youth
so that he’ll gobble up his ABCs? (Horace 1.1.29-33)

and, “While lunchless, seek the truth with me right here. (Horace 2.2. 11). Similarly, as quoted by William Scovil Anderson, Horace states that. “I have a compulsion [...] to speak out, to tell the truth with a smile” (qtd. in Anderson 5). Once again quoted by Anderson, Persius also writes “Like Midas’ barber, I am bursting with the truth about mankind and must speak out” (qtd. in. Anderson 6). At the beginning of his *The Sixteen Satires*, Juvenal similarly suggests that “If you have the leisure/to listen and reason calmly, I will enlighten you” (Juvenal 1.20-21) and later, “What I have just propounded

is not rhetoric but truth;/ my performance, believe me, is taken straight from the Sibyl's book" (8.125-26). As all these examples illustrate, the desire to express a truth is a commonly found feature in satire and has been so since its first known examples. As Greenberg explains:

Satire shows us dimensions of human experience generally closed off to the higher genres – the messy functioning of the body, the ignoble desires of the soul, the hard truths about society's corruption. Realism and satire share the functions of truth-telling and exposure, examining the world closely and unflinchingly. They authorize their representations with a claim to show things as they are; they disclose what official, sanitized accounts keep hidden. (19)

Hence, the unfiltered approach satire takes toward the reality it represents can be a useful tool, especially in telling alternate truths that might face censorship. In that sense, this function of "truth-telling" shared by realism and satire can be of use when one deals with histories and realities who has dealt with censorship. Satire lends itself to this function because it aims to tell the truth, but also bears a certain sense of self-awareness too.

Yet, the very notion of "truth" itself also complicates this aim. In many ways, creating an objective voice in the act of writing is impossible. What is different with satirical voices, however, is the fact that the "typical weapons of satire", which are cited as "irony, paradox, antithesis, parody, colloquialism, anticlimax, topicality, obscenity, violence, vividness, exaggeration" (18) by Highet, usually involve a level of self-reflexivity. This self-reflexivity, then, can potentially override the misconception of truth as an objective entity. In that sense, most contemporary definitions of satire reflect satire's complicated relationship with "truth" from a rather postmodern sense; meaning that while the satirical aim of revealing or exposing a truth is present, the impossibility of reaching an objective truth is also acknowledged. With the more contemporary definitions, there is also often an emphasis on the heterogenous aspects of satire. This aspect is one of the reasons why some theorists, such as Massih Zekavat, Jonathan Greenberg, or, John Clement Ball, for instance; are reluctant to call satire a "genre" of its own in recent times. While Zekavat considers satire as a discourse rather than a genre in his work, Ball calls it a mode of writing that can easily take the form of any other,

relatively “rigid” genre. In a similar vein, Greenberg considers modern definitions of satire “heterogeneous, slippery, and prone to multiplication” (Greenberg 12). According to Greenberg, it is difficult to define satire as a genre with its own rules and form because of both satire’s own variability and because of the heterogeneity of its contemporary definitions. As the contemporary definitions diverge more and more, it has been more difficult to arrive at a canonical model of satire as well. Greenberg suggests that the lack of unitary theorization has driven “critics and students alike” to “put the definitional questions to one side and simply gone ahead with the work of analysis” (12). As the following theorists of satire also illustrate, in the more contemporary outlooks, satire is defined by its “relation to reality”, which is again related to the satirical aim of exposing or revealing a “truth”. What is also important to remember, however, is the personal and subjective nature of satirical truth-telling.

For Northrop Frye, satire is marked by these highly personal characteristics. In his discussion of Menippean satire, Frye suggests that it “resembles the confession” (309) and that “at its most concentrated the Menippean satire presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern” (310). Similarly, while discussing what types of topics satirists usually take on, Gilbert Highet suggests that “the type of subject preferred by satire is always concrete, usually topical, often personal.” (Highet 16). Thus, what Frye seems to be suggesting in his wording of "single intellectual pattern" can be recognized as the subjective and highly personal outlook the satirist brings to a text. Through this type of outlook, the satirist attempts to reflect reality and show the “truth” as they see fit. As Highet writes, though "genuine satiric fiction pretends to be true and real, [...] it is distorted through and through” (158). As he goes on to explain:

The central problem of satire is its relation to reality. Satire wishes to expose and criticize and shame human life, but it pretends to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In narrative and drama it usually does this in one of two ways: either by showing an apparently factual but really ludicrous and debased picture of this world; or by showing a picture of another world, with which our world is contrasted. (Highet 158-59)

Then, even though satire is “rooted in history” (Griffin 29), the exaggerations upon which its tools are built on amplifies the subjective outlook it has. Satire makes its critique and ridicule through this contrast as Highet points out in the quotation. Still, as Greenberg suggests, “because satire is among the most “culturally embedded” kinds of literature, “to read satire” is always “to contextualize” it within specific historical parameters” (Greenberg 11). In her book *Irony’s Edge*, Linda Hutcheon makes a similar comment in regards to irony and writes “for some, irony—with its emphasis on context, perspective, and instability - is simply what defines “the present conditions of knowledge”” (*Irony* 31). For Hutcheon too, as a common feature of satire, irony gains meaning through the context of the present since to make sense of irony one needs to have prior knowledge on the context the irony is presented in. As a result, ironical language is instable on some level according to Hutcheon.

Placing serio comical genres within the "carnivalistic folklore" tradition, Bakhtin similarly defines satire through its "special relationship to reality” (*Problems* 107) and its capacity to capture multiplicity of voices. For Bakhtin,

The first characteristic of all genres of the serio-comical is their new relationship to reality: their subject, or—what is more important— their starting point for understanding, evaluating, and shaping reality, is the living *present*, often even the very day. For the first time in ancient literature the subject of *serious* (to be sure, at the same time comical) representation is presented without any epic or tragic distance, presented not in the absolute past of myth and legend but on the plane of the present day, in a zone of immediate and even crudely familiar contact with living contemporaries. (*Problems* 108)

In addition, as he differentiates Menippean satire from Socratic dialogue, Bakhtin also claims that Menippean satire “is fully liberated from those limitations of history and memoir that were so characteristic of the Socratic dialogue” (*Problems* 114). Thus, satire’s unique relationship to reality as well as the somewhat unrestricted approach it takes towards history is acknowledged within Bakhtinian theory too. Bakhtin also locates Menippean satire as a predecessor of the novel as a genre known for its relationship to the present. In his “Epic and Novel”, he claims that Menippean satire (alongside Socratic dialogues) "was the first authentic and essential step in the evolution

of the novel as the genre of becoming” (Bakhtin, “Epic” 22). According to Bakhtin, Menippean satire “can expand into a huge picture, offering a realistic reflection of the socially varied and heteroglot world of contemporary life” (“Epic” 27). Then, satire can capture the multiplicity of contemporary life as it can “expand into a huge picture”. In other words, Bakhtin emphasizes how satire can offer an authentic picture of a contemporary reality through its capacity to capture the diverse voices that set up the polyphony of novel.

Moreover, the way Bakhtin positions serio comical genres within carnivalistic folklore has further implications. Bakhtin claims that laughter within this tradition can be a form of resistance and subversion. According to him, carnival laughter is related to ancient forms of “ritual laughter” which “was always directed toward something higher: the sun (the highest god), other gods, the highest earthly authority were put to shame and ridiculed to force them to *renew* themselves” (Bakhtin, *Problems* 126-27). He writes:

Carnivalistic laughter likewise is directed toward something higher—toward a shift of authorities and truths, a shift of world orders. Laughter embraces both poles of change, it deals with the very process of change, with *crisis* itself. Combined in the act of carnival laughter are death and rebirth, negation (a smirk) and affirmation (rejoicing laughter). This is a profoundly universal laughter, a laughter that contains a whole outlook on the world. (Bakhtin, *Problems* 127)

From this point of view, then, carnivalistic laughter, which can be regarded as an originator of satirical textual attitudes according to Bakhtin, possesses certain subversive properties too. Moreover, we can even see the relationship between the opposite participants of carnivalistic laughter as a power relation. Then, the carnivalistic laughter satire evokes can have similar merits too. This way for “the other”, satire can be a form of resistance or reclaiming their voices. Considering this function from a postcolonial perspective, this can be liberating because carnivalistic laughter, as Bakhtin describes it, can bring the oppositional values postcolonial texts are also usually loaded with. In the simplest terms, postcolonial literature is also often concerned with reflecting oppressive realities created by colonialism. Then, the power dynamics created by colonial forces make a perfect subject matter for a satirist. Within the area of postcolonial studies, the views on these power dynamics vary. This variety is another point where satire and

postcoloniality can be examined together. The hybrid and often-ambiguous postcolonial conditions can be captured best with a mode of writing as open as satire is. Hence, satire can achieve the contradictory ambiguities that are often associated with the postcolonial condition.

In addition, if satire's relation to reality and its usual aim of exposing or expressing a truth is considered in a similar vein to how "the postcolonial writer uses the colonizer's language to oppose the hegemony of imperial and neocolonial power and to construct herself in that language as a subject where before she was an objectified and voiceless "other"" (Ball 2); then, there is a common aim of voicing often disregarded truths within both satirical and postcolonial texts. Moreover, reclaiming your voice is also a key element in postcolonial studies. In this regard, the use of the colonizer's language to claim a sense of subjectivity has been a topic of discussion for various thinkers. In certain ways, the postcolonial incorporation of satire can be regarded as a form adopting Westernized literary traditions too, especially with the case of writers who are "writing from outside". Oftentimes this process of cultural assimilation or acculturation is unavoidable which pushes postcolonial authors to embrace their ambivalence instead. Examining how various different postcolonial thinkers view this ambivalence of postcolonial voices show that the variety that is inherent to satire is inherent to postcoloniality too. Considering the fact that postcoloniality brings a sense of ambivalence and hybridity that complicates the notion of identity, then, satire can lend itself as a medium to capture this heterogeneity as a form of writing that is also usually defined by its versatile and open characteristics.

1.2 The Postcolonial and the Satirical

In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said suggests that "the authoritative, compelling image of the empire [...] finds its opposite in the renewable, almost sporty discontinuities of intellectual and secular impurities—mixed genres, unexpected combinations of tradition and novelty" (335). The postcolonial use of satire as a mode of writing can be viewed in these terms too since practices such as mixing genres is a characteristic of postcolonial writing as well as satire's. While it is true that satire has Eastern models too, for the purposes of this thesis, I will solely focus on the Westernized

uses of postcolonial satire as the authors I have chosen all use Westernized versions of satire in the novels. As he borrows the term 'convivial' from Paul Gilroy, which roughly translates to "live with each other"; Bill Ashcroft, likewise, proposes that this term "describes very aptly the present state of post-colonial studies" ("A Convivial Critical Democracy" xvii). As he goes on to explain, Ashcroft argues for the inevitability of this cohabitation within postcolonial studies and suggests that this way, "the field may avoid becoming a Grand Theory" since "the determination of different approaches to 'live with' each other" is a sign of "productive debate" ("A Convivial Critical Democracy" xvii). According to Ashcroft, "conviviality does not obviate argument, but neither does argument obviate cohabitation" ("A Convivial Critical Democracy" xvii). Thus, both satire and postcolonial literary theory share the traits of variety and flexibility through which critique and this inevitable cohabitation Ashcroft observes is possible. For postcolonial authors, adopting a literary convention is an often-discussed issue of its own as to be colonized is to inherit a language that is perceived as not your "native". Discussing British-Indian usage of the English language, for instance, Salman Rushdie suggests that "the British Indian writer simply does not have the option of rejecting English" since the following generations "will grow up speaking it, probably as a first language anyway" (17). Thus, "in the forging of a British Indian identity the English language is of central importance" (Rushdie 17). Chinua Achebe, likewise, states in his *Morning Yet on Creation*, that the adoption of English as a colonial language of the oppressor is an inevitable "by-product of this same process" that also oppresses and assimilates them (207). For both Rushdie and Achebe, there is an inevitable need to embrace the English language as a by-product of postcolonial identity formation, considering the future consequences of postcolonial condition brings. Historically, the oppression and the assimilation that the colonized has faced creates these consequences.

In his seminal essay, "Signs Taken for Wonders", Homi Bhabha outlines this process of mental colonization that makes the colonized gain hybrid identities and claims that, in shaping the colonized to become "*a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" ("Of Mimicry" 126), the colonizer also experiences cultural dysphoria. Bhabha's analysis of colonial mimicry demonstrates how the "display of hybridity-its peculiar "replication"- terrorizes authority with the ruse of recognition, its

mimicry, its mockery”? (“Signs” 157). In other words, as the colonized adapts to the colonizer’s customs and language, this leads to the creation of hybrid identities, which then blurs the signs of differences in the colonizer’s minds. These views are also applicable to postcolonial usages of English too. Bhabha himself talks about the influence of the “English book”, which stands for the Bible, and how the introduction of these texts was a way of mental colonization. Yet, as Bhabha exemplifies in “Signs Taken for Wonders”, the colonized were also resistant to read in a language that was not their own, which created a need for translations. This goes to show that the adoption of and the resistance to the colonizer’s language are both undoubtedly complicated processes that the oppressed at once embraces and shows resistance to. Hence, for Bhabha too, adopting to the colonizer’s culture and language is an inevitable process of colonialism, but there are also certain complications too.

When we trace how the voice of postcolonial writers has been examined, while bearing these complications in mind, it is also evident that the views on the issue often bear disagreements and contradictions too, which again goes parallel to satire’s variety and openness. As a literary tradition, some of the major features of postcolonial literature are often cited as writing back, reclaiming lost histories and voices and subversive writing. As Ashcroft puts it in *The Empire Writes Back*, “post-colonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place” by “capturing and remoulding the language to new usages” (*Empire* 37). As Ashcroft points out, “writing back” is a major characteristic of postcolonial literature, meaning that there is often an oppositional and subversive quality to postcolonial writing. The same can be suggested of satire as well as a tool of critique. Alongside their variety and flexibility, then, satirical and postcolonial writings also share characteristics such as oppositionality, subversiveness and referentiality. Still, it is also wise to remember that while for a satirist, being oppositional is a necessity, postcoloniality does not inherently bring subversiveness as opposed to the common misjudgment. Although they may or may not take this on as a mission, postcolonial writers are often viewed as representatives of a minority group with an agenda of voicing their silenced histories. Within postcolonial literature, the

need to raise oppositional voices has more to do with the historical silencing the marginalized people have been subjected to.

In his, “Crisis in Orientalism”, for instance, Said demonstrates how from the West’s point of view, the Orient is a passive, silent object. Said then argues that what the West perceives as objective truths on the Orient “came from books written in the tradition of Orientalism, placed in its library of *idées reçues*; for them the Orient [...] was something to be encountered and dealt with to a certain extent *because* the texts made that Orient possible” (“Crisis in Orientalism” 279). As he goes on to explain, to the West “such an Orient was silent, available to Europe for the realization of projects that involved but were never directly responsible to the native inhabitants, and unable to resist the projects, images, or mere descriptions devised for it” (“Crisis in Orientalism” 279). What Said describes here is the systematic silencing of colonized voices, not only through directly making sure their voices remain mute, but also through creating narratives and myths about them that popularize the misconceptions and misrepresentations the West has about the East. Hence, the birth of postcolonial subversive writings is undoubtedly related to this historical silencing Said talks about, as the subversiveness of postcolonial literature is certainly a direct reaction to that. Similarly, in her frequently quoted essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Gayatri Spivak showcases how “the subaltern cannot speak” (104). This essay, in general, is based on Spivak’s theory of how the (usually female) natives of underdeveloped countries are systematically silenced in a way that renders them mute. The moment the subaltern gains a voice is also the moment they enter the system of oppression according to Spivak. The issue is not that they are silenced, but that they do not reside in a mechanism in which their voices can be heard. Though Spivak reaffirms the historical silencing experienced by the other (maybe more so for, what she calls, the subaltern rather than the oppressed); she also somewhat questions the subversive quality that is usually taken for granted in postcoloniality. Moreover, as an institutionalized form of literary analysis, this notion has been a point of criticism for some other authors too. As Sarah Brouillette suggests, “as a field of production the politicized niche of postcolonial literature is characterized by its own unique assumptions and practices” (96). Then, within these practices, “writers become representatives of their purported societies,

‘cultures’, nationalities or subnationalities, transformed into all too singular embodiments of lengthy histories they can hardly hope to encompass” (Brouillette 97). For Brouillette, these types of expectations of postcolonial writers create an unfair misconception of true authenticity. It becomes as if the duty of a postcolonial writer to be an honest representative of whatever minority group they are categorized in, which is usually not an achievable expectation.

In his *The Postcolonial Exotic*, as he points out how intellectual circuits usually associate marginality with resistance and then turn the concept of marginality itself into a commodity, Graham Huggan similarly argues that “‘resistance’ itself has become a valuable intellectual commodity” (Huggan 83). According to Huggan, there is often an assumption that “minority literatures are written at least in part out of the experience of social marginality, as undergone at some combination of individual, collective and institutional levels” (83), meaning that it is automatically assumed that minority writing would provide authentic and objective representations. For Huggan, this assumption is problematic for several reasons. As he gives Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul as examples of two “minority writers”, Huggan questions how these categorizations postcolonial authors are often subjected to works. He finds these categorizations limiting and points out how although both Rushdie and Naipaul are often criticized for upholding Western values in different ways, “it is rare for either to be designated as a *British* writer” (Huggan 85) even though they often align themselves with the English traditions of writing. As an author who is also often classified by his “Otherness”, Hanif Kureishi also laments:

I have never wanted to identify with England. When Enoch Powell spoke for England I turned away in final disgust. I would rather walk naked down the street than stand up for the National Anthem. The pain of that period of my life, in the mid-1960s, is with me still. And when I originally wrote this piece I put it in the third person: Hanif saw this, Hanif felt that, because of the difficulty of directly addressing myself to what I felt then, of not wanting to think about it again. And perhaps that is why I took to writing in the first place, to make strong feelings into weak feelings. But despite all this, some kind of identification with England remains. (“Rainbow” 35)

For Kureishi, “‘my country’ isn’t a notion that comes easily” (“Rainbow” 35). He expresses that he feels in between these categorizations and although in his discussion of the identity crisis he has experienced, he talks about how he feels far removed from Pakistan even when he is there, and how he considers himself an Englishman, he suggests that this idea is not taken seriously by others (Kureishi, “Rainbow” 17). This in-between state of postcolonial individuality has of course been discussed countless times within the postcolonial discourse. In that sense, satire and postcoloniality share a sense of flexibility. Likewise, the subversive qualities they bring to the table are also quite similar. Yet, there are also important distinctions between them too because to be categorized as a “postcolonial writer” also brings expectations to “correctly” represent a postcolonial condition. For instance, even though much of Kureishi’s work can be characterized as subversive, what he is subverting is not always what is often expected of a postcolonial writer. His satire targets people from all walks of life regardless of their ethnic identities even though national and ethnic identity are questioned in his texts too. In that sense, he almost subverts the expectations to use subversion as it is seen appropriate for a “postcolonial author”.

Here, Graham Huggan’s idea of “staged marginality” suggests a similar kind of subversiveness too. According to Huggan, staged marginality is “the process by which marginalised individuals or social groups are moved to dramatise their ‘subordinate’ status for the benefit of a majority or mainstream audience” (87). He further explains:

...by simulating the conditions in which the dominant (in this case, white Anglo-Saxon) culture perceives them, marginalised people or groups may reveal the underlying structures of their oppression; they may also demonstrate the dominant culture’s need for subaltern others, who function as foils or counterweights to its own fragile self-identity. (Huggan 88)

Thus, the theatricality of these acts functions to show the power structures that create the need for such performativity for the dominant culture in the first place. As Huggan himself points out, his stage marginality also brings to mind Bhabha’s conceptualization of colonial mimicry. For Bhabha, colonial mimicry becomes productive with the presence of ambivalence, and it destabilizes the colonizer’s identity alongside the colonized. Then, this mimicry can also be a sign of resistance according to Bhabha. As

he explains “what emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a writing, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable” (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry” 128). The act of mimicry exposes the dominant culture “to be a model”, and this way, complicates the power relations between the dominant and the subordinate. As a result, hybrid identities, that are “*almost the same, but not quite*” becomes prevalent in postcolonial societies.

Both Huggan and Bhabha point out the inherent performativity within colonial mimicry. As a form of cultural metonymy, mimicry can almost be classified as a parodical act too. In *The Politics of Postmodernism*, as she discusses parody, Linda Hutcheon similarly claims that:

As a form of ironic representation, parody is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies. This kind of authorized transgression is what makes it a ready vehicle for the political contradictions of postmodernism at large. Parody can be used as a self-reflexive technique that points to art as art, but also to art as inescapably bound to its aesthetic and even social past. Its ironic reprise also offers an internalized sign of a certain self-consciousness about our culture’s means of ideological legitimation. (*Politics* 97)

According to Hutcheon, postmodern parody’s self-reflexivity makes it function as both “complicity” and “critique”; two attributes she finds in all forms of postmodernism. As she exemplifies how postmodern parody can be a political tool with Rushdie’s *The Midnight Children*, she suggests that in the novel, “the structure of the parody enables that past to be admitted as inscribed, but also subverted at the same time” since “the literary inheritance of an Indian writing in English is inescapably double” (Hutcheon, *Politics* 100). As Hutcheon points out, this postmodern style of critique is a common attribute in satirical fiction, and the same can be suggested of postcolonial writing too. Examining how these two terms relate to each other be useful as a way of gaining new understandings of the poly-voiced and subversive qualities of both these concepts.

To begin with, analyzing satire within the framework of postcoloniality has been a task that does not have many examples of. As the writers that will be discussed here also seem to concede, there are surprisingly few works that discuss satirical properties of

postcolonial fictions or the commonalities these two literary conventions share. In all of these works on satire, humor, and their place within the postcolonial discourse, there seems to be an agreement on the subversive properties these three concepts share. In short, subversiveness and flexibility are two of the most prominent elements shared by postcolonial and satirical texts as authors such as John Clement Ball or Massih Zekavat attest. As one of the first of its kind John Clement Ball's *Satire and the Postcolonial Novel* evidently illustrate the oppositional or subversive merits of satirical postcolonial fiction. In his book, John Clement Ball points out how "both satiric and postcolonial texts are innately oppositional" (4) as he demonstrates how satire becomes "a tool of postcolonial critique serving cultures that were among those most profoundly affected by imperialism and its messy aftermath" (7). Ball sees satire as an ideal tool of critique for those who have been historically oppressed under imperialism. His aim with this study is to show "the variety, power, and complexity of satire as a tool of postcolonial critique" (Ball 7) since satire's "multidirectional targeting" provides the perfect medium for the ambiguities and hybridity postcolonial condition connotes. In a similar sense, in *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Postcolonial*, Helga Ramsey-Kurz claims that "comedy [...] calls itself in question. It surprises by not keeping what it only pretends to promise, thus undermining the authority it also only pretends to assert" (79). Considering the representational aspects of postcolonial writing, her idea of "comedy calling itself into question" illustrates how the comedic effect of satire can provide a multidirectional targeting, just as Ball argues, because this way, there is a way of critiquing inner and outer workings of a social context with a metatextual awareness. Textual tools such as irony and parody are usually employed in satire to this end. In this same book, Michael Meyer analyzes Salman Rushdie and Matthew Singh-Toor's rewritings of Jonathan Swift and Laurence Sterne as examples of postcolonial satires, and claims that the chosen rewritings of these two authors can be read as a subversion of British satiric tradition itself. For Meyer, Rushdie and Singh-Toor "multiply echoes of laughter from past voices by ridiculing both present 'vices' and the basis of the satirical critique, the specious claim to superiority based on moral norms and the discourse of reason" (Meyer 128). Meyer's assertion is in line with both Ball and Kurz's claims as Meyer's argument also implies a multidirectional targeting in Rushdie and Singh-Toor's

novels. Meyer suggests that these novels can even be examples of resisting and/or critiquing satire itself as a largely Western literary convention. Thus, the oppositional qualities of these novels come from both their postcolonial and satirical merits even though, paradoxically, the traditional, English style of satire is also called into question. Like other authors of the book, Susan Lever also highlights the critical and variable aspects of the postcolonial satire and humor. For Lever, satire is “the archetypal postcolonial genre” as “the colonizer’s gift of cursing” (109). In a similar vein to other authors, Lever also sees postcolonial forms of satire as a way of critiquing colonial forces as a subversive genre.

Moreover, in his *Satire, Humor and the Construction of Identities*, Massih Zekavat similarly demonstrates how satire can be used as a tool for resistance, but he also emphasizes how it can also become a means of imposing already existing dominant ideologies. In the book, Zekavat attempts “to convey how satire can construct the identities of social subjects across the bipolarities of sexism, racism, nationalism, and religion all of which presuppose otherness” (4). According to Zekavat, “otherness is [...] inevitable in humor and satire” (23), and it is through two opposing forms of othering that satire works to construct identities. He writes:

Satire has been employed to perform two major functions with regard to the peripheries. First, it is adopted by the marginalized to mock, resist and subvert the mainstream. This function renders satire as the subaltern’s expression. Second, satire is manipulated by the mainstream to vex and marginalize the other and further deprive the peripheral of their share of power. In other words, satire can function as a means of othering. Thus, it has been used both to resist and subvert, and to reinforce the structures of power and social systems. In both ways, however, satire is a determinant of identity formation by distinguishing certain groups from others. (Zekavat 6)

As Zekavat suggests, satire can be a tool of both subaltern resistance “as the subaltern’s expression” and as a way of reinforcing already existing dominant cultural ideologies “as a means of othering”. This notion “is significant not only because identity is among the primary contemporary concerns in a globalized, cosmopolitan, and postcolonial world [...] but also because different aspects of contemporary life are dominated by

humor” (Zekavat 9). As he contextualizes satire as a discourse rather than a genre, Zekavat considers satire as a politically powerful tool and demonstrates its role in shaping identities. Since identity formation is one of the most significant issues within postcolonial discourse, Zekavat’s work can also be seen as an important contribution to the discussions of this thesis. Moreover, in his discussion of satire’s oppositional assets for the subaltern, Zekavat also complicates this oppositionality by claiming that satire can also be a form of othering or reinforcing certain ideological outlooks. Hence, his claim also in line with Ball’s view of satire’s multidirectional targeting as these two functions themselves show that satire is capable of functioning in multiplicity of ways, which stays the same within postcolonial texts too. This capability brings us to the shared characteristics of satire and postcolonial writing, and how these attributes are discussed in the analysis of satire in postcolonial literature.

As Ball explains in *Satire and the Postcolonial Novel*, satire, in a similar vein to postcoloniality, resists unitary theorizations. According to Ball, satire “needs to be separately theorized for each body of work” (6). Ball sees satire as an easily adaptable form and analyzes it separately in each text it is used. Like Zekavat, Ball claims that satire is “the quintessential form of “othering”” (13), meaning that satire functions in a way that “others” its target. Since the act of satirical ridiculing is intentional in the sense that the target of satire is differentiated with great exaggerations to drive a point home, in a perhaps more righteous way, it bears a resemblance to postcolonial concept of being “other”-ed. Thus, satirical forms can be then both a resistance and a form of inner critique as a tool reclaimed from the West. As Ball argues, “satiric modes can articulate internal disagreements within a culture, and also offer variously constituted connections between the satirized conditions located there and the colonial experience” (Ball 13). Ball emphasizes satire’s openness, flexibility, and multidirectional targeting as a rhetoric and mode of writing, and the two common elements he finds in both satire and postcolonial literature are oppositionality and referentiality. Stating that postcoloniality and satiric voices should be analyzed in consideration of both of their respective merits, Ball suggests that “if hybridity and syncretism are to be productive postcolonial concepts, their logical extension into the discourse of satire demands a concept of satiric multidirectionality” (Ball 12). In other words, even if a text “may not *directly* implicate”

(Ball 12) the multiplicity of targets postcolonial satires usually present, there is still a responsibility of reading these texts as products of the imperial and colonial oppression. Hence, analyzing satire within postcolonial texts requires one to find “multiplicity of targets” that reflects the complexity of the postcolonial state. Though the foremost target of postcolonial satire rightfully would be those imperialist powers, Ball also points out how “satiric modes can articulate internal disagreements within a culture, and also offer variously constituted connections between the satirized conditions located there and the colonial experience criticism of satiric texts” (13). In that regard, from a clearly subjective point of view, postcolonial satire can function to criticize both the inner cultural shortcomings and the external imperial forces’ effects on the context the author writes about. As Ball states, “satire merges elements from contrasting or antithetical realms” (23), which then allows satire to show its “multidirectional potential” (Ball 40). This multidirectionality, hence, can be a defining trait of postcolonial satires. While it is true that satire is also often characterized with its variety, from a postcolonial framework, this attribute can be even more heightened in a postcolonial satire because postcoloniality often brings this flexibility to a text.

Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein similarly suggest that there is also no “singular postcolonial laughter” and ask: “Given their heterogeneous nature and blurred boundaries, what happens when laughter and the postcolonial are brought together?” (Reichl and Stain 8) in *Cheeky Fiction*’s introductory chapter. For Reichl and Stain, what they call as “laughing back”, i.e. the subversiveness of humor, can be seen as a valid function of postcolonial humor however it certainly is not the only one. As they also consider the communal effects of laughter that can bring people together, they point out how “the specifics of humour, the laughter that is shared among an in-group, are particularly interesting for postcolonial analyses” (Reichl & Stain 22) since the “laughter that is shared by in-group members wields cohesive powers” (22). For Reichl and Stain, this laughter creates a tie that strengthens communal ties. Moreover, from a postcolonial perspective, then, the idea of laughter bringing communities together also has further implications when the power dynamics between colonizer and colonized, for instance, is considered. The multiplicities of these dynamics mean that laughter, like satire, can be a multi-purposed tool, which again shows satire’s versatility in writing. In that regard,

Ulrike Erichsen, likewise, suggests that “humour can be used to highlight a doubly-coded situation” (30). In a similar vein to Ball, Erichsen suggests that postcolonial humour “can be employed as a means to defuse such cultural conflict by pointing out cultural differences without the need to ‘solve’ the potential conflict or to decide which frame of reference is more appropriate” (39). Hence, from this perspective too postcolonial humor has multiple functions that goes with its versatility. All in all, as all these authors argue, Reichl and Stain’s study showcases the variety of outlooks on theories of humor alongside postcoloniality. They thoroughly represent both the lack of unitary theories and the variety of conversations surrounding these subjects, and showcase the multiplicity of functions postcolonial satire/humor has whether it is bringing communities together or critiquing the dominating colonial forces.

In all of these works on satire, humor, and their place within the postcolonial discourse, there seems to be an agreement on the subversive and flexible properties these three concepts share. Thus, satire provides a medium in which postcolonial resistance and subversion can be adapted in ways an author sees fit for their personal aim. Yet, as Zekavat also suggests, satire has a potential to be used to validate the dominant political ideologies as well, which might go against and complicate such subversive ideals. As Hutcheon also points out:

There is nothing *intrinsically* subversive about ironic skepticism or about any such self-questioning, “internally dialogized” mode (LaCapra 1985: 119); there is no *necessary* relationship between irony and radical politics or even radical formal innovation (Nichols 1981: 65). Irony has often been used to reinforce rather than to question established attitudes (cf. Moser 1984: 414), as the history of satire illustrates so well. (*Irony* 10)

Thus, even though “irony can and does function tactically in the service of a wide range of political positions” (Hutcheon, *Irony* 10), this political positioning may not always align with subversiveness or resistance. As Zekavat and Hutcheon both suggest satire can also work to reaffirm socially dominant ideas and political stances too. As W.H. Auden similarly claims:

Satire flourishes in a homogeneous society where satirist and audience share the same views as to how normal people can be expected to behave, and in times of

relative stability and contentment, for satire cannot deal with serious evil and suffering. In an age like our own, it cannot flourish except in intimate circles as an expression of private feuds: in public life the evils and sufferings are so serious that satire seems trivial and the only possible kind of attack is prophetic denunciation. (385)

Hence, according to Auden, satirical oppositionality only works if there is a societal agreement on the criticism of whatever vice or folly the satirist points their finger at. This idea however does not hold up when we consider postcolonial satirical fictions because postcoloniality inherently connotes heterogeneous forms of society and outlooks. As John Clement Ball suggests:

Postcolonial texts, satiric or otherwise, emerge from an environment that is at least as divided, fragmented, various, and destabilized as eighteenth-century England. Concepts such as shared norms and assumptions, cultural homogeneity, universal values, and social stability are impossible to apply with confidence either to contemporary postcolonial societies or to the international community of writers and readers of postcolonial novels. (19)

Therefore, the oppositional aspect of satire as well as other ironic forms of writing also cannot be so easily dismissed, especially when the postcolonial aspects of such writings are also taken into account. Susan Lever also disagrees with the idea of positing satire in such a conservative place. According to Lever, positioning satire as a conservative genre, “despite its anarchic stylistic qualities”, dismisses how satire usually “tends to see History as decline rather than progress” and “regards the claims of history-as-progress with great cynicism” (Lever 110). As Lever claims, satire often resists the very idea of a linear, historical process, and as opposed to what Auden claims, brings a cynical outlook to the happenings of the present conditions it attempts to represent. In that regard, perhaps oppositionality should not be equated to aiming to create actual social change. As Greenberg notes most topical satires are “content to make a fleeting impact in the immediate present” (23) rather than a lasting impact that inspires concrete change. There is rather an aim of oppositionality for its own sake.

Furthermore, with satire, there can also be complications in making sure the audience “gets” the intended meaning, which can often be problematic with satirical

modes of writing. John Clement Ball points out how even though “authors may write with specific audiences in mind” (20), this does not guarantee that the reception of their work will go according to their intentions. As he notes how postcolonial literature is consumed by international audiences who are made of various discursive communities anyway, he gives the controversies surrounding the works of Rushdie and Naipaul as examples and suggests that

the differing reception of Naipaul’s works by Caribbean and Anglo-American readers demonstrates the problems with claiming universal norms as the basis of satiric communication. And while Rushdie may have intended his portrayal of Mahound in *The Satanic Verses* as satiric fantasy, many Islamic fundamentalists read it (or dismissed it without reading it) as blasphemy. These may be extreme and unique examples. But they point to a general fact: a satiric work may assume an ideal reader who shares its standards of judgment, but it will not always get one. (Ball 20)

In a similar vein, Hutcheon claims that “even if an ironist intends an irony to be interpreted in an oppositional framework, there is no guarantee that this subversive intent will be realized” (*Irony* 15). Hutcheon talks about how irony happens as much through the audience's own interpretation as it is through the author's or any artist's intentional way of constructing their works. For Ball, the problem of this authorial intent in satirical texts becomes a double-edged issue as he notes how similar issues can also be observed in non-satirical postcolonial texts too. He talks about how the cross-cultural references that most postcolonial texts are loaded with might not be fully recognized by those who remain outside of the postcolonial contexts in question. In addition, because postcoloniality is also undoubtedly related to and is understood through binary oppositions, Ball argues that this is where satire becomes a useful tool. He points out how “establishing gaps and contrasts is exactly what the satirist does do as a strategy of critique” (Ball 24). Echoing Lever as well as Auden, Ball suggests that this “radical dualism” establishes its preferences—its norms and deviations— usually along the lines of the conventional values of the satirist and his projected audience” (24). From a postcolonial perspective, it would be expected that the target would be the imperial/colonizer side of the binary opposition who is the one “in power”. However, as

Bhabha and various other critics point out these oppositions usually do not remain in two contrasting categories, but often include multitudes and possess flexibility. Postcolonial satires can be regarded in these terms as well, as representations of these hybrid conditionings.

As Ball demonstrates in his book, satire works in a “multidirectional” way within postcolonial texts. Hence, Ball suggests that in order not to undermine this complexity, satiric postcolonial texts “demand careful investigation on a case-by-case basis of the gaps that structure their judgments” as the usages of binary contrasts in these texts would differ from one another, which should be accounted for (23). In that sense, “the critic must be alert to the fact that some satiric representations will look like reinscriptions of condescending colonialist discourse, as well as to the possibility that ambivalence and satiric multidirectionality may qualify a text’s apparent loyalties” according to Ball (23). In Hutcheon’s words, satirical postcolonial voices, then, are “never simple and never single” (*Irony* 16). Satire thus becomes useful for a postcolonial outlook because it can provide a baseline for the heterogenous and polyvocal texts of postcolonial fictions. Following John Clement Ball’s way of analyzing postcolonial satirical fictions, in this thesis, I also intend to present a “case-by-case” analysis of each of the chosen novels; which are V.S Naipaul’s *The Mystic Masseur*, Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* and NoViolet Bulawayo’s *Glory*. As all these authors are considered within the boundaries of “postcolonial authorship”, I intend to analyze how their usages of satirical forms of writing function as a tool for both postcolonial resistance and as a way of embracing postcolonial conditions of hybridity and multicultural/polyphonic voices. As a mode of writing that is described both as inherently oppositional and as a way of reinforcing dominant political ideologies within a society, satire possesses varied forms of political functions in any given satirical text. My question here is, then, how do these political functions work within each of the postcolonial texts I have chosen as case studies? In that sense, as Linda Hutcheon points out,

postcolonial theorists have argued that irony is one of the most effective ways of dealing with precisely such difficult issues—at least when used oppositionally from within. But there was the transideological rub: this irony was perceived as

coming from a colonial source, even if a self-deconstructing one, and even if the irony was largely at the expense of imperialists not Africans. (*Irony* 184)

My discussion of postcolonial satire can be regarded in a similar vein to this conceptualization of irony too. As it was previously suggested, there is a presupposed form of resistant quality that is ascribed to postcolonial texts by definition. Yet, as Brouillette and Huggan also point out, this ascription might sometimes oversimplify the sociopolitical positioning of a postcolonial text. In the case of postcolonial satirical texts, then, the target might be both the faults the satirists observe within the society and the external imperial forces; and even the follies humanity shares universally regardless of ethnic or national identities. Satire as a medium can function in such a “multidirectional” manner. With postcolonial influence, these variable and flexible aspects of satire get even more heightened. Consequently, satire lends itself easily to the often ambivalent and personal critiques presented in postcolonial literature. Considering all these possibilities, this thesis aims to examine how Naipaul, Kureishi, and Bulawayo use satirical forms to reflect the postcolonial realities their novels are representations of, from their own personal reflections.

In Chapter II, I will discuss V.S. Naipaul’s first novel, *The Mystic Masseur*, in relation to how his use of satire amplifies the ambivalent realities of both Trinidad as a colonial centre and as a reflection of his authorial voice in the novel. Discussing characters such as Ganesh, Ramlogan and Leela as representations of Trinidadian people, I intend to argue that although, from a representational stand-point, the characterizations of these figures can be criticized somewhat as “misrepresentations”; this outlook also dismisses the open and multidirectional possibilities of satire. Especially with the character of Ganesh, Naipaul portrays a nuanced and humanized portrayal of a masseur-turned-colonial politician who often falls victim to the necessity of colonial mimicry. As a primary target of satire too, Ganesh’s vices add dimensions to his characterization and exemplify how colonialism creates an environment these flaws can thrive in. Still, there are also valid criticisms that can be made with regards to Ramlogan and Leela who are often not given the same treatment as Ganesh as supporting characters of the novel. These portrayals, however, showcase the

ambivalence of Naipaul's novel as well as the multiplicities of ways satire and satirical elements can be interpreted in a (postcolonial) text.

In Chapter III, my discussion will be on Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* as an example both *Bildungsroman* and satirical text. I will discuss how the contradictory elements of these two literary conventions are employed within the novel through the characters Karim and Haroon. In this regard, I intend to argue that Kureishi's employment of satire in the novel enables him to subvert the conventions of *Bildungsroman* as a much more closed form of writing than satire. In the novel, since the personal journeys both Karim and Haroon undergo are paralleled with each other as performers of different kinds, this creates interesting possibilities for Kureishi to subvert the expectations of both *Bildungsroman* and satire. While Haroon becomes an unconventional subject of almost his own *Bildungsroman*, Karim's personal growth is often stunted in the novel in contrary to what is usually expected of a protagonist of *Bildungsroman*. Moreover, as Karim's humorous perspective also allows doing so, the satire of the novel does not overlook any of the characters or ideological stances portrayed in the book. Consequently, Kureishi hence subverts the expectations of "what should be of critical interest" for an author characterized as "postcolonial" too.

In Chapter IV, NoViolet Bulawayo's second novel, *Glory*, will be discussed in the context of how the satire of the novel is applied within the spectrum of polyphony. Since the novel deals with a fictionalized version of recent political developments in Zimbabwe, the discussion will also focus on how the topicality of the issues presented in the novel elevate the poignancy of its satirical elements. Bulawayo's use of intertextuality, orality, and tonal and perspective shifts result with a narrative that is reflective of many contradictory voices that reside in a single nation with a history of collective trauma. While the satire of the novel brings levity and a broad spectrum of points of views that are enabled through the polyphonic attributes as well, there is also something to be said about the ways satire makes room for genuine and affecting emotions in the novel with its openness to carry conflicting voices collectively. Thus, Bulawayo can mock and ridicule what has recently transpired in her home country in a fictionally realized way as the silenced historical realities behind these developments are also presented to the reader without losing their gravity. As the novel also deals with

giving voice to a silenced history, which is a key feature of postcoloniality, the novel can be considered a “postcolonial text”. In that sense, *Glory* is a postcolonial satire as the satire of the text can be considered a representation of the aftereffects of colonialism on Zimbabwe.



CHAPTER II

“TWO WORLDS AWAY”: THE AMBIVALENT SATIRICAL VOICE OF V.S. NAIPAUL IN *THE MYSTIC MASSEUR*

In this chapter, Naipaul's debut novel *The Mystic Masseur* will be discussed and the role satire plays in this novel will be analyzed in terms of the ambivalence Naipaul brings to the text. In *The Mystic Masseur*, V.S. Naipaul satirizes the Trinidadian society as well as the corruptive state of its political scene. Though at times it seems like his primary target is the ordinary citizens of the society, his critique of the making of a politician of a higher status also demonstrates what sort of corruption one should comply with, in order to obtain such a position. As authors such as John Clement Ball or Reyhan Özer Taniyan point out, Naipaul's satires often take a “multidirectional” or “double-edged” form, and *The Mystic Masseur* is no exception as he targets colonizer and colonized alike. It is easy to come to the conclusion that, at times, his tone is needlessly biting and cruel against the colonized. However, dismissing Naipaul's point of view also seems counterproductive for the discourse on postcolonial authors who write outside of their homelands as his voice represents the displaced colonial/postcolonial subject. As an individual who experiences “a double displacement, of the Indian originated Trinidadian people” (Özer Taniyan 39), Naipaul perfectly exemplifies this notion of displacement and ambivalence. The novel, then, presents a deeply subjective narrative based on Naipaul's own personal feelings and views on Trinidad and Trinidadian people. If satires are meant to present the reality as if to put a mirror against it as Gilbert Highet suggests, Naipaul uses the broken pieces of a mirror in Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands* in his reflection and paints a highly subjective picture of Trinidad. Still, his portrayal of the political scene showcases a valid critique of how a colonial state is ruled as the figure of a political figure is ridiculed for his phoniness and vanity. In many ways, satire becomes the outlet through which Naipaul expresses the ambivalence of both him as an author and the characters of the novel experience.

2.1 Naipaul's Ambivalent Voice

In many ways, the ambivalent qualities of *The Mystic Masseur* can be related to Naipaul's voice in the novel and his own ambivalence, reflecting his own personal

history and experiences. In his *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie describes his novel *Midnight Children* as “a novel of memory and about memory” (10) and his representation of his homeland, India, in the novel as “a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions” (10). For Rushdie, as an author who writes outside of his ethnic roots his reflections on India are reflected through “broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost” (11). As he likens these broken pieces to “broken pots antiquity” (12), he suggests that although fragmented, these views still have their value within literature. Hence, writers such as Rushdie who write inevitably from the “outside” also provide valid perspectives that Rushdie also finds valuable in terms of forging hybrid identities. For Rushdie:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (10)

As an individual who describes his position in the society as “two worlds away” (Naipaul, *Occasions* 10), V.S. Naipaul also exemplifies the types of displaced writers Rushdie is talking about in the passage who create “Indias of the mind” in their works. Rushdie embraces this inevitable outcome of Western hegemony and imperial practices, and it could be suggested that Naipaul's writing also displays some of these consequences of the cultural indoctrination colonial subjects experience.

Yet, Naipaul is also an undoubtedly polarizing figure whose writing has been criticized for creating or reaffirming wrongful generalizations or misrepresentations of the minorities he represents in his writings. Edward Said, for instance, claims that Naipaul's account of the Islamic countries he writes about in *Among the Believers* is “ignorant, illiterate and cliché ridden” (“The Post-Colonial Intellectual” 53). Homi Bhabha, likewise, points out that the types of representations Naipaul's work depicts are evident even through “the hideous panorama that some of his titles provide: *The Loss of*

El Dorado, The Mimic Men, An Area of Darkness, A Wounded Civilization, The Overcrowded Barracoon” (“Signs” 149). Elsewhere, Bhabha also writes:

...the imaginative value of Naipaul’s writing lies in its peculiar perversity. His narratives embody their negative energies and prejudicial perspectives with a ferocious passion that is, at once, dogmatic and diagnostic. The reader is given unusual insights into the psychic and affective structures that inform the politics of everyday life as it is lived in the midst of the protocols of colonial power and its contest of cultures. (“Adagio” 373)

Bhabha suggests that although Naipaul’s writing gives unusual insights into colonial practices, it still bears dogmatic dimensions that create misrepresentations. As Rushdie puts it when he discusses Naipaul’s documental writing in the same book Said criticizes, the underlying problem within his writing “is that it’s a highly selective truth, a novelist’s truth masquerading as objective reality” (Rushdie 374). Naipaul, therefore, has been a controversial figure to analyze and study, to say the least. As he acknowledges “that speaking on the subject of V.S. Naipaul can sometimes cause anger and offense” William Ghosh asks in his discussion with Bhabha on Naipaul “so why do we continue to read, study, and teach him? Why does Naipaul matter today?” (Ghosh, “Homi K. Bhabha on V.S. Naipaul”). For Ghosh and Bhabha, the reason to study Naipaul is because, for all his faults and misrepresentations, his writings encapsulate colonial ambivalence in a very authentic way.

Most of Naipaul’s late bibliography consists of his notorious travel narratives that he presents as documental truths. As John Clement Ball suggests, Naipaul’s “essays and travelogues have always been more controversial than his novels and short stories” (47) because of this claim of “representing the truth”. However, according to Ball, this criticism might have also caused biased readings of his earlier fiction that Naipaul has strictly posited as “fiction”. He claims that “it was only after *The Middle Passage* was published that West Indian critics [...] began objecting on ideological grounds to Naipaul’s earlier satiric fictions” (Ball 48). This begs the question of whether or not one should judge a work of fiction with a retrospective outlook. In Naipaul’s case too, we cannot firmly judge his earlier writing with the context of his later work because his writing can also be reflective of the different stages of his life. As this chapter will focus

on his first satirical novel, this distinction between his early and later works is an important one to bear in mind.

Furthermore, as Ball illustrates, Naipaul's satirical fiction often does not get the same level of critical attention as his "serious" writing. According to Ball, Naipaul himself, in fact, rejects the satirist label (42), and he has labeled his earliest work as "“apprenticeship” works, “frivolous” books that later embarrassed him” (Ball 42). Though this attitude perhaps illustrates the reasons why the critical receptions of these books may not have been at the same level of Naipaul's later work, Naipaul also seems to be undermining the possibilities of satire and the satirist label. From Ball's perspective too, embracing “the multidirectional possibilities enabled by satiric fictions” can be more fitting for an author such as Naipaul whose voice carries contradictions and ambivalence. Reyhan Özer Taniyan, likewise, claims that “for the readers and critics who are familiar with the postcolonial and Third-World issues, Naipaul's style induces both celebration and castigation” (1). Calling Naipaul "an ambivalent writer", she argues that Naipaul's early work can be characterized by the "double edged" criticism they show regarding Trinidadian life and people (Özer Taniyan 38). Here, Naipaul's use of satire highlights his ambivalence as it allows him to target both the inner workings and the colonial practices of Trinidad. In that sense, because Naipaul has been a particularly controversial figure in postcolonial literature, his use of satire can be viewed as freeing in certain ways. Since the primary aim of satire is to precisely criticize and ridicule the faults the satirist sees in a familiar zone or context, this medium allows authors to show their more biting and critical voices in a more unapologetic manner. Hence, the same can be suggested of Naipaul as a satirist too.

In many ways, Naipaul is also a displaced author whose reflections are often considered as at best imperfect and at worst offensive. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for instance, Naipaul is an author “who holds a mirror of imagination unto society to capture a certain view of reality”; he suggests, however, that “the mirror ends up showing much more than the holder intended” (“Lone Flower at the Dinner Table”). According to Elizabeth Powers, when it comes to Naipaul's writing, “there is a general consensus that the “personal” characterizes both his ambition as a writer and the work itself” (Powers 198). Naipaul himself, in fact, suggests that he “is the sum of his books” (*Occasions*

182-83) as he claims his aim in being a writer was to make sense of the "areas of darkness" that surrounded him as someone affected by colonialism (*Occasions* 190). This characteristic of writing as a personal exercise can be observed with *The Mystic Masseur* too. In many ways, the novel, and its satirical elements, operate as a means of Naipaul's societal commentary on Trinidad. Interestingly, the novel opens with the following disclaimer:

All characters, organizations, and incidents in this novel are fictitious. This is a necessary assurance because, although its politicians have taken to calling it a country, Trinidad is a small island, no bigger than Lancashire, with a population somewhat smaller than Nottingham's. In this novel the geography of the island is distorted. Dates are, unavoidably, mentioned; but no actual holder of any office is portrayed. The strike mentioned in Chapter Twelve has no basis in fact. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 7)

As opposed to his claimed documental writing of the later phase of his career, here Naipaul explicitly states the fictitiousness of his novel as a "necessary assurance". Yet, as opposed to what he claims, some of the incidents and figures of the novel can also be suggested to relate to real-life incidents and figures too. The most notable one perhaps is the first general elections of Trinidad in 1946, which becomes a topic of discussion for Aaron Eastley in his "V. S. Naipaul and the 1946 Trinidad General Election". In the essay, Eastley emphasizes the personal qualities of Naipaul's early Trinidadian writings and suggests that his representations "are much more telling about their author than his island" (Eastley 27). According to Eastley, Naipaul's "vantage point was in many ways ideal, but his views were obviously individual. And the same could be said of virtually all the extant primary texts touching on the election" (Eastley 3). Then, as it is also established by Naipaul with the disclaimer right at the beginning of the novel, even if some events or figures of the novel might have real-life correspondences, the text should be read somewhat skeptically as a reflection of Naipaul's personal outlooks.

2.2 The Satirical Workings of *The Mystic Masseur*

When one examines *The Mystic Masseur*, the role satire plays in the novel should also be considered with its "multidirectional possibilities" because much of the

novel's narrative workings is born out of these satirical qualities. Satirical elements such as parody or irony give other meanings to a text that might not be obvious at first glance. In addition, because satirical intent is often loaded with sociopolitical criticism, these types of fictional narratives become somewhat of an encapsulation of the faults an author observes in a social context. In addition, as W.H. Auden argues for, there should be an underlying agreement on these criticisms for the intended meaning to come across as the author has intended. However, as it was illustrated in the previous chapter this homogeneity is an ideal that cannot be reached within colonized societies. As Gordon Rohlehr suggests:

Satire is the sensitive measure of a society's departure from a norm inherent in itself. Since Naipaul starts with the conviction that such a norm is absent from his society, his task as satirist becomes doubly difficult. Not only must he recreate experience, but also simultaneously create the standards against which this experience is to be judged. This explains the mixture of farce and social consciousness which occurs in the two early novels. (qtd. in Ball 66)

For Rohlehr, Naipaul's first two novels, *The Mystic Masseur* and *The Suffrage of Elvira*, reflect these difficulties as he attempts to represent Trinidad through a satirical mode of writing. Because Trinidad was a highly multicultural colonial center, Naipaul's writing cannot be representative of the island as a whole. Then, *The Mystic Masseur*, alongside his other early writing on the island, is best seen as a reflection of Naipaul and his experiences as a young man who left Trinidad when he was eighteen.

At the beginning of the novel, there is an unnamed first-person narrator who Özer Taniyan speculates to be "probably Naipaul himself" (41). It is through the eyes of this child the reader first meets the protagonist of the novel, Ganesh Ramsumair, when the narrator has a swollen foot and comes to see Ganesh as the most famed masseur of the island at the time. When he asks his mother "'Who the hell is this Ganesh?'" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 10); the narrator playfully suggests, "this was a question many people were going to ask later on" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 10). At this point in his life, Ganesh masquerades as a masseur with holy or mystical powers of healing people; a profession that he assumes after his father. As he enters Ganesh's hut, the narrator describes his first impression of him in the following passage:

Presently a young man came out on the small verandah. He was dressed in the ordinary way, trousers and vest, and I didn't think he looked particularly holy. He wasn't wearing the dhoti and koortah and turban I had expected. I was a little reassured when I saw that he was holding a big book. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 11)

From this young boy's perspective, at first glance, Ganesh does not seem to exhibit his advertised "holiness"; what reassures the boy however is the big book in his hands as well as all the books that are scattered throughout Ganesh's hut. Here, Naipaul's choice of a child's perspective not only shows us how Ganesh is perceived in the society in the broadest strokes, but also how this image is reshaped in a child's mind. As the narrator notes the books he sees around him, we get the sense that in this society, simply being literate is regarded as a respectable quality. Moreover, in a sense, the boy's expectation of his appearance as an East Indian masseur and his surprise in seeing so many books in Ganesh's hut suggests that Ganesh has a duality in him as a colonized man. As Özer Taniyan suggests "the duality of the East Indian character in Trinidad represented with the western characteristics, indeed, indicates Naipaul's ambivalence" (41). Naipaul invokes this image of cultural duality and shows a child's skepticism right at the beginning of the novel to, then, unravel Ganesh's narrative of transformation later. At the end of the first chapter, the narrator suggests, "I myself believe that the history of Ganesh is, in a way, the history of our times; and there may be people who will welcome this imperfect account of the man Ganesh Ramsumair, masseur, mystic, and, since 1953, M.B.E" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 16). For the narrator, "the history of Ganesh" is "the history of their times". As an individual living in a colonial society, Ganesh exemplifies the ambivalence of a colonial subject. As he assumes the roles of "masseur, mystic and M.B.E", in many ways, his taking of such roles can also be associated with his frustrations regarding his (post)colonial identity. Even though Ganesh undoubtedly gains power and a respectable reputation among the society as a result of these roles, there is also the sense that these titles are still manufactured roles he plays in order to achieve a certain status. As the narrative unravels, we see that the titles themselves have no meaning because Ganesh fools everyone, including himself, to obtain a level of power in the society. Hence, if a phony such as Ganesh can come to these positions of power, the legitimacy of the positions themselves become questionable in the eyes of the reader.

2.2.1 Ganesh

As a character, Ganesh can be considered both the protagonist the reader is meant to root for and one of the most significant targets of Naipaul's satirical criticism in this novel. The result is a multidimensional and a dynamic character. Since Ganesh is one of Naipaul's representations of his "failed mimic men" (Eastley 19) in his fiction, the performance of colonial mimicry itself is critiqued in the novel through Ganesh's journey and the different roles he tries on. However, as Tewarie Bhoendra claims most critics "have viewed *The Mystic Masseur* as a satire of Trinidad society or of the colonial politician, but much irony in this novel is directed against the colonial power, which rewards mimicry and self-contempt and discourages independence and self-respect" (Bhoendra 26). From this perspective, while the novel is a satire of a colonial politician, because of the satirical workings also targeting colonial power, Ganesh is at once a target and a victim of his circumstances. It is not entirely his own choice to comply with the corruptive rules of colonialism, but there are other complicated reasons underlying his decisions in the novel too. The mimicry he employs, for instance, can be regarded as a survival mechanism as well as a self-serving means to maintaining or gaining power. Thus, what is meant by the double-edged or multidirectional criticisms of Naipaul's satire can be recognized as a way of exposing the very performative nature of the colonial mimicry Naipaul's characters are often obliged to. Ganesh becomes a perfect example of such a character. As Bhabha explains, colonial mimicry exposes the constructedness of both the colonized and the colonizer, and in a similar vein, Naipaul's criticism of these types of mimicry also works doubly. The character of Ganesh, then, becomes the exemplification of all these understandings.

When we first meet Ganesh, he is a student at Queen's Royale Collage. As it is suggested right at the beginning of the second chapter, he never really feels "happy during the four years he spends" there (Naipaul, *Masseur* 17). As a Hindu man who has not embraced his cultural upbringing fully yet, Ganesh feels a great deal of alienation in his college years. In the novel, this alienation is presented with humor, which both makes Ganesh as a character relatable to the reader and makes this subject a universal feeling that the reader can relate to. Moreover, he also becomes the target of some

people's mockery because of his physical appearance after he comes to Port of Spain with his father:

When they got to St Joseph, Ganesh began to feel shy. Their dress and manner were no longer drawing looks of respect. People were smiling, and when they got off at the railway terminus in Port of Spain, a woman laughed.

'I did tell you not to dress me up like this,' Ganesh lied, and was near to sobbing. 'Let them laugh,' the old man replied in Hindi, and passed the palm of his hand over his thick grey moustache. 'Jackasses bray at anything.' (Naipaul, *Masseur* 18)

Their way of representing the culture they are a part of is met with mockery and laughter, and this embarrasses Ganesh as he feels insecure in his own skin. Since Ganesh does not seem to be able to embrace his ethnic culture, he scolds his father and is emotionally quite affected by the bullying they face. Though within the Hindu traditions, their outfits symbolize respectability, people outside of their culture cannot recognize this, and because they stand out as "different" and "other", they easily become the targets of racist mockeries, which creates a sense of shame for Ganesh who wants to fit in. His father also in a way represents this culture Ganesh cannot fully embrace as much as his father seems to be embracing.

After he attempts to become a teacher following his college education, Ganesh's teaching career is short-lived, and he goes back to Fourways just in time to receive the news of his father's passing. This event is a significant turning point in the story not only because it is the first indication of Ganesh's coming of age, but also because it can be considered the first step for Ganesh to assume his father's profession of massaging and healing people. His father somehow represents his Hindu roots which would also be culturally and socially associated with the profession of being a masseur. Hence, his undertaking of his father's profession is also significant in relation to Ganesh's issues regarding his identity. In the novel, the death of Ganesh's father is depicted both as an alienating experience for Ganesh, as he grieves this loss personally, and as a means to show the ritualistic ways of communal grieving. In these regards, Naipaul portrays such a grim topic with humour and satiric exaggerations as he shows the performative nature of such rituals to the reader. For instance, the way Ganesh expresses his grief, as the

person who is probably going through the biggest sense of loss, is not loud or in-your-face as it would maybe expected to be. He is quite reserved in his grief though the alienation he is going through is also pointed out in the novel. The guests' exaggerated reactions in the funeral, however, paint a completely contrasting image:

The woman removed her hands from Ganesh and put them on her head. She shrieked, twice, then dropped into a wail: "No, Ramlogan, I don't want to eat today."

Ramlogan wiped his eyes with a thick hairy finger. 'Today,' he sobbed, holding out both hands towards the bedroom, 'today he can't eat at all.'

The woman shrieked again. 'Today he can't eat at all.' (Naipaul, *Masseur* 27)

As the official man of the house now, Ganesh also seems to notice the ritualistic ways of grieving that surround him. After he follows the ritualistic practices in order to honor his father, Ganesh realizes how "ritual had replaced grief" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 28). Moreover, as people start noticing how much this loss is affecting him as "he does a lot of thinking", his alienation is again emphasized: "He began to feel a little strange and feared he was going mad. He knew the Fourways people, and they knew him and liked him, but now he sometimes felt cut off from them" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 30). Here, the reader sees another instance of Ganesh's loose sense of self and how his grief worsens the alienation he has already shown since the beginning of the novel. As an individual, Ganesh feels completely cut-off and almost invisible; thus, these feelings might also explain his continuous attempts of making a name for himself. In his mind, this could be a strategy of establishing his identity as he might be equating status with a stable sense of self.

Following the funeral, Ganesh is left to build a life for himself now that he is a man after losing his father. Everyone expects him to get married and continue on his father's profession of massaging people. Even though he claims that "'I ain't a doctor, man. I ain't know anything about people foot.'" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 32), he tries his hand at being a masseur. Following his marriage to the daughter of Ramlogan, one of the small businessmen in town, and their departure to start a life in Fuente Grove, he also starts having aspirations of becoming a writer. As Bhoendra suggests, "Ganesh's career as a mystic follows his attempt to win fame as a writer, an attempt that needs brief

examination. His first book, *One Hundred and One Questions and Answers About the Hindu Religion*, is both a commercial and an intellectual failure, but the writing of the book reveals several important elements in Ganesh's character" (16). Furthermore, his insistence on doing "a little bit of massaging and a little bit of writing" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 55), can also be regarded as a way of reconciling the dual cultural identity as a colonial subject. What is striking here is that within the text, there are many instances of ridicules regarding Ganesh's decision to pursue a writing career. "'You ever hear of Trinidad people writing books?'" the boy in the print shop asks Ganesh, for instance. In another instance, Ganesh and Leale discuss his slow process of writing his book:

'Leela, is the thing everybody who want to write have to face.

Poverty and sickness is what every writer have to suffer.

'But you ain't writing, man.' (Naipaul, *Masseur* 83)

Another example of such mockery occurs when Ganesh sends a copy of his book to Mahatma Gandhi, and it is asserted that "doubtless it was only the outbreak of the war that prevented an acknowledgement" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 106). As it has been previously pointed out, at times, Naipaul's satirical targeting of his characters can be misjudged with representational expectations or values. In other words, if we read Naipaul's mockery of Ganesh in representational terms that implicates Trinidadian people as a whole; then, his characterization also loses some of its nuance. In the novel, Ganesh is rather portrayed as an individual who has his own positive and negative traits as every human does. The critique and ridicule directed towards him speak on a universal level as they point out the very human flaws such as laziness or hubris. As Imraan Coovadia explains:

Trinidadian people are mocked; yet the reader is, in a sense, welcomed into the community and its self-understanding. The punch line turns on an insight into provincial human nature, which might be the same for Alabama or the Australian Outback (Coovadia 40-41)

Thus, through the ridicule, the reader also feels a sense of belonging to this community and gains an understanding of Ganesh as a complex character. Whatever faults Ganesh might have does not entirely lie within his cultural identity; but with his personality. As an individual, Ganesh often lacks personal integrity and is usually motivated by shallow

things such as fame and reputation. He is as dishonest to himself as he is to the general public, and he lacks the self-awareness that could potentially make him change for the better. Yet, all these qualities are also obviously not inherently Trinidadian; Ganesh's flaws are universally humane ones that can be developed by any human being. In the novel, how he becomes continuously more corrupted is largely related to his own wrong choices and trickeries.

Following a significant recovery of a patient who claims that he is being chased by a black cloud, Ganesh begins to gain recognition within the society as a powerful healer. This incident is also one of the most significant indicators of the way Ganesh's phoniness and deceitfulness are shown in the novel. Since, as Greenberg asserts, "satire relies on techniques like exaggeration, deformation, caricature, and distortion, which push satiric representations beyond a threshold of realism" (18), it is through these satirical characterizations Ganesh's vices are exposed to the reader. In the scene when Ganesh chases away the black cloud, Ganesh just chants in Hindu, a language the family and the patient boy do not understand, and suggests that the boy alongside his family needs to believe in what he is doing for it to work. Although it is clear to the reader that he is making up all these "rules" just in the spur of the moment, the family shows that they believe in him, and Ganesh successfully gets rid of the cloud. Even Leela starts to buy into his shtick as she exclaims, "Man, I take back all the bad things I say and think about you. Today you make me feel really nice" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 130). It, however, becomes evident that what Ganesh was doing was in no way intentional as his silence speaks volumes:

'We not going to do that again. I only wanted to make sure this time. It makes them feel good, you know, hearing me talk a language they can't understand. But it not really necessary.'

'Manwa, I did see the cloud too, you know.'

'The mother see one devil, the father forty little devil, the boy see one cloud, and you see one cloud. Girl, whatever Suruj Mooma say about education, it have it uses sometimes.'

'Oh, man, don't tell me you use a trick on them.'

Ganesh didn't say. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 131)

From then on, as Beharry dubs him, Ganesh transforms into the titular “Mystic Masseur” as this successful session makes him gain credibility in his profession. His previously underselling book also starts to make more and more sales as a result. Moreover, he manages to fool people into believing that unlike other mystics, he is not after money or reputation, but does what he does only for the goodness of his heart. Yet, like Leela, the reader is aware of the truth behind Ganesh’s actions. In his *The Anatomy of Satire* Gilbert Highet writes, “the satirist, though he laughs, tells the truth. Many satirists repeat this. But often they declare that their truth is what people do not want to hear” (234). Thus, this is one of the points where Naipaul’s use of satire serve as a means of exposing Ganesh’s performativity which becomes exceedingly clearer with the start of his political career. John Clement Ball also suggests that through Ganesh, Naipaul criticizes “not only the mimic man’s imperfect or too-zealous achievement of his colonialist models, but also the choice of models in the first place” (37-38). Naipaul’s mockery here can be regarded as doubly placed since the target is not only the mimicker, but also the practice of colonial mimicry itself that is often forced by the colonizers themselves. For Ganesh, it is obvious that the mimicry he takes on as a masseur leads him to a much more prestigious career as a politician. Hence, there is an underlying implication here that trickery rather than authenticity garners accomplishments within the setting of the novel. As Coovadia indicates, Naipaul’s “writing is populated with characters who build up their own power with style, both in their clothes and in their ways of speaking” (13), and Ganesh exemplifies this notion too. Ganesh’s making as a politician is also a result of him building up his own power.

Thus, soon after he gains the status of a locally famed masseur, he decides to run for Trinidad’s first elections of 1946. In many ways, his feud with Narayan, who continuously attacks Ganesh in *The Hindu* newspaper, becomes a catalyst in his movement to a political career. As Ganesh himself writes in his *The Years of Guilt*, ‘If I needed any further proof of the hand of Providence in my career, [...] I had only to look at the incidents which led to the decline of Shri Narayan” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 177). When Narayan’s attacks against Ganesh continue in his column titled *A Little Bird Tells Us*, which actually often involves foul play and trickery against Ganesh’s costumers, Ganesh takes the matter into his own hands. He finally decides to publish his own newspaper:

The Dharma. Though Ganesh's reasonings seem noble at face value, it is also evident that his actions come from a place of self-serving interests. As Baidik Bhattacharya claims:

Ganesh's deliberate manipulation of Sanskrit texts, his self-promotional pamphlets, and his newspaper columns like "A Little Bird Tells Us," endorse the derelict intellectual and political atmosphere of the island where a trickster like him can become a local hero by flaunting his dubious "learning" and "knowledge" of books. The failure of plantation economy to produce a sustainable cultural milieu ensures the flourishing of a charlatan like him. (Bhattacharya 253)

Hence, when Ganesh manages to defeat Narayan, as it were, though he claims that he is only doing it "for the sake of Hindu unity in Trinidad" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 179), it is obvious to the reader that these sentiments are all false propaganda. Ganesh's actual aim is clearly just replacing Narayan as the new president of The Hindu Association. After Ganesh exposes the corruption Narayan has brought to the association by stealing from the association's funds, he is elected the new president of the organization without any fuss at all.

Then, as the narrator also states at the beginning of the novel, "nineteen forty-six" becomes "the turning-point of Ganesh's career" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 16) as the beginning of his political career. Such a career itself is often associated with deceitfulness and false promises, thus through this portrayal of a colonial "politician as playactor" ("Mimicry" 129), in Bhabha's words, Naipaul highlights how mimicry can become a performative practice for the colonized in order to fit in within ambivalent societies colonialism creates. As Bhabha notes, Naipaul's playactor exemplifies a type of representation of this colonial ambivalence. He calls these representations in general "the appropriate objects of a colonialist chain of command, authorized versions of otherness" (Bhabha, "Mimicry" 129). For Bhabha, "they are also, as I have shown, the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as "inappropriate" colonial subjects" ("Mimicry" 129). Going further, in an interview conducted by William Ghosh, Bhabha even suggests that Naipaul has been influential

for his frequently cited theoretical conceptualizations of colonial ambivalence and hybridity:

It is striking how many of the key terms from Bhabha's later work—ambivalence, vernacular cosmopolitanism—crop up again and again in his discussion of Naipaul. Did this early and diligent study of Naipaul shape his later concepts? "Absolutely," he says. "Naipaul was the matrix of some of my earliest ideas." (Ghosh, "Homi K. Bhabha on V.S. Naipaul")

Thus, as Bhabha asserts later in the interview, what Naipaul's writing often "requires you to do is to live with ambivalence" and "tolerate [it] as a condition of survival" (Ghosh, "Homi K. Bhabha on V.S. Naipaul"). As a result, his representations of colonial mimicry and hybridity can also usually be read with different multidirectional possibilities.

In terms of relating these notions of mimicry and ambivalence to Naipaul's satire, the connection between parody and mimicry can prove useful. Since "mimicry is very close to mockery and parody" (Zekavat 73), in many ways, the very act of representing this mimicry on page can be considered parodic. In Naipaul's case, however, this representation is doubly coded since, as the likes of John Clement Ball argue, the act of colonial mimicry itself becomes a target of ridicule. Here, there lies also the question of Naipaul's authorial intent as this ridicule can be seen both to the expense of the colonized and as a form of resistance depending on which perspective one chooses to partake. In this regard, as Ball suggests, "Naipaul's notion of mimicry has a natural structural compatibility with satire. Satiric writing often turns on the revelation of hierarchically evaluated gaps— between ideal and actual, reality and pretense, order and disorder" (Ball 59); and consequently, Naipaul's satire in *The Mystic Masseur* can be regarded as the encapsulation of the complex power dynamics within the Trinidadian society. As Reichl and Stain also suggest in their discussion of whether or not authentic subversiveness can be reached through postcolonial laughter:

Even if subversiveness is detected in laughter, its targets are varied so that it can be directed at colonisers or colonised; it can be self-deprecating or stereotyping; it might be read as an empowering move or a resigned comment on a status quo; it might trigger Medusa's triumphant laughter or merely elicit a tired smile. But

it will always raise the complex question ‘Who laughs at whom?’ (Reichl and Stain 12)

Others such as Aaron Eastley, contrarily, criticize Naipaul and claim that his writings are “insightful but ultimately unreliable” (Eastley 4) as “his fiction, often reading like news or historical commentary, is marred by both the exaggeration and limitations of an anxious orientalism” (Eastley 4). These opposing perspectives on analyzing Naipaul’s work are nothing new; what is also worth investigating is how his use of satirical format plays into these perceptions. As it was previously discussed satire can often be “misread” as a result of its ironical meanings. As Zekavat puts it, “since satire frequently implies two opposing senses at the same time, it can provide a broad framework for embracing and appreciating contradictions in various aspects of intersubjective interactions at different level” (Zekavat 191). For Hutcheon too “irony happens as part of a communicative process; it is not a static rhetorical tool to be deployed, but itself comes into being in the relations between meanings, but also between people and utterances and, sometimes, between intentions and interpretation” (*Irony* 13). Then, reading irony is possible through the interpreter as much as it is through the author, and both of these acts can be considered intentional according to Hutcheon. The criticism Naipaul is subjected to, specifically in terms of his early satirical fictions, can be regarded in these terms too because his fiction is also particularly open to interpretation as a result of its satirical attributes.

According to Ball, Naipaul’s “narrative inscription of stasis and worsening conditions supports Naipaul’s satiric critique of West Indian society” (71). In that sense, Ganesh’s transformation from an “ordinary” citizen, to a famed local hero, to a political figure is portrayed as a way in which these “worsening conditions” of the society are the implied target of the satire. As Ganesh begins his campaigning efforts for Trinidad’s first general elections of 1946, the reader witnesses the corruption of the state first-hand. The novel portrays how state politics can be inherently performative and deceitful. For instance, we see how even when Ganesh does not intend to play dirty and lie, his campaigning ads are still less than truthful:

He fought the cleanest election campaign in Trinidad history. He had no platform. And his posters were the simplest things: GANESH WILL DO WHAT

HE CAN, A VOTE FOR GANESH IS A VOTE FOR GOD; sometimes even plainer statements, GANESH WILL WIN and GANESH IS A MAN OF GOOD AND GOD. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 192)

Though technically, Ganesh does not take the way of a smear campaign against his opponent Indarsingh, who is an old friend from college, his strategy still paints Ganesh in a comically and excessively righteous way. His strategy, however, wins him the election against Indarsingh who “stupidly, talks about politics” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 197). In the novel, perhaps because Trinidadians “are not impressed with real intellectual depth or politically progressive ideas but rather with appearances, with personalities” (Eastley 18); from the novel’s perspective, Ganesh manages to impress the voters as the showman that he is. Here, there is a criticism of the way political campaigning works and the way people choose to vote in general, as well as a commentary on how these practices work within a colonial context. The sociopolitical conditions of Trinidad ensure that a fraud such as Ganesh can come to a position of power within the society. As John Clement Ball implies, “the historical colonial experience has a major influence on contemporary conditions in colonial and postcolonial society; when these conditions are satirized, colonial rule is implicated and the satire becomes multidirectional” (Ball 52). The critique of Ganesh as a politician plays into this idea. Explicitly, the satirical criticism is on Ganesh and his voters however the image of Trinidad in the novel also cannot be judged separately from the historical realities that has created it. Even Ganesh, who comes from a relatively more privileged background in comparison to rest of the society, can better his living conditions through various lies and trickeries. In the end, Ganesh becomes a Member of the Legislative Council, but this win truly exposes the corruption of the colonial government and is not portrayed as something to be celebrated to the reader. As Ball puts it, “the novel knows who its targets are and where responsibility lies” (70). As “the novel ironically observes the unidealized performance of roles and functions by other characters and institutions” (Ball 70), the reader sees that these institutions that should have probably caught on the lack of true competence within Ganesh, as a teacher, writer, masseur or politician. Yet, Ganesh prevails against all odds, and his vices are ironically awarded. His pretensions can even be viewed as the norm for the political scene he finds himself in.

In a way, Ganesh symbolizes the corruption colonialism creates. Naipaul uses mimicry to show how colonial rule creates such a need for performative behaviors in the first place. In that regard, colonialism is not explicitly denounced within the novel as there is not a Westerner character the reader can place as a stand-in for blame. The only British character of the novel, Mr. Stewart, in fact, employs a mentor-like role in Ganesh's life. Still, disregarding the implications behind Naipaul's societal critiques would also result in the disregarding of his ambivalent identity as an author, which his writings reflect. Thus,

whatever directionality metropolitan readers may actually glean from Naipaul's ironies, the social contexts underlying his work make clear that such ideals are inappropriate for measuring Trinidadian society because the present-day absences stem from historical absences for which colonial rule is largely responsible. (Ball 72)

Since colonial rule is inherently implicated in the corruption of the sociopolitical conditions of this society, the ironies of Naipaul also target those in power too, in a multidirectional manner according to Ball. Hence, the satire of the novel makes room for a multidirectional targeting of ridicule.

After Ganesh becomes an M.L.C., as his need to maintain a certain kind of image in front of the public eye increases, his performativity and mimicry are also highlighted in new ways. In this regard, the scene in which he is invited to a dinner as a member of the legislative council fully exemplifies the way colonial mimicry is handled in the novel. Firstly, we learn how Ganesh has been working on his table manners before this dinner, which can be seen as a means to adhering to Westernized customs and a representation of his mimicry. Most of the other attendants seem to follow similar tactics of colonial mimicry too. For instance, the descriptions of the attendants of the dinner are given in the following passage:

Ganesh came in *dhoti* and *koortah* and *turban*; the member for one of the Port of Spain wards wore a khaki suit and a sun helmet; a third came in jodhpurs; a fourth, adhering for the moment to his pre-election principles, came in short trousers and an open shirt; the blackest wore a three-piece blue suit, yellow

woollen gloves, and a M.L.C. monocle. Everybody else, among the men, looked like penguins, sometimes even down to the black faces. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 199)

The description of these important men as “penguins” here signals that they are mimicking something that is almost “unnatural” to them. There can be found a mockery of colonial mimicry as an unnatural practice for these people who are not Westerners, and thus, should not pretend to be one. As Özer Taniyan suggests, with these descriptions Naipaul “mocks the clothes of the members” (Özer Taniyan 53) however the mockery is mostly on the fact that “Ganesh cannot come to decision whether he should be loyal to his own manners as the characteristics of his culture or not” (Özer Taniyan 53). Though the satirical elements here bear unsavory bits, such as calling the dinner attendees “black faces” en masse, Naipaul’s description of their physical appearances as “penguins” also does not explicitly suggest a condemnation for their attempts at mimicry because the three-piece-suits are often likened to penguins universally without postcolonial connotations. Still, likening their “black faces” to penguins also warrant questioning on the intended meaning behind this simile. The intended meaning can also be read as the author mocking the mimickers’ inability to actually “look like” the Westerners they are attempting to imitate. Then, there is also Ganesh whose mimicry goes beyond his outfit in this scene because he is dressed in traditionally Hindu clothing. It is also suggested that “The meal was torture to Ganesh. He felt alien and uncomfortable. He grew sulkier and sulkier and refused all the courses” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 201). Ganesh’s previous attempts of learning table manners, hence, fail in the actual dinner, and he feels as alien as all the other guests even though he is not dressed in a similarly Westernized way. As Ganesh returns home not being able to dine in fear of embarrassing himself, the humiliation he feels humanizes him, and the same can be suggested of the other guests too. There can be, then, more than one way of interpreting the targeting of this scene. These different interpretations highlight Naipaul’s ambivalent voice as an author.

While Eastley’s remark that “the dinner is a grand humiliation, revealing the new MLCs as failed mimic men” (Eastley 20) is also a valid concern, this reading also dismisses how the awkwardness humanizes these characters and make them relatable. In many ways, their attempts of mimicry causes things to go awry, and makes the guests

unable to act naturally. Perhaps the need for the mimicry is to blame in the chaos, which then makes the act itself the target rather than the guests. Mr. Primrose, for instance, who wears a monocle to look more like a Westerner, drops this monocle to his soup, and then frustratedly asks: “‘What all you staring at? All you ain’t see nigger before?’” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 201). Another awkward moment occurs between the wives of two M.L.C.s:

‘Why, Mrs Primrose,’ she said brightly to the wife of the blackest M.L.C. ‘You look so different today.’

Mrs Primrose, all of her squeezed into floriferous print frock, adjusted her hat with the floral design. ‘Ah, ma’am. It ain’t the same me. The other one, the one you did see at the Mothers’ Union in Granadina, she at home. Making baby.’ (Naipaul, *Masseur* 199-200)

In their attempts of imitating how Western polite society converse with one another, the wives of the M.L.C.s also become targets of the satirical ridicule. As the Governor’s Lady makes a quite racist faux-pas by mistaking Mrs. Primrose for “the other one”, the interpretation of the ironical workings of this act is up to the reader. Here, while an implication of black people being easily mistaken for each other is possible to see, this interpretation of this moment also disregards the fact that the Governor’s Lady’s portrayal does reflect a reality of such casual racism. Moreover, while the awkwardness of these moments serves to make ridicule out of their "failed" mimicry, a humanizing element can be also found here as the awkwardness makes the reader feel sympathy for the characters too since “their awkwardness encourages sympathy” (Ball 50). As Ball points out, here “our assessment as readers is our own” (Ball 50) as the interpretation of the ironies and satirical ridiculing gain meaning through the reader’s interpretation. Whereas it is true that one can read these moments of awkwardness in the dinner party as a means to mock the attempts of mimicry, it can also be inferred that the need for mimicry itself is ridiculed in the scene.

For some such as Aaron Eastley, the ridicule within the scene “is clearly done for comic satirical effect - but the satire is one-sided: only the new politicians and their partners are mocked” (Eastley 20). From Eastley’s perspective, depicting Trinidadian politicians in such a manner not only has no real basis in the historical reality, but also

“in making his jokes Naipaul consistently portrays the leading non-European figures of Trinidadian society in ways that prompt non- Trinidadian readers to see these figures and their society as inferior” (Eastley 22). Eastley argues that these representations are hyperboles that only serve for comedic effect. Thus, from this perspective, the target is the colonized who foolishly attempts to mimic the colonizer even though they seem to be not capable of even the act of such a performance. Yet, this perception also disregards the ambivalent discourse Naipaul presents in his writing. As Ball suggests, the text does not explicitly condemn the people who are attempting to perform colonial mimicry, but the act itself as a whole as a practice that is forced onto the guests. Furthermore, Eastley’s interpretation also shows the thin line between author’s intention vs. the reader’s interpretation when it comes to ironic and/or satirical texts. As Hutcheon claims, it is often the reader “who decides whether the utterance is ironic (or not), and then what particular ironic meaning it might have” (*Irony* 11). Then, Eastley’s claim that these portrayals of influential Trinidadian figures would make non-Trinidadian reader see them as “inferior” is also a result of Eastley’s own personal interoperation of the ironical workings of the scene. His concerns may be valid, but other readings of the scene also has the same validity. For instance, one can interpret the broken English usages of the politician as a way of mocking or insulting them, but the existence of localized English(s) is also a reality and a common element in postcolonial novels. Hence, the portrayal itself does not equate ridicule; the interpretation also plays a key role in this satirical novel. As Ball writes:

The satiric play of Naipaul’s early novels encourages multidirectional readings because, unlike the nonfiction, it does not pre-empt the reader’s function of closing gaps between what is said and what is implied. The early writing is most interesting as satire because it invites multiple interpretations of its satiric trajectory. (Ball 52)

Thus, it is the satire of the novel that allows the reader to interpret the text in ways that create multiplicities of meanings.

Moreover, it is also important to remember that these controversial representations can also be viewed as Naipaul’s own individual reflections rather than an accurate picture of Trinidadian politicians. As Kenneth Burke claims, “the satirist

attacks in others the weaknesses and temptations that are really within himself” (qtd. in Greenberg 17). For Özer Taniyan, “Naipaul mocks with the Hindu characteristics to prove that he is closer to superior culture of the empire than to colonised culture he is ashamed of. Hence, there appears a dualistic general illustration of the colonised culture and the colonisers’ mimicked behaviours” (44). This ambivalence, thus, “creates the basis of his unique discourse” (Özer Taniyan 55). While Naipaul’s ridicule of these “mimic men” can be regarded as a clear ridicule of the ones performing the mimicry, disregarding how the dinner scene also implicates colonial forces for making mimicry a necessary practice for even the most powerful men in the society also does not consider the ambivalence Naipaul brings to his narratives. In that sense, the novel is a personal reflection of Naipaul as a part of his “unique discourse”, which brings an ambiguity to the narrative. Thus, his mockery of the act mimicry also contains multitudes that can be interpreted in multiple ways as a reflection of the author’s own ambivalent postcolonial stance.

When we come towards the end of the novel, Ganesh completes his transformation and feels that he needs to leave his cultural heritage behind in order to maintain his public image and hold onto the power that comes with it. As he becomes more “absorbed in politics” he stops “wearing dhoti and turban altogether” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 204). As “a terror in the Legislative Council” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 205), Ganesh at first decides to play the role of a phony activist as he has invented walk-outs as a form of protesting. In September of 1949, during a strike his phoniness is once again exposed to the public when he misspeaks during a speech he gives to the crowd who are on strike:

‘Brothers and sisters, I now ask the man of good and God to address a few words to you.’

And Ganesh missed his cue. Stupidly, completely missed his cue. He forgot that he was talking to a crowd of impatient strikers as a man of good and God. He talked instead as though they were the easy-going crowd in Woodford Square and he the fighting M.L.C. and nothing more.

‘My friends,’ he said (he had got that from Narayan), ‘my friends, I know about your great sufferings, but I have yet to give the matter further study, and until then I must ask you to be patient.’

He didn’t know that their leader had been telling them the same thing every day for nearly five weeks. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 209)

Here, the reader once again sees Ganesh for the pretender that he is. Though he claims to have good intentions all his actions actually come from a desire to create an appealing public persona. It is suggested, however, that this mishap has only been a step towards a higher position for Ganesh, which further demonstrates the corruption of the Trinidadian state politics. It becomes clear that the politicians within these narratives do not aim to actually serve the people of Trinidad, but have self-serving interests that are supported by the ways of colonialism. All these shows how easy it is to maintain a “good” public image by just projecting it in a performative manner rather than actually working to earn that respectable position, especially within the political scene. In reality, Ganesh never actually aims to make a productive change that would help the striking workers. Then, when he is exposed for the phony that he is, he fully commits himself to the actual reality of how politics work, and makes “communism” his scapegoat:

Ganesh called a press conference at the end of the week. He said Providence had opened his eyes to the errors of his ways. He warned that the labour movement in Trinidad was dominated by communists and he had often unwittingly been made their tool. ‘From now on,’ he said, ‘I pledge my life to the fight against communism in Trinidad and the rest of the free world.’ (Naipaul, *Masseur* 211)

Thus, as it is suggested in the novel, “Ganesh never walked out again. He went to cocktail parties at Government House and drank lemonade. He wore a dinner-jacket to official dinners” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 211). This commitment carries him to the last stepping stone as he is elected to be an M.B.E. (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 1950.

As the novel comes to an end, we return to the first-person narrator at the beginning of the epilogue:

In the summer of 1954 I was at an English university, waiting for the results of an examination. One morning I got a letter from the Colonial Office. A party of

Colonial Statesmen were in Britain for a conference, and would I be willing to entertain a statesman from my own territory? It was the vacation and I had much time on my hands. I agreed. It was arranged that I should be host for a day to G. R. Muir, Esq., M.B.E. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 213)

The novel comes full circle with the return of this narrator, and the transformation of Ganesh is highlighted by his attitude towards the narrator. There is a stark contrast between his cold attitude towards the narrator in comparison to how he was behaving towards him as a patient at the beginning. As Bhoendra claims, in certain ways, Ganesh “sells out to become a colonial mimic man and a stooge” (24). The very last lines of the novel, in fact, perfectly exemplify this claim:

‘Pundit Ganesh!’ I cried, running towards him. ‘Pundit Ganesh Ramsumair!’

‘G. Ramsay Muir,’ he said coldly. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 213)

We see the final transformation of Ganesh here as he corrects the narrator’s spelling of his name, which originally shows his Hindu roots. As he comes into power, however, he wants to step away from that image of his former self. Hence, “culturally, he becomes less and less a Hindu: he is transformed into a complete colonial politician, with commitment to neither community nor society” (Bhoendra 24). Therefore, the satirical elements here target the idea of completely removing oneself from cultural roots. The implication is not Ganesh’s “inferiority” making his mimicry invalid; but his situation as a person with an ambivalent identity denying this. As a result, colonial rule is also implicated in these vices Naipaul satirizes. As Bhoendra writes:

...if Naipaul’s assessment of politics and politicians in colonial Trinidad is brutal, he is no less brutal towards British colonial policy. Implied in all of these portrayals is a questioning of the extent of responsibility held by the colonial powers for the post-colonial political chaos in many so-called Third World countries. (Bhoendra 26)

Because “much irony in this novel is directed against the colonial power” (Bhoendra 26), as an attitude that “rewards mimicry and self-contempt” (Bhoendra 26); the novel should be read as an embodiment of both Naipaul’s and Trinidad’s ambivalence. Satire, with its “multidirectional possibilities”, offers a medium in which Naipaul can express multiple points of views.

2.2.2 Ramlogan and Leela

Furthermore, if we want to consider how satire works to ridicule the inner workings of the society, alongside Ganesh, characters such as Ramlogan and Leela exemplify this notion too. Apart from Ganesh, the most significant targets of the satire, in fact, can be found in the forms of these two characters in *The Mystic Masseur*. Unlike Ganesh, the reader is not allowed to see from the points of views of these characters. Given that these two characters play rather supporting roles within the novel maybe this outcome is inevitable. However, it cannot be denied that the narrative treats them somewhat poorly, and the ridicule these characters face feels less humanizing than Ganesh's. at times. These two characters become the satire's targets firstly because of their "ignorance", but unlike Ganesh, there is almost an underlying tone of cruelty in these portrayals. There is also a sort of stereotyping with these characters. When the reader first meets Ramlogan at Ganesh's father's funeral, the first impression he makes with his inclination to melodrama, shown through his exaggerated reactions within the funeral, is of someone insincere and phony. While the reader cannot be entirely sure whether these reactions are authentic ones, they also establish Ramlogan as a character who is prone to behave in accordance to sociocultural expectations of him. If their manners of grieving as cultural customs requires him to act as if the death is affecting him more than it actually is, he does not shy away from almost performing his grief. In many ways, Ramlogan is a performer. His manipulative ways may not be apparent to Ganesh at first, but the ironical tone of the narrative makes this apparent to the reader. Soon enough, his true colors are revealed as an opportunist who seeks to marry off his daughter to Ganesh. He relentlessly follows Ganesh around town, sends him gifts and even begs Ganesh to read to him in his pursuit of getting Ganesh agree to marry her. As one would expect, all these qualities and actions make Ramlogan a perfect target of the novel's satire. Much of Ramlogan's dialogue is, in fact, presented with an undeniable irony. For instance, when he complains about the lack of intellectuality in Fourways, the reader gets the impression that the irony is lost on Ramlogan. It is quite evident that he grovels to Ganesh, who is an educated man, and attempts to appeal to him through his admiration of Ganesh's intellectuality. He suggests that he is "doing my best to make this Fourways a modern place" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 33) by simply putting on a glass

window, which shows how shallow his idea of “modern” is. He also seems to idealize Ganesh in his head to an absurd degree. For instance, he constantly refers to Ganesh as “sahib”, which translates to Mr. in English, even though as his elder Ganesh would be expected to show him this sort of respect. Since Ramlogan’s actions also often lack sincerity, the reader is not sure whether this respect is genuine too, especially at the start.

What separates Ramlogan from Ganesh is that whereas Ganesh has received a formal education, Ramlogan has not, and thus, this shapes the characterization of their different intellectual positionings. In that sense, Ramlogan is portrayed as an ignorant individual who also reflects the ignorance the narrative seems to illustrate in the Trinidadian society. As a character, he is mocked for this ignorance, and the mockery he is subjected to somewhat lacks the multidirectionality and nuance as Ganesh is given. Here, the portrayal of how Ramlogan uses the English language in the novel exemplify this idea. His repetition of the phrase “cha’acter and sensa values”, for instance, is clearly presented as an ironical use of the phrase that the character is ridiculed for. Since the phrase is used several times by Ramlogan throughout the novel, and because it is phrased with a broken English; the interpretation that the reader arrives is that the joke is on Ramlogan who uses these words without actually knowing what they mean. One way of interpreting Ramlogan’s use of this phrase is that he has previously heard it from someone or somewhere else, and now is using it because it sounds sophisticated in his head. According to Ramlogan, the fact that he has been working since his childhood “give me cha’acter and sensa values” (Naipaul, *Masseur* 44). This is the first time he uses the phrase in the novel, and it is a fairly straightforward use of it. At face value, the irony here may not be apparent because what Ramlogan suggests is a reasonable idea. Yet, the integrity Ramlogan sees in himself and expresses as his “cha’acter and sensa values” is also a misrepresentation of him.

When Ramlogan talks about a Hindu custom that is expected of him in the wedding as the father of the bride, for example, we see his greed and his manipulative side. According to this custom, the father of the bride needs to give some money, which is essentially some kind of dowry, to induce the groom to eat a plate of kedgerree. Just before the wedding, Ganesh finds Ramlogan crying who suggests that he is ashamed of

not being able to give enough money to Ganesh. He seems to think that when the guests will see what he gives

...they go say, "Look, Ramlogan marrying off his second and best daughter to a boy with a college education, and this is all the man giving." Is that what eating me up, sahib. I know that for you, educated and reading books night and day, it wouldn't mean much, but for me, sahib, what about my cha'acter and sensa values?' (Naipaul, *Masseur* 48)

To appeal to Ganesh, Ramlogan again brings up how Ganesh is an educated man who probably would not think much of it no matter how much money he gets, though this situation troubles Ramlogan. He, then, makes Ganesh promise that when he gives him some money, he will eat fast to preserve Ramlogan's reputation and Ganesh agrees. On the wedding day, however, Ganesh does not act according to this plan and forces Ramlogan to give more money than what they previously discussed, which causes Ramlogan to feel humiliated in front of the crowd. In the end, Ganesh ends up getting "a cow and a heifer, fifteen hundred dollars in cash, and a house in Fuente Grove" from Ramlogan (Naipaul, *Masseur* 53). As Ramlogan finally relents, his words to Ganesh through tears again show the value he puts in the material stuff: "You see, sahib, what you doing to my cha'acter and sensa values.'" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 53). Although the stress Ramlogan seems to be under makes it somewhat easy to empathize with him, because the reader sees his inclination to melodrama, and because it is clear that he can afford to give that much of his capital; his actions read as emotional manipulation too. Since Ramlogan is also posited as an antagonist to Ganesh, what he means by "cha'acter and sensa values", thus, reflect his materialistic perspective because Ramlogan equates these with how he is perceived in the society socioeconomically. This attitude can perhaps be seen as no different from Ganesh, but he also lacks the dimensions Ganesh has in the narrative because the reader is not forced to see Ramlogan's point of view in the novel. The fact that he repeats this phrase several times also adds to his portrayal as a figure with exaggerated feelings. In comparison to Ganesh, Ramlogan reads more like a caricature because within the narrative, his exaggerated vices such as his ignorance and his greed are the only ones that are focused on as a primary target of *Masseur's* satire.

Then, when it comes to Leela too, the same ignorance that shapes Ramlogan as a character also characterizes Leela in the novel. In a similar vein to Ramlogan, her use of English language in the novel, for instance, is ridiculed to this end. When Ramlogan proudly shows a sign Leela wrote for his shop, it is evident that from the satirical point of view of the novel, Leela's writing is deserving of this ridiculing:

NOTICE

NOTICE, IS. HEREBY; PROVIDED: THAT, SEATS!

ARE, PROVIDED. FOR; FEMALE: SHOP, ASSISTANTS!

Ganesh said, 'Leela know a lot of punctuation marks.' (Naipaul, *Masseur* 41)

Ganesh's remark here in regards to Leela's writing poses him in a righteous place in the narrative with his sarcastic comment. Since the reader often sees things from Ganesh's perspective in the novel, the interpretation then should be that Ganesh is right in belittling Leela's writing. The emphasis in the scene is how "inferior" Leela's intellectuality is as a result of what the novel portrays as ignorance. As a social commentary, the novel thus appears to blame the characters for not using English in the "right", Westernized way. This is an outdated idea of how English *should* be spoken and written when, at the time the novel was written, the colonial variations of English were often looked down upon. Within this context, Leela's use of English is difficult not to interpret as a target of satire, especially when the text itself explicitly refers to it in comedic ways. When Ganesh's social status has been improving, it is suggested that Leela has also been becoming more and more refined every day and "the most important change was in her English" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 149). It is suggested that:

She used a private accent which softened all harsh vowel sounds; her grammar owed nothing to anybody, and included a highly personal conjugation of the verb to be. She told Suruj Mooma, 'This house I are building, I doesn't want it to come like any erther Indian house. I wants it to have good furnitures and I wants everything to remain prutty prutty. I are thinking about getting a refrigerator and a few erther things like that.' (Naipaul, *Masseur* 149)

The interpretation of the scene clearly rests on reading it with irony as this reading gives a comedic effect to it. Again, the joke is on Leela, who thinks that she is talking "proper" English in the standardized way with her conjugation of the verb "to be". The

reader, however, can interpret the scene as a clear mockery of Leela's ignorance since the comedic effect comes from Leela's lack of self-awareness to the fact that she is not using the verb to be in the actual, standardized way. There are grammar inconsistencies like this throughout the book. As opposed to all these other instances, however, here the intention is clearly to ridicule Leela's English. It feels less of a societal commentary and more of personal attacks against these characters for their lack of "civilized manners" for not even getting the education Ganesh has the privilege of gaining in the novel, and this idea comes up in the novel especially with their use of the English language.

For some like Aaron Eastley, these other portrayals of broken English(s) are also intentional to connote the ignorance of the characters. He writes: "Words are left out that British and American readers associate with grammatical completeness, and several mans and you knows are thrown in, making the speakers appear simpleminded or almost illiterate" (Eastley 19). However, this perspective might also be simply the reader interpretation too. Characters speaking in broken English can be seen as a common feature in various different postcolonial novels that can be a reflection of a reality. Then, what makes it a mockery is the reader's interpretation rather than the author's representation of these. This is where the question of readership also should be taken into consideration. As Hutcheon points out, when judging a work of art "how the resulting work is interpreted by viewers like me is not totally within the artist's control, whatever his intentions" (*Irony* 13). For works of art loaded with irony, this has the potential to create even more confusion because irony gains in part through the readers' recognition. In this regard, Hutcheon argues that the interpreter makes the irony possible, but there is also a necessity of a context readily available to the interpreter for them to make sense of the irony. Hence, the interpretation of these characters' use of English as a target of satire also differ in accordance to how the reader interprets them. Although there are some apparent examples of how the English usages of characters such as Ramlogan and Leela becomes explicitly ridiculed, most of the characters also have some sort of "deflect" in their English. It often depends on the interpretation of the reader in these instances. Thus, the ridicule in these other instances where the text does not explicitly refer to the "inferiority" of the broken English(s) present in the novel gain the meaning of ironical mockery only when the reader reads them as such. Considering

the views on the subject matter at time the novel was written, it is not entirely off-base that the authorial intent might have been at least slightly mocking, but the interpretative aspects still lie within the reader and how they perceive the text within their own subjective contextualizations.

Another point of ridicule that is hard to interpret is Ganesh's physical abuse of Leela who is described in the text as "a good Hindu wife" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 51). His first beating of her, for example, is told almost as a rite of passage for married couples:

Ganesh said, 'Leela, why you getting 'fraid? We not staying in this place long. In a few days we moving to Fuente Grove. Nothing to 'fraid.'

Leela continued to cry and Ganesh loosened his leather belt and beat her.

She cried out, 'Oh God! Oh God! He go kill me today self!'

It was their first beating, a formal affair done without anger on Ganesh's part or resentment on Leela's; and although it formed no part of the marriage ceremony itself, it meant much to both of them. (Naipaul, *Masseur* 56)

And later, when he stops beating Leela it is mockingly suggested that "he lost interest in her as a wife and stopped beating her" (Naipaul, *Masseur* 69). The irony in these instances is clear because the casualty of the language is in plain sight to the interpreter. Hence, they cannot be exactly seen as endorsements of such an abuse. However, the nonchalant way violence against women is portrayed here, from a male perspective, also almost trivializes it. Then, it should also be worth considering what is the target of satire in these instances because they are another showcase of Naipaul's "broken mirrors". The abuse is depicted in a way that makes it seem like both parties are willing participants which undermines the clear power dynamic between Leela and Ganesh. There is a layer of satirical targeting here that is almost victim-blaming Leela. Thus, interpreting satire in these instances can be difficult. If we consider them in line with Naipaul's other sociopolitical criticism that functions doubly, it would undermine the clear power dynamic between men/women or husband/wife within the family unit, especially within the social framework of the novel. However, by implicating both parties as willing actors, Naipaul represents the issue in an uncomfortably grey way. Perhaps, as Ball puts it, he "shows resistance not only through satire, but also to satire—as an attitude, and as a way of knowing and representing the world" (Ball 78). In *The Mystic Masseur*, rather

than using satire to point his fingers at one, specific flaw that he observes within the society; by using satire's "multidirectional possibilities", Naipaul paints a contradictory and ambivalent picture of Trinidadian society. As Bhabha explains, Naipaul's characters often reflect "a non-elite, "vernacular" cosmopolitanism of the migrant, the displaced, the diasporic, living in between languages and cultural traditions, and insecurely—even contradictorily—attached to different visions of culture" (Ghosh, "Homi K. Bhabha on V.S. Naipaul"). Hence, Naipaul's fiction highlights the ambivalent, diverse, and contradictory views postcoloniality creates. For Bhabha, these representations of cosmopolitanism "is why Naipaul is important today, because he is ambivalent, asymmetric, strange. When everything seems to be going in the other direction" (Ghosh, "Homi K. Bhabha on V.S. Naipaul").

In the end, reading Naipaul invites embracing the uncomfortable "truths" he represents that are often contradictory. These contradictions, however, are not only a reflection of the postcolonial condition, but also of the human condition. In that regard, Ganesh's arc of corruption and coming into power in *The Mystic Masseur* is depicted via satire to demonstrate the corruption that is an inherently humane flaw and the corruption that is an inevitable consequence of colonial rule. Naipaul shows how under this rule, colonial mimicry becomes an unescapable necessity if one wants to get to a position of power or maintain any sort of respectability among the society. Though it is also questionable whether or not the motivation in wishing to gain such power can ever be good-natured, the novel does not necessarily ridicule Ganesh for his ambitions, but for his own lack of self-awareness in his active participation in this corrupt, colonial rule. Moreover, Naipaul ridicules both the mimicker and the act of colonial mimicry itself through the character of Ganesh who is often defined by the roles he takes on: teacher, masseur, author or politician. While it seems like his satirical mockery primarily targets the subordinate natives, his questionings of the how such societal pressures became ingrained within the Trinidadian society also undoubtedly implicates the colonial forces too. Within the context of mid-20th century Trinidad, the causer of the corruption cannot be identified as anything other than colonialism. Yet, there is also always the possibility of the reader dismissing this historical reality in their interpretation of the text. As the portrayals of characters such as Leela and Ramlogan demonstrate, the multidirectional

satire of Naipaul's novel somewhat targets the local people in ways that can be viewed as dehumanizing too. Such portrayals can create inaccurate images of Trinidadian people and makes the reader question Naipaul's intentions with these portrayals, but it is also wise to remember that it is often the reader's interpretations that makes these ridicules gain meanings. In that sense, the question of whether or not such portrayals are offensive or not lie within the reader's interpretation of irony. Still, considering the fact that Naipaul is writing about his childhood homeland, these open-to-interpretation instances also reflect a part of Naipaul himself. As Naipaul himself suggests after all, he "is the sum of his books", which can be seen in *The Mystic Masseur* too as a reflection of his youth spent in Trinidad. The novel and its satirical targeting(s), therefore, represent the personal truths that largely belong to Naipaul. As Thiong'o asserts, he reflects "a certain view of reality" that shows the ambivalence and complexity both Naipaul and Trinidad come to possess as a consequence of Western colonialism. Since it carries varieties by definition, satire, then, can be considered as the ideal medium to represent these ambiguous realities as they are in display in *The Mystic Masseur*.

CHAPTER III

“A FUNNY KIND OF ENGLISHMAN”: HANIF KUREISHI’S SATIRICAL TAKE ON THE *BILDUNGSROMAN* IN *THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA*

In his *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*, Dustin Griffin asserts that “satire is often an open rather than a closed form, that it is concerned rather to inquire, explore, or unsettle than to declare, sum up, or conclude” (Griffin 95). In that sense, according to Griffin, “the form and purpose of satire seem to resist conclusiveness” (Griffin 96) as in various different shapes and forms satire indicate, it “tends to avoid or even to subvert formal closure” (Griffin 98). In *Problems in Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin, likewise, writes: “It should be pointed out that the carnival sense of the world also knows no period, and is, in fact, hostile to any sort of *conclusive conclusion*: all endings are merely new beginnings; carnival images are reborn again and again” (*Problems* 165). Hence, this aspect of resisting final conclusions and reaching certain narrative closure can be regarded as one of the key elements of satirical texts. In this chapter, Hanif Kureishi’s first novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* will be analyzed within the frameworks of both satire and *Bildungsroman* as the novel is shaped by the characteristics of both. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the satirical and comical voice of the narrator, Karim, is a direct reflection of the naivete the character has at the start of the novel, which of course colors the way he perceives the world and those around him. When the novel is regarded as an example of a *Bildungsroman*, in which Karim alongside his father comes of age, the self-actualization process is complicated by their positions in the middle-class, English society of the seventies as first and second-generation immigrants. Here, Kureishi’s usage of satire and comedy alongside the setting of theater allows the author to explore the performative nature of ethnic identity itself as both Karim and Haroon are also professional performers. While Haroon masquerades as a “spiritual guide” for his predominantly white neighborhood, Karim takes on the role of token “Indian” in stage plays. As they try to make themselves more palatable for the white gaze, they struggle to reach self-actualization, which marks the closure of a *Bildungsroman*. As Jonathan Greenberg suggests in his book, satire “often appears as a mock-form” (10). Then, from this perspective, Kureishi’s novel can be considered almost as a “mock-bildungsroman”

in which the traditional conceptualizations of *Bildungsroman* are twisted and distorted mainly through Kureishi's use of satire.

3.1 *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a Postcolonial *Bildungsroman*

Since Bakhtin classifies satire in terms of his “carnival sense of the world”, the implication of this classification is that as a carnivalistic mode of writing, satire usually does not display qualities such as conclusiveness or concreteness. Satire is rather defined by its flexibility and openness. Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* exemplifies this idea in interesting ways. For many critics, the novel is written in the tradition of *Bildungsroman*. In the simplest terms, these types of novels are characterized by the identity formation of a usually young person as they come of age and reach self-actualization through various trials and errors they come across along their journeys of growth. In this regard, there is a sense of completeness and finality at the end of *Bildungsroman* as the protagonist grows and goes through a transformation involving a maturation process, which is usually measured under Western standards of socialization. As a literary tradition, *Bildungsroman* is marked with such concrete ideals. Kureishi's novel complicates these notions not only through its satirical elements, but also through its postcolonial aspects with the ways concepts such as national identity or family are unsettled. In many ways, these aspects separate postcolonial forms of the *Bildungsroman* from its conventional forms. In her discussion of ethnic *Bildungsroman* Heather Fielding argues that:

Precisely because of its logic of identification, the bildungsroman has been soundly critiqued in ethnic studies as an ultimately conservative genre that subsumes any kind of difference within a homogenous national identity: identification makes ethnic difference disappear. From such a perspective, it is difficult to imagine how an ethnic bildungsroman- a genre whose telos is the assimilation of the ethnic subject to the nation- might be compatible with postcolonial conviviality. (Fielding 204)

Since the *Bildungsroman* has been classified as a “conservative genre”, its compatibility with the postcolonial condition is debatable according to Fielding. Moreover, this concreteness might also have a similar effect in regards to satire's flexibility as well.

Since *Buddha* can be “considered within the literary tradition of the ‘Bildungsroman’” (Perfect 12), and as an example of satirical fiction; then, the question of how satire functions within this narrative can be related to its features of *Bildungsroman* too. In addition, the novel also presents the realities of being first- and second-generation immigrants and how this shapes the national identities of the characters. Thus, as Fielding suggests, if *Bildungsroman* is to represent these postcolonial realities, it must take new, fluid forms, and satire can be a suitable medium for this aim. As Enrique Lima asserts, “because the classical *Bildungsroman* describes the possibility of a seamless social integration, writers from traditionally marginalized groups have marshaled the genre to narrate a counter discourse to Euro-American” (295). Creating counter narratives, again, can be considered one of the key functions of satire, which is exemplified in *Buddha*.

Furthermore, since *Bildungsroman* usually highlights the protagonist’s individuality as the primary focal point of the narrative, it can be analyzed as a reflection of who among the society represents the individual conditions of a period. In that regard, the immigrant experience, then, is highlighted as a common human experience of the 1970s England, in which the novel is set. As it is literally uttered in the novel, “the immigrant is the Everyman of the twentieth century” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 141). Within such sociopolitical conditionings, the novel, then, is able to capture a character such as Karim as a unique individual, and his voice gives the novel its shape. Moreover, as Kureishi states in an interview, he sees everyone as a potential source of comedy. He asserts that, “all my characters are laughable in the way that all the world is amusing to me. We’re all amusing” (Kureishi, “Hanif Kureishi & Gurinder Chadha” 53). This outlook also informs much of Kureishi’s work. Since he sees the whole world amusing, the comedy in his satires can come from each and every character and ideological perspective.

As an author, Hanif Kureishi usually aligns himself with British literary tradition though he is often also cited as a “postcolonial author”, which is a topic often-discussed in the analysis of his work. Kureishi himself often discusses his disagreement with this positioning. He suggests, for instance, that “critics have written that I’m caught between

two cultures. I'm not. 'I'm British; I've made it in England' (qtd. in Kaleta 7). As Kenneth Kaleta puts it, "it is undeniable that the green isle that is forever Shakespeare's England now also belongs to Hanif Kureishi" (Kaleta 2). In this regard, Kureishi's work represents the postcolonial world in which the notion of nationhood gains new meanings. To be British now can encompass a larger variety of identities rather than a singular, "white", European identity. Like Naipaul, Kureishi himself also exemplifies the voice of the displaced individual who may experience the repercussions of such an in-between state. Yet, Kureishi somehow denies this confusion and places himself firmly within the British tradition of writing. As Sara Upstone points out "he is more likely to cite influence from classic British or contemporary American fiction than postcolonial writing" (Upstone 40). Here, perhaps this can be regarded as a postcolonial symptom of the migrations England has received from its former colonies which significantly changed the cultural landscape of the country as a result. In other words, "Kureishi's stories, therefore, illuminate a distinctive new national identity" (Kaleta 4). Still, in his portrayals of the immigrant figure as the new "Everyman of the twentieth century" in *Buddha*, there is also an understanding of the complications people with such hybrid identities might face. On this point, Kaleta suggests that Kureishi's "characteristic immigrant figure is new, taking a place in the world, with both hope and resentment" as they "fail even to find assimilation" (Kaleta 16). Kureishi's work, then, is often characterized with this unfulfillment of its immigrant figures. Similar issues are explored in *The Buddha of Suburbia* too, and the search for identity and alienation becomes a recurring theme that is explored through most of the characters, but especially the ones who straddle between two cultures. This is where the performative qualities that are mostly observed in Karim and Haroon come in with their often-misguided attempts of fitting in as immigrants in a predominantly White society. Since much of the novel has to do with these two characters' attempts to fit in, whether it is in the predominantly white suburbs or in London with all its intimidating factors; how they "mimic" is presented as a complicated reality that is highlighted through elements of satire alongside the *Bildungsroman*. In this regard, while identity formation is the main aim presented in *Bildungsroman*, it has other implications within satire. As Massih Zekavat puts it, "satire can both determine identity construction and actively perform identity

politics” since “it can resist and subvert or else reinforce subject positions” (Zekavat 5). In other words, satire, with its self-reflexive tools such as parody and irony, can question the very nature of identity. This idea might go against the rather traditionalist forms of identity formation within *Bildungsroman*, but parallels Bhabha’s and Huggan’s ideas on colonial mimicry as an act of performance.

In his book, *The Postcolonial Exotic*, Graham Huggan also examines the notion of performativity in some of Kureishi’s works through his term “staged marginality”, which refers to the performativity individuals with marginal ethnic identities often feel obligated to show. For Huggan,

In all of Kureishi’s work to date, minority cultures appear to exist in an antagonistic relationship with a white, mostly middle-class mainstream even as they are invited to provide it with a steady supply of self-indulgent ‘ethnic’ entertainment. Minorities are encouraged, in some cases obliged, to stage their racial/ethnic identities in keeping with white stereotypical perceptions of an exotic cultural other. Yet as Kureishi makes clear, such stagings can be seen on one level as parodies of white expectations and, on another, as demonstrations of the performative basis of all identity formation. (Huggan 95)

As Huggan explains, both Karim and Haroon become figures who express their “ethnic” identities in ways that are more palatable for the white environments they are in. As these performances become “parodies of white expectations”, it is implied that the idea of stable/fixed identity or national identity itself is an imaginary notion. Hence, as suggested by Huggan, “identities are fashioned, rather than merely expressed” (Huggan 95), and the use of parodical representation of ethnic stereotypes “destabilises the controlling narratives that define ideas of ‘centre’” (Huggan 99) in the novel. Sara Upstone also asserts that “much of Kureishi’s work illustrate the ironic assumption of ethnic identities” (Upstone 39). This destabilization occurs through Haroon’s role of a spiritual guide and as Karim gets into the profession of acting and assigned with playing stereotypical “Indians” on stage. In addition, suburban life also requires a different kind of performance. In order to maintain this stability the suburbs provides, there are certain

limitations placed upon the characters in *Buddha*. At the very beginning of the novel, however, this stability the suburbs promise and the idea of nationhood are unsettled.

The novel opens with the following passage in which Karim Amir is introduced to the reader:

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care — Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it. Anyway, why search the inner room when it's enough to say that I was looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action and sexual interest I could find, because things were so gloomy, so slow and heavy, in our family, I don't know why. Quite frankly, it was all getting me down and I was ready for anything. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 3)

Right from the start, the novel makes it known to the reader that Karim sees both his nationality and the suburban life he is born in with blurry terms. He is “a funny kind of Englishman” who is bored of the dullness of the suburbs and wants a way out of there. As the events of the novel unravel, Karim almost gets his wish and the stability of their seemingly “perfect” suburban family is disrupted when he discovers that his father is cheating on his mother with a close friend, Eva. As Ryan Trimm claims, “the affair is the first crack in suburban homogeneity, a fissure opening the possibility of performing new selves” (60). In that sense, the affair not only opens the door for the opportunity for Karim to leave the suburbs for London, but it also creates a new chapter in Haroon's life who gains a new sense of self. For Haroon, who shares the secrets of both this affair and his new role in the community as a spiritual guru with Karim; there is this feeling of rediscovery of self, not unlike a mid-life crisis. Haroon explicitly tells Karim that “we are growing up together” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 22), paralleling the coming-of-age experiences they experience alongside one another. Hence, as Alamgir Hashmi writes “while a main interest of the novel no doubt lies in its development as Karim Amir's

personal *Bildungsroman*, its twin-focus plot gives us Karim Amir's father, Haroon, who is also rediscovering himself in his love for Eva" (Hashmi 26). Since "the notion of the 'perfect family' is destabilised in the majority of Kureishi's earlier texts" (Upstone 43), Haroon's development with all his flaws and humanity lays the cracks of this destabilization.

3.2 Haroon as a Target of Satire and a Subject of *Bildungsroman*

When we first meet Haroon in the novel, Karim, as the narrator, notes the change in his father's behaviors that appear bizarre and out-of-ordinary to him. According to Karim, the day the novel opens with is the "day everything changed" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 3). It is the day Haroon sarcastically dubs the "yoga Olympics" in which he is called to "speak on one or two aspects of Oriental philosophy" at Eva's (Kureishi, *Buddha* 5). When they arrive for the occasion, the reader sees Haroon through the eyes of Karim who shows the embarrassment most children experience when they are made to face the roles their parents play in the society. Thus, there is this universally relatable feeling of second-hand-embarrassment Karim expresses to the reader. This is where Haroon is satirized as a figure who, from Karim's perspective, makes a mockery of himself. Moreover, his predominantly white audience also becomes a part of the ridicule as their ignorance towards what they call as "Eastern philosophy" is subtly ridiculed in the narrative. In that regard, both Haroon's performance as an all-knowing spiritual guide and the reactions of the people around him become targets of the novel's satire. When Eva asks Haroon to "show us the Way. The Path" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 13), Karim describes the start of the session in the following passage:

Dad sat down at the end of the room. Everyone looked keenly and expectantly at him, though the two men near me glanced at each other as if they wanted to laugh. Dad spoke slowly and with confidence. The nervousness he'd shown earlier appeared to have disappeared. He seemed to know he had their attention and that they'd do as he asked. I was sure he'd never done anything like this before. He was going to wing it. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 13)

As a son, Karim knows a different version of Haroon, and thus almost has insider knowledge on him as a person. All these people he attempts to guide may buy in to the

performance more easily, but for Karim, this is a different story. Hence, Karim is able to see this performance for what it is and knows that Haroon “was going to wing it”. The paragraph also characterizes Karim as an undoubtedly biased narrator because of this intimate knowledge. Still, as Kaleta points out, the reader’s judgement on Karim is also related to the relatability of the narrator: “The son finds his father embarrassing and foolish-what boy of seventeen does not?” (Kaleta 69). Thus, the reader also sees Haroon through the lens of his seventeen-year-old son who finds him embarrassing. This embarrassment is both a universal feeling many can find relatable and a means to bring the personal level of ridicule from a satirical perspective. Satirical perspectives are often inherently personal, meaning they function through reflecting the satirist’s truth. In this case, the novel’s first-person narration is relevant because it presents both Karim’s world views within the fictional world and as a means for Kureishi to present his own outlooks as well. Since *Buddha* is semi-autobiographical, both of these readings hold value.

Later, when Karim goes to the attic with Charlie, Eva’s son, and leaves his father as he is showing basic yoga positions to his audience, Charlie and Karim have this following conversation that shows the reader the opposing images of Haroon in Karim’s and Charlie’s minds:

“Your father. He’s the best. He’s wise. D’you do that meditation stuff every morning?”

I nodded. A nod can’t be a lie, right?

‘And chanting, too?’

‘Not chanting every day, no.’

I thought of the morning in our place: Dad running around the kitchen looking for olive oil to put on his hair; my brother and I wrestling over the *Daily Mirror*; my mother complaining about having to go to work in the shoe shop. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 14)

Here, while Karim is able to recognize the phoniness of Haroon’s “act”, Charlie buys into the persona he is selling. Of course, it is because Karim is Haroon’s son who is able to see past the persona he is mimicking, but there are also racial implications here too.

Much like most of Haroon's audience, Charlie is a white, suburban individual. In Huggan's terms, Haroon can be suggested to be pushed to "stage their racial/ethnic identities in keeping with white stereotypical perceptions of an exotic cultural other" (95). With Charlie, these preconceived stereotypical images are presented to the reader and then the mistake of such assumptions of Haroon's and Karim's daily lives, as Charlie imagines it to be, is shown. The reader, like Karim, sees a "Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 16), whether it is the truth or not. In fact, for Huggan too, "Haroon's charlatanism can be seen to some extent as a retroactive New Age parody of the post-1960s commodification of Eastern spirituality" (Huggan 96). Thus, Kureishi's creation of these characters stand as a means of challenging the white, Western perceptions. As Huggan notes, Haroon's characterization can be regarded as a parodical one, meaning that the characterization is exaggerated intentionally. While Karim himself is indecisive whether Haroon "was a charlatan or if there was anything true in what he was doing" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 22), he still cheekily decides to give him the "God" moniker with remaining reservations.

Then, Chapter Two begins with the story of how Haroon, and his childhood best friend Anwar, immigrated to London from Bombay. Karim talks about how Haroon's wild and partying youth turned into a monotonous one after he ended up working as a clerk in the Civil Service and started a family with Margaret, Karim's mother. According to Karim, Haroon's interest in Eastern philosophy began when he was ten or eleven years old. He suggests that "I don't know how it all started, but when I was ten or eleven he turned to Lieh Tzu, Lao Tzu and Chang Tzu as if they'd never been read before, as if they'd been writing exclusively for him" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 26). From Anwar's perspective, as a man whose societal position can be seen as similar to Haroon's, this pursuit seems fruitless as he does not see any practical or financial merits of it. The economic stability England appears to promise is often one of the main aims in immigration. Hence, Anwar's stance towards Haroon is also understandable. According to Karim his mother seems to be on a similar page too:

Anwar raised his eyes to heaven and looked at Mum, who sat there, bored. They both had sympathy for Dad, and loved him, but in these moods love was mixed

with pity, as if he were making some tragic mistake, like joining the Jehovah's Witnesses. The more he talked of the Yin and Yang, cosmic consciousness, Chinese philosophy, and the following of the Way, the more lost Mum became. He seemed to be drifting away into outer space, leaving her behind; she was a suburban woman, quiet and kind, and found life with two children and Dad difficult enough as it was. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 27)

According to Karim, as a suburban woman whose life seems to revolve around her family, Margaret cannot relate or understand the solace Haroon finds in Eastern philosophy. As a result, their marriage has been suffering. Now perhaps retrospectively, Karim can pinpoint these times as the beginning of the disconnect between his mother and father. He observes the disconnect between his father and mother is growing increasingly. He sees that he is "leaving her behind", and when the news of the affair is broken, it is no surprise that they finally decide to get a divorce. There is an unavoidable rupture after Karim's aunt Jean and her husband Ted discover the affair.

In Chapter Three, Jean and Ted show up at one of Haroon's communions at Eva's. Here, we also see how these so-called close family members perceive Haroon as a failure too:

'What's Harry doing?' he mouthed. Ted and Jean never called Dad by his Indian name, Haroon Amir. He was always 'Harry' to them, and they spoke of him as Harry to other people. It was bad enough his being an Indian in the first place, without having an awkward name too. They'd called Dad Harry from the first time they'd met him, and there was nothing Dad could do about it. So he called them 'Gin and Tonic'. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 33)

From these explanations, it is obvious that Ted and Jean at least frequently use microaggressions against Haroon. Their racism is the kind that occurs daily, and is expected of them. His new role as a "Buddhist" worsens the already "poor" image they have in their minds because of their racist misjudgments. When Ted comes to talk to Haroon to make him give up his Buddhist ways, alongside the affair with Eva they are now also aware of, this conversation takes place:

‘Jean said I should come and see you, Harry.’ Ted didn’t know what to say next and Dad didn’t help him. ‘She says you’re a Buddhist.’

He said ‘Buddhist’ as he would have said ‘homosexual’ had he cause to say ‘homosexual’ ever, which he didn’t.

‘What is a Buddhist?’ (Kureishi, *Buddha* 48)

Though earlier in the novel, it was Haroon who was being satirized, through others’ reactions to him Kureishi creates a similar effect to Naipaul’s multidirectional satire. As John Clement Ball describes, multidirectional satire “works against the binary model of norm and deviation and offers one in which oppositions may be set up without either side being endorsed” (Ball 21). Within a postcolonial context, this means that the satire can reflect the rather hybrid/heterogenous realities postcoloniality brings. Hence, Kureishi’s societal commentary in the novel is meant to be a criticism of every single ideology that surrounds the daily lives of the novel’s characters. As Luke Ferretter writes when he discusses Kureishi’s comical writings, “there is no position that he does not represent ironically, and no set of values implied by this irony about which he cannot also make a joke” (Ferretter 119), meaning that everything and everyone can be ridiculed in Kureishi’s work. Kureishi himself similarly suggests in an interview that the novel is a “comedy of character” and “class” (Kureishi, “Hanif Kureishi & Gurinder Chadha” 52). Class, and its implications with racial identities, then, become ideological targets of *Buddha*’s satire. Kureishi ridicules both the need to play a character to be accepted by the white gaze and the bourgeoisie’s set of values that regard this need as an inferiority. Thus, as it was the case with the portrayals of mimicry in *The Mystic Masseur*, In *The Buddha of Suburbia* too both the act of colonial mimicry and the reinforcement of this act are satirized by Kureishi. Kureishi’s comic style, hence, can be suggested to be “a traditional English, satiric perspective” (Kaleta 33). As Kaleta explains, “Kureishi finds everyone equally worthy- and also equally worthy of ridicule- but he does not find prejudice, cruelty, or stupidity defensible. This is the same comic sensibility that elevates Jonathan Swift beyond political abuse to political satire” (33). From this perspective, satire allows Kureishi to have an authorial neutrality through which he can present social commentaries without certain limitations as his ridicule is

targeted towards every ideological or social outlook in place. For Kaleta, this is a very traditionally, “English” approach to satire and comedy, and Kureishi is one of the representatives of this style of writing.

Still, satire is not the only style of writing that gives *Buddha* its shape. When the text is analyzed as a *Bildungsroman* of both Haroon and Karim, there are some differences in how the respective journeys of the characters are depicted in the novel. These differences mainly occur because of the satirical elements of the novel. *Buddha*’s satire brings unconventionalities to the *Bildungsroman* as a generally pretty strict and straightforward genre. For Haroon, perhaps the most glaring unconventionality is his age, which signals a “midlife crisis” rather than “coming-of-age”. However, one can suggest that in *Buddha*, the closure that is expected of a *Bildungsroman* is given to Haroon rather than Karim. It is Haroon who gets the cliché happy ending at the very end as he announces his marriage proposal to Eva. Once he decides to break his marriage with Karim’s mother, Haroon, who “is growing up with” Karim, now needs to build a new life outside of the familiar security of the suburbs. As he moves to London with Eva, he starts to see Karim as a mirror of himself. At that point, Karim feels in-between spaces, living couch to couch in different spaces, and seemingly has no goal for his future. Karim questions why this situation bothers Haroon so much: “Why did it have to bother him so much? It was as if he saw us as having one life between us. I was the second half, an extension of him, and instead of complementing him I’d thrown shit all over him” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 110). From Karim’s perspective, however, the image of his father in his mind gradually begins to change. He starts to see him more like an individual to whom the respect he feels decreases. He contrasts these feelings with Eva’s: “Eva endured it all; it made her laugh. But he wasn’t my boyfriend. I’d also begun to see Dad not as my father but as a separate person with characteristics that were contingent. He was part of the world now, not the source of it; in one way, to my distress, he was just another individual.” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 193). Now that Haroon exists outside of the family unit that has been dismantled by the affair, Karim is able to him as an individual rather than as “the source of life” as his father. With this new understanding, the deployment of Haroon’s own *Bildungsroman* is justified because, as Karim suggests, he is now seen as an individual from the narrator’s perspective. In

addition, the notion of “fatherhood” is also called into question as it can be interpreted as another role Haroon takes on. If we see fatherhood as another performance Haroon is fulfilling, from Karim’s perspective, he is not entirely successful since he breaks the norms of the traditional family unit by breaking his family apart. These norms, which in the traditional forms the English novel often also depict, are also called into question in the novel. As Kaleta points out, “English initiation literature has a melancholy strain. The social satire is brittle, sometimes cold and hard” (Kaleta 35). These same characteristics Kaleta cites can be seen in *Buddha* too as a social satire. However, as opposed to the conventional English social satires Kaleta is talking about, *Buddha* also cannot be so easily classified as “cold and hard” tonally. On some level, most satires display these bitter qualities that somewhat attack the object of ridicule, but in *Buddha*, there is also a sense of sincerity and togetherness that binds the characters of the novel together at the end of the day.

In that regard, on one hand, Haroon’s new-found passion for his philosophy can be dismissed simply as an act of performance. As the representative of a voice of reason in the novel, Jamila, for instance, is entirely uninterested in Haroon’s teachings and calls him “a complete phoney” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 72). Tangibly, it seems like Haroon’s philosophy is not helpful to anyone in his life. Still, through this unconventional path he chooses Haroon feels a sense of fulfillment in his life. There is also one other person Haroon helps significantly: Ted. As Karim puts it, “Ted was Dad’s triumph; he really was someone Dad had freed” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 101). In a highly humorous scene, Haroon instructs Ted to “follow his feelings” to free himself when Ted’s intention in coming to him has been to put an end to his “Buddhist life style”. Instead of achieving this aim, Ted is persuaded into following Haroon’s more care-free lifestyle. As Haroon instructs Ted to follow his feelings to reach true happiness, Ted suggests that ““If I follow my fucking feelings I’ll do fuck-all,”” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 49). Then, the following dialogue takes place between two men:

‘Do nothing, then,’ said God.

‘The house will fall down.’

‘Who cares? Let it drop.’

‘The business will collapse.’

‘It’s on its arse anyway,’ Dad snorted.

Ted looked up at him. ‘How d’you know?’

‘Let it collapse. Do something else in a couple of years’ time.’

‘Jean will leave me.’

‘Oh, but Jean’s left you.’

‘Oh God, oh God, oh God, you’re the stupidest person I’ve ever met, Harry.’

‘Yes, I think I am quite stupid. And you’re suffering like hell. You’re ashamed of it, too. Are people not allowed even to suffer now? Suffer, Ted.’

Ted was suffering. He sobbed generously.

‘Now,’ said Dad, readjusting his priorities, ‘what’s wrong with this fucking record-player?’ (Kureishi, *Buddha* 49-50)

There is a surprising juxtaposition of snappy and humorous dialogue alongside a genuine moment of a spiritual awakening here that serves as a triumphant moment for Haroon who, for the first time, actually helps someone. Yet, the comicality and the irony of the situation also undercuts the dramaticism of this moment, and tonally any genuine sincerity is subdued by these satirical elements. It still cannot be denied that Haroon, maybe accidentally, pushes Ted towards a happier path in life. As Haroon puts it, he releases him from the shackles of the norms of polite society that they are part of. Like Haroon, Ted also finds an alternative way of living outside of the norms that make him unhappy under Haroon’s, and Eva’s, guidance.

Furthermore, when we look at how Haroon’s journey concludes at the very end of the novel, his narrative resembles a coming-of-age story later in life, as he reaches a form of self-actualization. Firstly, he quits his job that brings him so much misery, and fully commits himself to being a spiritual guru in London as his true calling. According to Karim even though “I’d always imagined that Dad’s guru business would eventually fall off in London”, “it was clear now that he would never lack employment while the

city was full of lonely, unhappy, unconfident people who required guidance, support and pity” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 279). Hence, as Ted represents his first genuinely successful attempt at guiding people, there is a promising start to this career for him towards the end of the novel. Although it is arguable whether Haroon himself is actually qualified enough or such qualifications can even exist to be a spiritual guide; in the end, Haroon’s aspirations are not mocked or cynically put down in the narrative. Moreover, his affair with Eva, which at first is portrayed as the first disrupter of the stable state the novel’s characters are in, also ends on a very promising note at the end of the novel as Haroon and Eva announce their engagement over a dinner Karim is hosting. As the novel presents these incidents in a tonally more sincere and less cynical way, the possibilities of both satire and *Bildungsroman* can be seen through these representations. As Gilbert Highet writes, “all good satires are eminently various” (Highet 18) whether it be “in plot, in discourse, in emotional tone, in vocabulary, in sentence-structure and pattern of phrase” (Highet 18). In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, these multifaceted attributes are achieved at least partly through a fusion of satire and *Bildungsroman* as often two contradictory genres. For Haroon, stylistically these elements create both a great source for comedy, since he is a very easy target for satire, and a sense of successful self-actualization that is usually expected of the main character of *the Bildungsroman*. Thus, in the novel, the conventions of the genres are both subverted and achieved in unexpected ways, which can be suggested for both Haroon and Karim.

3.3 Karim as the Protagonist and the Narrator of the Novel

As for Karim, though the novel largely consists of his *Bildungsroman*, throughout the novel we witness what Ryan Trimm calls as “his rootlessness” (64). Karim describes this rootlessness right at the beginning of the novel, pointing out both his in-between identity and his somewhat directionless restlessness as a young man who “is going somewhere”. As it was previously argued, in *Buddha*, Karim’s journey from the suburbs to London to New York is portrayed through a combination of satirical and *Bildungsroman* elements that at times, contradict each other. Since Karim as a reflection of his worldviews narrates the novel, the humor and the satire also largely come from these outlooks. As Kaleta also points out, “Kureishi tells his story through a narrator's

point of view- but as immediately, the author also provides the reader with an objective view of the incidents. Humor is integral to both Karim's story and Kureishi's truth; contradiction becomes inherent in the novel as well" (Kaleta 68). For satire and *Bildungsroman*, these contradictions mostly include how the novel appropriates elements of *Bildungsroman* with satire's openness as a mode of writing. In that sense, although as a character Karim grows and changes; by the end he does not reach actual or concrete self-actualization. There is an open-endedness to his journey, especially as opposed to Haroon's who gets a stereotypical "happy ending".

Moreover, in this personal journey, the notion of performativity also can be seen as an ever-changing survival tactic for Karim as he tries to fit into the various settings he finds himself in. After all, as Upstone suggests, "Karim himself is a wonderful version of Homi Bhabha's subversive mimic" (Upstone 39). For Bhabha, as a result of the colonial mimicry the colonized take on; new, hybrid identities become prominent in postcolonial societies. Bhabha sees the creation of this hybridity as an inevitable consequence of the cultural and mental colonialism as practices of domination of the colonizer. As a second-generation immigrant Karim fits this description too because his cultural identity carries this hybridity as the son of a Pakistani father and an English mother. However, as a seventeen-year-old, his sense of self and identity is not a rigid thing to begin with, and his position as a second-generation immigrant further complicates this as a character who contains multitudes within himself. This complexity often leaves Karim confused when it comes to his unsettledness as a person. In discussing Karim's rootlessness Ryan Trimm argues that "this always being somewhere else accurately conveys his rootlessness: he is by no means an alien, yet he seems not to belong squarely in any geographical, racial, class, or sexual camp" (Trimm 64).

As a result, his inclination to performativity and his lack of stable identity can almost be regarded as the defining qualities of Karim. As the narrator, all these attributes shape the narrative as well. Hence, Karim's mimicry becomes especially evident at the beginning of his acting career. After the opening passage, which already tells the reader so much about Karim as a person, we learn that Karim sees the suburbs as a point of departure from where he is "going somewhere" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 3). As a young man

who is just now beginning to form an individual identity, the reader witnesses Karim's struggles with this, which can be considered a universal experience of growing up for many. However, Karim's coming-of-age also cannot be analyzed without considering his ethnic identity. Even though Karim himself considers himself an "Englishman born and bred" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 3); he also knows that he has no control over how he is perceived in the largely white English society because of his ethnic identity. As Karim puts it in Chapter Four, "the thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 53). Even though he has been born and raised in an English context, Karim still feels like he is labeled as "Other" by the external forces. Later, he also talks about the bullying he faces at school because of his ethnicity while his comic and satirical voice is still prevalent:

I was sick too of being affectionately called Shitface and Curry face, and of coming home covered in spit and snot and chalk and wood-shavings. We did a lot of woodwork at our school, and the other kids liked to lock me and my friends in the storeroom and have us chant 'Manchester United, Manchester United, we are the boot boys' as they held chisels to our throats and cut off our shoelaces. We did a lot of woodwork at the school because they didn't think we could deal with books. One day the woodwork teacher had a heart attack right in front of our eyes as one of the lads put another kid's prick in a vice and started to turn the handle. Fuck you, Charles Dickens, nothing's changed. One kid tried to brand my arm with a red-hot lump of metal. Someone else pissed over my shoes, and all my Dad thought about was me becoming a doctor. What world was he living in? Every day I considered myself lucky to get home from school without serious injury. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 63)

Here, Karim's humorous way of talking about these frustrations not only highlights the fact that how these harassments are daily occurrences for him, but it also frames the *Bildungsroman* in an unconventional way. There is an allusion here to Charles Dickens, one of the most prolific writers of *Bildungsroman*, that further drives this point home. Karim both parallels himself to the misfortunate characters of a Dickens novel and

defies the conventions of those kinds of novels with his continuous use of comicality against all adversaries. This difference is also striking for the likes of Zadie Smith as she explains in her book *Feel Free*:

There were Dickens's various waifs and strays, often closer in postcode, but distant in time. Karim was different, I knew him; I recognized the way class worked in his family, the complex mix of working- and lower-middle-class realities, and all the strange gradations that can exist between these two states. And of course he was one of the "new breed," like me, like so many kids in our school, although the only other mentions of us I'd ever come across before were all of the "tragic mulatto" variety. But the kids I knew were not tragic. They were like Karim: pushy, wild, charismatic, street-smart, impudent, often hilarious. (Smith 237)

For Smith, Karim is an instantly recognizable and relatable character as he captures her experiences as a second-generation immigrant too. Smith suggests that what makes him unique in this relatability is that Karim is not a tragic figure, but someone whose humorous nature feels familiar to her. There is a fluidity to Karim's portrayal that is at once postcolonial and satirical.

In this regard, Kureishi's use of satirical comedy can also be understood within this fluidity too. As a narrative tool, comedy can function both as a means to create a communal effect and as a form of attack or critique. Historically, comedy has been a tool of oppression as a form of othering. Hence, from a postcolonial perspective, comedy can also be a tool for authors to write back against these mischaracterizations. In his "The Rainbow Sign", Kureishi explicitly talks about how comedy has been a political tool to reinforce ethnic stereotypes in British mass media, which Kureishi reinscribes in his writings:

Television comics used Pakistanis as the butt of their humour. Their jokes were highly political: they contributed to a way of seeing the world. The enjoyed reduction of racial hatred to a joke did two things: it expressed a collective view (which was sanctioned by its being on the BBC), and it was a celebration of

contempt in millions of living rooms in England. I was afraid to watch TV because of it; it was too embarrassing, too degrading. (Kureishi, "Rainbow" 12)

As Ferretter notes, Kureishi's fictions can generally be characterized as "realistic, contemporary and knowing" (Ferretter 107), and as the above quotation illustrates, much of *Buddha's* satire then can be associated with this aim of showing a sociopolitical reality through characters such as Karim who seems recognizable to Smith. Since *The Buddha of Suburbia* is set in the 70s, it represents an England with all its pre-Thatcherite racial conflicts of the era. During the 80s, Thatcherism was the dominating political ideology in England, which evolved through Margaret Thatcher's rise as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990. As *Buddha* was published in 1990, the novel is able to look at this era that, at least partly, had given rise to neo-fascist movements in England retrospectively. This way, the novel illustrates the conflicts of the era regarding migrancy as it sets the scene for Thatcher's future anti-immigrant policies. Rather than dramatizing these sociopolitical tensions, Kureishi's reflections often take a comical approach that brings a biting irony to them. For Kureishi, the 70s is "laughable" too in the same vein to "all of his characters" (Kureishi, "Hanif Kureishi & Gurinder Chadha" 53). The sense of retrospectivity through, which the 70s are depicted, is filtered through the contemporary in the novel with the satirizing of the era. In other words, while the era is portrayed retrospectively, the perspective of the "present" time the novel was written in also colors Kureishi's representation of the 70s. His social commentaries, hence, also carry contemporary elements of the time the novel was written in. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Karim's acting career provides the ground in which these sociopolitical commentaries are made within the setting of London's theatre scene. Thus, Karim moving to London becomes a turning point in the novel as a whole both for the arc of this character and for the possibilities it grants to the novel in terms of these sociopolitical reflections.

After the dissolution of his parents' marriage, Karim gets his wish, and moves to central London alongside Haroon and Eva in the second part of the book, "In the City". It is in London where Karim first seemingly finds a direction to his directionless life as he begins to pursue an acting career. At first, however, the endless possibilities of

London overwhelm Karim, and he feels as directionless as he has always been. In London, Karim suggests that he “still had no idea what I was going to do. I felt directionless and lost in the crowd. I couldn’t yet see how the city worked, but I began to find out” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 126). For the novel, the setting of London provides a new playing ground for Karim of which he has a romanticized image, prior to his arrival. As Trimm argues, in London, “Karim battles the same frustrations, racism, and unhappiness as in Orpington” (Trimm 58) and thus, the novel “simultaneously mark central London as a center while undercutting its magnetism” (Trimm 58). Moreover, the novel also poses Eva’s son and Karim’s brief romantic interest Charlie as a foil to Karim to further explore the parallels and contrasts between the coming-of-age processes of these two teenagers. Evidently, Charlie feels as lost as Karim, especially at the beginning of their reunion:

I’d been looking forward to telling Charlie how depressed and lonely I’d been since we moved to London. But before I’d managed a single moan, Charlie pre-empted me. ‘I am suicidal,’ he announced grandly, as if he were pregnant. He said he was circling in that round of despair where you don’t care one iota what happens to you or anyone else. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 128)

These growing pains that both Karim and Charlie seem to be going through can be seen as a universal feeling many teenagers experience. Yet, as the narrative continues, it becomes clear that there are significant differences between how Karim and Charlie deal with these issues and the obstacles that come in their ways. These issues hugely stem from their racial differences, which gives Charlie a white privilege Karim has no access to. As both of these characters get their share of limelight in their respective professions as actor and musician, these differences become even more apparent.

For Karim, the beginnings of his acting career is established in Chapter Nine, when Karim meets Shadwell, an old friend of Eva’s who is a theatre director. This meeting is a crucial point in Karim’s journey as Shadwell hires him in his production. Karim is essentially typecast as Mowgli, the main character in a play based on *The Jungle Book*, and Shadwell makes it no secret that he fits the role solely because of his ethnic identity: “‘You’re just right for him,’ he continued. ‘In fact, you are Mowgli.

You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry, and you'll be sweet but wholesome in the costume." (Kureishi, *Buddha* 142). Shadwell immediately characterizes Karim in accordance to his ethnicity. Even though Karim is born and raised in English suburbs, Shadwell also expects him to know Punjabi or Urdu and is disappointed when he discovers that Karim has never even been to his "homeland":

'You've never been there, I suppose.'

'Where?'

Why was he being so bloody aggressive about it?

'You know where. Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Goa, the Punjab. You've never had that dust in your nostrils?'

'Never in my nostrils, no.'

'You must go,' he said, as if nobody had ever been there but him.

'I will, OK?' (Kureishi, *Buddha* 141)

Here, Kureishi shows how the white gaze stereotypes what they see as "Other" in such an orientalist manner, in Edward Said's terms. In other words, Shadwell's views around the minorities around him may be coming from the textual stereotypes he has heard or read about rather than the actual realities he is presented with. Shadwell cannot fully grasp Karim's identity as a second-generation immigrant who feels England is his homeland, but still is not perceived as "fully English" by the society at large. His national identity is a new one, created as a consequence of English colonialism. Although he is born and raised in England, his father's upbringing as a Pakistani immigrant also informs how others view him. As Trimm explains, "Karim is not an immigrant but something Shadwell cannot quite accept: a native suburbanite whose complexion half-promises an intimacy with a language and land not in fact his own, insinuates a foreignness he does not actually possess" (Trimm 63). That is where Karim's performativity comes into play almost as a survival mechanism. Karim, much like his father feels the need to perform a type of "colonial mimicry" in order to fit in because he feels a sense of alienation. Moreover, how Karim deals with these

categorizations also parallels Kureishi's own issues regarding his categorization as a postcolonial author. As he suggests in an interview when he discusses his views on postcolonialism and stories of immigration:

I could see, from my father's point of view. He came to England and saw England as the great Rome, as a great cultural centre, the centre of the world. It was the leading place, or as my father put it, 'the tip-top place' ... and then you were a Paki. All these changes and all these ideas seemed to me to be fascinating stories that needed to be told. But obviously, when somebody comes from outside, there are also questions about the middle. I mean, if an Indian walks into a room, then you have to ask the question about what it is to be an Englishman. Who is English? What does being English mean? Who am I, as an Englishman? (Kureishi, "Hanif Kureishi and London" 44)

In that sense, since the novel is also semi-biographical, Kureishi portrays these issues surrounding being English in a postcolonial sense through Karim as a subjective stand-in. Like Karim, Kureishi also questions what it means "to be English" as a second-generation immigrant. In many ways, these queries lay the foundation for the ways the novel presents ethnic identity as a construct. As Karim literally turns his performativity into a legitimate profession, his issues with his identity are highlighted in new, prominent ways because acting gives him an outlook on how he is perceived in the society. He sees both how he is boxed into stereotypical categorizations by the directors he works with, and the reactions of his loved ones to these performances as his most honest audience.

After the play begins production, Karim finds himself performing an image that is further and further away from his authentic self. At first, however, Karim opposes the idea of portraying a racial stereotype on stage, suggesting that he "feels wrong" in his costume as he feels "that together we're making the world uglier" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 146). Another issue arises just as Karim comes around to the idea of wearing his costume, and it has to do with his accent in the play:

'A word about the accent, Karim. I think it should be an authentic accent'

‘What d’you mean authentic?’

‘Where was our Mowgli born?’

‘India.’

‘Yes. Not Orpington. What accent do they have in India?’

‘Indian accents.’

‘Ten out of ten.’

‘No, Jeremy. Please, no.’

‘Karim, you have been cast for authenticity and not for experience.’ (Kureishi, *Buddha* 147)

Through this demand for “authenticity”, Shadwell ironically forces Karim to act as a racist stereotype that is foreign to Karim. As Huggan also writes, “equipped with requisite singsong accent and primitive wild-boy costume, Karim is coerced into performing an ‘authentic’ racial/ethnic identity that was never his in the first place” (Huggan 98). Furthermore, according to Huggan, “a further irony is that the novel’s protagonists never really escape from their condition of continually restaged marginality” (Huggan 99). In the context of the *Bildungsroman*, the lack of a consistent sense of identity creates subversions. In other words, “as the theatrical itself assumes a dimension moves the plot of life, playing, and searching for a character becomes both a structural and a symbolic” (Hashmi 26). When the theatricality only highlights this search of identity, then, the novel is mostly interested in the search of identity rather than concrete self-actualization. Especially in the case of Karim, there is no solid self-becoming at the end of the novel, which clashes with the conventional presentation of the *Bildungsroman*.

When Karim eventually gives in to performing such a racially offensive stereotype in Shadwell’s play, he is met with disappointment by his loved ones. His father, for instance, describes his performance as “an awful performance by my boy looking like a Black and White Minstrel!” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 157). Jamila similarly is

not impressed by the performance and calls Karim out on “pandering to prejudices” in a “neo-fascist” play:

‘Jammie —’

‘And it was disgusting, the accent and the shit you had smeared over you. You were just pandering to prejudices —’

‘Jammie —’

‘And cliches about Indians. And the accent — my God, how could you do it? I expect you’re ashamed, aren’t you?’

‘I am, actually.’

But she didn’t pity me; she mimicked my accent in the play. ‘Actually, you’ve got no morality, have you? You’ll get it later, I expect, when you can afford it. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 157)

Here, while Jamila recognizes the faults of the play, there is also a recognition of why Karim must have taken on a role that makes him uncomfortable for socioeconomic reasonings. Later, they all let it go as Karim suggests to the reader: “So that was it. *The Jungle Book* was not mentioned again by any of them, as if they weren’t ready to see me as an actor but preferred me in my old role as a useless boy” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 158). Thus, this chapter of Karim’s professional life is closed, and his performance is never brought up again as if it is a shameful secret.

In Chapter Eleven, when Karim starts to work for a more famous and critically acclaimed director, Matthew Pyke, all these issues culminates in a way that places Karim in a similar position to the one in Shadwell’s play. For the play, Pyke wants the actors to base their roles on someone they know in their lives. At first, Karim considers Charlie, but is shut down by Pyke: “Initially I thought I’d choose Charlie as my character, but Pyke discouraged me immediately. ‘We need someone from your own background,’ he said. ‘Someone black.’” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 170). Although Pyke is supposedly a “more prolific” director than Shadwell, he still views Karim in a similarly stereotypical manner. Moreover, even in London and in the more highbrow theatre scene

of London, in which multiculturalism is supposedly embraced, Karim cannot escape these prejudices regarding his identity. As Ryan Trimm puts it, “London still attracts those like Karim drawn to greater possibilities for work, play, and life itself; however, such journeys simultaneously mark central London as a center while undercutting its magnetism” (Trimm 58). Hence, one can argue that in the novel, the common conceptualizations of a metropolis such as London are subverted too. As a cosmopolitan city, London can be viewed as a land of opportunity and as a more “welcoming” place for minorities. The experiences of the characters in the novel, however, depict London as a romanticized entity in their minds. In a way, Karim’s initial idolization of Pyke can also be a reflection of this since Pyke represents a highly selective theatre scene of London.

In the end, Pyke’s dissatisfaction leads Karim to consider Anwar as the character he would portray instead. When he talks about Anwar’s characterization and story, however, this time his choice of representation becomes a concern for Tracey, the only black woman in their troupe. When Pyke encourages her to speak on these concerns, the following conversation between her and Karim takes place:

‘Yes.’ She spoke to me as if all I required was a little sense. ‘I’m afraid it shows black people —’

‘Indian people —’

‘Black and Asian people —’

‘One old Indian man —’

‘As being irrational, ridiculous, as being hysterical. And as being fanatical.’

‘Fanatical?’ I appealed to the High Court. Judge Pyke was listening carefully.

‘It’s not a fanatical hunger-strike. It’s calmly intended blackmail.’

But Judge Pyke signalled for Tracey to go on.

‘And that arranged marriage. It worries me. Karim, with respect, it worries me.’

I stared at her, saying nothing. She was very disturbed. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 180)

What is ironic here is that although Karim's backstory on how Anwar goes on a hunger strike to convince Jamila to marry someone he chooses is something completely factual, which the reader also knows about; for Tracey, it becomes an issue of misrepresenting minorities. The novel questions both the need for "good" representation and whether or not such a thing is possible in a way that would be universally accepted. On a metatextual level, as Perfect suggests for Kureishi too "yet critics have often attempted to emphasize his importance for such debates by endowing his work with representational status" (Perfect 8). According to Perfect, "this has often led to a failure to recognize the multiplicity of his writing and to engage fully with its complexities. [...] and there has been much anxiety over the issue of who or what his writing finally "represents."" (Perfect 8). Therefore, in *Buddha*, as Kureishi parodies this concern for representation that artists of minorities can feel obliged to; he demonstrates the limitation such concerns can also create.

Eventually, Karim is persuaded into giving up his choice of Anwar, perhaps because of peer-pressure that stems from such obligations to representation. He, then, begins to consider Changez, Jamila's aloof husband, as a character he can portray on stage. Karim begins to experience what he describes as his first real "moral dilemma" after Changez does not give consent to Karim: "As I sat there I began to recognize that this was one of the first times in my life I'd been aware of having a moral dilemma" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 186). Moreover, through Karim's decision to fictionalize Changez, the reader gets the chance to see another character's perspective on being a foreigner or disenfranchised in London that clashes with Karim's own views. It is eye-opening how Changez seems to be bad-mouthing South Asian immigrants. According to Karim, "if I knew my Changez, would be abusing any Pakistanis or Indians he saw in the street" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 210). In this scene, when they come across a group of Sikhs, Changez gives the following monologue:

'Yes, they have souls, but the reason there is this bad racialism is because they are so dirty, so rough-looking, so bad mannered. And they are wearing such strange clothes for the Englishman, turbans and all. To be accepted they must take up the English ways and forget their filthy villages! They must decide to be

either here or there. Look how much here I am! And why doesn't that bugger over there look the Englishman in the eye! No wonder the Englishman will hit him!' (Kureishi, *Buddha* 210)

The ironic tone of this passage is apparent as it ridicules Changez's ignorance and complacency of the oppression he sees fit for other minorities that he views socioeconomically "below" himself. Then, what John Clement Ball suggests of Naipaul's satirical writing can be suggested for Kureishi too since, like Naipaul, Kureishi also portrays the faults he sees in both the oppressed and the oppressor with satirical elements. As Luke Ferretter writes, Kureishi's "ironic mode functions as a criticism of every ideology at work in contemporary society, but without positing any kind of alternative politics on which another could be based" (Ferretter 120), and this statement rings true for the satiric targeting at work here as well. To this, one can also add that while "Kureishi writes with humor about today's disparity and diversity", he "neither romanticizes nor propagandizes present-day incongruity" (Kaleta 17). Later, when Changez becomes the victim of a hate crime, this ironic detachment is further emphasized in the narrative. Ironically, prior to this assault, Changez exclaims how the English "don't try to do you down all the time like the Indians do" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 223). As Karim explains just a few days later, Changez is attacked by neo-Nazis who, according to Karim, "jumped out on Changez and called him a Paki, not realizing he was Indian" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 224). In these instances, as Ferretter argues, again there is a mockery of the workings of multiple ideological perspectives as both the aggressors and the victim are satirized for their own brands of ignorance.

The satirical elements at work here also question the very nature of ethnic identity since from a white perspective Changez can be so easily mistaken as a "Paki" when he is Indian. Then, when Karim makes his debut as the character he has based on Changez in his new play, Changez seems satisfied with the end result as he feels grateful that Karim "kept it fundamentally autobiographical and didn't try the leap of invention into my character" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 231). From Changez's perspective then Karim's parody does not seem offensive. Still, a conversation with his mother reveals Karim the instability of his own identity:

‘Wasn’t I good, eh, Mum?’

‘You weren’t in a loin-cloth as usual,’ she said. ‘At least they let you wear your own clothes. But you’re not an Indian. You’ve never been to India. You’d get diarrhoea the minute you stepped off that plane, I know you would.’

‘Why don’t you say it a bit louder,’ I said. ‘Aren’t I part Indian?’

‘What about me?’ Mum said. ‘Who gave birth to you? You’re an Englishman, I’m glad to say.’

‘I don’t care,’ I said. ‘I’m an actor. It’s a job.’

‘Don’t say that,’ she said. ‘Be what you are.’ (Kureishi, *Buddha* 232)

From Margaret’s perspective, Karim is fully “an Englishman” in contrast to what he previously has suggested in the opening monologue of the novel in which he defines himself as a “funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 3). However, Karim’s national identity is categorized in a way that does not encompass all the facets of it by others. In many ways, these attempts prove the fictitiousness of nationhood itself as much of what the reader perceives to be as Karim’s national identity is conveyed through others’ perceptions of him. In Bhabha and Huggan’s terms, there is a sense of staged and mimicked qualities that Karim displays to be palatable to whoever his audience is.

Towards the end of the novel, Karim goes to New York for the play; and after the play is done, he begins to live with Charlie for a while, who is now a famous rockstar in the States. According to Karim, Charlie is now “selling Englishness, and getting a lot of money for it” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 247). During this period, Karim almost becomes a babysitter for Charlie while he is dealing with his own downward spiral as he finds himself directionless after the end of their tournee. As Ryan Trimm suggests, throughout the book, Karim struggles to find a sense of belonging which continues to be troublesome for him in the suburbs, in London, or in New York. Trimm claims that paradoxically, “Karim is truly at home in England but his version of home means no fixed address; indeed, central to his being at home is the only partially successful desire to leave such security and middle-class domesticity behind” (Trimm 66), and

consequently, this means that “Englishness and the home are no longer the same” (Trimm 66). While the very ending of the novel offers Haroon a new state of stability and self-fulfillment, it captures this rootlessness in Karim that remains unresolved. After Karim secures a job in a soap opera, he gains a new sense of financial stability. While this financial stability can be seen as Karim’s coming-of-age in his *Bildungsroman*, Karim’s narration here also makes it clear that internally he is conflicted in regard to coming to terms with his identity as a young man. In the novel, Karim’s arrival from New York to his homeland is framed as the return of the prodigal son by Eva: “You’re our prodigal son. Don’t spoil it” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 261). In this scene, Karim witnesses Eva and his father being interviewed for *Furnishings* magazine after the renovations Eva has made in their flat with the help of Ted. The following conversation Karim overhears between the journalist and Haroon is illuminating in terms of the perspectives the novel presents on the identity politics of the immigrants. According to Haroon, “‘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. When I was young we saw the Englishman as a superior being.’” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 263). This perspective is not something that holds true in Haroon’s mind anymore. He suggests that the West has “no deepening of culture, no accumulation of wisdom no increase in the way of the spirit” (Kureishi, *Buddha* 263), which he perceives as a weakness. This change in Haroon’s attitude can be a result of both his latent interest in Eastern philosophy and a sign of being capable of more nuanced views with time and age. In the following scene, Karim this time visits his mother and his little brother Allie, and Allie’s perspective on these same issues as a second-generation-immigrant significantly differs from their father’s:

‘Let me say that we come from privilege. We can’t pretend we’re some kind of shitted-on oppressed people. Let’s just make the best of ourselves.’ He looked at me like a Sunday school teacher telling you not to let yourself down. I liked him now; I wanted to know him; but the things he was saying were strange. ‘So congratulations, big brother. A soap opera, that’s something to crow about. Television’s the only medium I like.’ (Kureishi, *Buddha* 268)

Here, his brother shows no sympathy towards the immigrants or foreigners of England and suggests that they are the ones to blame for the oppression they face. There is a subversion in this scene not unlike Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic", in which subversively the second generation is portrayed as more "ignorant" and malleable to propaganda than the first. These perspectives that Karim observes also serve to show the in-between state he often finds himself in, and the complex points of views that shape his identity too.

In the last scene of the novel, Karim decides to celebrate this newfound success as a soap opera actor, and his father giving up his job, by taking his family and loved ones out on a dinner. It is at this dinner that Eva and Haroon announce their engagement, which demonstrates Haroon's more settled ending in comparison to Karim. For Karim, while he suggests how him paying for them in this dinner makes him feel good as "they could no longer see me as a failure" (Kureishi, *Buddha* 283), this brief satisfaction does not eclipse the fact that the novel still ends on a relative open end for him. Karim's narration at the very end illustrates this notion earnestly:

I could think about the past and what I'd been through as I'd struggled to locate myself and learn what the heart is. Perhaps in the future I would live more deeply. And so I sat in the centre of this old city that I loved, which itself sat at the bottom of a tiny island. I was surrounded by people I loved, and I felt happy and miserable at the same time. I thought of what a mess everything had been, but that it wouldn't always be that way. (Kureishi, *Buddha* 283-84)

As Karim feels a mixture of emotions that does not connate certain satisfactory feelings, he makes a remark that this could change in the future. For Kaleta too, the novel "leaves the story of its main protagonist, Karim, open-ended, but in this case father and son, Haroon and Karim, share the final scene as they had shared the opening one" (Kaleta 185). In the novel, Haroon and Karim's identities are connected even solely by the fact that they are father and son. This connection is explored in the novel through both the elements of satire and the *Bildungsroman*. In terms of how these two genres work together, their inconsistencies help navigate Kureishi's own inconsistent style of writing. As Perfect argues, "Kureishi's writing abandons consistency itself" (Perfect 18),

meaning that stylistically, his works usually take rather fluid forms. The ending of the novel also encapsulates these ideas with tonal shifts at play as the almost bittersweet ending of the novel is in contrast with its generally cynical takes on the society. Since satire as a genre makes room for these sorts of tonal variations, its use is in effect in the novel's ending as well.

Therefore, if “satire can both determine identity construction and actively perform identity politics” (Zekavat 5); how this genre interacts with *Bildungsroman*, whose construction also has a lot to do with identity formation, creates intriguing questions to examine. In Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, satirical elements work to subvert the conventional properties of the *Bildungsroman* in the coming-of-age stories of a father and son since satire as a mode of writing can often distort the traditional norms of any genre. In this novel, not only the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* does not reach the promise of self-actualization, but the novel also makes a case for how a midlife crisis is often not too unlike from a coming-of-age story. There is also a subversion of how London and perhaps England in general are misperceived and idealized as a land of opportunity, which he explores through the views of many different characters, all of whom happen to be various types of immigrants. As Zadie Smith puts it in her discussion of Kureishi's *Buddha*, “for him England is, in so many ways, impossible—but it is also his playground. Both versions of his experience are true. That is the great discomfort and irresponsible charm of this lovely, funny, honest novel” (Smith 247). In the novel, this playground is shown with great honesty as the roles characters need to take on in order to fit in highlights the fact that identity formation itself is a fictitious notion, which is achieved through usages of satirical elements that distort the *Bildungsroman*.

CHAPTER IV

“THIS IS NOT AN ANIMAL FARM”: SATIRICAL ALLEGORIES AND POLYPHONY OF NOVIOLET BULAWAYO’S *GLORY*

As it has been illustrated in the previous chapters, stylistically, satire is often characterized by its open possibilities and flexibility. These qualities establish satire as a mode of writing in which contradictory voices often can be heard. As John Clement Ball puts it, from a sociocultural perspective, “satiric modes can articulate internal disagreements within a culture, and also offer variously constituted connections between the satirized conditions located there” (Ball 13). Hence, for Ball, this idea flourishes as multidirectional possibilities within “the colonial experience” (13). In this chapter, NoViolet Bulawayo’s *Glory* will be examined by analyzing how these open possibilities are demonstrated in this satirical take on a postcolonial reality. In her second novel, *Glory*, Bulawayo explores the process and aftermath of a coup in a nation that has had a traumatic colonial past with prolonged effects. In this political satire, she treats the complicated sociopolitical conditions of Jidada, standing for her homeland of Zimbabwe, as an issue more effectively portrayed through multiple perspectives. Whether it is mock social media excerpts Bulawayo places between chapters, or various mock street interview style monologues she assigns to the nameless animals of Jidada, or with the continuous shifts in character points of views and, at times, even with tonal shifts, Bulawayo makes sure that every voice of Jidada is heard in *Glory*. These polyphonic elements of the novel not only showcase multiple versions of truth and history that exist together, but also reflect the fragmented and individualistic social conditions of today’s world. In that sense, opposing views can and do coexist in *Glory*. As Ball suggests, one of the key features of satire is this capability to illustrate the inner conflicts within a culture, which has further meanings when this attribute is placed in a postcolonial context and can be classified as a type of polyphony. In addition, since topicality is classified as another feature of satire, Bulawayo’s portrayal of the 2017 Zimbabwean coup d’état, is an especially fitting subject matter. Thus, her reflections on today’s world can be associated with her use of satirical mode too. As she satirizes real-life events and figures, her usages of polyphony alongside her usages of satirical

parodies afford her the nuance and flexibility to look at complex issues of a nation with a long history of tribal conflicts through many perspectives that often contradict one another, but can still exist simultaneously. Furthermore, as it has been the case with the previous chapters, in *Glory* too, satiric form functions to highlight the inherent performativity of being a public figure as well, again specifically within a postcolonial context. In that sense, how the aftereffects of colonialism corrupt the state politics is underlined via the satirical elements of the novel too.

4.1 The Polyphony and Topicality of the Novel's Satire

When we look at polyphony and satire as two separate entities, there are many shared characteristics between them. In many ways, polyphony itself is a commonly found element of satire. As Dustin Griffin notes, Bakhtin also characterizes “the menippea” in such ways, and believes that ““the menippea” is characteristically dialogic or polyphonic rather than monologic, that it speaks with more than one voice” (Griffin 41). For Bakhtin, in fact, it was menippea (and Socratic dialogue) that prepared “certain generic conditions necessary for polyphony's emergence” (Bakhtin, *Problems* 122). He writes:

A very important characteristic of the menippea is the organic combination within it of the free fantastic, the symbolic, at times even a mystical-religious element with an extreme and (from our point of view) crude *slum naturalism*. The adventures of truth on earth take place on the high road, in brothels, in the dens of thieves, in taverns, marketplaces, prisons, in the erotic orgies of secret cults, and so forth. The idea here fears no slum, is not afraid of any of life's filth. The man of the idea—the wise man—collides with worldly evil, depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most extreme expression. (Bakhtin, *Problems* 121)

Hence, from Bakhtin's point-of-view, as a subgenre of satire, the menippea contains extreme contrasts within the text that can co-exist together, and “is not afraid of any of life's filth”. Since Bakhtin sees satire as an originator of the novel, he suggests that the polyphonic elements that are associated with the novel have evolved through menippea's evolution. As Renate Lachmann et al. write, “the novel appears as a freewheeling,

unbounded play with meaning that avoids committing itself to any single one” (Lachmann et al. 145). The same can be suggested of satire too as “the novels of their time” (Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel” 22). As Jonathan Greenberg sums up, “satire combines, inhabits, or transforms other genres. It mixes subject matter, linguistic registers, and literary traditions. Satire, moreover, exists in ironic or secondary relation to “higher” genres, and it negates the authority of epic, saga, and myth” (Greenberg 10). Thus, satire can be seen as one of the most hospitable modes of writing to create a poly-voiced text because it is flexible and works as a modifier of genres rather than a genre of its own.

Another aspect of satire which is important to emphasize for the purposes of this chapter, is its topicality and referentiality. As Greenberg writes:

Related to referentiality is the topicality of satire, the capacity of literature to treat people and issues that are of pressing public interest at the time of the writing. By naming names, or by not-so-subtly disguising them, satire – in contrast to epic or tragedy – tethers itself to its immediate, present-day context. (Greenberg 22)

For Greenberg, the fact that satiric representations often refer to real-life figures and events is also one of the main reasons why it can sometimes create great controversies (21). Hence, satire often cannot be read outside of the present conditions it was written in. In her *Irony's Edge*, Linda Hutcheon refers to irony as “the present conditions of knowledge” (31), and considering that irony and satire often go hand-in-hand, this quality can be regarded as satirical too. There is an almost documental characteristic of satire that Gilbert Highet likens to a camera or tape recorder (Highet 1). Still, it is also wise to remember that while satire “pretends to be true and real”, its representations are also often “misshapen, exaggerated, and caricatured” (Highet 158). Highet calls this satire’s “distorting mirror”; meaning that whatever current moment is being reflected still inevitably gets distorted. For Highet, one way to depict these distortions “is to depict men and women as animals, or rather as non-human animals” (177). From this perspective, if they are “sharp and sour enough” animal fables can be seen as satires too (Highet 178). As a satirical novel that makes use of animal allegories to explore humane

issues, NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory* thus can also be regarded as a "satirical animal fable" from Highet's point of view. Moreover, Susan Lever, who calls satire "the colonizer's gift of cursing" (Lever 109), also claims that though sometimes contemporary postcolonial satires can be read as politically somewhat unreliable "postmodern play" due to their reliance on irony and exaggerations, "once we recognize it as satire, then its relationship to its context becomes clear" (Lever 109). She further explains:

satire operates through comic exaggeration and relies for its political force on readers' recognition of its reference to mutual experience. Satire is not bound to report history as a set of chronological facts, nor to offer sympathy with individual characters, but can observe, quite coldly and even inconsistently, a multitude of aspects of the world. (Lever 109)

Hence, acknowledging that satire often works through comic exaggerations also does not hinder its specific capacity for sociopolitical commentary, which often comes with satire's referential and topical qualities. In *Glory*, as animals embody the voices of a nation with a troubling history of oppression, these attributes serve to build a rich narrative, composed of diverse voices and tonal shifts that range from great comicality with satirical exaggerations to crushing tragedies that represent the nation's traumatic past. In that regard, the author's political commentary in the novel, then, finds its footing through the satirical elements of the novel.

As it has been previously mentioned, Jidada refers to Zimbabwe in the novel, and the events of the novel are largely based on the real-life coup Zimbabwe went through in 2017. In many ways, "the coup was a by-product of factional struggles in ZANU PF" (Mutanda 5). ZANU PF is the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front which has been the ruling political party in Zimbabwe since the 1980s. Robert Mugabe had been leading the party since 1980 when he was removed by a coup in November 2017. According to Lucky E. Asuelime, the justification for his removal can be summed up as: "Mugabe had overstayed in power to such an extent that he was now surviving on the benevolence of security apparatuses. Internally, he had presided over the demise of one of the strongest economies in Africa which led many, including some members of his

party, to despise him” (Asuelime 20). In addition to these sociopolitical reasons, Grace Mugabe’s conflicts with ZANU-PF has also been considered another factor (Dendere “about Grace Mugabe”). Eventually these conflicts led to “the deteriorating relationship between Mnangagwa and the Mugabe family” (Dendere “about Grace Mugabe”), which is significant because Emmerson Mnangagwa was the vice-president of Zimbabwe at the time and would go on to fill the seat Mugabe left behind. In the novel, Mugabe is allegorized as the Father of the Nation/the Old Horse, Mnangagwa is allegorized as the Savior of the Nation/General Tuvy, and Grace Mugabe is allegorized as Sweet Mother. The background surrounding the coup is represented in a very authentic way that does not really distort the facts. The military operation being dubbed “Operation Restore Legacy” and how the military was hesitant to call the coup, a *coup* is directly referenced in the book. Mugabe being dubbed “The Father of the Nation” also resembles his image in reality. For instance, Tinashe Maware points out how “Mugabe is also presented and presents himself as the father and husband of the Zimbabwean nation in the Western inclined oedipal sense” (Maware 53). Bulawayo’s dubbing, however, comes off as an ironic jab against Mugabe as the exaggerated ways she describes him clearly demonstrate. In a similar vein, Mnangagwa’s dubbing as General Tuvy in the novel is also an intentional mockery. As Lizzy Attree points out: “In Bulawayo’s satiric rendering, Mnangagwa is represented by a horse, General Tuvy — a play on the Shona word for shit, *duzvi*, thus setting up the joke of his name: General Shit” (Attree, “Voices of Zimbabwe”). Perhaps, this can also be seen as how Mnangagwa is perceived by at least a section of the public. Moreover, the novel’s polyphonic vision of Jidada also simulates “the severely divided society” of Zimbabwe and its “lack of a shared national vision” (Madambi et al. 96-97). In the novel, this polyphonic vision is created through a number of stylistic choices, satire being the primary one. In that sense, Bulawayo’s satirizing of real-life events and figures captures an authenticity without necessarily being written from a traditionally “realistic” point of view. In other words, the novel’s satirical workings such as parody, exaggerations, and irony actually emphasize a true reality through the means of ridicule and excess. Maybe in a more straightforward way, the same attribute can be said for the novel’s polyphony too as it becomes the vehicle to carry the voices of an entire nation.

4.1.1 Intertextuality and Parody

In these regards, one of the first elements that contributes to the novel's polyphony, and its satire, is its intertextuality. The novel is highly rich in references that range from the Bible (as a subtitle that reads "Do Not Say, I Am Only a Child." For to Everyone I Send You, You Must Go, and All That I Command You, You Must Speak" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 27)) to Eminem (as a subtitle that reads "Will the Real Father of Nation Please Stand Up?" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 37)) to, maybe most glaringly, *Animal Farm*. In the case of the parallels the novel shares with *Animal Farm*, the common features perhaps can be summed up as using allegorizing animals to make sociopolitical criticisms. The inclination to connect the two novels is also explicitly called out within the text by Sweet Mother who exclaims: "with Jidada itself and this sun over there as my witnesses, and I'm saying: This is not an animal farm but Jidada with a -da and another -da!" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 30). In addition to this, both novels also allegorize dogs as cops. The novel is not interested in making such references to merely wink at the reader. In *Glory*, intertextuality plays a more significant role in heightening both the satiric play of the novel and the polyphony. As intertextuality usually involves mixing and combining different texts or genres, how this creates a polyphonic effect is rather obvious. As for its satirical workings, even with the Eminem example that is actually a jab at the political rulers of the novel, we can see how Bulawayo makes use of such a contemporary reference to ridicule the Jidadan politicians. In that sense, this reference is also related to topicality too. The Twitter threads Bulawayo parodies are also such intertextual placements that create a similar satirical effect, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Another example of such intertextual ridicule is a chapter titled: "Reformation in the Time of the Crocodile", a clear reference to Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*. While it is unclear exactly what "the Crocodile" symbolizes in the novel, here, just the likening of it to cholera indicates a negative connotation to the reader. Moreover, as Lizzy Attree points out, Peter Godwin describes Robert Mugabe as "the crocodile who ate the sun" in his book *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun: A Memoir of Africa* (Attree, "Voices of Zimbabwe", emphasis in original), which becomes another point of reference for Bulawayo. However, interpreting the crocodile just as an allegory for Mugabe's rhetoric does not exactly work within the novel's narrative because the

crocodile continues to cause havoc even after the Old Horse is replaced by Tuvy. Hence, the crocodile can also be interpreted as the general corruptive mentality Jidada is ruled under, which is exemplified through the allegory of a violent and predatory animal.

With all these examples, the intertextuality is also blended with parody as another common attribute of a satire. Bulawayo's general use of a highly ironic language in itself creates such effects. The following passage in which she satirizes the ministry names exemplifies the ironical language of the novel:

Much later, after the dogs had concluded their display and marched off the field, and after speeches from the Minister of the Revolution, the Minister of Corruption, the Minister of Order, the Minister of Things, the Minister of Nothing, the Minister of Propaganda, the Minister of Homophobic Affairs, the Minister of Disinformation, and the Minister of Looting. (Bulawayo, *Glory* 9)

As she makes a mockery of what is granted essential and prominent enough to create ministries in Jidada, Bulawayo's use of these ironical ministry names can be seen as reflections of the corruption rampant in real-life, in Zimbabwe. Thus, the exaggeration shows a reality. In the novel, these sorts of ironical exaggerations are employed even right at the beginning; the novel opens with a rally of the Old Horse/Father of the Nation, who becomes the first target of its satire. Here, again highly ironical exaggerations are used for this satirical portrayal. For instance, in the first chapter, the Old Horse is described as "The Anointed One. The Only One. The Supreme One. The Most Magnificent One" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 3), and it is suggested that "the Father of the Nation's appearance alone had once upon a time started engines, bent steel beams, and in separate documented occasions, made scores and scores of virgins pregnant so that long before he married the donkey and sired children with her, streams of His Excellency's blood were already flowing throughout Jidada" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 3). These exaggerations serve to show the reader the idealization of this leader's image in the public eye to such an absurd degree. Instead of plainly stating this fact, the narrator makes ironic jabs that illustrate how ridiculous it is to worship a politician; especially one who is also largely responsible for the socioeconomical state of Jidada.

4.1.2 Performativity of the Political Figures

Much of the ironical workings of the novel, in fact, serve to expose the façade the various politicians wear to sell false promises to the Jidadans. This is also where performativity can be a topic of discussion as the satirical elements expose the performative nature of postcolonial politics itself. In the novel, the use of language is also important as a powerful tool of rhetoric, i.e. the art of persuading people. As the omniscient narrator point of view shifts to Dr. Sweet Mother, an influential political figure as the wife of the president, this idea become apparent:

Part of the brilliance in her speeches, Dr. Sweet Mother knows, comes from her choice of language—indeed, she’s discovered she’s at her crushingest, her most potent, her lacerating best, when she expresses herself in her mother tongue. It’s one contrast between her and His Excellency, who’s indeed famed all over Jidada and beyond, including Great Britain itself, tholukuthi by Englishmalls themselves, for his eloquence in English. (Bulawayo, *Glory* 33)

Hence, in discussing the performativity of the novel in terms of its satirical elements, we need to bear in mind the general use of language in the novel too. As it is pointed out in the passage, for both Sweet Mother and the Father of the Nation, language is a significant tool to maintain their power, which is largely exemplified in the speeches they give to the public in the novel. In that regard, one of the first stylistic choices that grab the reader’s attention is the number of repetitions in these speeches. In the passage, there is also a word in Ndebele language, “tholukuthi”, which is used recurrently in the novel. Thoulukuthi means “I find that”, and as Attree suggests, it “is used to express shock or amazement at the strange doings depicted in the story” (Attree, “Voices of Zimbabwe”). The constant repetition of this word can be seen as satirical because it often deliberately interrupts the text and is excessive in a satirical way. In the passage, especially because the focus is on the politicians’ performativity the use of the word points toward this performativity.

In the novel, the stylistic choice of repetitions also works as a tool of rhetoric for political propaganda and accentuates certain feelings as the repetitions emphasize some satirical and emotive exaggerations. It reads like Bulawayo mocks the common use of

language that politicians often apply to convince their audience. In almost all of the political speeches *Glory* contains, repetitions come up. The following passage, for example, displays all these notions with the way repetitions are made use of in the text:

Are we not enjoying the precious fruits, both on and underneath, this blessed piece of earth? Are we not living in prosperity? Are we not the envy of less fortunate nations? Is anyone among you hungry? Or unfree? Or suffering? Or dissatisfied? Or poor? Or oppressed? Are we not set to leave future generations the kind of glowing legacy to make them stand tall among the nations of the world? (Bulawayo, *Glory* 19)

Since repetitions are a very key element of political rhetoric, here, the repetitions are also used by the characters for this aim of persuasion. By repeating similar rhetorical questions that deceives the citizens, the Old Horse spreads his propaganda. He invites the citizens to listen to what he is saying rather than to question whether or not this picture he is painting of Jidada is real. He knows that if he repeats these messages frequently, it would sound true to the listeners. Moreover, these portrayals then make up what Eline Kuenen calls “the performance of postcolonial dictatorship” (Kuenen 80-81) in the novel, in the sense that their political personas are made up of façades.

The first example of such portrayal is evidently The Old Horse/ The Father of the Nation as “the leader who was decreed by God” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 2). As the ironical exaggerations accentuate, his performativity is pointed out right at the beginning. He is described as a perfect, Godlike leader to a laughably absurd degree, and this image is quickly shattered as the ironical tone is quite evident. The reader also quickly learns that the much-adorned leader is mentally deteriorating as he is starting to show signs of dementia. In fact, just before his very impassioned rally speech, he asks one of his assistants: “What is this place? Who are all these animals? And why are they looking at me like maybe they know me?” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 5), to which the assistant explains how it is the Independence Day celebration and that is really a celebration of him as the Father of the Nation. As the Sweet Mother later suggests, “the Father of the Nation succumbed to a mild case of dementia” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 37). His dementia would later be one of the reasons he was removed from the seat of power. Although this situation is

made quite apparent to the reader, the same cannot be suggested of the people around him. Yet, we can see how deluded the Old Horse is and how everyone around him still believe the myths built up around him as a political leader. He even claims that “I have beaten Christ” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 13). He feels totally invincible, and as the following passage shows, this belief is normalized:

As you know, I have indeed died many times. That’s where I have beaten Christ. Christ died once, and resurrected just once. But me I have died and resurrected and I don’t know how many times I will die and resurrect but I know I will keep resurrecting and resurrecting and resurrecting—in fact, I promise you my dearly beloved Jidadans that I’ll attend each and every one of your funerals because you will all die and leave me here ruling in this beautiful land of the Fathers!” the Old Horse said, to more applause. He paused and reveled in it. (Bulawayo, *Glory* 13)

In this instance, the irony comes from both the Old Horse’s lack of self-awareness and how he is saying these things to a crowd that is so fully indoctrinated by his propaganda that they buy into it without question. Even when he suggests that he will bury each one of them, he is met with applause. In these political speeches, Bulawayo showcases how political propaganda is a form of professional lying as her satirized version of these speeches that we have continuously heard is not that far off from the reality. Thus, her ridicule reflects a truth of our world. Moreover, the satirical exaggerations and ridicule also point towards the performance of a dictator. In the novel, even Sweet Mother, who is perhaps the closest to the Old Horse, is aware of this situation: “what Sweet Mother quickly learned was that the Father of the Nation might’ve been venerated for all these things and more, but the simple truth was that when it came down to actually practicing, being, those things, he was also none of them” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 38). The novel explicitly suggests that he does not act according to the things he is preaching. His persona is a myth, created to oppress Jidadans.

Furthermore, though it is Sweet Mother who somewhat calls this out, she is as much of a phony as the Old Horse is in the novel. Sweet Mother herself is in fact aware of her performativity. When she watches the speech she gave at the rally, she thinks that

it is “her best performance so far ever since she began speaking at rallies” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 34). She recognizes the fact that what she offers to the public is a mere performance. She is also aware that “they were also no better than the very oppressors they’d replaced” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 38), meaning that she also recognizes themselves as oppressors. Still, Sweet Mother’s absolute vanity is also evident in the novel. Though she recognizes herself and her husband as oppressive forces, this recognition does not bring about personal change. She is as vain as it is expected from a person of such position. Her demands for a PhD degree without doing any work for it, for instance, show how highly she thinks of herself. As the narrator puts it, she “was awarded a PhD in sociology from the University of Jidada before you could say diss, for dissertation” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 40-41). Her title of Dr., then, is a complete façade. It is not something that she has earned but something that was granted to her because of her powerful position as a member of the ruling class. The satirical jabs that are directed towards her also illustrate this. For instance, her motivations behind getting a PhD degree are explained in the following passage:

Still haunted by the humbling and not so successful educational career of her youth, Sweet Mother was determined to put that shameful reputation behind her like a tail, open a new chapter, so to speak; tholukuthi she’d show every one of her snobbish former classmates and teachers who’d ever teased and bullied and despised and laughed at her. She’d outshine. She’d impress. She’d be number one. She’d take awards. She’d be first-rate. She’d be ~~sur~~ ~~supre~~ ~~superflr~~ supercalifragilisticxpialidocious. (Bulawayo, *Glory* 39)

Her motivation is described as putting a “shameful reputation behind her”, and her vanity is also quite apparent here. Moreover, how she uses the word “supercalifragilisticxpialidocious”, which really is not a word, also demonstrates the contrast between appearances vs reality. Sweet Mother does not actually aim to become more intellectual or educated; her aim is just to appear as if she is, which shows the performativity behind her act.

Then, there are others such as General Judas Goodness Reza who can also be cited as an example of performative political figures in the novel. The General is

mocked for similar vices to Sweet Mother as another recipient of a PhD degree even though he seems not to even know the degree he was awarded. He asks: “Which is why I had to get those youngsters to read and write that P-h-i- that Ph- that—goddammit, what’s the name of that motherfucking certificate that’s hanging in my office, Comrade? The one with that round stamp thing the color of gold, that one that they gave me at that gathering when I wore that long red dress and queer cap?” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 62). Here, the target, as is the case with the Old Horse and Sweet Mother, is clearly his ignorance. Just as it was the case with Sweet Mother, the General also receives a PhD degree without actually having to put any work for it.

Lastly, there is Tuvy/ Saviour of the Nation whose tyranny makes the Jidadans almost miss the Old Horse’s rule. Similar to most of the political figures of the novel, Tuvy is also portrayed as a vain, ignorant, and narcissistic individual whose ascent to power corrupts him thoroughly. In a similar vein to the Old Horse and Sweet Mother, we see how he fools the public with his use of rhetoric in his speeches and his false promises. He promises “a New Dispensation, a New Jidada” as “this country’s long, long, long terribly dark night has indeed ended and we now perch on the wings of a brand-new dawn” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 97). Though he suggests that he will get rid of the corruption and liberate Jidada again, in the end, he turns out to be no different than the Father of the Nation. This is made quite apparent when one of the Comrades behind his campaign suggests, “we have to convince all that the animals genuinely have a real voice for a change” (126), meaning that the promised change was always a lie to gather votes. Thus, it is no surprise that when he is elected, the problems of the country not only remain unresolved, but new problems are added to the daily lives of the citizens. Tuvy gives Jidadans false hope for his own personal gains only. In that way, he is another hypocrite politician who thinks way highly of himself. He is deluded enough to believe that Dr. Martin Luther King (his allegorical version in the story) could be inspired by him. One of his assistants affirms him and suggests: “It is indeed very likely that the great Dr. Martin Luther King was indeed inspired by your dream, Comrade Excellency” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 254). Another instance that shows his narcissism is his demand to command the sun as Sweet Mother has previously done in the novel:

“First, on the matter of the sun—”

“Did you fix it? You know I must absolutely command that sun.”

“Right, about that, Your Excellency, I’m afraid I don’t have good news. It seems the Former First Femal, Dr. Sweet Mother, well, how do I put it— ruined it, Your Excellency.” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 256)

Even his attempt at such a pointless endeavor shows his true colors. Just like Sweet Mother, whose command of the sun is suggested to anger the Gods, he just wants to play a God, and being the president is just a step towards this goal. His conversation with Siri highlights that even artificial intelligence recognizes his corrupt nature. When he asks “how can I rule without interference?” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 266), even Siri knows that what he means is to rule as a dictator. In the end, Tuvy declares himself “as the Greatest Leader of Jidada, Enemy of Corruption, Opener of Business, Dispenser of the New Dispensation, Fixer of the Economy, Imposer of Order, Inventor of the Scarf of the Nation, Most Successful Veteran of the Liberation War, Top Magnate of Jidada, Genius of Jidada, Survivor of All Assassination Attempts, Winner of Free, Fair, and Credible Elections, Main Chief Appointer, Respected World Leader” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 323-324). According to the narrator, “the Savior of the Nation was everywhere” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 324) as he begins to reappoint governing officials with people from his inner circle, and decides to name the streets after himself to the point where “it was common to hear an animal say something like: “My family are divided between Tuvy and Tuvy and Tuvy, and I myself live in Tuvy, on Tuvy, right next to Tuvy, but I was born and raised in Tuvy so I’m really a Tuvy boy at heart” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 321). These examples once again illustrate satirical exaggerations to show the absurdity behind the target’s actions. As Tuvy assumes the position of a total dictator, the novel reveals his true colors too. The Jidadans finally realize that they have been fooled, and a real revolution begins. When the Defenders first detain the Father of the Nation, the narrator asserts: “It’s true that power is a kind of armor, and that once it’s been stripped, even the most powerful animal is nothing but an empty tin” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 76). In other words, as a consequence of the immense power they wield, these political figures feels totally undefeatable. However, as the narrator points out, once the power is removed, they are

“nothing, but an empty tin”. Bulawayo shows how these political animals perform to make the public believe that their power is inherent to them, but slowly their cunning ways are revealed to the public, and at the end of the novel, both the Old Horse and Tuvy in fact are literally sent to hell. Both the awakening of the nation to such a large scale and the swift justice that follows these bad actors maybe utopian, but in many ways, as a narrative, *Glory* is also deeply connected to the reality of our present day. Yet, the satirical merits of the novel allow Bulawayo to depict both utopian fantasies and a certain level of realism that comes from the novel’s topicality.

4.1.3 The Topicality of the Novel

As the historical background surrounding *Glory* illustrates, the novel is also very much a product of and a response to the current Zimbabwean political troubles. What is more, the sentiments the novel invoke can also be applicable to many other underdeveloped countries in which the corruption takes its toll on ordinary citizens. The dedication at the very beginning of the novel, for instance, demonstrates this notion, which reads “For all Jidadas, everywhere” (Bulawayo, *Glory*). As NoViolet Bulawayo herself explains in an interview,

Glory is in many ways still a happening story, and not just in the specific physical space that inspired it; it feels like there are enough Jidadas out there with many people over the world fighting tyranny in all forms, including in my other home, the US. *Glory*, which is dedicated to “all Jidadas everywhere,” comes at a time when it can be part of needed conversations. (Bulawayo, “Animal Stories, Social Media, and Zimbabwean Politics”)

In another interview, Bulawayo repeats similar sentiments and suggests that,

My work is almost always in conversation with the world around me, and that of course includes my two complicated homes, Zimbabwe and the US. There’s certainly enough of America, and many other countries, in *Glory* - the novel may be inspired by a specific place, but tyranny isn’t just a Zimbabwean problem. The story fits so many places and can happen anywhere. (Bulawayo, “Tyranny isn’t just a Zimbabwean problem”)

Hence, the novel is not only an encapsulation of the current state of Zimbabwean politics and its effects, but also a universal encapsulation of what tyranny and state corruption do to a nation. That is also one of the reasons why the novel's accounts of events and figures might feel very familiar if you have been living in such a state of oppression. In these regards, satire comes into play "as a tool of postcolonial critique" (Ball 7); as a means of reflecting these often-silenced societal realities. Since Bulawayo's novel achieves this aim by invoking universal truths, the novel remains meaningful even without knowing the Zimbabwean historical context. This quality of *Glory*'s satire is also a topic of discussion for Greenberg. He writes:

This question of how to interpret the topical elements of satire magnifies a question present in all literary interpretation, the question of historical context. How much knowledge is needed to understand and interpret a work? With too little historical mooring, we don't understand jokes, we fail to make necessary inferences, we can misread wildly. Yet great works resonate because of insight and power that transcends the topical. (Greenberg 23)

With its far-reaching, universal implications, *Glory* can also be regarded as a novel "that transcends the topical". An example of such topicality is Bulawayo's usage of social media and technology in the novel, which places *Glory* in a particular and familiar contemporary period. Especially through chapters that are made entirely of mock social media excerpts, Bulawayo reflects how technology has become an inseparable part of our lives, as we create virtual realities with it. In fact, the novel suggests that "there was of course the Country Country that was the real, physical space in which Jidadans walked and lived and queued and suffered and got pained, and then there was the Other Country, where Jidadans logged on and roared and raged and vented" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 319). Thus, in the novel, what the narrator calls as "the Other Country" that exists within the boundaries of social media becomes almost a coping mechanism for the Jidadans to deal with their actual realities, which can be seen in the ways they represent their frustrations within these excerpts. For example, when Tuvy runs for his life after his dismissal, these are some of the very candid reactions of the citizens on Twitter (now known as X):

The Voice of Jidada @VOJ_NEWS

Dismissed, Disgraced, Dishonored #Jidada vice president flees.

MadeinJidada @MadeinJidada

Replying to @VOJ_NEWS

So #Jidada's top terrorist is crying about being terrorized now

Godwin @Goddy

Replying to @VOJ_NEWS

Bruh! *clown emoji*

Chipo @Chipo

Replying to @Goddy

When the Frankenstein you helped create comes for you!

The World News @TWN

#Jidada's sacked VP flees for his life.

Ronald Moyo @rmoyoz2020

Replying to @TWN

Shit done got hot in #Jidada. Succession dispute ends with Tuvy in Exile!

Dawta of the soil @Mamli

Replying to @TWN

They should close the border; this beast doesn't deserve any sanctuary.
(Bulawayo, *Glory* 65-66)

In addition to capturing the current climate of Jidada, these excerpts also show the true frustrations of Jidadan citizens that they may not otherwise feel safe to express in the oppressive realities they live in. These representations of social media also add to the novel's multi-voiced features because they capture this oppositionality that is perhaps

more freely expressed virtually. Alongside polyphony, these excerpts also add to the topical characteristics of *Glory*. As Sarah Ladipo Manyika writes, “*Glory* is also a fresh and modern take on our relationship to the virtual world and to the novel form itself” as a result of how social media excerpts are used in the novel (Manyika, “a Zimbabwean Animal Farm”). This stylistic choice is, then, both a new style of novel writing and a means of capturing our relationships with the virtual world today. Bulawayo also expresses how she found technology as an effective means for her to present the story:

...I needed a technology to allow me to match the absurdity. Fiction, and specifically using animals for characters allowed me to do just that. [...] Technology as in medium, a way of presenting the story. The benefits were immediately obvious – the freedom from facts meant I had the license to make stuff up to cover the true bones of the story, I could go all out with my imagination, anthropomorphism, use of satire, along with other limitless devices of fiction. (Bulawayo, “Animal Stories, Social Media, and Zimbabwean Politics”)

As Bulawayo points out, using technology as a medium allows her to represent the today’s world authentically in addition to freeing her use of allegories and satire in absurdist ways. Furthermore, while all these characteristics of her writing grant her “freedom from facts”, simultaneously, the way all these make room for a poly-voiced narrative also allows her to represent history and its effects on the present in multifaceted ways. In many ways, her usage of social media excerpts alongside the omniscient narrator's point of view that often shifts focus, and the mock street interviews that show the voices of every animal in Jidada demonstrate this polyphony of the novel. Bulawayo expresses how social media sections allowed her to capture a cast range of voices in the novel:

For me the draw for using social media was innovation, the opportunity to disrupt the traditional form with something outside of it, and potentially more interesting. We are storytelling beings, and this moment finds us doing so through different mediums specific to this time– I wanted my work, itself inspired by social media as a space, to give some sense of that. I especially

appreciated how effective Twitter sections were in helping me condense material and capture, very quickly, collective moods and voices, which was important in a novel that sometimes zooms in to grand moments. For a broad novel that is telling the story of a nation, of a vast cast of characters, of many moments, this form offered something I could use. (Bulawayo, “Animal Stories, Social Media, and Zimbabwean Politics”)

Thus, with its construction, the novel was written with an intentional desire to represent the realities of the characters from polyphonic perspectives. As Bulawayo suggests, the Twitter sections condense and is able to capture collective voices of an entire nation. This is significant not only because these sections present innovative ways of using parody in a novel, but also because they play a key role in adding up to the novel’s polyphony.

4.1.4 The Polyphony of the Novel

As Kathryn Lachman writes, “polyphony evokes the particular capacity of the novel to accommodate contradictory positions and multiple discourses without imposing any central authoritative view. Whereas “monophonic” text affirms the point of view of its author, polyphonic writing embraces dissonance and moral ambiguity” (Lachman 29-30). Lachman asserts that because oftentimes polyphonic writing involves “an act of voicing”, the text can naturally “become a site of tension between these contradictory elements of agency and submission” (Lachman 37); and this way, as the characters’ voices “exceed the author’s control; each of their voices carries a truth that rivals that of the author” (Lachman 42). In Bulawayo’s *Glory* too, polyphony functions in similar ways as the satirical elements of the novel also make room for a certain flexibility and openness, which is evident even with the previous example of a Twitter excerpt used in the novel.

In *Glory*, there are essentially two main sections entirely made up of these social media excerpts. One of them features the public’s reactions to General Tuvy’s exile, some of which has been shown in this chapter, and the other, quite lengthy one presents the public’s and media’s reactions to the elections following the coup and the removal of “The Old Horse” from the seat of power. This second section, entitled

“#Freefairncredibleelection”, begins with what is supposed to be a parody of the former U.S. president Donald Trump as “@bigbaboonoftheUS”, which is obvious to those familiar with Trump’s presence on social media:

POTUS @bigbaboonoftheUS

US election observers will be on site for the Jidada upcoming election because they have a tremendous record of STEALING elections and DISRESPECTING the WILL of voters over there. And that’s SAD! And very BAD! And NOT democracy! It’s DICATORSHIP!

GoldenMaseko @GoldenM

Replying to @bigbaboonoftheUS

It’s spelled Dictatorship bruh. DICTATORSHIP. I mean, you should know the spelling seeing it’s on your forehead

SonofBulawayo @SonofByo

Replying to @bigbaboonoftheUS

Says an unqualified pussy grabber, liar, cheat, conmal, racist, misogynist, bully, predator, and and and . . . (Bulawayo, *Glory* 161)

In many ways, social media becomes a means for Jidadans to express their rightful frustrations, which also allude to some real-life controversies surrounding Trump. In addition, for these Jidadans, social media also becomes a platform in which they can express their worries regarding the upcoming elections and the politicians representing them:

The Observer @Observer

Seen and heard: Tuvy on election observers: “They should do their job but if they get in our affairs they unfortunately will just have to eat the road.”
#freefairncredibleelection

[...]

Loveisnotenough @uthandolwanivele

Replying to @Observer

Reminds me of a certain dictator I used to know!

#freefairncredibleelection

Duckdudu @duckdudu

Replying to @uthandolwanivele

Gurrrrrrl—birds of a feather! BUT—the certain dictator you used to know is in fact a prince in comparison. Watch! (Bulawayo, *Glory* 162-63)

Then, there are polls and discussions on who will win the elections. Most believe that “Change is coming to Jidada” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 165); and that it is finally “time to demolish the despotism of the Jidada Party once and for all” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 166). As Bulawayo showcases differing points of view on whose win would be the better case for the future of Jidada, she also illustrates the collective hope for a better future the Jidadans now see as a possibility, after the supposed eradication of tyranny. Though in the end, they end up under the rule of another tyrant in the novel, which crushes their hopes and dreams, Bulawayo also shows the reader how among the conflicts and different perspectives among the society, their hopes still serve similar aims. Hence, at the end of the novel, these similarities bring Jidadans together and upstart a revolution for the better.

Furthermore, the conflicts that have been in the way of their prosperity for so long are best seen in the sections that give mini monologues to each and every voice in the land of Jidada. In total, the novel contains five sections of these mini monologues, weighing on the current events of Jidada. The topics of discussion in these range from the Jidadans’ takes on the Father of the Nation and Sweet Mother to their post-election feelings to how they perceive the socioeconomic conditions of Jidada as they are forced to go in queues to get their basic needs. These passages illustrate the range of different

voices that inhabit Jidada, maybe even more clearly than the social media excerpts. For instance, some quite fanatically and blindly support the Father of the Nation as the following passage shows:

—Loyalty is legacy if I must say, and that’s the truth itself. Today some idiots will actually laugh at you for wearing the Father of the Nation’s regalia, taunt you, saying, All these years of Independence, what have you to show for it besides the regalia, isn’t it time for real Change? Trying to manipulate an animal into switching sides. And I just beat my wings and say, Tsk-tsk-tsk! Because, have you woken up one day and looked at your parent and said, You’re old, you’re useless, you’re this and that and so I’m getting another parent, it’s time for Change? No, you don’t! Never! It’s the Father of the Nation for Life! Party of Power for Life! (Bulawayo, *Glory* 20)

Similarly, there are also those who boldly claim that, “Jidada is actually one of the best-educated nations in Africa” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 21), and that Jidada’s independence from being a colony somewhat justifies the country’s economic inferiorities since “the big picture is that Blacks have the land?! And that’s a legacy! Never a colony again!” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 21). Considering that these quotes come right after the Old Horse/The Father of the Nation’s rally, in which the attendees are allegorized as “sheep”, their blind faith in him is unsurprising, and the section demonstrates this fraction of the society. In contrast, when we look into the post-election thoughts, there is a very different picture, which shows how the country falls into further turmoil following the coup.

In that sense, the public’s reactions show the disappointment and the cautious optimism of the public. Given that while Tuvy comes to charge, the ruling political party remains the same, some feel that this is no cause for celebration: “—I’m not gonna lie, I truly believed change was come. I was so sure. And now these results! What was the use of removing the Old Horse then? Where is the change? Even the way this Tuvy won, if you do believe he won, just stinks of the Old Horse’s tactics” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 246). Then, there are those who embrace apoliticism: “—For my own sanity I really just want to move on. So on that note I have nothing much to say. I’ll just concentrate on me and

my family and my relationship with God. These being the things I know for sure I can control” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 245). There are also some who still believe that change can arise from this result too: “—This is actually the time to put aside our differences and work for one Jidada. All of us. Maybe this New Dispensation can work out if we come together, if we give it time” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 247). The contrary feelings are expressed too: “—If you thought Jidada under the Old Horse was shitty, then shit is about to hit the sky proper-proper” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 247). Thus, the section provides all the points of views on an election that has been more than disappointing. When the “queues mushroomed with a vengeance all across Jidada” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 283) soon after Tuvy’s election, “as days turned into weeks and weeks into more weeks and months, it became clear to the animals that the queues were not going anywhere anytime soon” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 285). Then, we witness the conversations animals are having in these queues.

This section is categorized in two forms first as “Portrait of Nostalgia” and as “Portrait of Struggles within a Struggle”. Here, a nostalgia over the past can also be observed here as some animals begin to view their past with rose-colored glasses, some even going as far as to romanticize colonial occupation which also appalls others:

—Talking of better times, what about when whites ruled the country though? I mean I don’t want to necessarily remember everything about that time but I still can’t help thinking that we didn’t spend our lives standing in queues like this! Sleeping the whole night in a bank queue, just to withdraw a couple hundred dollars that can’t even buy anything of substance, I mean what kind of life is this?

—I am Black as you can very well see, all my sons fought in the war, one of them didn’t come back from it, but I’ll tell you that what this who independence has taught me is that Blacks don’t know how to run a country! Tell me one thing that this Black government is doing well, tell me just one thing!

—Never in a million years did I ever think I’d see and hear, in a Black republic such as this, Black animals standing around and being nostalgic about a wretched

colonial past. This is the saddest day, this just takes the cup! (Bulawayo, *Glory* 290-291)

Moreover, the tribal conflicts in Jidada are given with again a multiplicity of perspectives in this section as well. While some suggest that “it’s really Shonamals who’ve killed this nation!” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 293), and that “Shonas simply don’t know how to govern! All they’re good at is corruption, looting, violence! Just look around you; behind everything that’s fallen apart, you’ll find a Shona!” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 294); there still also exists those who recognize that “this kind of tribalism won’t get us anywhere!” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 294). In this regard, the animals argue about what is known as “the Gukurahundi” in Zimbabwean history, which was partly a result of tribal conflicts between the Shona and Ndebele tribes. Here, while some believe that Shonas were responsible for this genocide, there are also claims such as, “Why is it that when Ndebelemals talk about the Gukurahundi they leave out that Shonamal supporters of the opposition were equally murdered? Their region attacked?” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 295). From another point of view, however, “the problem with Shonamals and Ndebelemals alike is that they act like they are the only two ethnicities in Jidada, and the rest of us don’t matter. And our issues are non-issues. Both groups can go to hell as far as I’m concerned, Jidada would be a better place without any of you” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 295-296). Some say that “Ndebelemals should get over the past” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 297), while others see the conflict itself as a colonial project of the West. In the end, someone’s questioning of the whole situation once again highlights the collective oppression of Jidadans:

Aren’t we, no matter our miserable ethnicities, standing together in these queues? Looking for food together? For money together? And didn’t we get here on potholed roads together? Aren’t we trying to survive together? Aren’t we jobless together? Dying in decrepit hospitals together? Aren’t our children looking at a bleak future together? This is us! Together! (Bulawayo, *Glory* 298)

The same collective feeling also surrounds the last two sections of these sections, which feature the Defenders and the public’s views on them as a group.

The fourth section of such mini monologues is then made of the Jidadans' accounts of their recent experiences with the Defenders. The common element of all these accounts is the victimization of these citizens for daring to resist and fight back against Tuvy's tyranny. When they all relay how they have all been an object of oppression under the Defenders who work in the name of their rulers, the citizens become united against a common enemy. Yet, the novel also grants the Defenders humanized feelings too as the last section of these mini-monologues illustrates. When an uproar takes over Jidada after the gradually increasing tension comes to a boiling point and the animals take over the streets, we are given the points of view of the Defenders who begin to feel powerless against the Jidadans' unity. Moreover, they also come to the realization that the crowds they are pointing their guns against are the people they know and care for. For example, one of them suggests:

—The reality, Comrades, is that these animals gathered all around us aren't some weird creatures from some faraway planet. They're your very own. And you all know that your relatives are in that crowd. Your friends and neighbors are in that crowd. Your landlords. Your church members. Your children's teachers. Your nurses and doctors. All of them good, decent citizens. Every one of them knowing they can die today. All of them prepared to die today. Not directly by the Seat but by us, on its behalf. My question is, When will we learn disgust? (Bulawayo, *Glory* 380)

They quickly conclude that "if the true liberators of this country were alive, if their bones would rise again, they sure wouldn't be sitting here with us, they'd actually be over there, standing and ready to die with those crowds. Because that, over there, is the right side. The moral side" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 381) as another one points out. Others point out how if they were to die, the Seat and the Chosen would not even come to their funerals and realize how pointless the uniform that they are bound to be. Thus, as the Defenders "consider the maths of the Revolution" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 383), they collectively decide to join the citizens and not fight against them. Though this scene feels almost utopic and divorced from the bleak realities the novel presents up until this point, it also demonstrates how easy it would be for people to band together for the same

purpose. Furthermore, in all of these sections, Bulawayo's usage of polyphony brings her to a position in which she can reflect those views she may not personally relate to, but still carry weight both in reality and in the fictional world of Jidada. The satire in these sections also allows Bulawayo to criticize certain shortcomings within the Jidadan society, as a mirror of the Zimbabwean society, from an ironic distance. This way, she can show the ridiculousness by simply showing it rather than explaining the faults in a didactic manner.

Moving onto another aspect of *Glory* that can be heavily associated with its polyphonic merits is the tonal and perspective shifts in the novel. These shifts mostly come into play during the perspective shift to one of the key characters of the novel, Destiny the immigrant goat returning to her hometown Lozikeyi in Jidada. The reader's understanding of the Gukurahundi on a personal level also comes from Destiny's point of view when she reunites with her mother Simiso, who tells her their family history surrounding this dark era in Jidada history. It is interesting how neither Destiny nor Simiso ever become targets of the novel's satire. There is an earnestness that remains prevalent in the sections involving these two characters. Considering that the reader finds a connection to Jidada's traumatic past through these two characters, this might be an intentional choice. However, satire can exist with stark tonal differences and the novel's placement of highly satirical exaggerations alongside such earnest portrayals also comes from satire's openness and flexibility to these contrasts. Moreover, as opposed to satirical topicality, these sections are also mostly concerned with the past and its effects on the present. When Destiny arrives in Lozikeyi, she is confronted by the transformation his hometown has gone through. The place she finds does not resemble the one that she remembers. Though she comes to find her mother, Simiso, there; she finds out that she has been missing for years, trying to find her lost daughter. Destiny, who already feels lost in her homeland she no longer recognizes in the same way, feels the disconnect even more because of Simiso's absence. The use of technology again comes into play when the townsfolk want to take a selfie with Destiny, which does not reconcile with the image of Lozikeyi in Destiny's mind: "And before Destiny—who isn't on social media, and isn't interested in having her picture broadcast on the Lozikeyi page—can protest, she's surrounded by posing elders. It's a scene she can't reconcile

with the Lozikeyi of when she left, before technology and social media were to take the township by storm” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 159). Another instance in which Destiny struggles to reconcile her past and present occurs when she finds a CD she made for Simiso’s birthday. When she finds a CD player and plays the CD she is quite taken aback:

She is not prepared for the voice that jets from the relic with the force of a waterfall. It staggers her backward until she lands flat on the sofa, felled by the awesome force of the water, and she sits there, tholukuthi drowning in Brenda Fassie’s voice, drowning in the song “Memeza,” that is also a lamentation of an absent mother, drowning in the past, drowning in the present that is full of her mother’s absence, drowning in the future she knows will very much be a bloodied river of broken hopes, just like the ugly past. (Bulawayo, *Glory* 192)

She feels a similar sense of melancholia when she looks at her childhood photographs on the walls too: “She’s grateful, too, for the entire gallery wall in the living room that Simiso has covered with faded photographs of her at every stage of her life, the goat thinks, scrutinizing the old photographs with a lump in her throat” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 191). As she breaks down crying because of the weight of these memories, the reader cannot help but empathize with Destiny and her struggles. This emotional connection gets even deeper when Destiny and Simiso finally reunite, and we hear their family history from Simiso. This perspective shift to Simiso also deepens our understanding of the hardships Jidadans had to endure for so long as she speaks of a collective trauma.

In the section entitled “The Family Story That Simiso Khumalo Never Told Her Daughter”, Simiso talks about a devastating incident she witnesses at her uncle’s house and how her father, Destiny’s grandfather, has been kidnapped never to be heard from again during that period of the Gukurahundi. According to Simiso, her father was a war veteran, and it was while he was away that Destiny was conceived. Simiso talks about how although she did not remain with Destiny’s birth father, his father never judged her for it and was, in fact, very fond of Destiny. This was not exactly the case for Simiso’s mother who at times felt ashamed of the situation. Then, one day when Simiso was sneaking out of the house to meet up with a lover she had at the time, she suggests that

she heard the Defenders terrorizing a school as she was passing by. Feeling terrified, Simiso says that she ran over to the closest house around her, which was her uncle's. There, she witnesses the Defenders rounding her uncle and his family, threatening their lives as they demanded them to tell where the Dissidents, meaning those who oppose the authoritarian rule, were. When they get no answer, the Defenders try to force Simiso's uncle to murder his son with an ax. Her uncle refuses to do so, and sacrifices himself for his son, and Simiso and the rest of the family watch her cousin kill his father. Simiso suggests that this trauma never left any of them and that the family was never the same. After Simiso returns to her village, Bulawayo, she also sees how the Defenders terrorized every inch of her village, leaving it inhabitable. On top of this, she hears about how they took her father like a "dirty rag" and drove off. Even after so many years, talking about these traumatic events is a significantly difficult task for Simiso. She tells Destiny that, "these many years, decades later, I still cannot find the words, Destiny Lozikeyi Khumalo; even as I'm telling you right now, I know I'm not telling it correctly, that I can never tell it right or tell it well. There are no words to tell it—they've never been, and there won't ever be" (Bulawayo, *Glory* 242). In this section, the tonality is in stark contrast to the rest of the novel. This tonal difference might be related to making the reader understand the gravity of the topic at hand. Because the Gukurahundi was a real-life event that resulted in the killings of thousands of Ndebele and Kalanga peoples, Bulawayo portrays the event as authentically as possible in this animal fable. In that sense, Bulawayo's storytelling also gives voice to a part of Zimbabwean history, that is perhaps often not talked about enough. The act of storytelling, in fact, brings many consequences to the narrative of *Glory* as Destiny takes on the role of a storyteller later on by following her grandfather's steps who was attempting to write a war memoir before. Moreover, this idea of storytelling can also be thought of in terms of the oral qualities the novel carries, which again is also associated with its polyphonic elements.

As the novel carries the qualities of an animal fable too, one can find the attributes usually associated with folktales and fable modes. The capacity to carry various different voices, then, is also related to these forms that evolve from oral traditions. Since oral forms of storytelling carry an inherent flexibility that is not unlike satire's, orality can also be examined in terms of its poly-voiced merits. In *African Oral*

Story-telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English, Maurice Tonezyi Vambe similarly claims that the capacity these forms of literature have “to be imaginatively stretched in different directions so as to frame contradictory realities gives them the interpretive power to simultaneously mean different things” (Vambe 3-4). Hence, much like satire, the elasticity of the oral forms “can be used and even manipulated to author alternative narratives of resistance” since “orality rejects the idea of single truth explaining events and social processes” (Vambe 15). In the novel, Simiso telling their family history to Destiny can be analyzed within these terms too. Simiso’s oral telling inspires Destiny to write her own telling of the events to reclaim a lost history, using her own voice. Later, this act becomes an act of resistance as Destiny reads an excerpt of her book at a rally, which results in her murder. Yet, Destiny’s death also becomes a starting point that inspires other Jidadans to use their voices too. In the end, Jidada gains true independence by claiming their own voices. Thus, the mini-monologues that Bulawayo gives to the animals of Jidada can also be an example of such resistance, especially towards the end when they start narrating how they too were once victimized by the Defenders and the tyrannical rule. Moreover, these sections, the sections made up of social media excerpts, and the continuous shifts in character points of views also exist alongside, often creating sudden tonal shifts. These contrasts can also be read in terms of orality as they can be viewed in the context of the satire or the polyphony of the novel. In his discussion of how Zimbabwean authors incorporate orality in their works, Vambe observes that these authors “select some aspects of orality and fuse these with the new ideas that either confirm, modify or even reject the old elements of tradition in their bid to transform their works into something new” (Vambe 13). Bulawayo’s fusion of satire, polyphony, and orality can be viewed along these lines as well. Still, as opposed to Vambe’s claim of “this process often being contradictory” (13), in *Glory*’s case all these elements work in a fairly complimentary way as the flexibility each brings only heightens one another.

Therefore, Bulawayo’s incorporation of these stylistic features, whether it is orality, intertextuality, or irony, all work in favor of the novel’s satirical and polyphonic disposition. In the novel, it is stated that as an author, Destiny “writes from the present into her past” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 351). As a storyteller, Bulawayo also achieves a similar

feat. While the novel is undoubtedly a mirror of contemporary Zimbabwe, it also shows how the present is also never completely divorced from the past. The novel, however, deals with the past and the collective trauma it brings to a nation with a starkly different tone and feeling. The sarcasm and irony that is largely present in the rest of the novel are missing in those parts when the perspective shifts to Simiso and Destiny, and a more sincere and less ironical tone takes over. Consequently, satire is employed in the novel in ways that can allow such flexible needs. As it is asserted in the novel, with a hint of metatextuality; “the satire of their suffering was at once hysterical and devastating” (Bulawayo, *Glory* 327). Thus, the novel embraces the Bakhtin definition of menippea that captures extreme opposites simultaneously. In that sense, the novel is a tapestry of different modes, tones, and voices. As Bakhtinian theory argues, these polyphonic features are thought to be born out of satire as a genre of “variety”. Hence, *Glory*’s polyphony can also be viewed as an extension of its satirical characteristics as Bulawayo gives voices to the past and present of Jidada through her employment of these features in her novel. Bulawayo’s depiction of the collective voices of a nation is possible through this polyphony, but the polyphony also cannot be separated from the satire. Much of the polyphonic elements of the novel such as parodies of Twitter feed, the intertextuality, or the sections with mini-monologues can all be considered inherently satirical. Then, the novel’s satire functions as a way of capturing the diverse voices and moods of Jidada as a fictional allusion to Zimbabwe. Through the excesses and variety of satire, Bulawayo illustrates the realities of her homeland.

CONCLUSION

Conventionally, the foremost aim in using satirical forms is a desire to criticize a vice among the society through ridicule. This way, a satirist reveals a personal truth about themselves and the society at large about the target of their satires. As it has been illustrated in the introductory chapter, this purpose is often the defining attribute of satire as a mode of writing. In these regards, this thesis has attempted to demonstrate how these ideals of satire function in a postcolonial context. My starting point for this thesis has been to question the choice for using satire and satirical elements in postcolonial novels and to see the different shapes and forms these stylistic choices take in different postcolonial novels. In many ways, both satire and postcoloniality can be characterized by their shared traits of flexibility and oppositionality. These commonalities they contain make satire a perfect medium to showcase the complex and hybrid societal issues within postcolonial societies. In addition, the choice of applying satire and satirical elements to any text can also be seen as a very intentional act in writing. Since satire usually hangs on irony, and, more often than not, irony requires intention to be sensible in a text; satire can be seen as one of the most personal reflections of authorial intent. From a postcolonial perspective, this choice in writing can be framed as an intentional act of critiquing the effects of colonialism both internally and externally; or in other words, in a multidirectional way. Consequently, satire can also heighten these multidirectional aspects that are often viewed as inherent to the postcolonial condition.

In the thesis, I have analyzed the three chosen novels, V.S. Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory*, with respect to all these ideas as the multidirectional, variable, and oppositional qualities of postcolonial satire can be seen in full display in all of the novels. The selection of these novels has also been influenced by the fact that each one of these novels presents a distinct postcolonial reality; namely mid-20th century Trinidad, the 70s of Britain from an immigrant's perspective, and the aftermath of the 2017 coup in Zimbabwe. The choice of these novels was intentional to be able to create a small portfolio of the variable ways satire functions in postcolonial texts. As John Clement Ball writes when he is discussing how he applies the theories of satire to postcolonial fiction: "The

proliferation of theories and definitions must be investigated and reconfigured on terms compatible with the strategies and sensitive to the varieties of postcoloniality represented by a diverse group of texts produced in widely differing conditions” (Ball 5). Hence in my selection of the novels, I have also attempted to follow a similar strategy to John Clement Ball’s.

Moreover, as I have illustrated in Chapter I, since satire has a special reality with reality as an originator of the novel genre, these novels also illustrate the present(s) depicted in them through satire. These depictions can be seen as a consequence of satire’s topical inclinations. In this regard, the novels reflect very particular periods in time from postcolonial perspectives. Still, it is also vital to remember that although satire can offer unfiltered authenticity because of its mocking attitude in general, the narratives of these novels are also inevitably shaped by the authors’ own perspectives, and thus reflect more “personal” truths or what Salman Rushdie dubs as “a novelist’s truth” (Rushdie 374). However, these subjective points of views are also satirical in the sense that satirical targeting usually becomes possible from a single-minded standing point. One cannot criticize or ridicule something without a clear opinion of their own, through which they write. Inevitably, satire offers distorted realities because it cannot be created from an objective perspective. As Gilbert Highet points out, although the aim of “truth-telling” is one of the key characteristics of satire and, although satire may seem like an attempt at revealing these “truths”, it still “presents a propagandist distortion” (Highet 158). This distortion Highet detects usually takes the forms of irony, parody, and comedy in satire as all these tools function through exaggerations, and hence distortions, of reality. All three of the novels exemplify this characteristic of satire in their own unique ways. In *The Mystic Masseur*, for example, the 1946 presidential elections of Trinidad play a key role in the narrative. This election is an actual election that, in fact, took place in 1946. How Naipaul portrays this historical event is noticeably not factual, and it has no obligation to be so as the event is presented as a piece of fiction. In the novel, the political propaganda behind the scenes of the political circuit is exaggerated for comedic effect. As a result, the reader is made to understand the corruption in the mid-20th century Trinidad state as a consequence of the island’s colonial history as the exaggerations work towards showing a reality or truth by paradoxically distorting it. In

The Buddha of Suburbia, the exaggerations come from the narrator's own clearly biased accounts of the events as a seventeen-year-old young man whose mission to find a place for himself in the England of the 70s remains somewhat unfulfilled throughout the novel. The reader, hence, can grasp that the exaggerated images of the people around Karim, whether it is his father, his mother, or close friends, are a result of the first-person narration. Since as a person Karim is characterized by a sarcastic sense of humor, the tone of the novel also reflects this attribute. As the novel is also semi-autobiographical, Karim's voice also reflects Kureishi's, who is an author known for his incorporation of comicality in his works. Thus, the exaggerations again present personal truths of the author. In *Glory*, this notion of "reflecting personal truths" is complicated because of the text's poly-voiced qualities. In the novel, Bulawayo attempts to capture the contradictory and diverse voices of a whole nation, and as a result, the novel resembles a panorama of Jidada as a stand-in for Bulawayo's homeland, Zimbabwe. Yet, the way the politicians and their tactics of political propaganda are exaggerated also exemplifies the idea of distortions showing an actual reality in the world. In a similar vein to *The Mystic Masseur*, *Glory* also criticizes how postcolonial politics work through satirical exaggerations. These portrayals of politicians such as The Old Horse, Sweet Mother, and General Tuvy are also intentional in the sense that the irony and the criticism behind the comical exaggerations are intentionally constructed to convey a certain message to the reader, by Bulawayo. Hence, we can see a reality behind the pointed jabs against real-life politicians, and these portrayals can be reflections of Bulawayo's own voice as well.

Needless to say, the stylistic characteristics of all three of these novels play key roles in the narratives they present, and analyzing the satire brings out the question of how these characteristics function as well. That is why in my analysis, I have attempted to pay close attention to those elements as well because they would affect and inform the satirical elements of the novels too. In Chapter II, my goal was to analyze the satire of *The Mystic Masseur* in relation to the ambivalent voice V.S. Naipaul uses in his fiction. I argued that the satire of the novel amplifies the ambivalence Naipaul reflects in his writing as an author who writes outside of his homeland. In the novel, the satire targets both the inner workings of Trinidad through its characters and the external colonial

forces as the defects Naipaul presents cannot be judged separately from the effects of colonialism in the lives of the characters. Hence, the protagonist's rise to power from teacher to masseur to politician is represented as an arc of corruption for Ganesh. The satirical elements of the novel, then, show the disparities between who the public believes Ganesh is vs. who the reader sees as the man behind the performance of integrity. Through ridiculing how political propaganda and the making of a powerful politician work, the novel questions and criticizes the need for colonial mimicry as an act forced by the colonizers. Yet, Ganesh also is not the only target of the novel's satire. Characters such as Leela and Ramlogan are also significant targets of the novel, and how their "ignorance" or lack of self-awareness is ridiculed in the novel can come across as unsavory since they reflect some outdated ideas of the era the novel was written in. Still, these representations also exemplify Naipaul's ambivalent voice as an author.

In Chapter III, I examined Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a satirical novel and a *Bildungsroman* and presented how the contradictory conventions of these two literary genres work within the narrative. I argued that since satire can take various shapes and forms with its flexible qualities, the novel's satirical elements work in a similar fashion too as they subvert the conventionalities of *Bildungsroman*. To this end, the journeys of growth Karim and his father, Haroon, take in the novel are paralleled with each other, and both of them are presented as subjects within the boundaries of the *Bildungsroman*. Firstly, since Haroon is not a stereotypical subject for a *Bildungsroman* as a middle-aged first-generation immigrant, the individuality the novel assigns him can be considered a subversion. Secondly, the way Karim's personal journey is concluded in the novel also does not abide by the conclusive self-actualization expected of a *Bildungsroman*. As both of these characters take on roles that require performativity, the novel questions the "true" essence of their identities, or if such a thing exists. In this regard too, the novel differs from the identity formation depicted in a traditional *Bildungsroman*. Through Kureishi's use of satire and humor, the notion of ethnic identity is deconstructed as Haroon's performance as a spiritual guru and Karim's performance(s) as a token South Asian in theater troupes makes the reader question the need for "authentic" representation.

In Chapter IV, my analysis focused on NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory* as a satirical novel with significant polyphonic elements. In the novel, the satire functions as a means to show contradictory voices can and often do coexist in postcolonial contexts. The novel, which can also be considered an animal fable, is a fictional portrayal of the 2017 Coup D'états in Zimbabwe. As Bulawayo allegorizes Zimbabwe as the fictional land of "Jidada", she reflects on how the coup came to be and the historical realities behind it. The novel's polyphony reflects the inner conflicts in Jidada, and its satirical elements work with these same capabilities. Stylistically, the novel contains various unconventional elements such as excerpts from Twitter, mini-monologues she gives to the ordinary citizens of Jidada, or even sudden tonal changes. This polyphony is possible because of satire's openness and variety as a mode of writing. In short, the novel attempts to encapsulate the diverse voices of a whole nation through satire.

As I have already mentioned, the use of satire in these novels also brings up questions of authorial intent as a result of the ironical modes they are written in. As Linda Hutcheon argues in her *Irony's Edge*, irony only gains meaning when the reader has the proper means or context to make sense of it, and this is true for these novels as well. It is true that all works of fiction are interpretive, but with satirical ones, this aspect becomes even more pronounced. In that sense, writing a satirical work can also be considered a very intentional act. Since the novels this thesis focuses on can also be classified as postcolonial ones, the choices the authors make also bear further implications that cannot be separated from that front too; because to be classified as "postcolonial" often brings certain political expectations. This, then, raises the question of to what extent an author is bound to these expectations. Moreover, the designated categorization of a "postcolonial author" can sometimes limit the scope of a literary analysis as well. To read a text written by what one might categorize as the "ethnic other" only through a postcolonial lens might also paradoxically differentiate these texts. This categorization, then, can result in with these unfair expectations of a grand political meaning within a text. Evidently, two authors who are subject matters to this thesis, Naipaul and Kureishi; have repeatedly expressed their discontent with their categorizations of an ethnic or postcolonial author. Although both of these authors mostly align themselves with British traditions of writing, it is also evident that they

cannot fully escape from these categorizations as individuals with hybrid ethnic identities.

Alongside Bulawayo too, these three authors write from outside about their homelands, which is another topic of controversy within postcolonial studies. Authors such as Salman Rushdie, for instance, have previously been criticized for their writings about the homelands from which they have immigrated, for worries over potential misrepresentations of those places. For many readers and scholars of his work, this worry over misrepresentations has come true in the case of V. S. Naipaul, especially with his documental/travel writing. However, simply dismissing these points of views also is not productive in the long run not only because of the problematics of the categorization of postcolonial authorship, but also because oftentimes writing from outside becomes an outlet for an author to have their voice heard globally. In the case of NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory*, for example, we see a narrative mostly concerned with an alternative history of Bulawayo's homeland, Zimbabwe. Publishing this novel, probably would not have been as feasible had Bulawayo not immigrated to the USA. This is also where completely eliminating the category of a postcolonial author seems unproductive because there is still a continuous need for politically subversive storytelling in terms of postcolonialism. Suggesting that the categorizations should be dismantled also on some level implies that we live in a post-racial world, which is not only untrue, but can also hinder the already-made progress within this field of study. Still, the categorizations also do affect the way "postcolonial" texts are perceived with certain political expectations of representation. Within this context, postcolonial satires provide interesting case studies in terms of both the representational and interpretive aspects of postcolonial fiction, and fiction in general, with their "special relationship to present". The analysis of postcolonial satires, therefore, can create new opportunities to question the category of "postcolonial". In addition, alongside reflecting the personal truths of authors who are often (mis)categorized, postcolonial satires can also take the task of revealing alternative histories, which is one of the primary interests of postcolonial studies. Analyzing the postcolonial and satirical merits of a text together reveals both the abstract nature of being "postcolonial"; not necessarily as a political stance, but as an assigned categorization, as well as the notion of historical truths as objective entities.

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