T.C.
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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY AND HUMOUR IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH NOVEL

Doktora Tezi

Dilek MENTEŞE KIRYAMAN

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

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İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
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ETİK KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANI

Ege Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğüne sunduğum "Transnational Identity and Humour in Contemporary British Novel" adlı yüksek lisans/doktora tezinin tarafımdan bilimsel, ahlak ve normlara uygun bir şekilde hazırlandığını, tezimde yararlandığım kaynakları bibliyografyada ve dipnotlarda gösterdiğimi onurumla doğrularım.

Dilek Menteşe Kıryaman

ÖZET

Bu tez, Andrea Levy'nin *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), Bernardine Evaristo'nun *Mr Loverman* (2013), Hanif Kureishi'nin *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) ve Meera Syal'ın *Anita and Me* (1996) romanlarına odaklanarak yazarların mizahı bir strateji olarak kullanarak ulusal ve kültürel kimlikleri sorguladıklarını ve bu kimliklerin sınırlarını aştıklarını tartışmaktadır. Tıpkı romanlarındaki başkahramanlar gibi seçilen eserlerin yazarları da farklı etnik kökenlere sahip ve İngiltere'de doğmuş büyümüş kişiler olarak ulusaşırı alanlarda konumlanmışlardır. Yazarların bu ulusaşırı duruşları ve ana karakterlerin her birinin farklı etnik veya edebi özellikleri her metinde mizahın farklı kültürel, etnik ve edebi alanlar açmasını göstermektedir. Bu tezin amacı, belirlenen romanlarda ulusaşırı kimlikleri inceleyerek mizahın sanılanın aksine eğlendirmek ve sömürgeci söylemlere karşı çıkmaktan öte "Ben" ve "Ötekiyi" durumsal ve pozisyonel olarak güldürerek ve/veya gülünç duruma düşürerek ulusal ve etnik kimlik kavramını sorgulatmak için kullanılan bir strateji olduğunu ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, ulusaşırı karakterlerin deneyimlerinde yer alan mizahın muğlak özelliğinin, ulusal ve etnik kimlik kategorilerinin yeniden değerlendirilmesine işaret ettiğini iddia etmektedir. Bu nedenle, mizah, "Ben" ve "Öteki" arasındaki bağların karmaşık ilişkisini gösterirken başkahramanların ulusaşırı eğilimleri ve akışkan kimliklerin altını çizmektedir. Bu tez, dört ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Tezin ilk bölümü, ulusaşırı kimlikleri anlatabilmek ve daha iyi kavramak için sömürgecilik dönemi ve sonrasını açıklamaktadır. İkinci bölümde ise mizah ile gülmek arasındaki ilişki ve başlıca mizah teorileri anlatılmaktadır. Son iki bölüm belirlenen romanları mizah ve ulusaşırı kimlik bağlamında incelemekte ve tartışmaktadır. Roman inceleme bölümleri, yazarların ve karakterlerin etnik kökenlerine göre ikiye ayrılmıştır. Bu nedenle, üçüncü bölüm siyahi İngiliz yazarların seçilmiş romanlarını ve dördüncü bölüm ise Güney Asyalı İngiliz yazarların belirlenmiş romanlarını incelemektedir.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013), Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), and Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* (1996) to reveal that the authors employ humour as a strategy to question and transgress the borders of national and cultural identities. The selected novels are written by authors who, just as their main characters, are located in transnational social spaces and born and raised in Britain with different ethnic backgrounds. Even though each selected literary work is written by transnational authors, the different ethnic or literary characteristics of each protagonist open up various cultural, ethnic and textual spaces for the use of humour as a strategic device. The main objective of this study is to analyse transnational identities in the selected novels to argue that, apart from amusing or challenging the colonial discourse, humour is used as a strategic device to make the "self" and the "other" laugh or/and be laughed at positionally in order to question the concept of national, ethnic, and cultural identities. In this sense, this dissertation argues that the ambiguous nature of humour employed in the experiences of the protagonists compels the reconsideration of racial, national and cultural identity categories. Thus, I discuss that humour represents the complex links between the "self" and "other", which underlines the transnational sensibility and fluidity of the protagonists. This study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces a background of the colonial and postcolonial period in order to comprehend transnational identity. The second chapter presents the links between humour and laughter and explicates the views and theories on humour. The third and fourth chapters examine the selected novels within the context of humour and transnational identity. The analysis chapters are divided according to the ethnic origins of the authors and the characters in their novels; therefore, the third chapter includes the selected works of black British authors and the fourth chapter consists of the selected novels of South-Asian British authors.

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CHAPTER 4

HUMOUR AND SOUTH-ASIAN BRITISH TRANSNATIONAL NOVELS

INTRODUCTION

The boundaries of identities are questioned in the postmodern era in which borders, limits and grand narratives are challenged. Static, essential and fixed notions of identities are distorted and resisted while the ideas that they are ever-changing and fluid are advocated. As Stuart Hall argues, "identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (2004, 17). Hall further asserts that there is no essential self and that identities are positional since the self is always in process and never completed (2004, 17). In this sense, interrogating the borders of identities also unsettles the view of a single national or cultural identity. Considering Benedict Anderson's discussion that nations are "imagined communities", which means that they are social productions and not concrete formations, it is possible to state that national identities are far from static fixed formations (6). Furthermore, globalisation and migration are two of the principal factors that have shaped the discussion on national identities. Particularly after the collapse of colonial Empires, the process of decolonisation and the increase of migrants from ex-colonies, the concept of national identity has become a much-discussed problematic issue in Western nation-states. Racism, conservative policies of governments, and the entrance of multiculturalism in public discourse all have drawn attention to the definition of national identity in a postmodern and global world. In this context, a transnational perspective is required in the understanding of national and cultural identities in a globalized world in which mobility across borders and trans-boundary social and political processes are foregrounded.

A transnational perspective provides an opportunity to look beyond nation-state borders by offering an insight in the transformation of identity and citizenship while they are constituted and re-constituted in fluid social spaces. In its widest sense, "[t]ransnationalism may be defined as the flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital across national territories in a way that undermines nationality and nationalism as discrete categories of identification, economic organization, and political constitution" (Braziel and Mannur 8). As Steven Vertovec argues, transnationalism describes an "arena of activity" where certain links have been formed regardless of national and

international borders (47). The content of these certain kinds of relationships, however, cannot be simply manifested as the connections between individuals and goods. To be specific, the "arena of activity" is a critical concept which highlights that transnationalism does not embody only goods or people but also opinions, identities and cultures. In this vein, Werbner argues that transnationalism cannot be basically described as the mobility of migrants as it also includes the movement of their customs, activities, and religious beliefs (117). In the 1990s, as a new attitude to the state of migrants, a transnational perspective was discussed by migration scholars who argued that several migrants maintained strong ties to their home countries but at the same time became a part of the host country. Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc detected that certain migrants could not be described as "immigrants" or as the ones that are "remaining behind" since they did not belong solely to their homeland or to their host country (1994, 5). Basch et al. delineated how these migrants participate in social, economic, political and cultural activities which extend across borders. Therefore, they "began to use the terms 'transnationalism' and 'transnational social field' to describe [these migrants'] interconnected social experience" (Basch et al. 1994, 6). Recent research cultivate the definition of the transnational and discuss that transnational identities are located within fluid social spaces which are continuously reshaped due to the migrant's embeddedness in multiple nations or cultures (Levitt and Jaworsky 131). As Schultermandl and Toplu state, "[s]uch identities are not unified or stable, but are fluid entities which constantly push at the boundaries of the nation-state, thereby re-defining themselves and the nation-state simultaneously" (11).

Regarding the identity question of migrants and their descendants in Britain, transnationalism is a critical concept that should be employed to comprehend and explore their state in Britain. Migration from ex-colonies and Britain's policy towards migrants and ethnic minorities induced, intensified and problematized the identity crises of migrants and their descendants born in Britain. Integration of migrants, racism, the parallel drawn between Britishness and a white skin colour intensified the racial and cultural tensions in the British society. In other words, the "British 'society' was generally conceived as a hermetically sealed homogeneous whole into which the 'immigrant' was expected to integrate, leaving behind the baggage of 'inferior and

archaic' cultures" (Brah 225). In particular, post-war generation of migrants in Britain and their children, who are described as second generation migrants, experience a clash between their native identity and British identity. These people with Afro-diasporic or South Asian roots who usually hold a British nationality or citizenship experience identity splits or identity crises as a result of the fact that they actually "belong" to more than one nation or culture. A transnational optic enlightens their state in multicultural Britain since the clash they endure does not indicate that their experience is contradictory but, on the contrary, simultaneous. In this context, they may define and redefine themselves parallel to their interactions between their "homeland" and Britain. In addition, migrants who identify as "British" are positioned in a more complex situation since "[t]he unsuccessful attempt to secure the post-imperial Commonwealth vision immediately after the Second World War […] created a political and legal legacy that intertwined race, citizenship and immigration with the search for 'Britishness' after decolonisation" (Ashcroft and Bevir 5-6). Their simultaneous engagement with multiple nations or cultures and the complicated interpretation of "Britishness" enhance their transnational positions as their sense of belonging cannot be categorised into certain types. Indeed, there are "multiple ways of being transnational, since transnationalism includes a multiplicity of historical trajectories or pathways that affect people in different ways" (Quayson and Daswani 6). Concisely, trans-boundary social and political processes generate a need to look beyond nation-states, racial and cultural borders to scrutinise cultural and national identities of migrants in Britain.

The concept of national identity, Britishness, identity conflicts and racial tensions have been much represented issues in the literary works of authors with a migrant background. These authors, who are born in Britain after the 1950s and who write approximately after the 1980s, challenge the traditional way of portraying national, cultural and racial identities. In a period in which static and essential notions of identities are distorted, their works imply a need to recognise multiple perspectives regarding the black British and Asian British culture. Referring to the works of second generation authors in Britain, Donnell asserts that "[t]he scrutiny of whiteness and Englishness as dominant ethnicities […] suggests a recognition of the way in which cultural identities are formed through complex patterns of difference and alliance, in the

context of a nation in which definitions of nationality are now more mobile and multiple" (xv). Rather than stable migrant or British identities, these writers insist on a "more complex, unguaranteed understanding of black representation and subjectivity" (Procter 118). They usually emphasise the cultural hybridity of their characters and their subject positions as sites of struggle in the British society. They offer narrative fields that focus on the complicated identification process of characters with migrant origins.

Although the literary works of second generation authors provide an insight into the tragedies of complex practices of self-definition, "home", belonging, and racism, I believe that humour maintains a critical role in the depiction and exploration of the identity question of transnational characters. Therefore, this study analyses Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013), Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), and Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* (1996). The aim of this dissertation is to analyse transnational identities in the aforementioned novels to argue that apart from amusing or challenging colonial discourse, humour is used as a strategic device to make the "self" and the "other" laugh or/and be laughed at positionally in order to question the concept of national, ethnic, and cultural identities. That is, the selected novels transcend the aim of postcolonial novels which "laugh back" at the Empire. The phrase "laughing back" is derived from the prominent thought that the Empire "writes back" to the Western colonial powers, which embodies Bill Ashcroft's idea that postcolonial writers aim to "write back to the centre" in order to object to the Eurocentric view and demand their native identities (Ashcroft et al. 1989, 6). In this sense, previous studies indicate that humour used in postcolonial novels aims to resist the colonial discourse by substituting "the Empire writes back" with "the Empire laughs back". Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein state that by "laughing back", the colonised "other" attempts to achieve power over the coloniser "self"; in other words, this type of laughter reflects the "other's" struggle for authority. Yet, the idea of "laughing back" limits the discussions of humour and the postcolonial subject since it centralises the position of the colonial "self" (Reichl and Stein 8-12). In this context, I argue that the selected novels go beyond the aim of "laughing back" and reach the aim of "laughing in turn". As for the notion of "laughing in turn", neither the "I" nor the "other" is the only one who laughs, but both laugh and are laughed at in turn. While the

"self" is laughing at the "other" in one moment, the "other" laughs at the "self" in another moment. Thus, the laughing subject and the course of humour change from one moment to the other. As the direction of humour goes back and forth repeatedly, the uncertainty of the object and subject of laughter increase. As a consequence of the ambiguity caused by "laughing in turn", humour disrupts the stable positions of the "self" and "other". When the fluidity of transnational identities is considered, it can be understood that just like transnational identities, humour is in flux and unstable. As Susanne Pichler notes, "[h]umour has its basis in ambiguity, discrepancy, and incongruity" since "[i]t has something to do with the exercise of some sort of perception which enables us to see things for the first time, to reconsider our categories" (210). The fluidity, ambiguity and uncertainty of humour in the selected novels enhance the audience to reconsider identity categories. This reconsideration is generated by exposing the reader with different frames of reference while changing the course of humour and laughter reiteratively. Thereby, the main objective of this study is to discuss that the selected novels provide a space to question national and cultural identities from the points of the view of both the "I" and the "other" due to the ambiguous directions of humour.

The similarities and differences among the selected novels and the conflicting points of the narratives establish further ground to interrogate the concept of identity within the scope of humour. All the selected novels are written by authors with a migrant origin born in Britain, which reinforces the idea that they draw attention to the complex identities of their characters. What these authors have in common is that, just like their fictional characters, they are located in transnational social spaces and born and raised in Britain with a different ethnic background. To clarify, Andrea Levy has Jamaican roots, Bernardine Evaristo is of English and Nigerian origin, Hanif Kureishi has both English and Indian roots, and Meera Syal is of Indian descent. Although these authors have different ethnic origins, their common aim is to move beyond fixed notions of identity. Also, even though each selected literary work is written by a second generation author, the fact that each novel includes a protagonist with different ethnic or textual features changes the direction and function of humour in each text. Consequently, the different characteristics of each main character open up various

cultural, ethnic and textual spaces for the use of humour as a strategic device. This research further explores that the concept of identity is questioned due to the contrast between tragic experiences and a humorous perspective to serious incidents in the selected novels. In these narratives, a contrasting picture is perceived as a result of the integration of humour in the representation of serious and problematic issues such as identity crisis, a sense of belonging, racism, family oppression, diaspora, and the concept of "home". Therefore, this study examines that narrating serious and painful events by employing a humorous perspective generates an urge to contemplate on the above mentioned issues along with the concept of identity. In order to question identity and humour in these novels, various humour theories are utilised to render the critical role of humour. Rather than focusing on a single humour theory, this study draws upon a wide array of humour theories such as the superiority theory, the incongruity theory, the relief theory and Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque laughter in order to present a comprehensive analysis of characters located in transnational spaces. Concisely, the aim of this dissertation is to point out that humour is used as a strategic device to question the concept of identity and transgress ethnic and cultural boundaries.

This dissertation has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter, entitled "From Colonialism to Transnational Identity", introduces a conceptual and historical background of colonialism, postcolonialism, diaspora, and transnational identity. The aim of this chapter is to render a background of the colonial and postcolonial periods in order to comprehend transnational identity. The first subchapter, "Colonialism", focuses on the relationship between the colonised and coloniser as it is significant to identify colonial discourse and its "construction" of the European "self" and non-European "other" to lay the foundation for the concept of identity. The "Postcolonialism" section explores decolonisation and the desire for an identity that is independent from colonial powers to demonstrate the beginning of the problem created by the search for an authentic identity. In this sense, this part explains the concepts of decolonisation, the identity of the formerly colonised subject, mimicry and hybridity. Moreover, the re-evaluation of the colonial discourse by postcolonial theorists will provide a basis for the links between humour and identity regarding the main objective of my argument. After providing a survey of colonialism and postcolonialism, the study delves into the

problem of belonging and migrant subjects in the subchapter entitled “Diaspora”. This part explores the concept of “home” and homeland, the myth of return, diasporic communities and the hybridity of diasporic identities. As this study focuses on transnational identities in British contemporary novels, this subchapter also introduces the African diaspora and the South Asian diaspora in Britain.

Finally, the last part of the first chapter aims to give a comprehensive account of transnationalism and transnational identity. Firstly, the concept and definition of transnationalism is presented in order to observe the different usages of the term and its connection to transnational identities. Then, the interrelationship between globalisation and transnationalism is discussed, for the fact that globalisation has generated interactive networks does not suggest that it is identical to transnationalism. The chapter continues with the definition and investigation of transnational social spaces which are formed by cross-border processes and mobility. Furthermore, simultaneity is discussed as one of the key concepts of transnational identities since transnational identities “change and swing one way or the other depending on the context, thus moving our expectation away from either full assimilation or transnational connection but some combination of both” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 288). Subsequently, the chapter investigates the problematic sense of belonging and identity problems of these shifting identities. Although transnational identities belong to multiple nations, they can experience identity conflicts since, as a result of their fluid identities, they may lack a sense of belonging. As they are both the “self” and the “other” in either their homeland or the land of settlement, they may feel that they belong to both nations or to neither. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses that a transnational existence should not be perceived as parallel to hyphenised definitions of migrant identities since the ethnic definitions on both sides of the hyphen cannot completely embrace the identity of a transnational character (Schultermandl 31-31). Lastly, this section renders that the fluidity of transnational identities is clearly addressed in Stuart Hall’s analysis in which he differentiates cultural identity as an embracing term from cultural identity that is in flux.

The second chapter explains and discusses humour, laughter and humour theories. The first subchapter entitled “Humour and Laughter” explores the relationships

and differences between the two terms since humour is usually confused or equated with being optimistic, hilarious, or with laughter. Explicating that "humor is typically not about enjoyment, but *about* problems", this part presents that humour cannot be interchangeably used with optimism, happiness or joyfulness (Morreall 2009, 51)(emphasis original). Thereafter, the link between humour and laughter is analysed in detail. Although laughter is used as a synonym for humour in most theories in the course of history, recent studies underline the necessity to distinguish the two terms. Laughter may be one of the reactions to humour; however, other physical or mental incidents which do not contain humour may also be the cause of laughter (Morreall 1983b, 297). Nevertheless, as most of the discussions concerning humour are founded on laughter throughout history, it is inevitable to employ certain theories on laughter while analysing humour. Thus, occasionally humour and laughter are used interchangeably by various critics and in diverse humour theories such as the superiority and incongruity theories. This study employs humour varying from slight amusement to loud laughter; therefore, it draws upon humour as the stimuli of laughter and humour as stimuli to other reactions since humour may result in the laughter of few people and the outrage of many at the same time (Billig 179). This subchapter ends with the conclusion that humour is an unstable, changing, and contradictory phenomenon since it is both universal and subjective, and transforms and evolves through time.

The following subchapters introduce major humour theories in order to comprehend diverse perspectives on humour and to establish a basis for using humour as an analytical tool in the selected novels. The first part, entitled "The Superiority Theory", scrutinises the relationship among superiority, power, egoism and humour by referring to the ideas of Plato, Aristotle and Thomas Hobbes. In general, the critics of this theory suggest that laughter is initiated by the feeling of superiority over someone or something. The next subchapter explicates the incongruity theory in the light of the views of Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, Henri Bergson and John Morreall. In a broad sense, this theory focuses on the idea that humour is produced as a result of the discrepancy between certain concepts. Regarding their views on the incongruity theory, this chapter elucidates Kant's reduced "expectations" that generate humour, Schopenhauer's contrast between concept and reality as a source of humour, Bergson's

focus on the social signification of laughter and humour, and Morreall's "cognitive shift". The next part explains the relief theory which is developed by Sigmund Freud and Herbert Spencer. To clarify in basic terms, the relief theory can be defined as the study of the discharge of nervous energy which results in laughter. After touching upon Spencer's brief discussion on the link between laughter and bodily motions, this part delves into Freud's extensive and detailed research on humour. Freud contends that laughter's aim is to create pleasure since it releases saved energy caused by the repressions in the unconscious. In this sense, this subchapter explains Freud's discussions on "jokes", the relationship between "dream-work" and "joke-work", joke techniques, "the comic", caricatures, and "humour". The last part demonstrates Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the "carnivalesque" by investigating points such as the carnival spirit, grotesque imagery, and the marketplace. This section reveals that carnivalesque laughter provides an alternative life and a sense of freedom by subverting authority and, as a result, generates revival and change. All in all, theories of most critics are challenged by other critics as each critic believes that there is a lack of a certain point in each other's theories. On these grounds, it should be stated that not a single humour theory but the combination of several humour theories offers a complete understanding of humour and laughter.

The third and fourth chapters examine the selected novels regarding transnational identity to discuss that apart from amusing or challenging colonial discourse, humour is used as a strategic device to make the "self" and the "other" laugh or/and be laughed at positionally in order to question the concept of national, ethnic, and cultural identities. These chapters are divided according to the ethnic and national origins of the authors and the characters in their novels; therefore, the third chapter includes *Fruit of the Lemon* and *Mr Loverman* as the works of black British authors and the fourth chapter consists of *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *Anita and Me* which are written by South Asian British authors.

The first subchapter of the third part analyses Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* by focusing on the critical role of humour in the representation of Faith's, the protagonist, identity conflict. The narrative revolves around Faith's identity crisis as a young black woman in Britain and her journey to Jamaica to discover her familial and

racial background. Faith, who is born in Britain to Jamaican parents, identifies herself as "British" and not as Jamaican; however, as racial discrimination increases, the tension between her British identity and Jamaican identity builds up. Through Faith's experiences in the British society and the stories of her extended family in Jamaica, Levy depicts the bitter truths of slavery, colonialism, and racism. In her novel, Levy, born and raised in London with Jamaican roots, sheds light on the problematic issues of race, identity and lack of a sense of belonging with a combination of a serious and comic tone. This chapter discusses that the direction and function of humour changes in order to reflect and reinforce the fluidity of racial identities, and particularly of Faith's transnational identity. The first part entitled "'England' and Exposing the Laughter of the Empire" analyses the first part of the novel and focuses on the function of humour concerning Faith's experiences in the British society. In this sense, by analysing the humiliating laughter of the "white" British society towards Faith, this section points out how Levy reflects the relationship between the dominant hegemonic forces and the construction of Faith's "otherness". Another focal point of investigation is how Faith's inability to laugh or her desire to "laugh back" at the British gaze further intensifies her identity conflict. In addition to the superiority theory, comic incongruities are discussed to unravel her problematic formation process of Jamaica and Britain as homelands. The next subchapter, entitled "The Transformation of Humour in 'Jamaica'", focuses on the second half of the novel which narrates Faith's journey to Jamaica and the discovery of her extended family. This part argues that Faith's experiences in Jamaica problematize and display the perspectives of the "self" and "other" with the laughter of not only British but also Jamaican characters. By elaborating on humour directed from black characters to other black characters who try to mimic the coloniser or the colonised, this part renders how humour blurs the notions of identity and race. The chapter ends with the discussion of the role of humour in Faith's discovery of the complex interconnections between Jamaica and Britain as she learns that she is the descendant of a white British slave owner who had impregnated a slave woman. In brief, by drawing upon various humour theories, this section argues how Levy portrays the disruption of fixed racial and national norms.

The second subchapter examines Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* by focusing on the humorous attitude, jokes and comic anecdotes of the main character, Barry. Barry, a seventy-four year old closet-gay of Caribbean descent living in London, leads a double life since he is married to his wife, Carmel, but is in a romantic homosexual relationship with his Antiguan lover Morris. In her novel, Evaristo designs a marginal character, an elderly queer diasporan, who does not experience melancholia like a typical immigrant but who is continually repositioned in the Caribbean diasporic community. Evaristo casts a new light on the issues of identity, race, and sense of belonging by amalgamating sexual identity and ethnic identity. By including the voice of the racially and sexually "other", the queer black person, she attempts to disrupt colonial and patriarchal hegemony in *Mr Loverman*. I argue that humour, particularly Barry's joking character, holds a critical function as it complicates and exposes Barry's transnational identity by presenting the ambivalence of his Caribbean identity. In this regard, this chapter mainly concentrates on Barry's jokes with reference to the Freudian joke theory. The first subchapter, entitled "Laughing at the Caribbean Diaspora Community", concentrates on Barry's jokes which target the Caribbean diasporic community represented by his wife, her friends and his marriage. I claim that Barry employs "tendentious jokes" in Freud's terms, towards the concept of marriage, his wife's attitude, and the Caribbean culture. The second subchapter, "Laughing at the Queer Diasporan", analyses Barry's humorous attitude towards the non-heteronormative society. On the one hand, as will be argued in the first part, Barry criticises the normative norms of the Caribbean society. On the other hand, he mocks homosexuality and rejects identifying himself within the queer space. This subchapter discusses that although he does not directly challenge national and cultural boundaries, his jokes and his humorous perspective demonstrate how he implicitly ruptures these borders. Firstly, this section explains that his racial and sexual identities cannot be comprehended separately since Barry's hostile jokes towards the queer implicitly reflect his fear of "being an outsider" both racially and sexually. As Barry is homosexual himself, his laughter, which is directed from his traditional Caribbean "self" to the eccentric homosexual "other", complicates his national and sexual identities and underlines his transnational identity. Exploring Evaristo's novel from the changing direction of

humour, this section opens a new line of enquiry regarding Evaristo's subversion of familiar migrant archetypes in Britain.

The first subchapter of the fourth chapter evaluates Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* regarding the relationship between comic ethnic caricatures and fluid identities. The novel narrates four years in the life of the seventeen-year-old Karim, who is born to an Indian father and an English mother. Although Karim is partially of British origin, his dark complexion prevents him from fitting in the British society. As a result of his "hybrid" identity, Karim's sense of belonging fluctuates between "othered" immigrants and white supremacists. Through Karim's perspective, Kureishi employs racism, ethnicity, social class and the struggle of reaching a sense of belonging with a sense of humour. This chapter claims that Kureishi's sense of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is related to the construction of comic figures of authority from Karim's humorous perspective. The comic characters are analysed as caricatures since Kureishi combines humour and ethnic stereotypes to degrade and question the authority of specific characters. In this sense, the main objective of this chapter is to argue that the shifting direction of humour generated by the construction and deconstruction of comic ethnic caricatures exposes the transnational sensibility of ethnic identities, and particularly of Karim's identity. The first part, entitled "Comic Ethnic Stereotypes", focuses on humour that is particularly produced by the representation of Indian characters. I argue that Karim's British gaze caricatures these ethnic characters by directing laughter from his British "self" to the Indian "other". Karim's degradation and stabilisation of Indian characters such as Haroon, Changez, and Anwar, with a humorous perspective, exposes his complicated sense of "self". I also discuss that Karim's aim to caricature a white British character further complicates the relationship between his British "self" and Indian "otherness". The second subchapter, "Performing Comic Ethnic Stereotypes", focuses on Karim's theatrical performances as the comic Indian "other". This section argues that all of Karim's theatrical roles excite laughter and include humour, yet, the direction and target of humour changes continuously. As Karim's performances depend on the humorous and caricatured versions of the Indians, his acting roles complicate and reveal the constructed and unstable nature of national and ethnic identities. His role as Mowgli, his performance as Anwar, and his acting role

as Changez direct the laughter of the British "self" at the Indian "other". On the other hand, Karim's reactions to the superior laughter of the British audience further intensifies his identity conflict. Finally, the absence of humour in Karim's new performances of the Indian characters is discussed within the scope of racial and political tension in Britain. Thus, this chapter concentrates on how Kureishi blurs the direction of laughter to complicate Karim's identification process.

The fourth and final chapter examines how Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* unfolds new lines of enquiry regarding transnational sensibilities by different perspectives of humour in the depiction of the protagonist's identity conflict. Syal's work is a coming-of-age story of the nine-year-old Meena who is born and raised in England to Indian parents and who desires to reach a sense of belonging as a girl with Indian parents living in a white British society. Like Meena, Syal is born in Britain and is the daughter of Punjabi parents who migrated from India. Regarding her simultaneous identification with both India and Britain, Syal states that humour is a powerful tool to change fixed opinions of certain communities or societies (Sharma). Therefore, this part concentrates on the critical role of different humorous perspectives and their relation to national identity. The novel is a retrospective narrative which is told in the first person since Meena as an adult narrator tells the story of her nine-year-old self. Drawing upon the shifting direction of humour via the perspective of Meena as the protagonist and the voice of Meena as the narrator, this chapter discusses how the perspectival characteristic of humour in *Anita and Me* intensifies the clash between Meena's British and Indian identities, which reflects her transnational identity. The first subchapter, entitled "Humour and the Voice of the Transnational Child", focuses on Meena's stance as the child-character to investigate that humour unravels Meena's problematic sense of belonging and identity construction. The superior laughter of "white" characters at child Meena, the superior laughter of Indian characters which affect Meena's sense of "self", and Meena's use of humour as a tool to belong are all discussed in order to examine humour's relation to the construction of ethnic stereotypes. Moreover, Meena's sense of "home" and the clash and interaction between Indian and British social spaces are evaluated within the incongruity theory. The next subchapter addresses Meena's perspective as the narrator and how Syal reveals the transformation of Meena's

perception of identity through the change of her sense of humour. Meena's voice as the adult narrator intermittently appears or comments on her childhood experiences. I discuss that the narrator's ability to laugh at her childhood tragedies, her humorous perspective towards Indian characters, and her use of "reverse jokes" to create comic white characters all position her in a transnational field. Elaborating on the role of humour in Meena's growth and identity development, this chapter investigates Syal's attempt to question fixed ethnic stereotypes created by both the Indian community and the British society.

The exploration of the selected novels within the context of humour and identity provides ground for the conceptualisation of national and cultural identities in transnational social fields. Analysing the object of laughter, the laughing subject, the fluid direction of humour, the functions of humour in the novels by referring to various humour theories and critics, I discuss that humour represents the complex links between the "self" and "other". By elaborating on the unstable and ambiguous characteristics of humour, this study discusses how Levy, Evaristo, Kureishi and Syal use humour as a strategy to rupture national and cultural boundaries in their works. This dissertation argues that these authors employ humour to render the complex interactions among cultures, nations, and identities, which lead their characters to become involved in cross-border spaces. Furthermore, different characteristics and ethnic origins change the course and function of humour since each protagonist positions and repositions himself/herself in other national and cultural contexts. Accordingly, Faith is a young girl who is engaged in the Jamaican and British spaces, Barry is an old queer character who is positioned in the Caribbean cultural space and the Western cultural space, Karim is a young boy who is located in Indian and British spaces, and Meena is a young girl who is embedded in Indian and British communities. This study, thus, investigates various national and cultural spaces within the concept of humour in order to present the transnational existence of "migrant" identities.

CHAPTER 1

FROM COLONIALISM TO TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY

1.1. Colonialism

Colonialism, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is defined "as a settlement in a new country … a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up" (in Loomba 7). One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether there were people living in the "new" country since in this definition colonialism does not refer to domination or a confrontation with the natives. Ania Loomba answers this question and discusses the problematic definition of colonialism, in her work *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, stating that this description does not exactly define colonialism as it lacks the existence of the natives who are already living on the colonised lands (7). Loomba adds that colonialism can be accurately described "as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods" (8). In this sense, it is significant to define colonialism through the term "exploitation", for exploitation of both the land and the natives, and the aim to rule them by force are the substantial issues in the definition of colonialism. In brief, colonialism can be delineated as the exploitation of a country by another country and the settlement on those exploited lands to rule by force.

While colonialism is related to the occupation of different lands with the aim of enlarging the boundaries of the lands as great powers like the Roman Empire, the Mongols, the Aztec Empire and the Ottoman Empire did, colonialism in the "modern" sense includes the eighteenth and nineteenth century European or Western colonialism, which should be discussed in a different context. Regarding "modern" colonialism, colonies were considered as establishments for raw material such as ivory and cotton that were processed in the newly developed industrial factories. Processing these raw materials and using them to grow in capital were the fundamental objectives of the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The flow of raw material to the mother

country to process them and gain economic profit interested the colonisers. In addition, using natives as slaves and exploiting their physical strengths played important roles in the economic profits of colonialism. Given these facts, modern colonialism "restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries" (Loomba 9). Gaining profit from processing raw materials and exploiting human power resulted in the imbalance of economic relationships between the dominating countries and the colonised lands. The economies of the colonised countries were dependent on the economies of the colonisers, and thus exploitation developed the economies and industries of the colonial powers. Correspondingly, this economical interaction between the colonised and the dominating countries resulted in the increase in capital in Europe. Colonies were assumed as "markets" and as places for "trade", which strengthened Western capital (Loomba 9-10). Thus, in comparison to colonialism before the eighteenth century, "modern" colonialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is strongly associated with industrialism and capitalism.

Despite its cruel, exploiting and hegemonic aspects, colonialism was justified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Complex relationships were required to rationalise economic and politic exploitation. In *Culture and Imperialism,* after declaring the importance of economic profit for the Western colonial powers, Edward Said highlights the more complex colonial relationships. Said discloses that colonial discourse allowed British subjects to accept that the natives living in colonised places should be subjugated. This perspective "replenished metropolitan energies so that these decent people [British subjects] could think of the *imperium* as a protracted, almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior, or less advanced peoples" (1993, 10)(emphasis original). To justify colonialism, rather than economic strategies, complicated ideological strategies were established and imposed such as the inferiority of native people and the idea that their only chance to survive is to be ruled by the West. So, it was believed that the "white man's burden" was to "save" the native people by bringing white man's civilisation. Colonial and imperial justification is clearly recognised, for instance, as revealed in Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden" (1899)(see appendix for the poem). The poem portrays that the Empire should

take up the white man's burden and should send their best men to the uncivilised places in order to end famine and diseases to save the natives. Said's view concerning the justification of colonialism is clearly identified in the poem since the poem represents racial superiority and praises imperialism. In the process of colonisation, religion was also used to regard natives as inferior and to rationalise colonialism, as it is demonstrated by the aim of Christian missionaries to convert natives in order to add the converted territory into their own control (New 106). It is evident that colonialism not only reflects the idea of physical occupation of the land, but also demonstrates the importance of construction of the "inferior" native. Imperial and colonial power may have been the result of force and economic power; however, the construction of the "other" employed by the dominating countries is the critical aspect which helped to preserve this established power in the colonies.

The term "the construction of the other" refers to the colonial discourse which, to begin with, should be discussed within the concept of Orientalism. In *Orienatlism*, Edward Said emphasises the relationship between knowledge and power with reference to the colonial or Orientalist discourse. The construction of the non-European "other" is the result of a "created" knowledge by the countries who own the power, which are in this case European countries. In *Orientalism*, Said highlights the subjectivity of the "knowledge" produced by the Western colonial powers by discussing that "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). This vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived. Orientals lived in their world, 'we' lived in ours" (1978, 43). Binary oppositions were created by the "West" to define itself as superior and the "other" as inferior. Said marks that "[t]he vision and material reality propped each other up, kept each other going. A certain freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner's privilege; because his was the stronger culture" (1978, 44). He argues that the binary opposition between Europe and the Orient is the outcome of the colonial discourse constructed by the Western mind which clearly reflects the idea that Orientalism promotes this binary opposition. The construction of the "Oriental" or the "other" regarding the non-European is the result of the "knowledge" reflected and produced by the European hegemony. The subjective

knowledge of the East was transformed into "objective" knowledge by the hegemonic powers. Especially, representation of the subjective knowledge of the Oriental as objective through both fictional and non-fictional texts strengthened the already accepted inferiority of the "other". Exemplifying his idea through Silvestre de Sacy's works, Said discusses Sacy's writings concerning the formation of the Orientalist discourse. Sacy, a philologist and Orientalist born in the late eighteenth century and the founder of modern Orientalism, portrayed the East or the Oriental which was far away and difficult to discover in his several writings (Said 1978, 123-24) [1]. Sacy's didactic tone in his texts represents the authority of his Western perspective to define the Orient. According to Said, Sacy's didactic writings reflect the idea of "[o]bjective structure (designation of Orient) and subjective restructure (representation of Orient by Orientalist) [which] become interchangeable" (1978, 129). Thus, the subjective ideas concerning the inferiority of the Oriental are replaced with the objective realities of the Oriental. The Orient, which is almost impossible to be perceived personally by many people, because of its geography, becomes the representation of the exotic, the "other", and the strange from the Western point of view. As Said asserts, "what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West" (1978, 40). For this reason, the knowledge about the Orient could never be objective and the Orient could never be on the same level as the West since the Oriental discourse was created to maintain colonial powers.

Acknowledging Orientalism as a discourse, Said scrutinises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised by revealing that the representation of the Orient by the West created a dichotomy between the East and the West. In the sense that power produces knowledge, power that is attributed to the West or Europe creates knowledge about the Orient or the "other". As Said argues, "because of Orientalism the

[1] Sacy published anthologies of Arab grammar and grammatical writings, text-books for students, short works on Oriental history, translations and commentaries on certain Arab texts. However, when discussing the didactic tone of Sacy, Said evaluates primarily Sacy's *Chrestomathie Arabe* (1806) and *Principes de Grammaire Générale* (1799). Indispensably, analysing the transformation of subjective knowledge of the Oriental into "objective" knowledge, Said mainly probes into *Tableau Historique de L'érudition Française* (1862), whose co-author is Bon-Joseph Dacier, a French historian, philosopher and translator.

Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action. This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity 'the Orient' is in question" (1978, 3). So, the Orient created in the mind of the West does not have any existence outside the Orientalist discourse. To maintain the hegemony over the colonised lands, the Orient was identified as inferior by the Western colonial powers. Whereas each negative feature is attributed to the colonised or the Orient, each positive feature is attributed to the European or the colonisers. Loomba exemplifies this by stating that while the Orient is feminine, static, lazy, sentimental, and uncivilised, Europe is masculine, developing, hardworking, rational, and civilised (45). Thereby, the "self", the West, is described with terms related to superiority and the "other", the East, is only described with inferior terms. When Foucault's[2] views about discourse formation are considered, the colonial powers create knowledge about the colonised lands and people to maintain their power. Compendiously, the knowledge of the East or the "other" can never be objective since it is a "production" or fiction, and not actual reality.

Homi Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, also discusses certain aspects of the colonial discourse. Bhabha asserts that "the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin" in order to justify colonial exploitations of the West (1994, 70). However, this aim to fix colonial subjects is not reached since the formation of stereotypes threatens the "self" and "other". McLeod clarifies Bhabha's ideas by stating that "in the discourse of colonialism, colonised subjects are split between contrary positions. They are domesticated, harmless, knowable; but also *at the same time* wild, harmful, mysterious" (53)(emphasis original). Alternatively stated, the "other" is identified as the "strange" and interests the coloniser because of its difference, so the colonised subject seems

[2] According to Foucault power and knowledge are strongly connected since neither of them appears separately; and, therefore, power produces the reality or a specific discourse in a certain period. He explains the notion of discourse by referring to the concept of "episteme" in his work, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault states that "[t]his episteme may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge" (1969b, 191). That is, the episteme is the space in which certain discourses may emerge. He adds that each specific era constructs its own episteme and this episteme controls the point of view of social subjects when they encounter reality (191).

totally outside the boundaries of the West. However, the "other" is also described as "harmless" and domestic, which makes him enter the Western boundaries; as a result, the colonised subject is defined both as on the outside and in the inside simultaneously. Colonised subjects are represented through contradictory descriptions, which make it impossible both for the "other" and for the "self" to define themselves. John McLeod comments on Bhabha's view on these contradictory representations of the "other" by stating that "[t]he distance between the colonisers and the colonised is *lessened*, as the colonised are brought within the boundaries of Western knowledge. But, on the other hand, colonial stereotypes also function contrariwise to *maintain* this sense of distance" (53)(emphasis original). Both descriptions serve a function on the justification and maintenance of colonialism and exploitation of the "other". In addition, Bhabha suggests that "[t]he subjects of the discourse are constructed within an apparatus of power which *contains,* in both sense of the word, an 'other' knowledge – a knowledge that is arrested and fethishistic and circulates through colonial discourse as that limited form of otherness that I have called the stereotype" (1994, 77)(emphasis original). That is, the coloniser creates the knowledge of the "stereotype", which is a fixated knowledge and limits the "other" to define itself; however, it also limits the "self" to define itself. Thereby, the colonised subject does not have an authentic position to construct a "self", and he/she is always the "missing person" or the "Oriental stereotype" confronted with its difference (1994, 46-47) [3]. Thus, Bhabha argues that the colonial discourse represents contradictory descriptions of the "other".

1.2. Postcolonialism

Before defining postcolonialism, the fact that various definitions of the term "postcolonialism" exist should be underlined. While postcolonialism as a historical period is the era after Western colonialism, within a political or literary context, it refers to a reaction against colonialism and the colonial discourse. In the sense of a political or literary context, postcolonialism deconstructs the hegemonic colonial power, re-reads

[3] Homi Bhabha's theories regarding the displacement and deferral of the "self" and "other" will be explored in the forthcoming chapters.

and challenges colonialism, and resists and exposes the unjust rationalisations of colonial exploitation by distorting the colonial gaze. The constructed relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is exposed and criticized through the colonised gaze. The meaning of the word "postcolonial" is discussed by many critics, so it has various significations since it is difficult to limit the boundaries of the "postcolonial". In the beginning, the "post-colonial" had a chronological denotation as it was used to define the state of certain countries after the Second World War; however, after the 1970s it has been used to explore the results of colonialism (Ashcroft et al. 1998, 168). Elleke Boehmer exposes the distinction between the hyphenated and the unhyphenated version of the term by explaining that "post-colonial" is the historical period after the Second World War and the "postcolonial" is "that condition in which colonized peoples seek to take their place, forcibly or otherwise, as historical agents in an increasingly globalized world" (3). While referring to the term, postcolonialism, its meaning as a historical period or its definition as "after" colonialism is not taken into consideration for it will limit its interpretation. As Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin argue,

> '[p]ost-colonialism/ postcolonialism' is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and, most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities. (1998, 169)

Thus, postcolonialism not only includes the conditions of people and countries after the decolonisation process but also represents the period of colonialism. It re-reads and re-evaluates the colonial discourse to expose and distort the dominant discourse of colonialism.

Decolonisation, which can be described as "the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms" (Ashcroft et al. 1998, 56), and colonial nationalist movements are critical historical factors which have great impact on the emergence of postcolonialism. The physical removal of the colonial powers and the disruption of the culture imposed by colonial forces are the main aspects of

decolonisation. This resistance against Western colonial powers began after the First World War and was strengthened after the Second World War. Dennis Walder explains the history of decolonisation of Britain's colonies by evaluating the transition from Empire to Commonwealth. The conflicts between European powers resulted in the loss of their colonies; as a result, the British Empire came to an end and was transformed into the Commonwealth. Although the British Empire collapsed, its hegemony still continued in the Commonwealth. However, nationalist feeling was getting stronger, so many colonies of Britain gained independence in the second half of the twentieth century and by the mid-1960s most of Britain's colonies became independent (Walder 1087). Especially, after the independence of India in 1947, decolonisation became a powerful movement. African countries such as Nigeria and Kenya, and countries in the Atlantic such as Jamaica all gained independence after the 1950s (Boehmer 174). However, the West continues to control these ex-colonies in economic terms since, although the colonies achieved independence officially, most of them are still economically dependent on the old colonial powers. As Loomba clarifies, direct rule is not necessary for imperialism since the ex-colonies are economically still dependent on European countries, which is described as "neo-imperialism" or "neo-colonialism" (11). Within this framework, Robert Young contends that independence of the colonies should not be indicated as a total independence by stating, "Independence! However, in many ways this represented only a beginning, a relatively minor move from direct to indirect rule, a shift from colonial rule and domination to a position not so much of independence as of being in-dependence" (3). Concisely, in the second half of the twentieth century most of the colonies gained independence as a result of the powerful anti-colonial movements; yet, while struggling to destroy the colonial legacy of the West, most of them are still economically dependent on the colonial forces.

Language has a significant role in the process of decolonisation and in the struggle against colonial rule. Elleke Boehmer defines the resistance against colonial powers as "a double process cleaving", by arguing that the colonised tries to escape the colonial rule and discourse, but on the other hand, borrows or transforms the language and other texts to gain cultural and social independence (101). Language is the most powerful tool that is used to construct certain fictional realities about the "inferiority" of

the colonised. Also, language of the Empire is imposed on the natives in order to distance the natives from their native language. Postcolonial writers aim to challenge the imperial language and establish their own languages through which they can represent themselves. They aim to "write back to the centre" in order to object the Eurocentric view and demand their native identities (Ashcroft et al. 1989, 6). However, Standard English is not enough to describe their experiences during and after the colonial period. Standard English written as "English" with a capital letter is the imperial language which is used as a result of the colonial domination of the "centre", and "english" is the language transformed and used by the "peripheries" (8). In this sense, Chinua Achebe's ideas on language clarify the problem of the use of English in the ex-colonies as he highlights that "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings" ("English and the African Writer" 349). Thus, according to Achebe only a modified form of English can describe his postcolonial experience.

It is significant to explore language in the process of anti-colonial movements and the formation of new nations. As for the concept of "nation", Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, asserts that nationalism is based on the idea of an "imagined community" (6). Anderson contends that "[i]t is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6)(emphasis original). This means that nationalism is not related to materialistic aspects, but it is rather a social formation; therefore, Anderson claims that language plays an important role in the formation of a nation. Language spoken by any person in a nation makes them imagine that they are a part of the same community, that is through language "pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed" (154). Within this context, the power of language in the process of colonialism and decolonisation can be observed. Regarding postcolonialism, nations which were formed after decolonisation needed a redefinition of their community, a definition that excluded the Eurocentric view, for each attempt to gain independence needs a new definition of that certain nation in the minds of the subjects. Because language is the main tool that

constructed the “realities” of the colonised “others”, it is used by postcolonial writers to deconstruct these “realities” which can be only achieved by the use of a non-imperial language. Therefore, they had to use either their native language or a modified form of English. Achebe points out that the African writer “should aim at fashioning an English that is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience” (“English and the African Writer” 347). With new “versions” of English, postcolonial writers have the opportunity to narrate their experiences in the formerly colonised countries.

The purpose of the colonised subject to create an identity independent from the colonial rule is one of the main problems of the ex-colonies. Arguing that “post-colonialism is regarded as the need, in nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images”, Simon During compares the postcolonial subject’s denial of “otherness” with the postmodern idea that distorts the centre (125). He further adds that “[t]he post-colonial desire is the desire of decolonized communities for an identity” (125). The crisis of identity in the postcolonial subject is the result of dislocation since the loss of a sense of self may be the result of dislocations such as enslavement, migration, and transportation, or it may be the result of the oppression of the native culture by the colonial rule (Ashcroft et al. 1989, 9). With respect to postmodernism, and its attitude to deconstruct the center, the “Truth”, and grand narratives, the postcolonial subject’s desire for an identity can be noticed. With reference to Lyotard’s thought that postmodernism is defined by its scepticism towards grand narratives, postcolonial writers and critics subvert and challenge the center by considering Eurocentrism as a grand narrative. Furthermore, the deconstruction of binary oppositions in the postmodern thought should also be considered while discussing the “other”. In this sense, Linda Hutcheon argues that from a decentred perspective the marginal, the off-centred or the ex-centric takes on a new significance. To be ex-centric is to have a different and shifting perspective; thus, not a centralized sameness but a decentred community becomes significant since the ideas that there is no single otherness and there are no fixed binary oppositions are the focal point of postmodernism. Postmodernism does not make the marginal the new center (61-69), but it celebrates differences. As a result of postmodern thought, the marginal, the “other” or

the “ex-centric” is not defined by binary oppositions anymore, but, as Hutcheon states, by the language of differences – not by “either-or” but by “and-also” (62). Many postcolonial critics have discussed the concept of identity regarding the postcolonial subject. Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha are among the most known postcolonial critics who argued and exposed the state of postcolonial identity.

As for the concept of the identity of the formerly colonised subject, Frantz Fanon’s psychoanalytic discussions about the postcolonial subject underline his/her psychic trauma. Fanon argues, in his work *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), that a normal Negro child grown up in a normal family will become abnormal when he comes in contact with the “white world” (111). Fanon manifests the thoughts he endured as follows: “I wanted to be typically Negro—it was no longer possible. I wanted to be white—that was a joke. And, when I tried, on the level of ideas and intellectual activity, to reclaim my negritude, it was snatched away from me” (101). The reason for this is explained through the term “collective catharsis”, because the Negro child who has read European magazines, and has had a European education automatically identifies himself with the hero, the explorer, the “civilized” or the “white” man (112, 113-4). Consequently, like the “white” man, the Negro child regards “blacks” as savages from the Western point of view. Fanon explores the “trauma of the Negro” within the framework of the immigration of the Negro to the West or Europe by contending that the Negro is continually reminded of his inferiority since “[i]n him [the Negro] there is none of the affective amnesia characteristic of the typical neurotic” (116). Unlike the European, the Negro’s unconscious does not restore repressed feelings since his trauma is made conscious in the Western world. In other words, his trauma is continually reminded by the “white” society. As a result of his identity crisis, the Negro is forced to choose between his background and the Western society. Fanon concludes that the Negro chooses the society, and not the family, so the family is replaced from the superego into the id (115). Evidently, the European white society is the reason for the trauma of the Negro. Furthermore, Fanon argues that the construction of the “other” and the identity crisis of the Negro are all the results of the “collective unconscious” of the Western world. He asserts that unlike Jung’s statement, the archetypes of the collective unconscious are not inherited but culturally and socially constructed (43). The idea that

"[t]he black man is the symbol of Evil and Ugliness" is an excellent demonstration of the culturally acquired archetypes (139). Exposing that "[i]n relation to the Negro, everything takes place on the genital level" (121), Fanon also refers to projection to define the construction of the Negro. Regarding this statement, the "white" man projects his repressed sexual fears onto the Negro; therefore, "the Negrophobic woman is in fact nothing but a putative sexual partner- just as the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual" (121). In addition, the Negro symbolizes the "biological danger" since he is "turned into a penis" from the perspective of the European (127,130). To conclude, Fanon discusses the schizophrenia of the colonized subject in his work to reveal the construction of the Negro by the "Self".

Another postcolonial critic who questions and explores the state of postcolonial identity is Homi Bhabha who, in *The Location of Culture*, defines terms such as mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity to scrutinise postcolonial identity. Bhabha describes that mimicry is the state when colonised subjects imitate the culture of the colonisers. He describes colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (1994, 86)(emphasis original). Yet, rather than representation, mimicry deals with repetition; as a result, it increases the power of the coloniser since the mimicking subject is "not quite the same", therefore it can never be authentic (1994, 88). The ambivalent state of these "others" challenges the colonial discourse for when the colonizers see the "others" act like them, they face with the resemblance between the coloniser and the colonised. Furthermore, Bhabha states that "[t]he *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (1994, 88)(emphasis original). Thus, mimicry can also be unintentionally subversive since it intimidates the colonial discourse by exposing its constructed realities. Mimicry is highly related to ambivalence as the split in the identity of the colonised "other" can be discerned through mimicry.

Also, Bhabha's discussions of the term hybridity is significant in relation to postcolonial identity for he defines hybridity as "a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality" (1994, 13). Like mimicry, hybridity includes a double vision since it does not produce a mirror, but it always splits the subject. Bhabha takes the term

hybridity as a counter narrative, which demonstrates that colonialism is not a concept which is fixed in the past, but changes through time; therefore, the construction of the fixed "other" from the Western point of view fails when Bhabha's term is considered. In other words, hybridity opens a new space in which neither the "self" nor the "other" exists, but a new political object is constructed that alienates our expectations (25). As Bhabha articulates, "for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (1990, 211). In this sense, Bhabha refers to this space in which hybrid identities are formed as the "Third Space"; in other words, as a space of liminal reality or inbetweenness in which "fixed" identities of the colonised or the coloniser are reshaped. To be specific, in the Third Space, cultural identities are destroyed and hybrid identities are constructed for it disrupts the notion of cultural or racial hierarchy belonging to the colonial discourse. The notion of the Third Space "may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing the *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*" (1994, 38)(emphasise original). Consequently, this space provides postcolonial subjects a site to reconstruct their identities since the contradiction of certain cultures in this liminal space includes the potentiality of new of cultural practices. As to explain the idea of "newness" created in this space, Bhabha highlights that the "third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (1990, 211). It can be summarised that according to Bhabha, postcolonial identity, which is not fixed but differential, cannot be separated from its colonial past. Focusing on the identity of the colonised, he states that there is always a state of "liminal reality" due to displacement and differentiation in the Third Space. Bhabha argues that the "self" is always in an absence and endlessly deferred in language (1994, 51). The "self" defines itself with the "other"; however, the other is always invisible; thus, the mirror structure is lost because of the invisibleness of the other.

The state of postcolonial subjects should also be discussed from the standpoint of their difference. It is necessary to clarify their difference in the light of Gayatri

Spivak's article "Can the Subaltern Speak?". Spivak defines the "subaltern" as the lower classes of the postcolonial society. She is influenced by Antonio Gramsci's term, the subaltern, which explains the idea that that the voice of the proletariat cannot be heard since they are outside the bourgeoisie. Thus, the subaltern is not heard. Significantly, the subaltern does not mean the postcolonial "other", but it is the lower class of the postcolonial "other" (285). The homeless and labourers, for instance, can be recognised as subaltern subjects in colonial or postcolonial societies. Rather than thinking of the postcolonial subjects as homogenous, Spivak emphasises the difference of postcolonial identities. The talk of the subaltern does not manage the level of communication for there is no listener. Spivak also questions the female as the subaltern asserting that "[i]f, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak 28). Therefore, the subaltern woman is represented by the patriarchy or imperial powers, so she is doubly unheard. Within the sense of postcolonial identity, not all postcolonial subjects are heard and there is no dominant discourse for the postcolonial subject to speak. Focusing on the place of the postcolonial woman, Spivak suggests that "we witness the unfixed place of woman as a signifier in the inscription of the social individual" (299). In this sense, Spivak's ideas support that identity is not fixed and not stable. Her theory challenges the essentialist view of the colonial discourse.

1.3. Diaspora

The origin of the word diaspora, stems from Greek, meaning "diaspeirein" which signifies "disperse" and is composed of two parts; "dia" meaning "across" and "sperein" meaning "scatter" ("Diaspora", *Oxford Dictionaries*). The term refers to the spread of people from their homeland as it was first used to describe to condition of the Hellenic Jews who were forced to live outside their homeland, Palestine (Braziel and Mannur 1). Although its original definition is associated with the dislocation of the Jews, the interpretation of the term is presently not restricted with the Jewish condition, hence its definition also includes other dispersed communities such as migrants, refugees and labourers. In other words, while diaspora stood for the dislocation and oppression of the Jews only, at present time rather than a fixed and limited term, it is

used to define other people who are directly or indirectly ruptured from their homeland. Despite the fact that the scope of diaspora has expanded through time, its major components, which are both longing for and questioning "home", and the problematics of identity, are still the fundamental aspects of diaspora.

There have been many discussions on the meaning and content of diaspora, and especially the concepts of home and diasporic identities are analysed by many critics. William Safran provides an extensive research on the notions of diaspora which he attempts to classify into certain categories by arguing that the definition of diaspora should be enlarged and not be limited to "that segment of a people living outside the homeland" (83). He discusses that diasporas share several specifications, which he employs to explicate diaspora and delineate diasporic subjects. To exemplify, Safran asserts that diasporans or their ancestors "have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions", they maintain a collective myth about their homeland, and they assume that they will never be accepted by their country of sojourn which makes them feel excluded (83). Furthermore, diasporic subjects perceive their homeland as an ideal home to which they will return, they believe that they should support the preservation and recovery of their homeland, and they maintain to relate themselves to their homeland which defines their ethnocultural union in the host society (83-84). Within this framework, it can be apprehended that Safran specifically underlines the problematics of belonging, and the creation of and relation to a mythic "ideal" homeland to preserve ethnic or cultural identity in the host society.

Safran's diaspora model has been developed and criticised by several critics as a result of the constant transformation of the dynamics of societies in the global world. Considering William Safran's discussion of diaspora, James Clifford articulates that Safran's diaspora model is "centred" and limited when certain communities are taken into consideration. Criticizing Safran's model, Clifford claims that "[i]n Safran's prefiguration of a comparative field—especially in his 'centered' diaspora model, oriented by continuous cultural connections to a source and by a teleology of 'return'—African American/ Caribbean/British cultures do not qualify" (305-306). Besides, arguing that the aforementioned cultures do not meet the conditions of each category

that Safran defines, Clifford also mentions that the South Asian diaspora does not qualify each point since it does not include a desire for return. He indicates that the notion of diaspora should not be fixed and limited since only then can it define certain ethnic or cultural communities. Significantly, the Jewish diaspora can be taken as a nonstandard example for the term diaspora, which is continuously redefined and unsteady in the global world as a consequence of decolonization, immigration, development in transportation and communication (306). In addition to Safran's points, Clifford adds several aspects to extend the scope of diaspora by reinforcing the idea that diaspora should not be principally connected to the affection and return to a homeland, as in the case of the Jewish diaspora. Therefore, decentred relations are equally important as the myth of return, and a continuation of dislocation, sorrow and rebellion are as vital as the representation of a distinct origin (305, 306). Evidently, no diasporic community qualifies all the aspects of diaspora for each community has diverse histories, experiences and dynamics, which elucidates the fact that recent diaspora studies focus on the fluidity of ethnic and cultural identities rather than a fixed desire to return home. In particular, "[r]ecent uses of the term move from essentialist notions of homeland, national or ethnic identity, and geographical location to deployments of diaspora conceptualized in terms of hybridity, *métissage* [mixing of different races], or heterogeneity" (Braziel and Mannur 5-6). Based on the discussion of the modifications about the content of diaspora, it can be concluded that recent diaspora studies underline hybrid and unstable identities of ethnic and cultural communities.

One question that needs to be answered, however, is whether diaspora implies only negative factors since it is also essential to underline the positive points of the term. Diasporas, which were purely described as painful and melancholic displacements, are recently specified as formations celebrating the diversity of the postmodern; in other words, "[d]iasporas are both celebrated (by late/post modernity) and maligned (by early modernity)" (Mishra 1). Rather than emphasizing a gloomy and melancholic attitude, Robin Cohen proposes contemplation on the empowering diversities that diasporic communities evoke (7). Cohen embraces a postmodern point of view of diaspora, by taking on a celebrating attitude towards the differences and diversities of minorities. Apparently, the conflict between ethnic, national and

transnational identities initiates a difference and a shifting perspective which he considers to be a creative and inspirational process. Pnina Werbner is another critic who highlights the positive features of diasporic existence by depicting that diasporas, as transnational social formations, resist the dominant ideology of nation-states (2005, 29-30). Similar to Cohen, Werbner expresses the vitality of the postmodern notion to challenge the center, which is in this case the "fixed" center of the nation-state, by establishing that the works of diasporic intellectuals are appraised for their disruption of national boundaries (2005, 30). It can be ideated that diaspora is clearly perceived as an unfixed term in the postmodern era, and also as a concept that is altering and transforming parallel to the changing world. Also, diaspora and diasporic subjects are evaluated as centreless notions that manifest the fragmented postmodern world.

The concept of "home" within the scope of diaspora studies is scrutinised from various points of view, and has transformed with respect to the continuous mobility of communities. Despite the fact that home is the primary element of diaspora, it is not a fixed or specific place that one desires to return to as the perception of "home" changes even within the same community. Therefore, "diaspora, does not only create an unrequited desire for a lost homeland but also a 'homing desire', a desire to reinvent and rewrite home as much as a desire to come to terms with an exile from it" (Nasta 7). With reference to the idea that the notion of home is specific for each group and history, Avtar Brah remarks that "[n]ot all diasporas inscribe homing desire through a wish to return to a place of 'origin'" (189). Thus, she argues that "homing desire" and a desire for "homeland" are not the same things by clarifying that feeling at home and asserting a specific place as home are different concepts (194). Brah reinforces that rather than a geographical location, home is the imagined place where one dreams to return to or a place of "homely" experience by depicting that "[o]n the one hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality" (188-189). It is in this context that it can be argued, especially in relation to the "new" diasporas, that "home" is interpreted beyond a geographical location of origin for it is associated to transnational sites, imagined places, and complex cultural or social relations.

Considering his own sense of belonging and diaspora, in *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie aims to give a comprehensive account of the homing desire by questioning the idea of "home". Rushdie demonstrates his thoughts by reflecting his desire to reclaim and "recall" home and his failure to do so since he is too alienated to be capable to recollect "home". Interestingly, he can only remember some pieces which do not create a complete memory which displays the impossibility to recover and recreate the lost home. Rushdie delineates his argument stating 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). Concisely, the concept of home can be identified as a place that cannot be recalled totally but is created as an "imagined" place where the diasporic subject desires to return.

Besides the myth of home, the wish to return home is distinguished as another myth that constitutes the diasporic subject and community. The myth of return includes a specific intention which is to unite the subjects of a certain diasporic community, so this myth is one of the vital constituents of cultural and ethnic groups living in a "hostland". As Safran explains, "the myth of return serves to solidify ethnic consciousness and solidarity when religion can no longer do so, when the cohesiveness of the local community is loosened, and when the family is threatened with disintegration" (91). With reference to the discussion of the myth of return, Rushdie's view unfolds a new sight of the myth since he rejects the melancholic context of the myth which disrupts the assimilation process in the land of settlement. He declines to recall home with a gloomy view as it hinders adapting to the country of sojourn since the protection of a "fixed" ethnic or cultural identity restrains assimilation that causes a "ghetto mentality" (19). The myth of return can be perceived as a defence mechanism of communities living as a minority as "it is used to make life more tolerable by holding out a utopia—or *eutopia*—that stands in contrast to the perceived *dystopia* in which actual life is lived" (Safran 94)(emphasis original). On this basis, it can be concluded that the myth of return is a concept which can be analysed in terms of different aspects such as creating a sense of belonging and unifying communities.

The notion of diaspora can be further traced by analysing its subjects, who are defined by hybridity, heterogeneity and diversity. Before arguing the hybridity of diasporic subjects, they should be evaluated within the concept of the "stranger" coined by Georg Simmel. Simmel elucidates that "[t]he stranger is discussed here, not in the sense often touched upon in the past, as the wanderer who comes today and leaves tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow" (in Holm et al. 9). Apparently, the position of the stranger mirrors the myth of return, in other words, there is always the possibility of returning home, yet this never happens. Simmel reveals that "[h]e [the stranger] is, so to speak, the *potential wanderer*: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going" (9)(emphasis original). Correspondingly, the "stranger" can never be fully integrated into the host society as he maintains the possibility to be gone one day. Although Holm et al. probe into the situation of guest workers in Germany within the concept of the "stranger", the term can also be applied to other diasporic communities for the potential of moving to the imagined homeland is the chief aspect of diasporic groups. In this fashion, Holm et al. articulate that the inability to go "home" and the settlement in the hostland cause diasporic subjects to be observed as "interior others", which signifies that their roots are still in their homeland, but that they are concurrently settled in another country (8). In this sense, the diasporic subject is recognised as an unstable and hybrid construction that can be examined by the metaphor of Janus. Janus – a two-faced Greek god of beginnings, doorways and transitions – maintains a gaze that is controlling both the front and back which conveys the idea that he reflects a particular transience as he observes both the future and past. However, this metaphor has certain limits since it cannot be employed to describe each diasporic community since it limits the definition of diasporans in relation to hybridity and multiplicity (Braziel and Mannur 9). The significance of this point within the scope of the diversity of diasporic subjects stems from the necessity to scrutinise them within the framework of ethnic, cultural or national diversity rather than essence.

Diasporic subjects identify themselves with more than one ethnic, cultural or national community which mark their multiplicity. They are diverse versions of intercultural and transnational experience; that is, "[d]iasporic subjects are marked by

hybridity and heterogeneity – cultural linguistic, ethnic, national – and these subjects are defined by a traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora" (Braziel and Mannur 5). As for the diversity of cultural identities, Stuart Hall highlights the unstable and metamorphic features of them by declaring that "[f]ar from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (2003, 236). Hall contends that within the concept of diasporic identities, the old-fashioned idea that diaspora represents dispersed people who desire to return home regardless of anything should be subverted and replaced by the thought that cultural identities are not fixed in space and time. Stuart Hall suggests that

> [t]he diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (2003, 244)

Thus, diasporic identities do not live in a stationary melancholy, but they are identities who construct and reconstruct themselves parallel to the interactions between their "home" and land of settlement, and the transformations of social, political or cultural relations.

Apart from instability and diversity of diasporic subjects, it is crucial to analyse diasporic communities formed by these heterogeneous subjects. Diasporic subjects interact, communicate and have strong bounds within that specific community as a result of their common culture, religion, national background, ethnicity or language. Thus, "diasporas often *mobilize a collective identity*, not only a place of settlement or only in respect of an imagined, putative or real homeland, but also *in solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries*" (Cohen 7)(emphasis original). The idea of solidarity or co-responsibility of ethnic groups is also observed in Hall's discussion on cultural identity since he claims that "[t]he first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other,

more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (2003, 234). This aspect of cultural identity that implies “oneness” provides a stable community in order to ensure them to “survive” as a minority in the land of settlement. Nevertheless, the diversity of the subjects within a specific group also threatens the unity of it because of the altering dynamics between and within communities. In this context, “[w]hatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. They are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host country” (Clifford 307). While, for instance, Black, African, and Indian minorities may agree to protest the white Eurocentric views of Britain, they may also experience conflicts when divided into subgroups such as religion and indigenous identity. Consequently, “[t]here is no guarantee of *postcolonial* solidarity” for each diasporic subject is positioned in diverse social and cultural space (315) (emphasis original).

One of the crucial and early illustrations of diaspora is the African diaspora which started in the sixteenth century and shaped the dynamics of modern societies. Slave trade initiated the Black African diaspora as African people were dislocated from their land and forced to live in the “New World”. They were sold, exploited and abused in order to promote the economy and expansion of the Western countries. Selling Africans into slavery continued for four hundred years, from 1502 until the abolishment of slavery in 1833, however it even continued after its official abolishment. As a consequence of the migration of Black Africans to Europe and other cities in the United States, this transatlantic slave trade led to many other diasporas emerging in the late nineteenth and twentieth century (Braziel and Mannur 2). The Windrush generation, for instance, arriving in 1948 in Britain on the board of *Empire Windrush* is one of the major demonstrations of the migration of Black Africans to Europe. To distinguish between “old” and “new” African diasporas Robin Cohen’s phases of diaspora can be taken into consideration for he categorizes the African diaspora in the first phase among the Jewish diaspora. He argues that the African diaspora in this phase is the “old” African diaspora, which includes the dislocation of African people to America. On the other hand, the twentieth century migration of African people are interpreted as “new”

African Diasporas belonging to the second phase that is defined by famine, economic conditions, and political issues (3). Furthermore, Cohen categorizes the African diaspora under the title "victim diaspora" by emphasizing that abuse and exploitation are two dominant factors for African slaves beside the aspect of exile. Also, the construction of a homeland is a question for the black community: "[s]ince a specific homeland cannot be restored to American blacks, their homeland myth is translated into solidarity with African liberation struggles" (Safran 90). Whether there is a desire to return "home" or not is one of the problematics of the African Diaspora since Africa is remembered as a place of pain, struggle and sorrow.

Rather than suggesting Africa as a continent of origin, recent studies focus on the mobility that forms the African diaspora. Within this sense, in *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy defines the notion of Afrocentrism by suggesting that an Afrocentric position represents an opposition to the intricate black experience (196). Gilroy criticizes a fixed perspective that includes a desire to relate to Africa by stating that "[m]arked by its European origins, modern black political culture has always been more interested in the relationship of identity to roots and rootedness than in seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation that is more appropriately approached via the homonym routes" (19). To be specific, he employs the metaphor of roots and routes to support the idea that, instead of a single origin, the transactions of Black Atlantic should be taken into consideration in the process of defining African diaspora. Thus, diasporic cultures are initiated by "uprooting and loss" representing a perspective of mobility rather than fixity (Clifford 317). The concept of "route" can be elucidated by the portrayal of the ship image as "[t]he image of the ship — a living, microcultural, micro-political system in motion— is especially important for historical and theoretical reasons" (Gilroy 4). The reason for this is that "[s]hips immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artifacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs" (4). In this sense, the black diaspora is sophisticated in that it does not have a single and fixed origin but emerged out of varied origins and interconnections. Therefore, a postmodern perspective on the African diaspora distorts the Afrocentric perspective of the late

nineteenth century since African diaspora cannot be reduced to a single nation or ethnicity.

Other major diasporas that should be discussed within postcolonialism are the South Asian diasporic communities. Opposition to the British rule resulted in the Indian independence in 1947, which caused the "Indian Empire" or the "British Raj" to divide into India and Pakistan, and later Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation out of Pakistan in 1971. After the 1948 Nationality Act restated the right of British citizenship to all the subjects of the Commonwealth, a lot of Punjabi and Pakistani people immigrated to Britain for the prospect of reaching economic advancement (Lahiri 203, 205). The fundamental reasons for their immigration were economic and social problems caused by the partition. While only males immigrated in the beginning, women and children also immigrated to Britain later in the 1960s. Although accepted as British subjects, when the numbers of immigrants increased, immigrants were perceived as problems (204, 206). After the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which restricted immigration, was passed in 1962, workers decided to stay in Britain permanently (Conway 73-74). The situation of South Asian immigrants, especially Pakistani people, is comprehensively analysed by Pnina Werbner by employing the aforementioned term, "chaorder". Werbner scrutinises that the cause for Pakistani diaspora is not their unity since they differ in terms of their political preference, religion, and world view. Some of them form religious groups, and others Urdu poetry groups; however, although people belonging to this diaspora are diverse in themselves, they still form a community. Despite the fact that they have chaotic internal dynamics as a result of their diversity, diasporas depend on co-responsibility such as raising money for religious and cultural situations in the land of settlement or to support the homeland (Werbner 2005, 36-37). Situational identifications of South Asian diasporans demonstrate the chaorder of their communities since while they define themselves, e.g., in the Pakistani diaspora, they may redefine themselves in the Muslim or "black" diaspora to struggle against racism. As Werbner emphasizes, "diaspora is a place which is both a non-place and a multiplicity of places, a place marked by difference" (2005, 44).

In conclusion, due to the technological and scientific developments in the global world that resulted in the improvement of communication and of transportation,

diaspora studies adopted new perspectives. Migration does not occur in one direction any longer but it becomes transversal, and diasporas are contemporarily formed not only by traumatic events but also by other causes such as labour and trade. Certain aspects of globalization such as a globalised economy, new types of international migration, the development of cosmopolitan sensibilities, and religion as a focus for social unity evoke new notions in the term, diaspora (Cohen 141). Therefore, new centres of belonging may emerge since diasporas are in a continuous state of formation and reformation as consequences of changes in their homelands and lands of settlement.

1.4. Transnational Identity

The boundaries regarding identities are questioned in the postmodern era in which borders, limits and grand narratives are challenged. While the idea that identities are unstable is advocated, the fixed and essential notions of identities are disrupted. As Stuart Hall argues, "identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (2004, 17). Hall discusses that there is no essential self and that identities are positional for there is always a lack in Lacanian terms[4], and never a totality in the process of identification; thus, the self is always in process and never completed (2004, 17). In this context, questioning the borders of nations and identities has generated the disruption of a single national or cultural identity; in other words, the postmodern sensibility rejects a single centre, borders and static aspects of nationality which blurs certain boundaries. Considering Benedict Anderson's discussion that nations are "imagined communities", which means that they are social productions and not concrete formations, it can be argued that national or cultural identities are constantly reproduced (6). In addition to the objection of the essential and stable nature of identities, globalisation and migration have also contributed to the discussion of national identities. In this framework, as a

[4] Lacan contends that identities are not essential but fictional constructs with a sense of lack. He states that the subject is constituted from outside during the mirror stage and that it always strives for the completion of the self-image, which he entitles as "jouissance". Yet, this will never happen since the total self-image or the "ideal-I" was always a fantasy; in other words, a misrecognition - "méconnaissance" (Lacan 45-49).

result of mobility across borders, including trans-boundary social, political and economic processes, it is remarkably necessary to analyse cultural and national identities of migrants or their children from a transnational perspective. In its widest sense, "[t]ransnationalism may be defined as the flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital across national territories in a way that undermines nationality and nationalism as discrete categories of identification, economic organization, and political constitution" (Braziel and Mannur 8). Pertaining to the identity question of migrants or their descendants, transnationalism has become one of the critical concepts employed to comprehend and elucidate their position. A transnational perspective provides an opportunity to look beyond nation-state borders by inducing observation of the transformation of certain factors such as identity and citizenship when they are constituted and re-constituted in transnational social space. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is to explain and explore transnational identity with the objective to apprehend the flexible, ongoing, and fluid aspects of migrant identities.

Before clarifying and analysing transnational identity in detail, the concept and definition of transnationalism should be elaborated in order to observe the different usages of the term and its connection to transnational identities. With the objectives of supporting pluralism and regenerating a peaceful atmosphere between diverse ethnic groups in America, Randolph Bourne[5] became the first critic who coined the word "transnationalism" in 1916 (Quayson and Daswani 12). Bourne used the phrase "trans-national America" to define the position of migrants who continue having cultural ties to their homelands. By reconsidering and challenging the theory of an American "melting pot", the thought that immigrants would fully assimilate and become Americans, Bourne objected to the homogenisation of America and proposed a new American citizenship which he identified as transnationalism (Nichols 350, 351). Although transnationalism was employed by Bourne as early as 1916, it had not been used until the 1960s; however, in the 1960s, it was employed to describe economic procedures with respect to corporations that have multiple establishments in different states (Schiller et al. 49). Within the context of the intellectual tradition of the term

[5] Randolph Bourne (1886-1918) is an American cultural critic and essayist.

rather than its economic connections, the 1990s are the years when transnationalism became a prominent term in diverse scholarly fields and in discussions concerning global theories (Quayson and Daswani 12).

In the 1990s, as a new attitude to the state of migrants, a transnational perspective was discussed by migration scholars who argued that several migrants maintained strong ties to their home countries but at the same time became a part of the host country. Significantly, "[t]hey described how migrants and their descendants participate in familial, social, economic, religious, political, and cultural processes that extend across borders while they become part of the places where they settle" (Levitt and Jaworsky 130). Thus, it can be recognised that the term was used to describe the migrants with respect to the diminished importance of national borders and notions that exceed national boundaries. Levitt and Jaworsky state that though this new theory of transnationalism drew much attention, certain scholars were likely to observe transnational migration in each situation which led to certain critique (131). Recently, transnationalism has been employed as a combination of both usages of the term; that is, both the globalisation of economic processes and the weakened importance of borders are included in its definition since "the restructuring of capital globally is seen as linked to the diminished significance of national boundaries in the production and distribution of objects, ideas, and people" (Schiller et al. 49). Therefore, globalisation and migration are two fundamental concepts that initiated the transgression of national borders and a need for a re-definition of the state of some migrants.

A detailed definition of transnationalism can be presented with an emphasis that migrants construct social spaces which transcend geographic, cultural and political borders. In general terms, "[t]ransnationalism describes a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common – however virtual – arena of activity" (Vertovec 447). The content of these certain kinds of relationships, however, cannot be simply manifested as the connections between individuals and goods. To be specific, the "arena of activity" becomes a critical concept foregrounding that transnationalism does not embody only goods or people but

also opinions, identities and technology. Pnina Werbner highlights that transnationalism does not simply produce "flows" of capital and goods, linking dispersed family members and joining activities between "home" and the land of sojourn. Yet, "*transnationalism is above all a social and cultural movement that inscribes itself spatially, morally, and imaginatively in the dispersed places where migrants settle"* (Werbner 2013, 117)(emphasis original). Werbner argues that the term cannot be basically described as the mobility of migrants because it also includes the movement of their cultures, activities, customs, religious beliefs, and their views of hierarchy. The interactions between these activities shape the social spaces formed by transnational migrants. As Werbner states, "[a]s they move transnationally and come to be rooted locally in shared practice and performance, such symbolic complexes are elaborated, hybridized, creolized, revitalized, and redeployed by transnational migrants in their efforts to form circles of trust and in their agonistic vyings for power and distinction" (117). Thereby, transnationalism is identified as the interactions among the complex social and cultural movements of migrants, opinions, norms, identities, and capital.

On the basis of the factors such as migration and globalisation as the main components of transnationalism, one of the critical points that requires a distinction while analysing the term is that the transnational should not be confused with the global. The fact that globalisation has generated an interactive network of cultures and people does not suggest that it is identical to transnationalism. Ulf Hannerz indicates that "I am rather uncomfortable with the rather prodigious use of the term globalization to describe just about any process or relationship that somehow crosses state boundaries" (in Levitt and Khagram 3). He asserts that the transnational is a more convenient term to employ while emphasising trans-border actions that are not necessarily global. In particular, "[w]hereas the global is, in our understanding, defined vis-à-vis a homogenous and dominant set of criteria, the transnational designates spaces and practices acted upon by border-crossing agents, be they dominant or marginal" (Lionnet and Shih 5). Notably, globalisation delineates identical aspects while transnationalism embraces both the local and global appraising ruptured boundaries. Lionnet and Shih add that "[t]he logic of globalization is centripetal and centrifugal at the same time and assumes a universal core or norm, which spreads out across the world while pulling into its vortex other

forms of culture to be tested by its norm" (5). That is why globalisation is linked to the West and to the aim to centralize Western culture and ideology with a focus on the similarities in order to create a single global identity. On the contrary, transnationalism engages in the interaction of minority cultures in the huge global world by highlighting the differences and disrupting an essentialist point of view about identities (5). Lionnet and Shih state that the global and local are closely associated to two types of transnationalism: "transnationalism from above" and "transnationalism from below". "Transnationalism from above" is connected to the utopic side of globalisation supporting capital and global corporations which glorify the disruption of boundaries in order to form a global market, enlarging democracies and human rights. On the other hand, "transnationalism from below" is incidental to a dystopic perspective on globalisation which includes criticism of factors such as "McDonaldization", exploitation of cheap labour, and, thus, the domination of Western capitalism (6). Assessing both forms of transnationalism, it can be observed that the elite and non-elite, and the global and local are constituents of transnational social spaces since "[t]he transnational, therefore, is not bound by binary of the local and the global and can occur in national, local, or global spaces across different and multiple spatialities and temporalities" (6). This allows the conclusion that the global and the local are not contradictory terms, but they are parts of transnational sites that extend frontiers.

The identification of transnational identities exposes a more transparent comprehension of the complexity and difference between the transnational and the global. As a consequence of the global space of continuous travel and mobility, minorities encounter individuals who experience a similar "otherness". In this sense, "[m]any protagonists in contemporary Anglophone literatures even experience that these potential others are not so different from themselves. This does not mean, however, that the politics of transnational identity animates premature postulations of a global kinship, assuming that everybody is on the same plane and that the world is one happy place" (Schultermandl and Toplu 16). It can thus be suggested that a transnational stance celebrates difference while portraying the complex interactions of cultures, identities and ideas in the global world. In other words, "the politics of transnational identity that emerge from these cultural dialogues between self and other

often mirror global power dynamics" (16). Moreover, Friedman and Schultermandl's interpretation of the title of their work, *Growing Up Transnational*, is an excellent illustration of the distinction between the global and the transnational for they state that "[w]e consciously adopt the term *transnational* instead of *global* because we are convinced that the movement of people and cultures contributes to a *Weltbild* (conception of the world) in which borders and boundaries of nation, culture, race, and gender need to be reconceptualised, blurred, challenged, and, potentially, eliminated" (Friedman and Schultermandl 6)(emphasis original). Compendiously, transnationalism underlines the diversity, interaction, and mobility in the contemporary world whereas globalisation refers to a centred and homogenous world.

The definition of transnationalism elicits one of the vital concepts, which is the formation of social spaces as a consequence of cross-border processes and mobility. Referring to transnational spaces, Basch et al. elucidates the idea that "[w]e call these processes [trans-border practices] transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (1994, 8). It is evident that the transnational social spaces constructed as a result of transnational movements are principally formed in relation to the complex social and cultural connections of migrants. One of the most essential points of these social sites is that they are not static and fixed but flexible and fluid, existing parallel to the transnational mobility of ideas, cultures and individuals. In this sense, "[m]ore recent scholarship understands transnational migration as taking place within fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society" (Levitt and Jaworsky 131). Levitt and Jaworsky's comment is illuminative in that these sites are not limited to home and the country the migrants live in, but these fluid spaces exceed home and host country including other areas that link migrants. Moreover, not only migrants but also non-migrants are engaged in these spaces since the flow of goods, capital, human beings, beliefs, norms, and identities are very dense, huge and comprehensive (132). In addition to Levitt and Jaworsky, Levitt and Glick Schiller also discuss the concept of "social fields" to probe into the meanings of transnationalism. By portraying the illusion that social fields are confined by nation-state borders, Levitt and Glick Schiller's assertion provides a realisation that these

spaces do not solely exist within national boundaries. The reason for this illusion is that "[b]ecause much of social science theory equates society with the boundaries of a particular nation-state, researchers often take rootedness and incorporation in the nation-state as the norm and social identities and practices enacted across state boundaries as out of the ordinary" (285). In this context, it is clear that national boundaries are not necessarily parallel to social fields, but they only contain them, for whereas national boundaries include social spaces, their interactions across borders are connected to transnational social sites (286).

Transnational attitude, significantly correlated with the alteration in the perspective of borders and boundaries, has also motivated the transformation of the perception of immigrants and their national or cultural identities. The common thoughts that migrants *either* move to a certain country in order settle and adapt to a life in a new country, *or* that they move to a new state with the objective of finding work and staying there temporarily until a certain economic aim is reached are disrupted. In Linda Hutcheon's words, the fixed principle of "either-or" is challenged in the postmodern world and transmutes into "and also" which represents the language of the decentred world. From a decentred perspective, the marginal, off-centred or the ex-centric takes on a new significance since to be ex-centric is to have a different and shifting perspective. As a result, not fixed individuals but contextualized identities appear; alternatively stated, there is no single otherness and there are no fixed binary oppositions (61-62). In this fashion, the migrant's position has changed from "either-or" into "and also" as "it has become increasingly obvious that our present conceptions of 'immigrant' and 'migrant,' anchored in the circumstances of earlier historic moments, no longer suffice. Today, immigrants develop networks, activities, patterns of living, and ideologies that span their home and the host society" (Basch et al. 1994, 4). Linda Basch, in her study of immigrants with a Caribbean background living in New York and Trinidad, observes that they fit neither in the concept of immigrant nor in the position of the family left behind in the Caribbean. The research team detected that these migrants could not be described as "immigrants" or as the ones that are "remaining behind" since they did not belong solely to their homeland or to their host country. Their experiences and lives were not sharply segmented between host and home societies, "[r]ather, the

migrants in the study sample moved so frequently and were seemingly so at home in either New York or Trinidad as well as their societies of origin, that it at times became difficult to identify where they 'belonged'" (Basch et al. 1994, 5). The team discovered that the limited scientific theories could not be employed to describe the migrants' simultaneous engagement with multiple nation-states as their political and social practices extend outside of national boundaries. Therefore, "[t]hese researchers began to use the terms 'transnationalism' and 'transnational social field' to describe this interconnected social experience" (Basch et al. 1994, 6). Briefly, transnational social fields involve migrants that are not confined within the static definitions of the "other" because they reflect the existence of contextualised identities regarding postmodern sensibility.

Transnational social fields include transnational identities that are positioned in multiple national contexts. As Schiller et al. discuss "[t]ransmigrants[6] are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state" (48). They are not guests in the country they live in as they partake in the political and economic structure in that country; on the other hand, they also continue to have connections to their country of emigration (48). Thus, they construct and reconstruct their national or cultural identities in multiple national contexts and positions. Evaluating the fluidity of transnational identities, Schultermandl and Toplu state that "[i]n this era of increasing global mobility, the nation-state can no longer serve as primary means of identification of selfhood. Identities are too complex to be captured by concepts that rely on national borders for reference. Instead, they spill out over the boundaries and rims of nation-states, thus exposing the very limits that these borders conjure" (11). Schultermandl and Toplu add that "[s]uch identities are not unified or stable, but are fluid entities which constantly push at the boundaries of the nation-state, thereby re-defining themselves and the nation-state simultaneously" (11). Since they belong to more than one nation, fluid identities of the migrants or of their descendants

[6] Basch et al., referring to transnational identities as transmigrants, assert that immigrants who maintain social, cultural, economic, or political relationships that transcend borders are defined as "transmigrants" (1994, 8).

are foregrounded, which reveals that their transnational identities are produced and re-produced through the involvement in more than one nation simultaneously.

Simultaneity is one of the key concepts of transnational identity that needs to be explicated specifically. Steven Vertovec remarks that the consciousness of belonging to more than one nation is related to the belief of multiple identifications. This consciousness of decentred connections can be clarified as the sense of feeling concurrently at home and not (450). Vertovec reinforces the idea that "[t]he awareness of multi-locality stimulates the desire to connect oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there' who share the same 'routes' and 'roots'" (450). Transnational identities live their lives, form their norms and beliefs in relation to both the society of origin and the country of settlement. Therefore, their experiences cannot be defined as contradictory but should be defined as simultaneous practices. Their connections to the country of sojourn, to their homeland or to certain family members in other nations can exist simultaneously. Remarkably, these connections can strengthen each other or, on the contrary, deteriorate one another, reflecting that they do not have any linear feature. In this regard, these "[p]ersons change and swing one way or the other depending on the context, thus moving our expectation away from either full assimilation or transnational connection but some combination of both" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 288). Levitt and Glick Schiller illustrate this point clearly by associating transnational experience with a gauge that while fixed rotates between the homeland and land of settlement. The motion of this gauge is not linear or chronological since it changes direction in the course of time, and moves back and forth. The middle point of the gauge does not represent a complete integration, but it portrays a simultaneous connection to both nations (288). Furthermore, this non-linearity of the experiences of transnational identities can be discussed within the rhizomatic aspect of the postmodern thought. Bran Nicol's

discussion concerning the rhizomatic feature of postmodern texts[7] lends support to the argument that transnational identities do not have any center or any periphery like postmodern texts, and every part can be connected to each other as they exist in multiple spaces simultaneously.

Evaluating the sense of simultaneity, Pnina Werbner explains that it is closely connected to global media and communication. Werbner asserts that migrants lacked simultaneity in the past since telephone costs were expensive or it was impossible to own a mobile phone; therefore, letter-writing and cassette tapes were the only means of communication, but sending and receiving them could last for many weeks. Accurately, "[t]hey thus lacked the 'simultaneity' posited by the transnationalists, while having other intrinsic advantages: the letters, the authors tell us, were carefully crafted and could be carried around, read and re-read, while cassettes reproduced the voices of absent loved ones and in this sense were emotionally moving" (Werbner 2013, 115). It can be argued that, by reading or listening to the stories of the ones who stayed back, the migrants in the past experienced simultaneity not physically but metaphorically by feeling both at home and not. In the present world, the technological developments and improvements in communication make it easier and cheaper to travel and communicate. Flow of cultural phenomena and transformation of identity are closely related to the aforementioned improvements which can be listed as the use of phones, global media, Skype, WhatsApp and other forms of social media. Werbner illustrates the results of easier connection to homeland by representing working Philippine mothers in the United Kingdom, who try to maintain their ties with their children in the Philippines. Even though these mothers possess the technology to talk to and supervise their children, rupture can be observed in their relationship (2013, 115). Werbner highlights

[7] Bran Nicol discusses that postmodern narratives are shaped according to the metaphor of the rhizome. Firstly, he explains his argument by referring to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's statement that this metaphor is used to provide an image of "the relation of things to other things in philosophy, language, the arts, and social sciences" (47). Thus, "[u]nlike the roots of a tree 'which plots a point, fixes and order' the value of the rhizome is that 'any point … can be connected to anything other, and must be" (in Nicol 47). While Deleuze and Guattari argue that language is rhizomatic, Nicol suggests that postmodern texts should also be interpreted regarding the metaphor of the rhizome since these texts "generate a whole string of meanings which are only connected by the fact that they are triggered by the same element of the text" (48). Accordingly, postmodern texts do not have a center, beginning or end like rhizomatic maze, therefore the reader is "more of a traveller in space, ready to encounter different, co-existent, worlds" (49).

that the use of Skype "allows them to cling to the *illusion of simultaneity,* of being intimately close to their children; they often Skype them daily and even leave Skype on continuously so events in the Philippine household can be viewed all day long" (2013, 115) (emphasis original). The thought of "the illusion of simultaneity" portrays that their connection exceeding borders does not provide a total sense of belonging, which can never be reached. As Appadurai and Breckenridge underline, "[c]omplex transnational flows of media images and messages perhaps create the greatest disjunctures for diasporic populations, since in the electronic media in particular, the politics of desire and imagination are always in contest with the politics of heritage and nostalgia" (in Vertovec 451). However, "the *illusion of simultaneity* remains a powerful experiential force, especially within transnational families, defining migrants' sense of self and subjectivity, and more so in the age of easy Skype and mobile phone connectivity" (Werbner 2013, 108) (emphasis original). Concisely, while this illusion conceals the gap between their home and host country, it also facilitates the identification process of transnational identities.

Furthermore, it is significant to specify the sense of belonging and identity problems transnational identities experience. Although transmigrants belong to multiple nations, they can experience identity conflicts since, as a result of their fluid identities, they may lack a sense of belonging. As they are both the "self" and the "other" in either their homeland or the land of settlement they exhibit simultaneity. Werbner reiterates that even though the relationship of the transmigrant to the homeland and host country is strong, and occurs frequently, the physical or metaphorical distance between these spaces increase in time and cannot be smoothly fused (2013, 107). This experience of a complex sense of belonging to more than one "home" or country is narrated in novels written by transnational authors, and about transnational identities. Schultermandl and Toplu demonstrate that transnational characters often physically and metaphorically go on journeys in order to reach a sense of belonging. Consequently, "[t]hese protagonists learn, often at crucial moments in their character development, that only by embracing a fluid sense of self can they reach a sense of belonging amidst this hyper-mobility" (13). Thus, these characters can achieve to retain the balance between their indigenous

culture and the culture of the country they live by accepting their fluid identities. Schultermandl and Toplu also foreground that

> [t]his fluid sense of self repudiates all notions of unified identity. What it proposes instead is a way of reading identity as a political performance in everyday social interactions. These social interactions include cultural encounters that cannot be defined by the nation-state but are testimony to the velocity with which culture travels. (13)

Drawing upon the idea of Louis Althusser that ideology hails concrete individuals into subjects, and forms their identities[8], it can be discussed that transnational identities are interpellated by multiple national or cultural ideologies, which results in the fact that they are positioned in numerous national, cultural or social contexts.

The shifting nature of transnational identities reflects that their sense of belonging cannot be categorised into certain types. The reason for this is that individuals who hold a transnational self may feel fully at home nowhere, feel at home more in either homeland or hostland, he/she may totally lack a sense of belonging, or he/she may experience all of the aforementioned points. Schultermandl and Toplu state that "[f]rom a transnational perspective, a perspective that defines borders as permeable and flexible, the significance of cultural identity as a political practice raises a number of relevant questions about viable modes of self-representation" (13). Specifying various forms of the identification transnational identities encounter, Levitt and Glick Schiller divide belonging into two categories entitled as "ways of being" and "ways of

[8] In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser points out that ideology hails individuals as subjects. Althusser's theory is based on the idea that ideology distorts reality by creating a false consciousness –misrecognition- or an illusion that we are free subjects. Ideology has material existence since it controls subjects through ISAs, which interpellate subjects into concrete subjects. This means that individuals do not have self-produced identities but that their identities are formed by ideology. In other words, ideologies interpellate individuals and offer them a certain identity which they have to accept. Furthermore, Althusser explains that the Absolute Subject placed in the center interpellates individuals into subjects. In this sense, there is a mirror-structure since there is a mutual recognition between the subjects and the Subject. Consequently, "the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject*" (37) (emphasis original). Although the subject thinks that he/she acts freely, he/she is not aware of the fact that he/she acts according to the ideological system. Althusser concludes that there is a "misrecognition" because the subject has never been free, but he/she has always been interpellated by ideology (31-38).

belonging". They interpret ways of being as the actual social connections and activities these identities experience in daily practices which they have to carry out. Therefore, while being engaged in certain social fields concerning the ways of being, they do not necessarily identify with that social space. On the other hand, ways of belonging include social activities individuals consciously participate in; namely, they identify with the social sites which are a part of their ways of belonging (287). Levitt and Glick Schiller scrutinise that diverse combinations of ways of being and ways of belonging can be observed in transnational identities:

> If individuals engage in social relations and practices that cross borders as a regular feature of everyday life, then they exhibit a transnational way of being. When people explicitly recognize this and highlight the transnational elements of who they are, then they are also expressing a transnational way of belonging. (287)

More precisely, a person who frequently communicates with the members of the family in his/her homeland may not identify with his/her country of origin or a person may be carrying out the cultural or religious activities of his/her country of origin, but may not identify with these rituals. This means that they are not representing a transnational way of belonging. On the contrary, people may have almost no connection with their homeland but still identify with it through memory, nostalgia or imagination (287). Thus, the practices and networks transnational identities construct as a result of continuous travel or mobility, involve fluid identities who cannot be classified and who are not always what they appear to be.

Living a transnational existence should not be perceived as parallel to hyphenised definitions of migrant identities. Hyphenation as a concept to denominate migrant identities emerged in the 1970s in the United States (Schultermandl 31). Referring to the limited capacity of the hyphen to define transnational identities, Schultermandl illustrates Eleanor Ty's theory that

> [w]hile the entrance of the hyphen as a new category into the American cultural imaginary of ethnicity (African-American, Asian-American, Anglo-American) created a new awareness of the ethnic diversity in the United states, the categories

> themselves suggest somewhat easy alliances between the concepts on either side of the hyphen. (31)

The main reason of this is that the ethnic definitions on both sides of the hyphen cannot completely embrace the identity of a transnational character. In order to represent the problem of hyphenation, Schultermandl provides a comprehensive analysis of the statements of Lisa Suhair Majaj, a Palestinian American author. Majaj, who is identified as Arab-American or Palestinian-American, states that "I am never *just* an American, any more that I am *just* a Palestinian. Yet I am not therefore any *less* of an American, or *less* of a Palestinian" (in Schultermandl 32) (emphasis original). Schultermandl deciphers Majaj's identity negotiation by expressing that "she is constantly in multiple states, states, that can in fact not be separated from each other" (32). In a similar vein, Majaj cannot separate her Palestinian and American identities since she belongs to both nations concomitantly. Evidently, she can be regarded as a typical demonstration of the identity problems transnational identities exemplify.

The identity concept beyond hyphenation also precipitates the involvement of migrants in nation-creating process of both nation-states. Correspondingly, "[t]his is a moment in which large numbers of people, no longer rooted in a single place, go to great lengths to revitalize, reconstruct, or reinvent not only their traditions but their political claims to territory and histories from which they have been displaced" (Schiller et al. 52). Clearly, emigrants are perceived as a part of their homeland even though they live in the country of settlement (52). Schiller et al. illustrate this point obviously by referring to the case of Greek people born in the United States, who were once described as "American ethnic", but at present define themselves affiliated to Greece. Both the Greek government and the Greek living abroad embrace the term "Greeks abroad", generating the emergence of a new transnational space for the Greeks who define themselves in relation to Greece and to the nation-state they are living in. Thus, "the unifying force of the Hellenic diaspora is no longer a place, the nation-state of Greece, but the imagined transcendental territory of Greekness which groups of individuals may appropriate to suit their own needs and interests" (53). The manifestations of both Schultermandl's study of a transnational author and the shifting identity of Greekness underline the necessity of a concept of identity that fractures

boundaries. At a simpler level, “the individual life narratives of people who live on and across national borders underscore the need for a conceptualization of identity beyond hyphenation and by, extension, beyond national borders” (Friedman and Schultermandl 13-14). National and ethnic categories that are taken for granted are distorted and disrupted within the transnational existence.

The fluidity of transnational identities is clearly addressed in Stuart Hall’s analysis who differentiates cultural identity as an embracing term from cultural identity that is in flux. The identity problem transnational individuals experience are mainly the result of the definition of the “self” or “other” in essential terms, a desire to construct an authentic self, and the lack of existence in the main discourse. In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, Stuart Hall’s notion of cultural identity highlights the focal aspects of diasporic identities. Hall’s main point is that cultural identity includes two meanings. The first one is cultural identity that is the collective identity of a certain nation, community or ethnic group. Hall remarks that “[w]ithin the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history” (2003, 234). Evidently, cultural identity as a collective identity is or should be stable to form a certain ethnic or racial group of people to express themselves. This form of cultural identity plays a crucial role in the negritude movement for Hall (2003, 234). In the second definition of cultural identity, “difference” is emphasized since “as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather - since history has intervened – ‘what we have become’ [..] Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’” (2003, 236). Notably, cultural identity in the second definition is unstable, incomplete and always in flux. It should be noted that this second definition of cultural identities which are always in transformation should be considered while analysing transnational identities. He emphasizes that only from the second meaning of cultural identity can the colonial experience be discerned. The colonisers not only had the power to construct the other in Edward Said’s terms, but also, “had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as ‘Other’” in Frantz

Fanon's view (2003, 236). Hall explains in "Who Needs 'Identity'?", there is always a lack and never a totality in the process of identification which reveals that the concept of identity does not have a stable centre since identities are fragmented, and are always in the process of change. He defines cultural identities as "the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning" (2003, 237). On these grounds, cultural identities are not essential but positional and defined by a sense of "difference"[9]. Quintessentially, transnational identities are constantly positioned and repositioned in different national and cultural spaces, which imply the idea that identities are deferred and differed repetitively.

[9] Stuart Hall refers to Jacques Derrida's "différance" in this part. "Différance" introduces the idea of a conceptual process, which means that each concept is a part of the chain which refers to other concepts. Therefore, meaning can never be fully present in one sign. Derrida claims that "différance" is the displacement and deferral of signification. Thus, there are no absolute total signs according to Derrida. Correspondingly, there are no total, fixed identities since, like signs, identities define themselves through what they are not. Thereby, identities cannot be present exactly because they are deferred and differed in terms of time and space (Derrida 87-93).

CHAPTER 2

HUMOUR

2.1. Humour and Laughter

As defined in *The English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, humour etymologically originates via Old French from the Latin word "humere" which means humid. Originally, in the Middle Ages, the term was employed to define the four bodily fluids – blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile – which were believed to affect the physical and mental qualities of a person. This usage affected its definition as "mood" or "whim" in the early sixteenth century. Eventually, in the late sixteenth century, humour was used to describe amusement. *The English Oxford Living Dictionaries* define humour as "[t]he quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech" which emphasises the aim to amuse. Also, humour is defined as a "mood or state of mind" referring to the indulgence of a person's whim ("Humour"). Humour, in the sense of being amusing, is usually confused or equated with being optimistic, happy and hilarious, or with laughter. In order to explore and analyse humour regarding its primary definition as amusing, first a distinction should be made between humour and the above mentioned concepts.

Humour and being hilarious are two terms that are primarily perceived as identical concepts. Victor Raskin, editor of *Humor: The International Journal of Humor Research*, underlines the need for a distinction between the two terms by stating in the first issue of the journal that "[o]ne thing this journal should not be expected to be is funny. To quote a friend, a journal on schizophrenia or a journal on aggressive behavior does not typically publish schizophrenic or abusive prose. Neither should *we* be expected to be funny" (in Lippitt 11-12)(emphasis original). While Raskin underlines the seriousness of studying humour, John Morreall highlights that humour itself also includes negativity and pessimism. Drawing a distinction between humour and optimism, Morreall states that "[a]fter eighteen years of research into humor, I am convinced that there's nothing essentially optimistic about it. Personally, I am critical of most of our society's institutions, and am pessimistic about most of our problems. I still

laugh a lot. In fact, my sharp eye for stupidity, irrationality, hypocrisy, tackiness, folly, and other human shortcomings is a big part of my sense of humor" (1997, 31). His analysis of humour regarding the incongruity theory, which will be discussed in the forthcoming section, reflects the idea that the moment incongruity is perceived the pessimistic side of humour can be comprehended. Morreall argues that amusement is felt not as the result of happiness but as the consequence of the contrast between what is assumed and experienced. In fact, he asserts that this incongruity generally depends on the negative sides of the events such as disappointment, rudeness, blunders, and corruption. This implies that "[o]n television programs featuring funny home videos, for example, the scenes are typically of someone falling down, crashing a bicycle, or sneakily taking the last piece of cake. Comic characters, as Aristotle noted, are worse than average. For all the enjoyment that humor brings, humor is typically not about enjoyment, but *about* problems" (Morreall 2009, 51)(emphasis original). Evidently, humour cannot be interchangeably used with optimism, happiness or joyfulness.

Satire clearly demonstrates the role of humour in problematic issues as it represents the misdeeds of subjects or institutions through ridicule. Regarding the aspect of ridicule, humour is in varying degrees integrated in satire to emphasise social and political corruptions. Berger marks that "satire is the deliberate use of the comic for purposes of attack" (157). He explicates that humorous attacks in satires reveal the agenda of the authors. Therefore, "in satire, the aggressive intent becomes the central motif of comic expression. All elements of the comic are then, as it were, welded together into the shaping of a weapon. Most often the attack is directed against institutions and their representatives" (Berger 157). Furthermore, satire playfully distorts the familiar through exaggeration, humour and irony; therefore, "the basic technique of satire is distortion ... and distortion implies disorder. A popular satiric method of achieving distortion is incongruity, which also results in disorder" (in Barshay 58). Consequently, satire highlights the absurdities of certain norms and practices. Kane et al. suggest that the laughter of the audience at the absurdities presented by satire indicates that the audience accepts and agrees with the satirist (15). Satire not only points out the absurd mannerisms and corruptions in society, but also occasionally aims to cure these misdeeds. As Zekavat states, "satire has frequently had

(or claimed to have) a diagnostic ability to identify social, political, and moral ills and has compelled people to cure them" (2). All in all, referring to Morreall's aforementioned idea that humour is about problems, satire is a useful tool to portray social and political issues, which as a result suggests that humour should not be confused with optimism and joy.

In addition to the confusion between humour and cheerfulness, there is also a degree of uncertainty around the terminology between humour and laughter since humour and laughter are perceived as synonyms by some critics whereas these terms are totally different according to other theorists and researchers. As it is aforementioned, only in the late sixteenth century humour was used to define amusement; however, Morreall states that the term did not mean "funniness" until the late seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century amusement, funniness, and comic were employed to define humorous (2009, 28). He states that "[b]efore humorous amusement was distinguished from laughter, philosophers usually identified laughter with particular emotions – malice for Plato, [and] self-glory for Hobbes" (2009, 28). Furthermore, Michael Billig explains that the perception of laughter in the eighteenth century should be analysed firstly in order to understand the relationship between humour and laughter. He reveals that laughter and language were recognised as notions that are remarkably remote from each other in the eighteenth century, for theorists differentiated between the natural and the artificial. Laughter was observed as a natural sign, and language was regarded as an artificial sign. Later in the nineteenth century, laughter was perceived as the biological response to the inner emotions which are evoked by humour (176). Remarkably, most of the discussions concerning humour are founded on laughter throughout history, so it is inevitable to employ certain theories on laughter while analysing humour.

Although laughter is used as a synonym for humour in most theories in the course of history, recent studies underline the necessity to distinguish the two terms with the objective of avoiding misinterpretations. Chapman and Foot argue that though used in the same context, humour and laughter have different meanings. Laughter is employed to define a human feature that responses to stimuli; however, "[o]ne obvious problem that bedevils definitions of humour is whether it is to be viewed as a stimulus,

a response or a disposition" (3). They state that *The Penguin English Dictionary* represents three different aspects of humour. Humour is defined as stimuli as it generates "good-tempered laughter", it is identified as a response since humour is "cheerful and good-tempered amusement", or it is considered a disposition regarding that humour is "the capacity for seeing the funny side of things" (3). Consequently, some critics use laughter and humour interchangeably while others make a distinction between the two terms. In "Humour and Emotion", Morreall asserts that the difficulty in dividing laughter and humour is that laughter is a physical reaction to both humorous and nonhumorous incidents such as embarrassment, tickling or happiness (1983b, 297). Thus, laughter is not only created by humour but also by other physical stimuli. In addition, the outcome of humour is not always laughter; in other words, laughter and humour are not the only cause or result of each other which demonstrates that "[d]efining humour simply as 'what makes us laugh' is sloppy and confusing" (Morreall 1997, 24). Similarly, Billig conveys that humour may excite joyful laughter or, on the contrary, it might create fury and no laughter at all, depending on the features of the audience. In addition, humour may result in the laughter of few people and the outrage of many at the same time (179). This idea suggests that laughter may be one of the reactions to humour, yet other physical or mental incidents which do not contain humour may also be the cause of laughter. Laughter is only a physical reaction to certain stimuli whereas humour is produced in a specific cultural environment. Billig clarifies the relationship between culture and humour by pointing out that animals do not laugh and human beings do. He asserts, however, that having the ability to laugh does not suggest that it is parallel to a sense of humour (180). Billig conveys that human beings have inherited the universal noises of laughter, but this does not signify that humour is inherited, too. To illustrate, he compares the instinct to eat to laughter and the rituals related to eating to humour; thus, while the desire for food is a natural instinct like laughter, the creation of specific customs to eat that food is a cultural element like humour (181). It can be concluded that when a distinction is made between humorous laughter caused by amusement and non-humorous laughter generated by other factors, the confusion between the two terms will be eliminated.

Within the context of culture, Billig emphasises that humour is not a simple but a contradictory notion. It contains specific paradoxes and "[t]hese are not paradoxes to be resolved, for they express the complex, indeed contrary, demands that social life makes upon individual" (185). One of the contradictions, for instance, is that humour is universal but particular at the same time. It can be detected in each culture, yet the sense of humour differs for each society or individual, for "[t]here does not exist a particular joke, scene or anecdote that will universally amuse all members of the laughing animal species. Any attempt to find the objectively laughable – the holy grail of comedy that will guarantee to unleash the biological mechanism of laughter – will be doomed to failure" (186). Billig argues that another paradox which can be observed in humour is that it transforms and evolves through time. This idea can be exemplified by laughter observed in Charlie Chaplin's films. In the past, laughter was loud and regular during the demonstration of these films. People from different ages, cultures, and social classes were amused during the screenings since the topics Chaplin treated were universal. Three generations later, however, the audience may not laugh as loudly as the old generations (186). As Chaplin expressed towards the end of his life, "[t]here's not the same humility now ... so it has become something of an antique ... it belongs to another era" (in Billig 186). This allows the conclusion that humour is an unstable, changing, and contradictory phenomenon which is practiced through cultural tools such as language, literature, and visual media.

2.2. Theories of Humour

The superiority theory, the incongruity theory, and the relief theory are the basic humour theories. On the other hand, there are several humour types such as irony, sarcasm, satire, parody, pun, and many others. The distinction between the theories and types of humour is a significant point in understanding the idea that the theories examine and attempt to explain the perception of humour while the types are the tools of humour. In order to comprehend diverse perspectives on humour and to employ humour as an analytical tool, its theories should be discussed specifically. With regard to the theories of humour, it should be noted that each defines humour from a different perspective. The superiority and relief theories focus on the workings of the reactions to

humorous incidents; thus, they concentrate on the relational and emotional elements. The incongruity theory emphasises the conceptual aspects of humour by analysing the structure of humorous situations. Briefly, "[w]e might say that the incongruity theory focuses on the cognitive aspects, superiority the emotive, and relief the physical of comic amusement" (Lintott 347). In other words, the incongruity theory studies the mental process or certain ideas that result in humour, the superiority theory concentrates on emotions that trigger humour, and the relief theory studies the psychological structures that evoke humour. Significantly, explaining humour with reference to only one theory is not sufficient since comprehending a humorous situation needs more than one perspective. Theories of most critics are challenged by other critics as each critic believes that there is a lack of a certain point in each other's theories. On these grounds, it can be stated that not a single humour theory but the combination of several humour theories defines the sense and cause of humour.

2.2.1. The Superiority Theory

The superiority theory is the oldest humour theory suggesting that laughter is initiated by the feeling of superiority over someone or something. The superiority theory explains the nature of humour instead of defining humour itself. Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Hobbes, who are the precursors of this theory, employ the term laughter instead of humour as a result of the aforementioned fact that humour, as a term, has only been used after the late sixteenth century. When observed from a historical perspective, humour and laughter have been perceived as corrupt, as Chapman and Foot state "humour has often been characterized as base and degenerate, fit only for the ignorant and foolish" (2). In this sense, Plato relates laughter to lack of self-knowledge, and Aristotle and Hobbes to the existence of the instinct to feel superior. Although Thomas Hobbes's ideas form the principles of this theory, Plato and Aristotle's thoughts require inquiry in order to clarify the origins of the relationship between laughter and superiority.

Plato asserts, in the *Republic,* that laughter is founded on the lack of self-knowledge. He reveals that protectors of the state ought to avoid laughter as it disrupts logical control over one's self by stating that "[n]or again should [the guardians of the

state] be fond of laughter. For when someone gives way to violent laughter, it provokes a violent reaction" (Plato 74, 388e). This violent reaction implies the loss of self-control, for it creates certain hatred towards the other person we laugh at and it also directs one to fierceness. Plato argues that "it is unacceptable to portray men who are worth anything, much less a god, as overpowered by laughter" and argues that "we won't accept such things as this from Homer about gods: Unquenchable laughter arose among the blessed gods" (74). Furthermore, in *Philebus*, Plato narrates "laughter as a typical example of 'mixed feelings,' i.e., experiences of simultaneous pleasure and pain" (in Heyd 288). He demonstrates that while laughter is pleasant, regarding that the comic object is perceived as something inferior, it is connected to envy, which is distressing (in Heyd 288). Concisely, in Plato's views, laughter is completely attached to negative connotations as one seems less dignified and loses self-control as a consequence of laughter.

Highlighting the impact of the "ridiculous", Aristotle discusses laughter with reference to distortion, mistakes, and inferiority. He denotes in *Poetics* that "[c]omedy, as we said, is an imitation of people of a lower sort, though not in respect to every vice; rather, what is ridiculous is part of what is ugly" (25, 1449b). Thus, the laughable is lower than the ordinary, yet, only in the sense of its ridiculousness. Aristotle defines the ridiculous as "certain sort of missing mark and a deformity that is painless and not destructive" (25, 1449b). With the objective of clarifying the term, he points out that the mask, for instance, is an ugly and deformed thing that does not create pain but laughter. In *Rhetoric*, he explicates that the ludicrous and the comic are connected which is a different relation from that of the ridiculous and laughter. The distinction between the terms "ridiculous" and "ludicrous" is a critical point which needs clarification. As it is defined in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "[t]hings *ludicrous* and things *ridiculous* have this in common, that both excite laughter; but the former excite pure laughter, the latter excite laughter mixed with disapprobation or contempt" ("Laughter", 122)(emphasis original). That is, the ludicrous produces amusement and is the cause of amusing laughter, but the ridiculous invites ridicule or mocking laughter. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle refers to the ludicrous by stating that "since sport and all relaxation are among pleasant things, it follows that causes of laughter must be pleasant, whether people, or words, or

deeds" (50, 1371b29-1372a). Thus, while the ludicrous refers to pure amusement in a positive sense, the ridiculous refers to contempt and mockery. Regarding both kinds of laughter in the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle criticises that an excess of them gives a person a non-serious attitude about significant things which could be harmful to one's character (in Morreall 1983a, 7). It is evident that both Plato and Aristotle associate laughter with the feeling of superiority; however, while Plato views laughter as an action that destroys one's character, Aristotle assumes that it is a form of contempt which becomes destructive when in excess only.

Thomas Hobbes's thoughts on humour are significant in terms of understanding the superiority theory since his approach forms the classical and essential assumptions of the concept. Heyd maintains that Hobbes is influenced by Aristotle as both claim that the object of laughter is inferior and the subject superior; however, "while Aristotle as an aesthetician is interested only in the analysis of the laughter-raising object (the comic), Hobbes as a psychologist is concerned only with the laughing subject and with the function of laughter in human behavior" (288). In *Human Nature* (1650) and *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes draws attention to laughter very briefly as he defines it in relation to his general theories about human beings. His ideas on humour are based upon his general views that human beings are egocentric and compete always for power as a result of their desire for self-protection. In *Human Nature*, Hobbes argues that "the passion of laughter is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmities of others, or with our own formerly" (1650, 55). The feeling of a sudden superiority over others or one's self is what generates laughter. Similarly, in *Leviathan,* he declares that "[s]udden glory is the passion which maketh those grimaces called laughter; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves" (1651, 44). Contending that laughter is the result of the recognition of certain infirmities of others' or one's self, Hobbes claims that laughter is the representation of the wish for power which supports his general thought that human beings strive always for power. He expresses that laughter can be harmful as it is the result of perceiving others as inferior "[a]nd therefore much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of pusillanimity. For of

great minds one of the proper works is to help and free others from scorn, and compare themselves only with the most able" (1651, 27).

Hobbes's ideas of laughter are based on his general theory of emotion in which he discusses that human beings have two types of motions: the vital and the animal. The vital motion controls the organs, and the animal motions are the movements through which human beings can control themselves; in other words, animal motion is the expression of passions (Hobbes 1650, 36). In this fashion, laughter itself is not an emotion but a motion since it is the physical expression of a passion or emotion named "glory" – the way one observes others and himself. Heyd states that "laughter is not considered by Hobbes an instinctual, irrational, or 'demonic' impulse, but rather a voluntary motion" (290). Since laughter is produced by "glory" as a result of voluntary motion in human beings, Hobbes suggests that the comic is in the laughing subject and not the object since "[t]here are no inherent properties which make the object laughable in itself" (in Heyd 294). Therefore, Hobbes deviates from Aristotle's idea of the superiority theory as Hobbes does not attribute certain characteristics to the thing or person laughed at. Instead, the person who is laughing is the origin of humour since laughter is a voluntary motion. Specifying his discussion, Hobbes claims that wit is not necessarily needed for the creation of comic amusement since "*[l]aughter*, which is always *Joy:* but what joy, what we think, and wherein we triumph when we laugh, is not hitherto declared by any. That it consisteth in *Wit*, or, as they call it, in the *Jest*, Experience *confuteth*: for Men laugh at Mischances and Indecencies, wherein there lieth no Wit nor jest at all" (1650, 54)(emphasis original). Whereas wit is a dispensable element in triggering laughter, the sense of superiority is one of the fundamental factors, for human beings compare themselves to others and, as a result, laugh at the faults of them (1650, 54). He underlines that superiority does not excite laughter by itself, for a situation must contain something unordinary and unpredicted in order to create laughter. As Hobbes states, "forasmuch as the same Thing is no more ridiculous when it groweth stale or usual, whatsoever it be that moveth Laughter, it must be *new* and *unexpected"* (1650, 54)(emphasis original). In brief, Hobbes enunciates that although laughter is created by the feeling of superiority over others, resulting from the desire for power; the element of unpredictability plays an essential role in evoking humour.

On the other hand, Hobbes's ideas were extensively criticised by certain critics such as Francis Hutcheson in the eighteenth century. Hutcheson's objection to Hobbes's assumptions caused the superiority theory to decrease its impact. Hutcheson states that "[i]f Mr. Hobbes's notion be just, then, first there can be no Laughter on any occasion where we make no comparison of ourselves to others, or of our present state to a worse state, or where we do not observe superiority of ourselves above some other thing" (7). Hutcheson illustrates his view that the feeling of superiority is not a necessity in creation of comic amusement by describing that "some ingenuity in dogs and monkeys, which comes near to some of our own arts, very often makes us merry; whereas their duller actions in which they are much below us, are no matter of jest at all" (11). Thus, the sense of superiority in relation to animals does not trigger laughter in each circumstance. In fact, when a person feels superior as a result of pity towards someone, that person is "in greater danger of weeping than laughing" (11). On the other hand, from a contemporary perspective, Sheila Lintott interprets that Hobbes does not state superiority evokes laughter at all times, and adds that "according to the most common interpretation of Hobbes on laughter, he holds a strong essentialist version of the superiority theory according to which feeling superior is always necessary and sufficient for laughter" (353). However, she also underpins that "Hobbes is committed to the claim that superiority *can* cause laughter and the joy it is often an expression of, but *not* that it is always (or the only thing) involved in said joy" (355)(emphasis original). Lintott scrutinises her thoughts by regarding the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes, and asserts that "not one of the three can be said to hold or defend a superiority theory of laughter if such a theory is taken to claim that superiority is either necessary or sufficient for laughter, let alone if it is taken to claim that superiority is both necessary and sufficient for laughter" (349). Lintott argues that all the three philosophers claim that the aspect of superiority exists in humour, yet it is it not a necessary factor in the production of humour.

Evaluating the superiority theory, John Morreall articulates that the insulting aspect of laughter and the existence of superiority in some situations cannot be denied, yet not all laughter is related to these factors. Regarding the notion that laughter is a result of inferiorities of others, Morreall accepts that people have always laughed at

deformities, and sufferings of others such as the Romans who enjoyed watching Christians torn by lions or the people of the Middle Ages who took pleasure from torturing criminals (1983a, 8). This feeling of superiority and its relation to cruel laughter can be detected in each culture as Morreall expresses it through an anecdote: "Some of our fellows who were out in Africa . . . during the war tell of how the Negroes went down to a stream for something and came back roaring with laughter. What was the joke? Why, a crocodile had suddenly popped out of the water and snatched one of their fellows off" (1983a, 9). Morreall substantiates that there is no feeling of superiority needed to create laughter such as in non-humorous incidents as tickling or seeing someone loved. Also, the sense of superiority is not necessary, in some humorous incidents such as in puns, excessive alliterations, or absurd situations. Morreall reveals that "[s]omeone for a joke once put a bowling ball in my refrigerator while I was not home. When I next went to the refrigerator and opened the door I broke out laughing. But not *at* anyone, and not out of any feeling of superiority—I was simply amused by the sight of this object in a completely inappropriate place" (1983a, 11). This suggests that it is inaccurate to reject the Hobbesian theory of laughter; therefore, it is logical to claim that not every laughter can be explained by superiority and "sudden glory" as its core (1983a, 10). Concordantly, he asserts that incongruity is the key factor in the production of humour, which will be explored in the next part of this study in detail. Demonstrating that not superiority but inconsistency in certain situations creates comic amusement, Morreall conveys, "[i]f I am watching a movie in which a character falls into a swimming pool fully clothed, for example, then I may laugh simply in enjoyment of the incongruity of this event. But if I dislike my neighbor for the way he flaunts his wealth, and I see him fall into his pool in his new $500 suit, I may laugh harder, enjoying both the incongruity and his suffering" (1983b, 298). Thus, the incongruity of his misery and his wealth triggers laughter instead of the thought that the rich neighbour suffers.

In conclusion, although the critics of this theory agree that humour is evoked by superiority, their views differ in certain aspects. Plato relates laughter to malice and contends that laughter is the result of the loss of self-control which creates envy since the comic object is perceived as inferior. Aristotle asserts that laughter is the

consequence of contempt and mockery caused by the ridiculous. Both Plato and Aristotle assert that laughter, especially excessive laughter, is parallel to corruption, immorality, and absurdity. Nevertheless, while Plato claims that inferiority of others evokes humour, Aristotle specifies that humour is generated by the deformities in others. Like Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes argues that much laughter leads to harm as it strengthens the recognition of infirmities in others. Different from Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes suggests that the comic does not exist in the laughable object but in the laughing subject, which reflects that Hobbes focuses on the laughing person and human instincts. He claims that the feeling of unexpected sudden superiority is what excites laughter, for this feeling is closely connected to the instinct for power and self-protection. Finally, contemporary critics such as John Morreall point out that a sense of superiority is not necessarily detected in each humorous incident, and he also remarks that incongruity is the crucial element in the creation of humour. On this basis, it can be concluded that instead of analysing each humorous situation by only referring to the superiority theory, the combination of several approaches may be more effective for a more accurate explanation.

2.2.2. The Incongruity Theory

The incongruity theory, flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is fundamentally based on the discussions of Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer. It can be suggested that critics of this theory define humour as an intellectual response to something inconsistent or inappropriate. Though Aristotle's notion of comedy is based on superiority in *Rethoric*, he touches slightly upon the idea that inconsistencies create laughter. He states that "[l]iveliness is specially conveyed by metaphor, and by the further power of surprising the hearer; because the hearer expected something different, his acquisition of the new idea impresses him all the more. His mind seems to say, 'Yes, to be sure; I never thought of that'" (160). Nonetheless, as his elaboration of comedy is primarily about the superiority theory in *Poetics*, his thoughts on the incongruous do not essentially contribute to his views on laughter (Morreall 1983a, 16). As in the superiority theory, laughter and humour are used interchangeably by the critics of the incongruity theory. Whereas the superiority theory is linked to the emotional aspect of

humour, the incongruity theory engages with the cognitive aspect of it. Furthermore, both theories accept that laughter is created by a duality, but whereas the superiority theory claims that this duality is between the laughing person and the laughable, the incongruity theory focuses on the contrast between certain concepts in the comic situation (1983a, 15). The incongruity theory, thus, embodies a contrast between two or more concepts rather than the laughing person's contrast with the thing that is being laughed at. This requires an explicit need for clarification about what is meant by the incongruity. Morreall articulates that the basic thought behind the incongruity theory is not as much complicated as it appears to be. Human beings live according to certain structures in a certain order among things and situations. Laughter emerges when a certain object or a thought seems to be out of place in that certain order human beings live in (1983a, 15-16). In other words, when a person's thought or perception violates his/her normal mental patterns, humour is created; however, incongruity does not excite laughter when puzzlement or negative emotions are experienced.

James Beattie, an eighteenth century Scottish philosopher and poet, is the first critic who coined the term "incongruous" in relation to humour in "An Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition", published in 1779. Beattie draws a distinction between the "ridiculous" and "ludicrous" and considers that both create laughter, yet the ridiculous excites laughter in connection to disrespect while the ludicrous creates pure amusement. He states that his discussion on laughter is carried out regarding the ludicrous as his analysis focuses on pure amusement (133). Beattie points out that "[l]aughter often arises from the discovery of unexpected likeness between objects apparently dissimilar: and the greater the apparent dissimilitude, and new-discovered resemblance, the greater will be the surprise attending the discovery" (177). Thus, laughter arises from two or more inconsistent situations or concepts which are observed as one whole body, or from considering a shared connection between those unsuitable circumstances (155).

Beattie questions whether incongruity always produces laughter and whether each kind of laughter is the result of the recognition of inconsistency between diverse concepts. He points out that "unless when the perception of it is attended with some other emotion of greater authority" it is sufficient for comic amusement (Beattie 267-

268). This suggests that excess of feelings such as compassion, fear, hatred or appreciation prevent the creation of humour since they repress the sense of amusement. Beattie's identification that certain emotions prevent the emergence of laughter is partially mirrored in Morreall's analysis of laughter and emotion. Similar to Beattie, Morreall contends that laughter may include other feelings such as superiority or hatred, but these emotions should not be too strong since they will restrain the appearance of joy. Referring to the example of the situation when a rich neighbour falls into the pool, Morreall states that

> [i]f I do not merely dislike my neighbor, but feel occurrent hatred for him, as I watch him fall into his pool, for instance, I'll be taken by practical interest in the situation: I'll crane my neck to see if he might actually be drowning, and I'll be thinking of ways I might prevent his rescue. And in this frame of mind I won't experience amusement. (1983b, 302)

Furthermore, Beattie discusses that not all laughter is induced by incongruity by highlighting that a distinction ought to be made between "sentimental laughter" and "animal laughter". Sentimental laughter is caused by incongruity as it "always proceeds from a sentiment or emotion, excited in the mind" (Beattie 136). Yet, animal laughter is not motivated by "any sentiment, or perception of ludicrous ideas", but it is the result of "some bodily feeling, or sudden impulse, on what is called the animal spirits" (136). Reactions to tickling or gladness are some of the situations that Beattie exemplifies for animal laughter. Beattie does not categorize animal laughter as an intellectual form of humour that can be analysed. In fact, it can be argued that Beattie's notion of animal laughter is closely connected to the physical aspect of laughter while sentimental laughter can be identified as humour.

Apart from Beattie, Immanuel Kant's contribution to humour theory in the eighteenth century is immense. Kant's concise discussion on laughter provides a basis for the analysis of the incongruity theory and has generated thought-provoking discussions among other significant critics such as Arthur Schopenhauer. Unlike Beattie, who explicitly defines humour with reference to the term incongruity, Kant does not employ the word "incongruity"; nevertheless, his ideas are definitely still based

on discrepancy. In *Critique of Judgement,* Kant explains that laughter appears when a person's expectations are challenged and the events take a different turn. He foregrounds "expectation" as the most critical factor, and claims that "*[l]aughter is an affect arising from a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing*" (Kant 161)(emphasis original). Kant clarifies his suggestion, "the reduction of expectations" with the following joke. The heir of a rich relative prepares for a flamboyant funeral service, yet he laments his failure to arrange the organisation. He illuminates the audience that the more he spends on the mourners to grieve, the happier they look. Kant explains that the audience's expectations are reduced to nothing as a result of the lack of explanation in the joke, which is the reason why the audience laugh at it as they did not assume that the grievers become more and more delighted by the constant payment of the heir (161). In relation to this joke, John Morreall criticises Kant's idea that laughter is generated by expectations reduced into nothing. Morreall accepts that we anticipate a clarification for the failure of the heir; however, this explanation is provided in the joke. He asserts that this anecdote is entertaining as the result of the incongruity of the heir's explanation and not as a consequence of Kant's view that the audience's expectations are reduced into noting (Morreall 1983a, 17). In other words, humour is produced since there is a discrepancy between the expectation of a logical explanation for why the heir's preparations will be a failure and the reason for his lament which the audience have not assumed. Morreall highlights that if the heir expressed that his failure is caused by the weather or his inability to arrange the funeral, there would be no violation of expectations and so no laughter at all (1983a, 17).

John Lippitt, in his study *Philosophical Perspectives on Humour and Laughter* (1991), argues that Morreall considers Kant's theory too literal and that Kant provides an insufficient definition of his "reduction into nothing" theory. He states that "'reduction into nothing' in this literal sense is an adequate explanation of only a very small field of humour and, if we interpret him literally, it seems that Kant's formulation is not the best explanation of his own examples" (Lippitt 15). Like Morreall, Lippitt argues that the feature of the explanation is significant since "[t]he humour lies in the nature of the explanations, when they arrive: if these jokes are perceived as funny, it is because, as the first part of Kant's formulation acknowledges, […] the heir's comments

appear absurd or incongruous" (15). Lippitt also suggests that the idea of expectations "reduced into nothing" can be explained from a different perspective, for Kant discusses that this reduction should not be a positive opposite. Kant states that "[w]e must be careful to observe that the reduction is not one into the positive contrary of an expected object—for that is always something, and may frequently pain us—but must be a reduction to nothing" (161). Commenting on the funeral joke, Lippitt appends that our expectations are "reduced into noting" because amusement is created not as a result of the total opposite of our expectations is presented but as a consequence of the realisation that we were entirely following a wrong path (16).

Kant's theory on laughter precipitates ground for Arthur Schopenhauer's idea that humour significantly depends on the inconsistency between an abstract concept and a concrete perception. Prior to his thoughts, it is significant to take into consideration that Schopenhauer regards humour and laughter as identical. Lippitt underlines that a distinction should be made between humorous laughter, which is caused by amusement and non-humorous laughter, generated by other factors, in order to display the lack of clarity in Schopenhauer's theory (33). In *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), Schopenhauer proposes that laughter is the expression of the sudden perception of the discrepancy between a concept and the reality; in other words, laughter is the result of the perception of an incongruity between something abstract and concrete (1966b, 91). Therefore, "[t]he greater and more unexpected this incongruity in the apprehension of the person laughing, the more violent will be his laughter" (91). Regarding Schopenhauer's views, first, two diverse objects are identified through one common concept that can be applied to both of them; nevertheless, when the incongruity is suddenly realised and when the misinterpretation of their connection is exposed and the one-sided point of view of the laughing subject is revealed, laughter is evoked (1966a, 59).

Schopenhauer clearly illustrates his point by narrating several anecdotes which he analyses according to the dissimilarities between the abstract and concrete aspects. Firstly, he demonstrates the story of the poor Gascon wearing summer clothes in winter. When the king asks why the Gascon is dressed in summer outfit, he answers: "'If your majesty had put on what I have, you would find it very warm'; and on being asked what

he had put on, replied: 'My whole wardrobe!'" (1966b, 93). With reference to the abstract concept, a wardrobe is a person's collection of clothes, but the concrete representation of the wardrobe in the story includes only a few pieces of clothing. Humour is created as the result of the incongruity of the conceptual understanding of a wardrobe and the reality of the poor man's wardrobe in the anecdote. Furthermore, Schopenhauer notes that in some circumstances the concept and the real thing of perception need not to be expressed in language and reinforces that "[a]ll laughter is therefore occasioned by a paradoxical, and hence unexpected, subsumption, it matters not whether this is expressed in words or deeds" (1966a, 59). Referring to a situation David Garrick, an actor, has experienced, Schopenhauer states that Garrick begins to laugh during a tragedy performance when he sees a dog with the wig of another actor, who puts the wig on the dog in order to clean the sweat from his forehead. Schopenhauer reveals that this kind of incongruity is why animals such as apes and kangaroos seem ludicrous, for their resemblance to human beings generates an inconsistency between humanly features and the animals' behaviours or appearance (1966b, 97-98). Thus, unlike the stories or jokes, events that are not narrated through language may also have inconsistent features which motivate laughter. Notably, thus, Schopenhauer explains why we take pleasure from laughing, and suggests that the concrete object or "the perceived" is always right as it is the real thing of representation, such as the wardrobe of the poor man or the dog with the wig. The audience realises the reality is the thing which is observed. Thereby, "[t]his triumph of knowledge of perception over thought gives us pleasure. For perception is the original kind of knowledge, inseparable from animal nature, in which everything gives immediate satisfaction to the will presents itself" (1966b, 98).

Within the context of the relationship between seriousness and laughter, Schopenhauer states that although it appears that seriousness is totally the contrast of laughter, they have an interconnected relationship. He asserts that "[t]he opposite of laughter is *seriousness*" since there is an ideal contract and congruity between the abstract and the concrete which signifies that the serious person is persuaded that he conceives what he perceives (1966b, 99)(emphasis original). In other words, things in reality are parallel to the abstract concept in that person's mind. In this sense, a

transformation from seriousness into laughter can be made easily as the stronger the person is convinced about the congruity, the more smoothly the harmony will be destroyed (1966b, 99). Moreover, jokes are also connected to seriousness, for they are intentionally ludicrous but when they are concealed behind seriousness irony appears (1966b, 99). On the contrary, "the opposite of irony would be the seriousness concealed behind a joke, and this is *humour*" (1966b, 100)(emphasis original). Significantly, humour includes not only pure amusement but also a certain amount of seriousness. Schopenhauer adds that "[i]rony is objective, and so is aimed at another; but *humour* is subjective, and thus exists primarily only for one's self" (100)(emphasis original). Consequently, humour necessitates seriousness and a subjective mood which results out of a conflict with or incongruity of the outer or real world (1966b, 100).

While Kant and Schopenhauer's ideas shape the core of the incongruity theory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Henri Bergson's "Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic"[10] (1900) produces a striking effect in the early twentieth century in terms of the interconnection of superiority and incongruity with reference to the function of humour. Prior to his exploration of laughter, unlike Schopenhauer who emphasises the subjectivity of laughter, Bergson suggests that laughter maintains a social signification. It has a social existence since "[o]ur laughter is always the laughter of a group […] However spontaneous it seems, laughter always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughers, real or imaginary. How often has it been said that the fuller the theatre, the more uncontrolled the laughter of the audience" (Bergson 64). Likewise, he illustrates his point by stating that it is impossible to translate humorous situations to another language as they are the products of a specific social group (64). Therefore, "[l]aughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a *social* signification" and, thus, to comprehend laughter it must be examined in its own natural and social environment (65)(emphasis original). In this fashion, he analyses humour and comic characters in their social surroundings. Bergson states that a lack of "elasticity" leads to laughter as a result of absentmindedness. He demonstrates that we laugh at a man who falls while running or

[10] As Bergson's views on laughter include both the aspects of superiority and incongruity, some critics evaluate his ideas in the superiority theory while others discuss them in relation to the incongruity theory.

who is a victim of a mischievous joke (66). We are amused by both instances since they "continued like a machine in the same straight line […] The laughable element in both cases consists of a certain mechanical inelasticity" (66-67). Hence, Bergson's thought of laughter is grounded on his idea that it is "[s]omething mechanical encrusted on the living" (84). Humour is created when a situation or a person's machine-like structure is disrupted. Although Bergson does not directly state that incongruity leads to laughter, it can be argued that he assumes humour is the result of the incongruity in rigid situations or machine-like people.

Bergson elaborates on the features of the comic character and its connection to the effects of industrialisation and mechanisation. He states that "*[t]he attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine"* (Bergson 79)(emphasis original). The comic figure resembles a "piece of clockwork" or has "puppet-like" movements different from a naturally behaving human being (156, 152). In Bergson's view, "[the comic character] lives by formulas, not by animation, and his behaviour is a series of repetitions. But life should be a negation of repetition. So we laugh at him" (Sypher xi). The comic character is incapable of living, for it acts with automatism and is isolated from life the moment its inflexibility is disrupted by external factors which, as a result, reflects its ridiculousness. Bergson explains that those kinds of inflexible attitudes stem from industrialisation, mechanisation and the division of labour as they cause mechanised human behaviour. This automatic attitude can be detected in each part of life and in each person; therefore, "*[a]ny arrangement of acts and events is comic which gives us, in a single combination, the illusion of life and the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement"* (Bergson 105)(emphasis original). It is in this context that he supports spontaneity of life rather than its mechanical aspect. Bergson's analysis of laughter mirrors his philosophy that life is a "vital impulse", "an élan vital", which cannot be comprehended only by reason or rational science, but which should be explained by instinct and experience (Sypher viii, xi). Thus, life is not mechanical; therefore, incongruity appears when human beings act like a puppet instead of acting according to the changes in life.

Furthermore, it is significant to emphasise the fact that Bergson discusses laughter in relation to superiority in addition to incongruity. He implies that the function of laughter is humiliation which reflects the thought that it is used as a social corrective by humiliating certain situations or people. Laughter must "[a]lways [be] rather humiliating for the one against whom it is directed, laughter is, really and truly, a kind of social 'ragging'" (Bergson 147-148). Laughter is not innocent amusement or pure pleasure, but it includes a mocking characteristic, as it is stated "the pleasure caused by laughter, even on the stage, is not an unadulterated enjoyment; it is not a pleasure that is exclusively esthetic or altogether disinterested. It always implies a secret or unconscious intent, if not of each one of us, at all events of society as a whole" (148). This unconscious aim of laughter is contempt with the objective of correcting the faults of the society. Bergson establishes that "[i]n laughter we always find an unavowed intention to humiliate, and consequently to correct our neighbour, if not in his will, at least in his deed. This is the reason a comedy is far more like real life than a drama is" (148). The objective to correct someone manifests that the laughing person's superiority is over the one who is being laughed at. In broad terms, the comic person seems inferior since he/she exposes his/her rigidity, and it can be argued that the laughing person criticises the comic person's attitude toward life as life is not mechanical.

Wylie Sypher points out that although Henri Bergson's views on laughter have influenced many critics, humour in the contemporary world cannot only be described by Bergson's view about the comic. He criticises Bergson's rigid distinction between the comic and the tragic, and claims that a different perspective should be acquired to Bergson's views to understand life in recent world. Sypher also argues that "Bergson's analysis of laughter is incomplete, which may explain why he thinks comedy works only from 'the outside.' Comedy may, in fact, not bring laughter at all; and certain tragedies may make us laugh hysterically" (205). Sypher's argument is significant as he states that the comic and the tragic are not totally different concepts and they are even interconnected in modern criticism; in other words, the comic is not only present in comedies and the tragic is not always encountered in tragedies (193). In order to explain his point, Sypher refers to Kierkegaard's idea of the comic regarding existentialism: "In truth, no age has so fallen victim to the comic as this […] the comical is present in every

stage of life, for wherever there is life there is contradiction, and wherever there is contradiction the comical is present" (in Sypher 196). Kierkegaard asserts that the comedy of faith is the greatest comedy since the religious person knows that there is an infinite difference between God and human beings, but he desires to prove himself to God although he knows that God is all (in Sypher 196). In brief, unlike Bergson, who claims that the comic occurs only in the ridiculous actions of human beings, Sypher underlines Kierkegaard's philosophy that the modern world demonstrates that existence itself is both comic and tragic. Thus, humour exists in the tragic whereas tragedy may be represented by humour.

Though its basis has been established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the incongruity theory has become a critical issue in recent humour studies. Especially, the differentiation between the terms; humour and laughter, has allowed a development of the theory. John Morreall, for instance, provides an in-depth analysis of the essential function of the "cognitive shift" in triggering laughter. In this sense, it is recognised that humour is the stimulus whereas laughter is a reaction to or an outcome of humour. He argues that humour is the appreciation of cognitive shifts, which signifies the sudden change of perception or thoughts, and is created as follows:

> 1. We experience a cognitive shift – a rapid change in our perceptions or thoughts.
> 2. We are in a play mode rather than a serious mode, disengaged from conceptual and practical concerns.
> 3. Instead of responding to the cognitive shift with shock, confusion, puzzlement, fear, anger, or other negative emotions, we enjoy it.
> 4. Our pleasure at the cognitive shift is expressed in laughter, which signals to others that they can relax and play too. (Morreall 2009, 50)

To be in a play mode is the second aspect of humour which reflects that "distance" is another crucial part of it. To illustrate, when a person watches cartoons that have harsh violence, he/she knows that it is not something real; as a result, he/she observes it from a playful perspective (2009, 53). Morreall's third point partly draws on James Beattie's idea that laughter should not be accompanied by other stronger emotions. Morreall states that these strong emotions are not intermingled in the reaction due to the

existence of playfulness. However, having a playful attitude does not represent that humour is evoked only by positive emotions. Even though humour is sometimes created by a mild cognitive shift which makes it easy to enter a playful view, "most humor, today as in the [Ice Age], is a reaction to cognitive shifts that could be more threatening, such as facing danger, failing, misunderstanding other people, quarrelling with neighbors, etc. Most humor, as we said, has always been about problems" (2009, 52-53). As humour is an amalgamation of both negative and positive feelings, "[i]t seems possible for us to enjoy something and *simultaneously* be disturbed by our ability to enjoy it – 'guilty pleasure,' we call it. Notice here, though, that the object of pleasure and the object of displeasure are different" (2009, 54)(emphasis original).

Morreall proclaims that humour is not a simple phenomenon but a sophisticated conceptual system. As humour is caused by incongruity regarding spatial, temporal, and casual connections, it needs the ability to compare and knowledge of certain concepts. Morreall claims that acquisition of a sophisticated conceptual system is based on language; which is why children obtain a sense of humour when they can speak a language and why their sense of humour depends on their linguistic development. For this reason, infants and animals can feel love, anger and other emotions while they do not have a developed sense of humour as they do not retain the required abstract concepts for the understanding of incongruous situations. Morreall adds that, unlike animals, human beings can relate a specific incident to both the abstract things and to other timeframes such as the past or the future (1983b, 299-300). This implies that "we can do so not only to learn practical lessons from the past or to plan for the future, but simply for the fun of it. We can reminisce and daydream and speculate; we can even create incongruous events in thought and present them to each other as jokes" (1983b, 299). In short, humour is a complex occurrence that is generated by a sudden psychological change, which can be only achieved through the acquisition of language or, in other words, through abstract concepts rather than a simple reaction to "funny" things.

Other contemporary critics attempt to improve the incongruity theory by focusing on other aspects of the approach. Michael Clarke, for instance, highlights the aspect of "joy" as he states that first a person observes an object that is incongruous,

then he/she enjoys observing that object, and lastly the person enjoys the perceived incongruity (in Morreall 2009, 13). It can be argued that Clarke's model may bear resemblance to Morreall's cognitive shift since, while Clarke emphasises the existence of "joy", Morreall underlines the essential function of a person's "play mode" in order to evoke humour. This suggests that both agree with the idea that a person should be in a playful mood rather than a serious one in order to be amused by discrepancy. Moreover, psychologists, Thomas Schultz and Jerry Suls, expose that humour is created not as a consequence of incongruity but as a result of the resolution of incongruity since pleasure is caused by figuring out the inconsistency of the comic incident. As Schultz states, "[t]he pleasure of humor in a mature person, according to this view, is not the enjoyment of incongruity, but the enjoyment of a kind of puzzle solving similar to what scientists do" (in Morreall 2009, 15). Therefore, Shultz and Suls maintain that humour consists of two parts: the first phase that includes incongruity and the second phase which is the resolution (Suls 41). It is notable that in order to evoke laughter, both phases should be experienced by the audience. In this sense, when the resolution does not take place or when the person cannot comprehend the explanation behind the incongruity, then, no humour is created. In summary, contemporary studies on the incongruity theory enlarge the perspective of the approach by developing its principles as Clarke emphasises "joy", and Schultz and Suls stress the function of "resolution" part in incongruous situations.

Finally, the critics of this theory agree that humour is an intellectual response to something inconsistent. Kant argues that laughter emerges when expectations are challenged as it depends on the contrast between the expectations of a person and the way the incident ends. Influenced by Kant's ideas, Schopenhauer claims that humour is the sudden realisation of the inconsistency between a concept and the reality. Different from Kant and Schopenhauer, who assume that incongruity is the sole cause of humour, Bergson implies that both incongruity and superiority are fundamental parts of a humorous situation. Regarding incongruity, Bergson claims that a lack of elasticity creates humour since the disruption of someone's machine-like behaviour enables the audience to observe the incongruity between that puppet-like person and the reality. With reference to superiority, Bergson asserts that the function of laughter is

humiliation; therefore, it has a social existence and is used as a social corrective. On the other hand, Sypher, disputing Bergson's idea that the comic occurs in only ridiculous incidents, highlights Kierkegaard's philosophy that the modern world represents the co-existence of the comic and the tragic. Moreover, present-day critics of the incongruity theory do not only base their ideas on the traditional discussions of the approach but also offer diverse perspectives to enlarge its scope. Morreall contends that the "cognitive shift" is essential in triggering laughter, and states that humour is the stimulus and laughter the outcome of this shift. He explains that other feelings such as superiority or hatred may be present in this shift, but when they are in excess, they will prevent the emergence of humour. Morreall, thus, agrees with Beattie, the first critic who coined "incongruity", by asserting that when there is an excess of emotions other than amusement, incongruity will not trigger laughter. It can be observed that, though their claims differ when analysed in detail, both Bergson and Morreall imply that incongruity may be accompanied by superiority in order to create laughter. Other modern critics such as Schultz and Suls scrutinise that not incongruity but the "resolution" of that inconsistency is what causes humour. In brief, while Beattie, Kant, and Schopenhauer concentrate on incongruity solely, Henri Bergson reveals the existence of superiority and incongruity in humour. Finally, contemporary critics of the theory such as Morreall, Schultz, and Suls explore diverse aspects of the approach by attempting to divide the process of humour in certain steps.

2.2.3. The Relief Theory

In its widest sense, the relief theory can be defined as the study of the discharge of nervous energy which results in laughter. The central issue of this theory is to discuss the factors and psychological structures that create laughter, rather than attempting to define humour. In other words, "Why does laughter take the physical form it does, and what is its biological function?" is the principal question that the theory asks (Morreall 1983a, 20). Morreall delineates that the theories about the nervous system in the eighteenth century initiated and shaped the relief theory. These theories of the medical sciences claim that the nerves are connected to the muscles and brain; therefore, it is indicated that the nervous system is a network of channels in which pressure is

produced and a need for release arises (2009, 15-16). The relief theory considers laughter within the context of the above mentioned medical theory in which pressure is created and the discharge of that pressure occurs afterwards. The first study which can be considered as the pioneer of the relief theory is Lord Shaftbury's "The Freedom of Wit and Humour" (1711) in which he asserts that when human beings are oppressed or controlled, they will seek other channels to find relief and these options may include mockery, imitation or horseplay (in Morreall 2009, 16). Although Shaftbury is the forerunner of the theory, Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud are the most significant critics of the relief theory whose approaches are based on the idea that humour is a tool for relief of social tension or repression.

Herbert Spencer's "The Physiology of Laughter" (1860) provides a brief and basic explanation for the connection between laughter and bodily reaction. Spencer argues that "[n]ervous excitation always *tends* to beget muscular motion; and when it rises to a certain intensity, always does beget it" (Spencer 195)(emphasis original). This suggests that emotions evoke nervous energy and this energy leads to the movement of muscles since nervous energy and the motor nervous system are interconnected. Spencer demonstrates his idea by explaining that when a person receives positive news, he/she will show the excitement through bodily motions such as laughter or a smile; however, when a person does not display such signs, it implies that he/she is not pleased or has unusual self-control (196). Spencer, thus, assumes that emotions certainly change one's mood and behavior. Regarding Spencer's theory, one of the critical points that should be considered is that the interaction between emotions and the muscles are necessary for the survival of human beings. To illustrate, when a person is angry, these emotions trigger his bodily response since he/she clenches his/her fists, and when the rage increases, he/she may attack (Morreall 1983a, 24). Spencer points out that laughter is a bodily reaction to certain emotions that trigger the nervous system; however, different from anger or other emotions which may help one to survive, laughter's only purpose is to release nervous energy. He explains that nervous energy is discharged first through the muscles connected to organs of speech like the jaws, tongue and mouth which display the appearance of a smile. If the nervous energy is too much to be unloaded through the first passageway, the second channel which includes the muscles

related to respiration will get involved, and these muscles cause laughter. Lastly, if there is still energy left that needs to be released, other bodily channels are used like clapping hands and swaying the body backward and forward (201-202).

John Morreall remarks that Spencer's theory is inadequate to explain the relationship between laughter and relief completely. One of the significant points Morreall criticises is that not all laughter can be described as the discharge of nervous energy since most humorous situations do not produce a certain energy that should be released (1983a, 24). Morreall suggests that when a situation of pure incongruity or absurdity occurs, it does not necessarily produce nervous energy in order to cause laughter or amusement. He exemplifies this through a cartoon in which an optician helps his client try various glasses which are attached to a fake nose and moustache. This cartoon seems funny, yet, it does not create nervous energy (1983a, 25). Another aspect of Spencer's theory that Morreall objects is that even if a certain nervous energy is created, it does not mean that it is a kind of redundant energy as Spencer claims. To exemplify, when a person gives an exploding cigar to an enemy, the nervous energy which is created is an expected one (1983a, 26). In brief, though Spencer's theory is criticised for being unsatisfactory, it draws attention to nervous energy and exposes a specific connection between the body and humour.

Unlike Spencer's brief theory on laughter, Sigmund Freud, in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious,* provides an extensive and detailed research on humour. Freud's views on laughter are based on the thought that human beings collect psychic energy in order to use when needed, and during laughter this surplus energy is released. In laughter, "the conditions are present under which a sum of psychical energy which has hitherto been used for cathexis[11] is allowed free discharge" (Freud 148). Alternatively stated, humorous incidents save a certain amount of psychic energy and this energy is ejected through laughter. Freud does not investigate laughter as a general concept but draws a distinction between "jokes", "the comic", and "humour" since each

[11] Freud employs the term "cathexis" to express "the idea of physical energy being lodged in or attaching itself to mental structures or processes, somewhat on the analogy of an electric charge" (Fodor and Gaynor 20). For more information please see "Cathexis", *Freud: Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. Eds. Nandor Fodor and Frank Gaynor. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950.

of them release energy which is attached to a different aspect. Jokes discharge the energy that is employed to suppress prohibited feelings, the comic unloads surplus energy of thoughts, and humour releases expenditure of energy in emotions (Morreall 2009, 18). This implies that, unlike Spencer, Freud does not consider laughter or humour as a general concept but divides it into three categories.

Though Freud probes into all three categories, he mainly discusses the "joke" as a significant type by stating that it discharges repressed energy formed by feelings. His main argument is that psychic energy released through jokes is based on sexual grounds or on hatred. Laughter occurs as a consequence of sexual or hateful jokes since the energy that normally supresses the libido or hostility is ejected; that is, "the cathectic energy used for the inhibition has now suddenly become superfluous and has been lifted, and is therefore now ready to be discharged by laughter" (Freud 149). Freud argues that laughing at a joke is certainly connected to pleasure and to the unconscious, for the release of supressed energy creates a kind of relief. Therefore, "since laughter—not all laughter, it is true, but certainly laughter at a joke—is an indication of pleasure, we shall be inclined to relate this pleasure to the lifting of the cathexis which has previously been present" (148). It should be highlighted that the suppressed energy has been mostly accepted to be the energy of the repressed feelings; however, it is "not the energy of repressed feelings, but the energy that normally represses those feelings" (Morreall 2009, 18). Furthermore, with reference to his previous studies on the unconscious and pleasure, Freud implies that jokes have the same structure like dreams which will be explained in detail in the forthcoming paragraphs. He demonstrates his main views in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in order to create a ground for the comparison of jokes and dreams by discussing that dreams alter our hidden desires through displacement and condensation. Freud draws a parallel between the mechanics and certain aspects that can be detected in both dreams and jokes as both are connected to the unconscious (159). With the objective of endorsing the affinities between jokes and dreams, Freud prefers to employ the term "joke-work", which refers to the concept

of "dream-work"[12] in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. As it is stated in *Jokes*, "[t]he term ["joke-work"] here introduced serves to emphasize the resemblance between the processes concerned in producing jokes and dreams" (54). Although he suggests that there are certain resemblances between dreams and jokes, he indicates that not each aspect of dream-work can be compared to joke-work, but the most basic and significant aspects such as condensation and displacement can be depicted in both.

Freud notes that there are different joke techniques by underlining that condensation and displacement can be observed as the methods that are identified in both jokes and dreams. The first joke technique is condensation, which implies that a certain concept or word is abbreviated with the aim of creating laughter. Freud employs his thoughts on dream-condensation to develop "joke-condensation". He defines condensation in dreams by stating that "[i]n the course of the dream-work the material of the dream-thoughts is subjected to a quite extraordinary compression or condensation", which means that condensation is a form of suppression or compact form of ideas and objects (Freud 163). Likewise, certain jokes contain abbreviations which represent the repression in the unconscious. He illustrates his point by narrating an anecdote in which a poor man says that the rich Baron sees him as an equal or "famillionairely" (17). In this joke, "familiarly" and "millionaire" are the two meanings which are condensed. The interpretation of this joke is that the Baron treated the poor man equally as much as a rich man can (19). As a result, the compression of these two words creates laughter since the blending of these two concepts represents the inability of the Baron to treat someone inferior equally. Another technique which can be detected in both dreams and jokes is "displacement". Freud defines that displacement in dreams occurs when hidden desires are attached to other objects (163-164). Similarly, displacement can be identified in certain jokes in which an idea replaces another one. He explains "displacement" with an example in which a man desperately borrows money from his friend. The man eats a luxurious meal with the borrowed money and the benefactor comments that he cannot eat luxurious dinners with that money: "'I don't understand you', replied the object of the attack: 'if I haven't any money I *can't* eat

[12] Freud states that "[t]he dream-work is the name for the whole sum of transforming processes which have converted the dream-thoughts into the manifest dream" (160).

salmon mayonnaise, and if I have some money I *mustn't* eat salmon mayonnaise. Well, then, when *am* I to eat salmon mayonnaise?'" (50)(emphasis original). Freud asserts that the meaning of the benefactor's criticism is displaced in this joke (50). It is evident that dreams and jokes have the same mechanics regarding condensation and displacement.

Apart from condensation and displacement, Freud reveals that there are several other joke techniques. "Multiple use of the same material" is another cause for laughter in jokes which is created by repeating a word or a concept. This can be illustrated briefly by the following joke: "'Mr. and Mrs. X live in fairly grand style. Some people think that the husband has earned a lot and so has been able to lay by a bit *[sich etwas zuriickgelegt]',* others again think that the wife has lain back a bit *[sich etwas zuriickgelegt]* and so has been able to earn a lot'" (33)(emphasis original). Clearly, the repetition of the same phrase, especially in the original German version, represents that the main cause of laughter is the reoccurrence of the same phrase in a different context. Another technique is "double meaning" such as the use of metaphors and their literal interpretations (36). Freud demonstrates this with a Jewish joke. One Jew asks another if he has taken a bath. The other replies: Is someone missing a bath? (49). This joke is an example of "double meaning" as the word "take" is differently perceived by each character. It is interesting to note that different joke techniques can be employed in the same joke since the aforementioned joke includes both double-meaning and displacement. This joke is an example both for displacement since the meaning of "take" is displaced between the two characters and for "double meaning" as it uses two meanings of the word "take" (49). In addition, faulty reasoning is another joke method that reflects illogical conclusions. Freud demonstrates the following joke to exemplify faulty reasoning:

> A gentlemen entered a pastry-cook's shop and ordered a cake; but he soon brought it back and asked for a glass of liqueur instead. He drank it and began to leave without having paid. The proprietor detained him. 'What do you want?' asked the customer.-'You've not paid for the liqueur.'-'But I gave you the cake in exchange for it.' – 'You didn't pay for that either.'- 'But I hadn't eaten it'. (60)

In short, besides suggesting joke techniques that are based on dream-work such as condensation and displacement, Freud also proposes various techniques which can be found in jokes by themselves or together with other methods.

In addition to joke techniques, Freud makes a distinction regarding the purpose of jokes, and argues that they can be categorised into "innocent" and "tendentious" jokes. The primary difference between them is that while innocent jokes do not have any distinct purpose, the tendentious ones have a specific aim (Freud 90). Innocent jokes are the "purest form" of jokes as they do not hold any other purpose than amusement (94). As Freud states, "there is nothing left open to us but to bring that feeling of pleasure into connection with the technique of the joke" (95). Innocent or non-tendentious jokes do not create an enormous laughter, but they generate a modest satisfaction and a small smile; therefore, this lack of a sudden burst of laughter of innocent jokes makes tendentious jokes more appealing (96). Whereas innocent jokes create only pleasure, tendentious jokes initiate humour through the satisfaction of a sexual or hostile instinct (101). In other words, tendentious jokes contain thoughts that are normally censored but are made acceptable through the joke-form. This joke-form enables a person to criticise another person since instead of a direct insult, the joke-form is used to ridicule the enemy indirectly which creates pleasure in the joking person (103). To exemplify, sex and violence are the two most common concepts that are related to prohibition; therefore, "[s]uch restrictions cause people to suppress their sexual desires, according to the relief theory, and so when someone, say a comedian, breaks the taboo and talks about sex, forbidden sexual thoughts are called up and some of the sexual energy which has been repressed is released in laughter" (Morreall 1983a, 21). It is clear in these views that the instincts underlying in tendentious jokes are mainly sexual or hostile ones.

Though Freud discusses these two types of jokes, he concentrates in detail on tendentious jokes and their sub-categories. He asserts that tendentious jokes can be divided into hostile ones such as satire and obscene ones which expose certain things (97). To illustrate, smut, "the intentional bringing into prominence of sexual facts and relations by speech", is one of the sub-categories of obscene jokes as it is only accepted in a form of a joke (97). Evidently, direct indecency cannot produce laughter or humour

as it creates shame or disgust; however, when an indecent situation is demonstrated through a joke-form, it will cause laughter (101). Consequently, an indecent joke exposes and satisfies sexual instincts which are normally repressed. Apart from sexual instincts, repressed hostile urges are also significant parts of tendentious jokes. Hostile tendentious jokes enable one to "exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in our way, bring forward openly or consciously; once again, then, the joke *will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible"* (103)(emphasis original). Freud states that insulting an authority figure through the joke-form, for instance, hides the insult and foregrounds the comic aspects that create amusement. He asserts that these types of jokes are employed for criticism and aggressive comments against people in superior positions; as a result, they reflect a protest against these figures and a sense of freedom from the constraints of their pressure. Freud illustrates that caricatures can be discussed in relation to the aforementioned views since they aim to exaggerate certain characteristics of a person to criticise that person by creating a comic effect; thus, even if they are ineffective, still, they are charming since they represent a protest against authority and render a sense of freedom (104-105). Briefly, whereas innocent jokes contain a single aim which is to amuse, tendentious humour revolves around lust and/or hostility in order to achieve a satisfaction of these instincts.

Considering Freud's views about tendentious jokes, Michael Billig explores, in *Laughter and Ridicule*, the relationship between these type of jokes and prohibitions. Billig states that one can technically joke about everything such as economy, physics or issues about daily life. However, when there are prohibitions, jokes will rise in number since, especially, the nature of tendentious jokes is based on restrictions and on certain aspects that prevent the freedom of the individual (154). Interestingly, Michael Billig refers to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913) in order to elucidate on the nature of tendentious jokes[13]. Freud declares that festivals are a means of discharge of prohibitions in traditional cultures that are strict about social rules. During traditional festivals, practices that are forbidden during the year are allowed and social rules are

[13] See Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921).

broken and authorities ridiculed (in Billig 155). In fact, individuals gain a sense of freedom during these festivals because of the release from social oppression for a specific amount of time. In this sense, Billig asserts that a tendentious joke can be observed as a "mini-festival" that lifts prohibitions for a short time since these jokes recreate and expose ideas which are normally considered as taboo in social interaction (155). Billig remarks that "[tendentious jokes] permit speakers to say things that would otherwise be forbidden. In this regard, humour is a means of evading the inevitable restrictions of social life, permitting brief moments of shared freedom" (156). The release and freedom which festivals offer, thus, can be compared to the discharge and pleasure generated from tendentious jokes.

In addition to his extensive discussion on jokes, Freud continues with a brief analysis of the comic as he draws a distinction between the nature of jokes and the comic. His main idea is that the process of relief and laughter is identical both in jokes and in the comic, but unlike the joke, which discharges surplus energy caused by feelings, the comic releases energy related to thought. In order to explain his views, Freud expresses that a person undergoes a process of comparison to understand something; in other words, he/she goes through a mental activity to comprehend a situation and this intellectual activity expends psychic energy (191). In this regard, Freud claims that the above-mentioned thought process reflects how the comic produces laughter. As an example of the comic, Freud illustrates the actions of a clown which are based on imitation since he states that when a person watches a clown stumbling to perform a simple act, imitation is employed to understand the situation of the clown. That is, the audience concludes that they would spend a smaller amount of energy to carry out the simple tasks which the clown has to spend too much energy on. The difference between the big energy the clown needs for that task and the small energy the person needs produces surplus psychic energy which creates laughter (190-191). Furthermore, within the context that the comic is based upon intellectual activity, Freud suggests that there are also other means of making situations or people comic such as caricatures. Although he discusses caricatures regarding tendentious jokes, Freud concisely analyses caricatures regarding the comic as their significance within the scope of laughter that stems from mental activity. Freud states that "*[c]aricature,* as is well

known, brings about degradation by emphasizing in the general impression given by the exalted object a single trait which is comic in itself but was bound to be overlooked so long as it was only perceivable in the general picture" (201)(emphasis original). Caricatures, thus, focus on a certain feature and exaggerate that feature with the aim of criticism and creating laughter. Therefore, it can be argued that the audience compares the caricature with reality and this imitation produces a surplus energy that needs to be released. All in all, the comic generates laughter as a result of the superfluous energy initiated by the comparison between an exaggerated situation or concept and the ordinary version of that incident.

Freud employs the term "humour" to denominate the third category in which laughter is developed by emotions. Humour is the discharge of redundant emotions that are produced as a result of inappropriateness (229). "Inappropriateness" is employed to refer to the improper emotions created as a result of a certain incident, and when this mistake is realised, the energy created by improper emotions becomes unnecessary, which is ejected by laughter. Freud demonstrates his argument by narrating Mark Twain's story about his brother. Twain's brother was working to build a road and, at a certain point, a dynamite was used in the process of building. When the dynamite went off, it blew him into the air and made him land far away his workplace. When he walked to his workplace, his wage was cut for the reason that he was absent from work. The end of the story makes the listener laugh as the feeling of worry and sympathy towards the worker because of the explosion is recognised as unnecessary as a consequence of the end of the story (230). Alternatively stated, surplus energy is caused as a result of the "inappropriateness" of emotions and is released through laughter. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that different from the comic and jokes, humour does not need another person to make someone laugh. Freud argues that jokes require three people as one person is telling the joke, one is the laughable person in the joke and the other is the listener who laughs at the joke. The comic only needs two people: the one who is comic and the other person who finds it comic (181). On the other hand, humour is a personal incident as it does not need another person (229). In this fashion, "[h]umour, unlike the comic, is a kind of private satisfaction in Freud's terms; it

involves a certain amount of social understanding, but can be shared by someone with [himself/ herself]. The humorist chuckles to himself" (Neve 40).

Freud's theory of laughter is considered as problematic by many critics since some of Freud's terms and ideas are not explained clearly. John Morreall, for instance, criticises several points in Freud's theory although he accepts that Freud's theory is one of the most detailed ones which elucidate the relief theory. Morreall challenges the idea that a person uses small packets of energy to understand how he/she may perform the act and huge packets of energy to comprehend how the clown, for instance, carries out the act. He rejects that human beings expend a large amount of psychic energy to understand something huge; for instance, astronomers do not spend much more energy than watchmakers (1983s, 33). As a result, Morreall questions the "surplus energy" regarding the clumsy clown example as there is nothing superfluous in the energy difference between comprehension of the clown's action and its comparison with the action an ordinary person would carry out, for "[t]he big packet was used to understand the clown's movements and the small packet was used to understand our own movements. Nothing is left over" (2009, 22). Yet, if the audience does not understand the clown's movements, then they would not recognise the exaggeration of the clown's movements; as a result, no comparison would occur and laughter would not be created (1983a, 33-34). Moreover, Morreall reveals that comic incidents also occur when there is no exaggeration present since there are comic situations which are initiated by the imitation of ordinary people or actions. These situations which are still comic cannot be explained by Freud's theory of surplus psychic energy, as Morreall states "[w]hen we watch Harold Lloyd[14] get stuck out on a window ledge twenty stories above the pavement, and try various means of getting back inside, we can laugh even though he is neither extravagant nor lazy in his motions" (1983a, 34). Morreall explains that Freud desires to clarify the above-mentioned type of comic as the comparison between the present and past actions of the comic character rather than the comparison of the comic character and the audience. Even though the juxtaposition of the past and present of the comic person is the case, the creation of laughter will be only possible when there is a

[14] Harold Lloyd (1893-1971) is an American actor and comedian who performs in silent movies.

surplus energy, which may not be the case in each situation (Morreall 1983a, 34-35). Basically, Morreall questions the aspect of superfluous energy by discussing that comparison in comic situations does not necessarily produce surplus energy and by problematizing the relationship between energy packets and their size in the creation of laughter.

Furthermore, John Lippitt disputes several of Freud's views on laughter. Lippitt questions the theory that the two types of jokes require different amount of energies as innocent or non-tendentious jokes initiate only a modest smile while tendentious ones produce laughter (Freud 96). Lippitt argues that this comparison is an over-generalisation which is the result of Freud's ignorance of individual differences regarding the sense of humour. In addition, he states that the amount of laughter produced after a joke is not a tool to measure a person's enjoyment; in other words, the magnitude of laughter does not equal the pleasure derived from the joke (100-101). Moreover, Lippitt disagrees that there are only two kinds of tendentious jokes, for apart from sexual and hostile jokes, there are other kinds of tendentious jokes such as "aggression as a cultural idea" (103-104). In this context, just like Lippitt, Morreall claims that although Freud states that sex and violence are only two drives that can be related to relief theory, other taboos such as drugs and alcohol can also be listed in the prohibitions which cause laughter (1983a, 21). Concisely, critics such as Morreall and Lippitt, not only praise Freud's detailed work but also question its several inadequacies, generalisations and problems by mostly regarding the energy and laughter relationship.

In conclusion, Herbert Spencer's and Sigmund Freud's views on laughter are primary and essential in the development of the relief theory. While Spencer briefly concentrates on laughter and its relation to the bodily motions, Freud scrutinises laughter regarding psychic energy and divides it into three categories that are related to different initiators. Spencer states that emotion forms nervous energy and this energy is released through the muscles. The type of release depends on the exact emotion; thus, when anger is experienced, the release may be to attack, and when amusement is experienced, the discharge may be through laughter or a smile. In this sense, different than other emotions that trigger our instinct to survive, laughter's only aim is to release nervous energy. On the other hand, Freud contends that laughter's aim is to create

pleasure since it releases saved energy caused by the repressions in the unconscious. Therefore, although both Spencer and Freud claim that laughter is caused by collected energy in the body, their views about the objective and result of laughter vary slightly. Furthermore, Freud's views on "humour", his third category of the causes of laughter, can be compared to Spencer's views on laughter, for both reveal that emotions generate laughter. Similar to Spencer's theory, Freud's theory underlines that there is a certain amount of build-up energy which is released when the emotion the person feels turns out to be inappropriate after the twist in the story. Nevertheless, different from Spencer, Freud claims that only humour is related to discharge of emotional energy while Spencer associates all kinds of laughter to the release of emotions.

2.3. Mikhail Bakhtin's Carnivalesque

In *Rabelais and His World* (1968), Mikhail Bakhtin provides a different perspective on laughter and discusses its transformation in relation to cultural and social change in the course of time. He explores the historical change of humour by situating his revolutionary term "carnival" at the centre of his discussion. The term carnival is employed to describe the folk humour of the Middle Ages and may include "1. Ritual spectacles: carnival pageants, comic shows of the marketplace. 2. Comic verbal compositions: parodies both oral and written, in Latin and the vernacular. 3. Various genres of billingsgate: curses, oaths" (Bakhtin 5). Although carnival may involve these performances, it is itself not a performance since "[c]arnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people" (7). Bakhtin defines the carnival as an event which disrupts rules, destabilizes hierarchy, and represents a transgression of codes (8). Briefly, the carnival can be described as an event of the folk culture which represents a world of topsy-turvy and which transgresses the codes established by the ruling class or the Church.

Mikhail Bakhtin provides an extensive historical research on the transformation of laughter and the carnival spirit. Firstly, he articulates that laughter in the ancient era or pre-class society depends on rituals like the festivals in ancient Rome. These rituals represent the equal nature of the comic and the serious as both existed in the "official" world – the sphere that belongs to the authority. In this regard, in pre-class society, the

comic and the serious were not separated but were accepted as parts of human life by both the folk – the "nonofficial" sphere – and the rulers. However, the link between the comic and the serious was ruptured after the emergence of class-structured societies; as a result, the comic was transferred to the "nonofficial" level in the medieval period (Bakhtin 6). Correspondingly, the comic developed outside the official world in the sphere of folk humour. As Bakhtin reveals, "[h]aving on the one hand forbidden laughter in every official sphere of life and ideology, the Middle Ages on the other hand bestowed exceptional privileges of license and lawlessness outside these spheres: in the marketplace, on feast days, in festive recreational literature" (71-72). Bakhtin states that the rupture of the comic from the official level is caused by the objective of the Church and the rulers to reinforce respect and obedience through intimidation. He clarifies that the carnival spirit emerged in the Middle Ages as the relationship between the comic and the serious discourse took a hierarchical course. Humour was employed to challenge the rulers and the divine since the comic discourse belonged to the oppressed folk; therefore, folk humour provided a sense of freedom from hierarchy, rules, and dogmas (7). Bakhtin asserts that the "feast of fools" can be a good illustration of folk humour of the Middle Ages. This feast is a parody of the Church and it was legitimate to practice it in the Church in previous periods; however, it was prohibited at the end of the medieval period but maintained to exist outside the church in the streets (74). Within this context, Bakhtin comments that the new role of the comic discourse enabled subjects to denounce and glorify the official world and human relations (6). Thus, the comic became a substitute for the serious tone of the ruling class, and criticism and celebration were considered as the new role of folk humour.

Bakhtin claims that the negative connotations of medieval laughter and humour changed in the Renaissance. He explicates that, in the Renaissance, feudalism and the Church began to lose authority as a result of the newly-emerging bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie employed the comic discourse to reduce the power of the medieval ideology by demonstrating the relativity of its dominating truths (Bakhtin 11). Bakhtin adds that the use of vernacular in literature and in other ideological spheres strengthened the destruction of the distinction between official and nonofficial literature. Consequently, folk humour entered high literature as it is observed in the works of William

Shakespeare and François Rabelais (72). Furthermore, the spirit of the carnival which is identified as the "world inside out" was employed to display that the authority of the Church and the feudal system were not predetermined (11). Bakhtin argues that the carnival spirit generated the criticism of the Church, authority, and the divine by foregrounding corporeality. The corporeal perspective undermined divine authority; thereby, it challenged the medieval thought that celestial and divine bodies are the most superior. As a result, rather than the divine image, the human body became the centre and the stability of the body, and authority was disputed (363-364). Bakhtin asserts that the new role of humour was not less significant than the serious perspective, but it provided a critical and an alternate perspective of the world. In this sense, the Renaissance view of laughter "is a peculiar point of view relative to the world; the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint" (66). Concisely, humour and laughter entered the official sphere and gained a positive connotation.

After the Renaissance until the twentieth century, the rise of the bourgeoisie and the new way of living changed the status and position of comic discourse once again. Bakhtin points out that the bourgeoisie sought for ways to present their own norms as absolute truths. This new order could not accept the ambivalence of the grotesque anymore; therefore, after the Renaissance, the comic discourse was not perceived as an alternative to the serious discourse. In other words, the comic discourse was transferred to a lower level than the serious attitude (101). Bakhtin also underpins that another reason for the degeneration and descend of folk humour is the transformation of the way of life of people in the eighteenth century and in the following periods. The festive character of the carnival spirit relies on the collective body of people and it is produced outside home in the streets; however, industrialisation changed the lifestyle of people by highlighting individualism. Feasts became a part of private life and of home, which restricted the free, challenging and subverting carnival spirit (33). As Bakhtin expresses, "[t]he carnival spirit with its freedom, its utopian character oriented toward the future, was gradually transformed into a mere holiday mood" (33). In short, Bakhtin's exploration of folk humour reflects that the peak point of the carnivalesque can be

detected in the Middle Ages as the carnival spirit transforms and declines in the progress of time.

Apart from the historical transformation of the carnival, Bakhtin elaborates on the concept by explaining its fundamental components such as its disruption of hierarchy and its collective spirit. Bakhtin asserts that the carnival can be defined as nonofficial practices, like feasts, fairs, comic performances, animal shows, and masks, which were employed by folk culture to laugh at the official world (9). He remarks that hierarchy played a critical role at official feasts in the Middle Ages as, for instance, people were required to sit and act according to their rank. On the other hand, everyone was perceived equal and could act according to their desire during carnival; thus, they were reborn and renewed since their social relations were not considered (10). It is evident that in contrast to the official feast, the carnival glorified liberation from rules, hierarchies, and norms; in other words, "[d]uring carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom" (8). The function of carnivalesque laughter is that it produces a sense of freedom by allowing the practices which are normally taboo such as over-eating, disruption of hierarchies, and sexual connotations (89). In addition, the carnival advocates a universal spirit and an atmosphere of collective consciousness as it rejects hierarchy and individual power. Carnival laughter, thus, is a "festive laughter" that is not an individual act but a collective practice since it is "the laughter of all the people" (11).

The aspect of revitalisation, which implies change and renewal, is another significant element of carnival laughter. Bakhtin states that "[c]arnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (10). The carnival is associated to revival and renewal, for it celebrates the end of the old world and the birth of the new world such as welcoming the new year, the spring, or the new ruler. Therefore, it includes a dual perspective and "[t]his is why in carnivalesque images there is so much turnabout, so many opposite faces and intentionally upset proportions" (410). In this framework, the contrasting elements in the carnival spirit represent that ambivalence is a crucial point of carnival laughter. As Bakhtin expresses, "this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival" (11-12). It is significant to highlight

the fact that travesty, the revitalisation of physical and social appearance, is one of the critical concepts of carnival laughter (81). Clowns and fools clearly demonstrate the aspect of travesty since they transform both their physical appearance and social status. Bakhtin argues that they are clowns and fools not only on stage but also in every aspect of life. In fact, they exist in-between art and life as they are the representation of reality and idealism (8). Thus, the carnivalesque sense of the world is a world upside down which disrupts social hierarchies, offers people an alternative and a festive life, and constructs alternative relations.

Bakhtin asserts that comic imagery of the carnivalesque is strongly connected with the representation of grotesque imagery. In grotesque realism, physical features of the body are emphasised, and "exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness are generally considered fundamental attributes of the grotesque style" (Bakhtin 303). He states that eating, defecating, childbirth and death are all imageries of the grotesque; that is, the openings and the orifices like the mouth, anus, and reproductive organs are all emphasised within the carnivalesque sense of the world. This suggests that the earthly and the bodily are promoted whereas the ideal and the spiritual are degraded in grotesque realism (19). The word degradation does not imply a negative connotation, but it denominates the idea of being close to the earth and the revitalising feature of the world. In this sense, "[t]o degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs" (21). Furthermore, the grotesque imagery demonstrates a body that is incomplete and never static. As Bakhtin scrutinises, the grotesque body is "a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body" (317). To illustrate, the orifices of the body generate the interaction between the body and the world since eating, defecating, pregnancy, sweating and so on are all actions that take place between the boundaries of the body and the outer world (317). The ongoing and repeating aspect of the above-mentioned physical features indicate that the body is unfinished and in the process of becoming. In addition, Bakhtin compares the incomplete and dynamic body to the ever-changing social relations (24). This implies that authority and hierarchy are not static and

predetermined like the grotesque body, which reflects the carnivalesque sense of subversion and renewal. Therefore, the body in grotesque realism holds a positive connotation as the renewing aspect of the earth is the focal point of grotesque imagery.

It is significant to highlight the idea that the grotesque body clashes with the Renaissance idea of the body. Bakhtin explains that childbirth, death, and conception are hidden issues of the Renaissance thought or "classic" aesthetics since they define the body as complete and static. Exemplifying his idea through the comparison between the classic and the grotesque image, Bakhtin states that grotesque bodies "are contrary to the classic images of the finished, completed man, cleansed, as it were, of all the scoriae of birth and development" (25). The grotesque body, thus, is considered as ugly and formless as it does not demonstrate the aesthetic view of the Renaissance. Bakhtin also adds that while grotesque realism portrays the body's universal aspect which foregrounds the collective body of people as a single universal unit, classic aesthetics describe the body in isolation from other bodies and emphasise its individuality (29, 19). In fact, the classical body is the image described by the official sphere since it is the divine and ideal image. On the other hand, the grotesque body is the representation of the nonofficial world as it is earthly and incomplete. Stallybrass and White argue that the classical statue is a good illustration of the contrast, for it has no holes whereas grotesque outfits or masks highlight the wide mouth, the belly, feet, and genitals. Furthermore, the classical body holds "high" class characteristics, for it represents theology, philosophy, law, and literature while the grotesque body reflects only corporeality and the earthly (22). Although the grotesque body contradicts the Renaissance view, "[t]he private and the universal were still blended in a contradictory unity. The carnival spirit still reigned in the depths of Renaissance literature" (Stallybrass and White 23). In this regard, the contrast between the grotesque body and the classical body reflects that the carnival can still be detected in Renaissance life and literature, such as in the works of Rabelais.

The marketplace is another aspect of the carnival that should be discussed since the sphere and the specific language of the carnival are generated in the marketplace. The marketplace is the nonofficial space where carnivals take place. It can be described as the outer world or the streets where the collective body of people are visible during

festivals (Bakhtin 255). Especially the language of the marketplace is significant in the understanding of the carnival. The nonofficial sphere of the carnival initiated a new type of speech which was not encountered in everyday life. This type of speech can be defined as the sincere and free language which does not depend on respectability not which is based on profanities and curses (153). The language of the marketplace is strongly connected to the revitalising aspect of the carnival as the vulgar and nonofficial speech forms at the marketplace are the ideal speech structures to destabilise and challenge authority. The reason for this is that the carnival spirit rejected the language of the official world which includes etiquette and conventions. Bakhtin argues that "[s]uch speech forms, liberated from norms, hierarchies, and prohibitions of established idiom, become themselves a peculiar argot and create a special collectivity, a group of people initiated in familiar intercourse, who are frank and free in expressing themselves verbally" (188). In brief, the marketplace created an atmosphere of freedom through its own language whereas the language of hierarchy and etiquette dominated the official world and private homes.

Bakhtin's analysis of Rabelais's works clearly demonstrates his theory of the carnivalesque sense of the world.[15] Bakhtin claims that "[i]n Rabelais we see the speech and mask of the medieval clown, folk and carnival gaiety, the defiance of the democratic cleric, the talk and gestures of the mountebank- all combined with humanist scholarship, with the physician's science and practice, and with political experience" (72). The births of the protagonists in Rabelais's *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, for instance, reflect the carnival sphere, the grotesque image and the marketplace language. Gargantua's mother, Gargamelle, gets into labour during a feast when everyone is

[15] Bakhtin establishes, in "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel", that Rabelais's works signify a specific time and space; that is, a specific chronotope - "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (2008, 84). He specifies this chronotope as the "Rabelaisian chronotope" and relates it to the pre-class society and the agricultural phase when life and time is defined by the collective, agricultural production, and productive growth (2008, 206). In this fashion, Bakhtin asserts that this chronotope can be detected in Rabelais's works, for his works overflow with the interaction between human beings and the earth, and they position the human body at the centre. Thus, it is implied that the Rabelaisian chronotope challenges the medieval ideology, depending on the hierarchy of the divine and the others, by forming a humanist world view that contrasts with the Medieval chronotope (1984, 363-364).

drinking and overeating. She eats so much tripe that the defecation of the tripe and Gargantua's birth occur at the same time, which represents the interwoven aspect of death and birth, and the ambivalent nature of the carnival. The narration of Gargantua's carnivalesque birth strengthens the grotesque imagery since his mother has overeaten so much tripe that Gargantua is born out of her ear as he cannot find any other way to exit (in Bakhtin 225-226). Instantly, Gargantua utters his first words the moment when he is born: "Drink! Drink! Drink!" (226). Tripe signifies a critical view regarding the grotesque, for tripe is connected with death since it is associated to slaughter, but it is also linked with birth as the belly generates (163). Bakhtin states that "[t]his grotesque image [of tripe] was a favorite expression of the ambivalence of the material bodily lower stratum, which destroys and generates, swallows and is swallowed" (163). Thereby, Gargantua's birth signifies the ambivalence and earthly nature of the carnival by intermingling the bowels, food, birth and death in a single action. The birth of Pantagruel, Gargantua's son, also displays grotesque imagery and carnivalesque laughter. Pantagruel's mother ate so much that it alarms the midwives about the birth of the child; as a result, she dies just after the birth. When Pantagruel's father learns about his wife's death, he begins to weep but starts laughing immediately "like a calf" the moment he sees his new-born son (in Bakhtin, 331). Pantagruel's birth generates carnival laughter since it includes exaggeration, grotesque imagery, death and birth. In this sense, the ambivalent nature of the carnival is clearly observed as joy and sorrow are experienced simultaneously (331). Evidently, from the narration of both births, it is clear that carnival laughter is initiated by positioning the earthly and the ambivalent nature of the body at the centre of life.

Bakhtin's discussion that the carnival provides a sense of freedom and disruption of authority has not gone unchallenged by critics. Terry Eagleton, for instance, points out the infirmity of the carnival's positive context by arguing that the carnival is a tool of the official world to maintain control and power over the nonofficial world. Eagleton declares that "[c]arnival, after all, is a licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off as disturbing and relatively ineffectual as a revolutionary work of art" (in Stallybrass and White 13). Likewise, Roger Sales challenges Bakhtin's idea by indicating that the carnivalesque

reinforces the power of the authority rather than disputing it. Sales states that the carnival is organised by authority itself in order to release negative emotions of the society with the aim of maintaining authoritative power. He asserts that, during the carnival, the discharge of oppressed emotions leads to a stronger endurance of that oppression in the future. Consequently, rather than subverting authority and eliminating oppression, the carnivalesque allows the authority to control and dominate the folk in the long run (in Stallybrass and White 13). As a comment on Eagleton's and Sales's views, Stallybrass and White point out that carnival may disrupt and challenge authority during certain times while it may be a regular and stable practice for long periods (14). Within this context, in *Race Riots: Comedy and Ethnicity in Modern British Fiction,* Michael Ross agrees with the aforementioned ideas and contends that the carnivalesque reinforces laughter at those who "don't belong" since it represents the act of laughing at the other and at the one who does not belong to the "civilised" norms. Ross adds that "hegemonic comedy" may be the right term to describe the works that demonstrate the carnival attitude of "laughing down" since these works strengthen the social order instead of disturbing it (5). Ross articulates that "[s]uch comedy tends to construe the folk-unruliness of carnival, which Bakhtin deemed healthy and progressive, as potentially dangerous *misrule*, a lack of 'civilized' order requiring correction" (5)(emphasis original). In short, although Bakhtin's theory of the carnival opens up new issues regarding laughter, its function to subvert authority is criticised by certain critics.

In conclusion, Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque provides a different perspective on laughter and humour. His discussion mainly concentrates on the relationship between folk humour and the carnival spirit of the Middle Ages in Rabelais's work. Within the framework of Bakhtin's discussion, it can be stated that carnival humour provides an alternative life and a sense of freedom by subverting authority and, as a result, generates revival and change. It rejects hierarchy and stability of authority by celebrating the end of the old order and the birth of a new order. In this sense, the carnivalesque promotes travesty and, therefore, represents its own ambivalent nature. Bakhtin focuses also on the marketplace since it maintains the "nonofficial", collective and festive sphere of the carnival. The language of the marketplace creates a collective crowd as everyone can express themselves through the use of speech forms

that are freed from norms and hierarchies. Furthermore, Bakhtin asserts that grotesque realism is one of the significant parts of the carnival as the ambivalent and contradictory nature of the carnivalesque is based on grotesque imageries. The orifices of the body which lead to eating, defecating and giving birth demonstrate the exaggerated features of the grotesque body and the link between the material body and the earth, which displays the ambivalence of grotesque imagery. In brief, carnival laughter has a festive and material character which portrays a world inside out.

CHAPTER 3

HUMOUR AND BLACK BRITISH TRANSNATIONAL NOVELS

3.1. *Fruit of the Lemon* by Andrea Levy

Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) explores the aspects of race and identity through its protagonist, Faith Jackson. The novel narrates the story of Faith, who is born and bred in England to Jamaican parents, and exposes her complex family history and racial background. The experiences of Faith and her family reflect the bitter truths of slavery, colonialism, and racism. The text revolves around Faith's identity crisis as a black woman in Britain and her journey to Jamaica to discover her familial and racial background. *Fruit of the Lemon* sheds light on the problematic issues of race, identity and lack of a sense of belonging with a combination of a serious and comic tone. Although the novel provides an insight into the tragedies of colonialism and racism, humour maintains a critical role in the representation of these tragedies and Faith's transnational identity. In this chapter, I argue that within the context of the tension between Faith's Jamaican and British identities, the direction and function of humour changes in order to reflect and reinforce the fluidity of racial identities, and particularly of Faith's transnational identity.

Fruit of the Lemon primarily consists of two parts. The first part includes Faith's experiences in England while the second part recounts her journey to Jamaica. At the beginning of the novel, Faith asks her parents about their family in Jamaica, but they prefer to stay silent about their life before their immigration to Britain. Faith identifies herself as "British" and not as Jamaican; however, as racial discrimination increases, the tension between her British identity and Jamaican identity builds up. Consequently, Faith has to confront racism around friends and at her workplace in the 1980s London. When she witnesses a racist attack on a black woman, which initiates her identity crisis, her parents decide to send her to Jamaica since they think that "everyone should know where they come from" (*FL* 162). In Jamaica, Faith learns about her extended family thanks to the stories told by her aunt Coral, Coral's friend Violet, and her cousin Vincent. She discovers the complex interconnections between Jamaica and Britain as she learns that she is the descendant of a white British slave owner who had

impregnated a slave woman. Her extended family tree represents that she is not purely white, black, British or Jamaican, but a combination of all. In this sense, Faith lives in a transnational existence since she travels, metaphorically and literally, back and forth across borders. Firstly, she embraces a British identity and later, when she travels to Jamaica, she forms a sense of belonging to Jamaica. At the end of the novel, Faith realises that her racial background consists of multiple races and nations such as British, Jamaican, Scottish, and Irish. Thus, it can be argued that throughout the novel Faith holds a transnational identity since she positions herself within multiple national contexts and she does not maintain a fixed sense of belonging but forms an identity that extends borders and shifts continuously.

It is crucial to note that Andrea Levy's own experiences about racism and her complex familial background provide a basis to discuss Faith's transnational identity as Levy writes from a transnational location. Like Faith Jackson, Levy questions her racial background as a second generation author since she is also born and raised in London with Jamaican roots. In her article, "This Is My England", she reveals her thoughts as follows, "Identity! Sometimes it makes my head hurt – sometimes my heart. So what am I? Where do I fit into Britain, 2000 and beyond?" (Levy 2000). Levy underlines that she is educated like the "white" English people but is forced to question her Englishness because of her colour. She expresses that during her childhood, Jamaican food and traditions were strange to her as she was raised as a "typical" English girl, and states that "I wanted just to fit in and be part of everything that was around me, and these strange parents were holding me back" (2000). Later on, Levy tries to embrace her Jamaican identity and when she learns more about her extended family, she realises that the concept of identity is not a simple notion but a very complicated one: "When you look at family trees – anybody's family tree, people's individual histories, not the winner-takes-all history of nations – the question of identity becomes very complicated" (2000). Therefore, the notion of racial or ethnic identity and the sense of belonging to a certain nation are critical concepts which Levy discusses in her article and which she explores in *Fruit of the Lemon.*

Prior to delving into the details of humour and transnational identity in Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*, it must be noted that the novel is received as a significant work

regarding the diasporic subjects in multicultural Britain. In *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation*, Mark Stein evaluates Levy's novel in relation to Faith's journey considering her diasporic identity, stereotypes and preconceptions. He proposes that the novel presents multiple "contact zones" between cultures, nations, and geographies (78). Furthermore, Şebnem Toplu discusses the critical position of places in identity construction and the function of home and land of sojourn for hybrid identities in *Fruit of the Lemon*. Since she analyses the novel by questioning and scrutinising the transformed notion of "Britishness", Toplu renders that Levy's work provides "a new global hybrid identity and the future of multicultural Britishness" (2005, 12). Moreover, in "Transnational Identity Mappings in Andrea Levy's Fiction", within the context of transnationalism, Toplu also refers to the reconstruction of multinational selves in relation to identity mapping in Levy's *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994), *Never Far from Nowhere* (1996), *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), and *Small Island* (2004). Toplu maintains that transnationalism in Levy's works represents the reconstruction of social and geographic space, the clash between homeland and hostland, and the conflict between family and identity (2011, 178). Furthermore, Elena Machado Sáez articulates that Levy's work dramatizes a British society which is multicultural but does not tolerate racial differences by creating a "regime of color-blindness" (2006, 1). In another article, Sáez focuses on the "silences" in *Fruit of the Lemon*, and claims that these silences expose the erasure of the diasporic subjects from the dominant discourse (2015, 46, 48). Focusing on the concept of migration, Weihsin Gui argues that Levy's fiction displays the mobility of migrancy since the concept of migration travels parallel to Faith's journey (73). In brief, previous discussions and studies on Levy's novel concentrate on diasporic identities, multicultural Britain and Britishness, and the impact of the colonial discourse on racial identity. In this context, I argue that it is possible to further improve the discussion of racial and ethnic identities by analysing their relation to the critical function of humour in *Fruit of the Lemon*.

3.1.1. "England" and Exposing the Laughter of the Empire

This section analyses the first part of the novel, entitled "England", and focuses on the function of humour concerning Faith's experiences in the British society. To

begin with, humour unravels Faith's problematic formation process of Jamaica and Britain as homelands. The first part of the narrative incorporates memories from Faith's childhood in England and introduces her confusion about her Jamaican background. When the boys at her primary school tease her saying that "Faith is a darkie and her mum and dad came on a banana boat", Faith is embarrassed of her Jamaican background (*FL* 3). These boys ridicule her and "giggle" each time when they think of the banana boat her parents travelled on. The laughter of the boys is clearly created by a sense of superiority. Thomas Hobbes argues that laughter is the outcome of the perception of "some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmities of others" (1650, 55). In this sense, the "white" British boys perceive Faith as an inferior, which represents the on-going existence and power of the colonial discourse in the late twentieth-century Britain. As Edward Said states, the formation of the "other" is the consequence of the "knowledge" produced by the "West" and colonial ideology (1978, 43). The boys construct an "other" by transforming their subjective knowledge of the banana boat into an objective reality. Even though Faith's mother, Mildred, tells her that it was a proper boat with cabins and that they had even a dance each evening, Faith believes that her parents sat among the bananas while "trying to find a comfortable spot amongst the spiky prongs of unripe bananas" (*FL* 4). The superior laughter of the boys denotes the relationship between the dominant hegemonic forces and the construction of the "other".

Apart from the laughter that reinforces superiority, the contrast between the boat Faith's parents travelled on and the banana boat that Faith has in her mind creates humour since normal mental patterns of a "boat" are violated. Arthur Schopenhauer argues that the sudden realisation of the incongruity between a real object and an abstract concept produces humour (1966b, 91). The incongruity of the abstract idea of the banana boat and the real concept of the boat produces humour in this context. In other words, humour is the result of the clash between the abstract boat image of Jamaican passengers lying among bananas in Faith's mind and the reality of the banana boat which is a decent boat with cabins and bananas only in the cargo department. It is essential to point out that this situation does not create laughter or humour for Faith as she does not recognise this incongruity. The lack of Faith's realisation of this

incongruity and humour manifests Faith's lack of information about Jamaica and her inability to adopt a shifting perspective. Humour, thus, points out that "Faith's insufficient knowledge about her family origin […] provokes Faith to reject her Jamaican roots and to construct a stable British identity" (Menteşe 112). In this framework, while the laughter of the "white" boys displays the superior laughter of the "West", which criticises Britain's imperial past, the incongruity created due to this superiority problematizes Faith's "otherness" and her inability to form a Jamaican "self".

The concept of home sustains to trigger humour in relation to the arrival and integration of Faith's parents, Mildred and Wade, which underlines the precarious construction of England as homeland. Mildred and Wade belong to the Windrush generation and experience many difficulties during their arrival and stay in Britain. They find the weather too cold, are employed in jobs beneath their proficiency as a result of racial discrimination, and live in a tiny single room. After six months, Mildred "wanted to go home", but when their circumstances slightly improve, she feels that they "finally arrive home" in their first apartment in London (*FL* 9, 11). Susheila Nasta asserts that, for diasporans, "homing desire" is a desire to reinvent home and create a place of homely experience; thus, it does not always refer to a longing for a specific homeland (194). Similarly, Avtar Brah states that "home" is not a geographical location but a place of "origin" and the place were experiences can be defined as homely (188). In this sense, it is notable that as an Afro-Caribbean diasporan and Jamaican immigrant, Mildred desires for her Jamaican homeland, and since she cannot reclaim Jamaica as home, she rewrites England as "home".

After representing Mildred's and Wade's serious difficulties of immigration and integration, the text moves to a humorous tone. It is this change of tone which strengthens the complicated notion of homeland and hostland. To illustrate, the shift to humour is represented through Mildred and Wade's hobby, storing boxes of all sort. Faith expresses that "[m]y mum was the greatest gatherer […] My dad and she would discuss the merits and weaknesses of each box […] My dad would store any new boxes in the small cellar of the house with mathematical precision" (*FL* 15). Significantly, "[t]he boxes they always keep ready for moving is an explicit metaphor of the parents'

immigrant selves; it reflects the paradoxical situation that while they are ready to go back 'home,' they expect their children to settle down in England" (Toplu 2005, 2). Although Faith's parents do not talk about Jamaica and have reinvented home as England, "the myth of return" is still present in their diasporic existence. This clash can be explicated by James Beattie's ideas on humour. Beattie states that humour is generated from the observation of two or more inconsistent situations or concepts as one whole body (155). In this respect, humour is produced since the incongruity of a "normal" hobby and their longing for home are united in one concept: collecting boxes. The comic tone of their exaggerated analysis of the boxes clashes with the serious concept of "returning home". By unifying a daily hobby and the bitter results of colonialism and immigration such as the "myth of home" and the "myth of return", Levy highlights the incongruity in the lives Jamaican immigrants.

The shift from a serious tone to a comic tone also underlines Faith's struggle to identify herself as British and to resist her fluid identity. Faith is unable to recognise her parent's aim of moving back to Jamaica as she always wonders why they are storing so many boxes. When Mildred and Wade tell her that they "are thinking of going back home", she thinks that they are going back to the old flat in London where she and her brother grew up (*FL* 44). Faith cannot process the news and asks "Why is Jamaica home?" (*FL* 45). The serious tone of her parents' decision is intermingled with Faith's ironic reaction to their decision. Schopenhauer contends that seriousness and humour are interconnected since the stronger a person is convinced about the congruity and the seriousness, the easier the transformation from seriousness to humour occurs. That is, the congruity between an abstract concept and the reality produces a serious tone while the sudden destruction of their unity produces humour (1966b, 99). Within this framework, Faith's abstract idea of home which is linked to England initiates the switch from congruity to incongruity. When the congruity is destroyed; in other words, when dissimilarity occurs between the idea of home and "homeland", the reader observes the humour in her reactions. Ulrike Erichsen ascertains that postcolonial humour's ambiguous character provides a double reference by code-switching in order to represent a double-perspective. Consequently, "[t]his double-focus of humorous utterances forces the reader or listener to switch between two perspectives and two

frames of reference" (Erichsen 32). In this fashion, the reader is forced to switch between two different concepts of home since while London is home for Faith as she identifies herself as English, Jamaica is home for her parents who identify themselves as Jamaican. The narrative, by representing the fluidity of home with a shift to a humorous tone, demonstrates that the concept of home is not attached to a specific location. Providing a double-perspective through humour, the text opens up transnational social fields and engages the reader in these fields. In short, the double references caused by comic incongruity compel the reader to question and contemplate on the notions of home and homeland.

Humour takes on a different significance as the clash between Faith's British identity and Jamaican identity gradually becomes more evident during "The Comedy Cabaret". Faith, her friends Marion and Mick, Marion's dad and sister visit the cabaret to watch comic performances. Laughter, comedy, and humour are all intermingled during the cabaret. It can be suggested that the first impression of the cabaret performances foregrounds the subjectivity of laughter and humour and its great effect on the subject and object of laughter. When the first comedian jokes about Margaret Thatcher, "the room convulsed with cheers and whoops and hollers"; however, Marion's dad, Fred, seems irritated by the Thatcher jokes and expresses that "I like a joke but you have to give Maggie her dues" (*FL* 89). Unlike Fred, "Mick and me [Faith] stood up to applaud him [the comedian]" (*FL* 89). During a different act of a man with a washing-bowl, Marion's sister is "howling with laughter and everyone, unfortunately, stare[s] at her" (*FL* 90). With reference to the above mentioned quotations, it is evident that the subject of laughter alters continuously. Billig asserts that laughter is a subjective, transforming and evolving phenomenon, which characterises its paradoxical nature (186). The changing and subjective laughter of the audience portrays the conflicts in multicultural Britain. Fred, for instance, rejects accepting and recognising humour related to the Thatcher government, which foregrounds his conservative and anti-multicultural perspective. Before the act, Marion's family refers to black people as "darkie", "coon", "gorilla", and "nig-nog" at their family home (*FL* 84, 85). Upon hearing these references, Faith overlooks their racist attitude. Although Fred states then that "Faith's different", he rejects being the laughing subject of Thatcher jokes during

performance (*FL* 93). On the other hand, unlike Fred's laughter, Faith's laughter is directed towards Thatcher jokes. The direction of laughter implies that although Faith struggles to construct a fixed British identity and although she overlooks Fred's racist comments, she actually longs to ridicule Fred's "white" racist attitude and the anti-multicultural policy of the conservatives. Thus, the subjectivity of laughter during the cabaret shows lends support to Faith's transnational identity by underlining her laughter at Thatcher jokes.

The last act at the cabaret can be regarded as the primary incident which crystallises Faith's transnational identity. The last show is performed by a black comedian and the moment Faith sees him, she realises that "the poet and me were the only black people in the room. I looked again – it was now a room of white people" (*FL* 92). While "[p]eople started to laugh and clap", Faith is constantly worried about whether the comedian will be able to amuse the "white" audience (*FL* 92). The decline of her engagement in the comedy casts a distinct viewpoint on the complexity of her transnational identity. Indeed, her distance to the jokes uttered by the black poet is a critical point that requires attention since it highlights her shifting sense of belonging. Faith's enjoyment of Thatcher jokes and her engagement in the comedy performances cease when the black poet appears on stage. John Morreall states that having a playful standpoint is substantial in embracing humour. To maintain a playful point of view, the laughing subject should maintain a specific distance to the serious events employed in the comic situation or joke. Morreall articulates that when accompanied with strong emotions other than enjoyment, playfulness is prevented and humour cannot be evoked (2009, 52-53). Within this framework, Faith cannot enter a playful mode as her colour-consciousness, which results mainly from Fred's racist attitude, predominates her amusement. Faith, who has identified herself as purely British until this act, positions herself within another national context: the black community. Her decline of laughter represents her shift from a British gaze to the gaze of the black "other" as follows, "[t]he poet became my dad, my brother, he was the unknown black faces in our photo album, he was the old man on the bus who called me sister […] He was every black man – ever" (*FL* 92). Faith's reaction to the black comedian indicates her simultaneous embeddedness in both England and Jamaica. As Peggy Levitt and Nadya Jaworsky

suggest, transnational social fields, produced by complex social and cultural connections, exceed home and host country (131). Faith disrupts the boundaries of her British identity by becoming involved in a complex cross-border space. Concisely, she cannot maintain the required distance to the comedy since she is excessively engaged in the performance as she identifies herself with the black comedian.

One of the most essential points of the comedy cabaret, concerning Faith's sense of belonging, is the clash between Fred's and Faith's lack of laughter. Like Faith, Fred does not laugh at the black comedian's jokes and impatiently desires that the show comes to an end. The "laugh and clap" of all the people in the room strongly contrast with Faith's and Fred's lack of laughter (*FL* 92). Their wish to terminate the black comedian's show and their rejection of recognising his humour epitomises the conflict between the "self" and "other". Fred rejects laughing due to his racist attitude since he perceives black people from the gaze of the European white "self". Nevertheless, Faith cannot laugh as she is aware of Fred's gaze as a result of her identification with the "other". Her consciousness of the white European gaze can be illustrated by Faith's doubts about how Marion's family perceive her during social gatherings at their house: "I always wondered who they saw" (*FL* 93). It can be discussed that Fred's and Faith's lack of laughter represent the ambivalent position of the "self" and "other". Homi Bhabha argues that the "other" has an ambivalent position as the "other" is associated not only with the colonised or dominated subject but also with the subversive and wild subject. Therefore, it is ambivalent whether the "other" is outside or inside the boundaries of the west (in McLeod 53). In this case, Faith as the "other" is inside the physical and metaphorical boundaries of Marion's family as she spends time in their house. On the other hand, the black comedian as the "other" is totally outside Fred's boundaries. The text, thus, interrogates the construction of the black "other" and European or white "self" through the ambivalence of constructed racial identities during the cabaret. As Bhabha also states, it is impossible to fix the "other" since the formation of the ambivalent stereotypical "other" threatens both the "self" and "other" (1994, 46). Fred is threatened by the Britishness of the black comedian; in other words, he is threatened by the black "other" through which he has constructed his white British "self". This suggests that it is impossible for Faith to construct a stable British "self".

Succinctly, Fred's lack of laughter reflects the power of British hegemonic dominance and of the colonial discourse. Even though the cabaret appears to be an ordinary comedy performance, it accentuates the superiority of the British and European gaze through Faith and Fred's inability to laugh. Certainly, the unstable and changing feature of humour elucidates the fluid and contradictory character of Faith's racial identity.

The gaze of the British "self" becomes more apparent when laughter is employed to question Faith's racial identity during her visit to a "typical" British village. Faith and her friend Simon travel to an ordinary British village where Simon's parents live. The conversation in a local pub, which takes place between a friend of Simon's mother and Faith, exemplifies humour's function in clarifying Faith's transnational identity. The man asks,

> 'And whereabouts are you from, Faith?' 'London,' I said. The man laughed a little. 'I meant more what country are you from?' I didn't bother to say I was born in England, that I was English, because I knew that was not what he wanted to hear. 'My parents are from Jamaica.' 'Well, you see, I thought that,' he began. 'As soon as you walked in I thought I bet she's from Jamaica.' 'Just my parents are,' I added but he went on. (*FL* 130)

It is evident that the dialogue initiates laughter and entertainment for the man but irritation and disturbance for Faith. Levy employs humour and laughter to unearth the contrast between the expectations of the white British society and immigrants or their descendants. Immanuel Kant contends that laughter and humour are created as a result of "a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing", that is, when a person's expectations are challenged and the events take a different turn humour appears (161). In this fashion, the laughter of the man exposes the violation of his expectations since he expects that a black woman like Faith will utter that she is from a former colony of England (Menteşe 112). Apart from the incongruity produced by the challenge of expectations, the inconsistency between an abstract concept and concrete reality, as in Schopenhauer's views, excites humour (1966b, 91). That is, the abstract concept the man has in his mind about someone from London is a white person whereas the concrete reality of Britishness is embodied by Faith. Despite the fact that the incongruity is very clear since the "misunderstanding" creates laughter for the man, he

refuses to accept the reality of Britishness, symbolised by Faith's black British identity. Significantly, "[w]hat is particularly interesting in Levy's fiction is the way she constructs the binary opposition of Faith's 'black' identity and her 'British' identity; these two identities conflict primarily because of the society's inability or unwillingness to recognize the black girl's right to be treated like any other British-born citizen, irrespective of race and color" (Toplu 2005, 4). In this sense, by challenging the expectations of the British society and representing the discrepancy of thoughts and realities about Britishness, humour is used as a strategy to reinforce the clash between racial identities.

The man's laughter with a feeling of superiority continues through his anecdote and signifies his feeling of superiority over the "others", ex-colonised subjects. His reluctance to recognise Faith's identity is in direct proportion to his rejection of accepting the realities of Britain's imperial past. To illustrate, he tells that his last name is Bunyan and that he met a Jamaican man "[d]arker than you [Faith], my dear, if you'll pardon me saying. And his name – and this is the funny part. His name was Winston Bunyan.' He sat back and laughed" (*FL* 130-131). At the start of the anecdote, he notifies Faith and the others that the story "will make you laugh" and, as aforementioned, refers to the "coincidence" of names as funny (*FL* 130). The laughter of the British Mr Bunyan hints his sense of superiority over the Jamaican Mr Bunyan. Although he thinks he solely laughs at the coincidence of the Jamaican man's and his own British surnames, he essentially laughs as a consequence of the sense of superiority. The reason for this is that Mr Bunyan compares his white British "self" signified by his "superior" British last name to the "inferior" black Jamaican man. Hobbes states that the comic is not in the object of laughter but in the laughing subject since it is the subject who compares himself/herself to the other which makes him/her feel superior (in Heyd 294). Evidently, the Jamaican man as the object of laughter does not possess any properties to create laughter. In fact, Mr Bunyan, the laughing subject, is the one that voluntarily produces laughter as a result of his comparison between his Western identity and the Jamaican subject. This comparison explains Mr Bunyan's sense of power over the object, which is in this case the ex-colonised subject or the Jamaican Mr Bunyan.

The invisibility of Faith's British identity mirrors the invisibility of the Jamaican Mr Bunyan. As the British Mr Bunyan refuses to recognise Faith's British identity, other residents of the "typical" English village also ignore her existence. When Faith greets some villagers, she states that "[t]hey looked at me but did not respond" and when she needs help because her foot sticks in the mud, she expresses that "a man approached me near the stile and he didn't say hello either. He stared at me instead" (*FL* 127). The village people overlook her presence because of her colour; alternatively stated, their gaze threatens Faith's existence in the village. This typical British village, thus, stands for the conservative British society outside the borders of multicultural London. Even though the colonial gaze threatens the "other", Bhabha argues that the "other" – "the invisible eye" – can also challenge the racist gaze and provide a counter-gaze by creating an anxious absence (1994, 47-48). Faith employs the counter-gaze and directs the laughter towards the British Mr Bunyan or the coloniser by explaining the reason for their shared surname as follows: "that would have been his slave name […] Your family probably owned his family once […] And I giggled a smile at Mr Bunyan" (*FL* 131). An anxious absence emerges as Faith demonstrates the absence of the Jamaican Mr Bunyan outside the boundaries of the colonial past. Indeed, Faith becomes the laughing subject as the black "other" and challenges the racist gaze of the British Mr Bunyan. In this regard, her invisibleness and the invisibleness of the colonial past threaten Mr Bunyan's British "self".

The change of laughter's direction represents that British Mr Bunyan is defined by the colonised "other". Even his surname, which defines his identity, is redefined by black Jamaican "others" who probably were the slaves of his forefathers. Homi Bhabha contends that the "other" who is the "invisible eye" does not possess an authentic position to construct a "self". The reason for this is that the "self" defines itself with the "other", yet, the other is always invisible. As a result, the mirror structure is lost because of the invisibleness of the "other" (Bhabha 1994, 46-47). In this context, the British surname of the Jamaican man reveals that he does not have an authentic position to construct a "self" and that he can only define himself in relation to the Western colonial powers. In order to reject the disruption of his identity and to construct a stronger British "self", the British Mr Bunyan denies the realities of colonialism and explains

that it is probably a vicar in his family which went to Jamaica and reproduced (*FL* 131). William Herbert New argues that colonisers justify colonialism through religion (106). Similarly, the British Mr Bunyan justifies his slave-owning background through the vicars in his family. By redefining his colonist background, Mr Bunyan reclaims his position as the laughing subject. He expresses that "'No. You know what it was? […] We had a lot of vicars in our family. Some vicar just going round sowing his seed. Producing lots of little dark babies. That sort of thing happened all the time.' He laughed" (*FL* 131). In short, the change of the laughing subjects portrays that Faith, as both the black "other" and British "self", does not hold an authentic identity position since she is not recognised as British and does not identify herself as Jamaican.

Toward the end of the first part of the novel, the existence of laughter displays Faith's shift from a desire for a stable British identity to the construction of a problematic "Black" one. Faith and Simon witness an attack on a black woman, carried out by group of racist boys. When Simon tells the story of the attack to Mick and Marion, Faith constantly interrupts him by underlining that the attacked woman "was a black woman" (*FL* 156). In fact, "Simon's interpretive lens in narrating the story ends up erasing the identity of Yemi [the attacked woman] and thereby the racist motives for the attack, and it is these silences which Faith finds herself continually correcting" (Machado Sáez 2006, 7). As a result of Simon's and Mick's stories which they narrate from a humorous perspective and which understate the seriousness of racism, Faith observes that "[a]ll my flatmates laughed" and, again, "[t]hey [Faith's flatmates] all laughed" (*FL* 157, 157). Mick tells that the attack should not be taken seriously since in the past some people threatened to firebomb his school as it was full of "Pakis". The threatening people, however, only broke some windows (*FL* 157). Ironically, Mick's anecdote reflects the understatement of racist attacks. Considerably, Faith, as the first-person narrator, distinguishes the laughter of her "white" flatmates. Their laughter is not just a narration of their physical reaction, but it also signifies that Faith places herself in the position of the object of laughter. As the object of laughter is the racist attack, Faith's perception of herself as the object of laughter marks her shifting identity. She identifies with her black identity after the attack which represents her transnational sensibility. Though she does not construct a positive black identity, she relocates her

position in society and embraces a collective black identity. It can be observed that Faith begins to form a cultural identity, which is Stuart Hall's first definition of identity. Cultural identity is a collective culture which provides solidarity for ethnic and cultural groups; therefore, "[i]t is this identity which a Caribbean or black diaspora must discover, excavate, bring to light" (Hall 2003, 236). Faith positions herself in the collective identity of black people, which includes the attacked woman, her attacked brother[16] and all the other black people in her imagination.

The change in Faith's reactions to laughter and humour is remarkable in relation to her transnational identity. Until the attack on the woman, Faith firstly overlooks the laughter of the British "self" such as the laughter of the school boys regarding the banana boat. Later on, she tries to redirect the direction of laughter, like the laughter of Mr Bunyan at the pub. Considering the case of the attacked woman, however, she neither overlooks nor redirects the laughter of the white British "self". This can be illustrated briefly by her final reaction, for when "her flatmates were giggling" by making fun of the attack again, Faith gets furious and says, "[w]ill you all just shut up. Just fucking shut up. It's not funny" (FL 158). Faith's reaction to her friends' humorous perspective exposes not only how laughter and humour can undervalue racism but also how they can portray the flexibility of boundaries of identity.

Humour underlines the flexibility of boundaries also by contrasting Carl's, Faith's brother, and Faith's notions of identity. The humorous tone in Carl's identity shifts is in contrast with the bitter tone of Faith's inability to redefine her ethnic identity. To exemplify, when Carl was young, he insisted on being called by his middle name "Trevor" since "[t]here were no other Carls and boys used to walk behind him in the streets shouting his name or calling him Carol, among other things" (*FL* 18). Each time the Jackson family forgot that he renamed himself and called him Carl, he answered as follows, "I don't know who you mean, my name is Trevor'" (*FL* 18). After his graduation, "[h]e wanted to be called Carl again. Carl, he decided, had a certain

[16] The memories of Faith's brother, Carl, are narrated just after Mick's story: "Carl once came home with bruises on his eyes, his face, his arms. The bruises took weeks to heal and turned bits of his skin blue. He never told anyone what happened" (*FL* 157). With reference to this quotation, the text implies that Carl was the victim of a racist attack.

Superfly, *Shaft*, don't-mess-with-me-I'm-a-black-man message. He deployed the same tactics: 'Trevor, who's Trevor? Never heard of him'" (*FL* 18)(emphasis original). With reference to the illustration mentioned above, superiority and incongruity are the two aspects of humour, and they are employed and intermingled to question the construction of racial identity and national identity. In terms of superiority, it can be argued that the superior laughter of the boys has generated Carl's identity shift. The boys are probably "white" British boys as they were also calling him "other things", implying that they possibly called him racist nicknames. The superior laughter of the boys can be compared to the laughter of the boys who make fun of Faith and the banana boat. Both situations include British laughter's hegemonic dominance over the "other". It is clear that the Western 'self' defines and constructs the "other"; yet, whereas Faith is unable to redefine her identity, Carl easily reaches a fluid sense of self. In particular, unlike Faith, Carl avoids being the object of laughter by repositioning himself in different nation-states.

Apart from the laughter of superiority, humorous incongruity solidifies Carl's ethnic identity. Morreall argues that humour can be defined as the recognition of a cognitive shift, the unexpected sudden change of ideas (Morreall 2009, 50). In the light of Morreall's view, the humorous cognitive shifts are closely linked to Carl's identity shifts; therefore, Carl's sudden and continuous identity shifts trigger humour. Although Carl's identity shifts are narrated in a humorous way amusing the reader, the superior laughter of the boys forces the reader to question the reasons for Carl's shifts. As Ross states, "we are again and again compelled also to interrogate, and sometimes to regret, our amusement" (Ross 278). Even though Ross concludes that one cannot escape inquiring the source of amusement through his brief analysis of Levy's *Small Island* (2004), it is not wrong to apply his statement to *Fruit of the Lemon* since he discusses *Small Island* by delving into the concepts of humour, race, and second generation writers. Thus, while Carl's naming issue is narrated in a humorous tone, it compels the reader to question his identity construction. Carl's possession of two names demonstrates that he belongs to two nations while his cross-boundary shifts reveal his fluctuating position in national and cultural space. In other words, Carl is able to react to the requirements of both nation-states. His situation underlines that his ethnic and

cultural identity is defined by "difference". As Hall states, cultural identities are positional, defined by a sense of difference or lack and always in a process of change (2003, 236-237). Carl defines himself as the "black" Carl when he is not the "British" Trevor and he is Trevor when he is not Carl. He identifies himself by what he is not, by his difference. However, his repositioning and redirection of laughter lead to the uncertainty of the object of laughter as it is uncertain whether "black" Carl or "white" Trevor is laughing. This uncertainty and ambiguity consolidate the interrogation of ethnic and cultural identities. Carl clearly embodies the fluidity of transnational identities, which suggests that his ethnic identity defies any categorisation. Concisely, the text criticises the superior laughter of the Western "self", but as this superior laughter leads to Carl's humorous identity shifts and continuous redefinition of his identity position, it can be argued that humour functions not only to criticise Western laughter but also to display the fluidity of identity.

Like Carl, Faith also possesses a middle name: Columbine. Faith is named after her mother's goat in Jamaica; nevertheless, she cannot interiorise and love her middle name (*FL* 5, 103). In fact, Faith's incapability to love and accept her middle name, unlike Carl, implies that she is unable to interiorise her Jamaican heritage. Thus, the goat is not only a comic tool but also a symbol of her Jamaican heritage. Toplu remarks that, in Levy's works, transnational identity is a complex notion since it may be generated by one's own choice, or by the decisions of one's parents, whose descendants are drawn in a struggle to be accepted by the family and society (2011, 170). Faith's denial of her middle name hints her complicated transnational identity which is affected by both her own choices and that of her parents. Her mother tells that "I loved that goat, why shouldn't I call you after me goat, Faith?" (*FL* 5). Furthermore, her parents think that "even though [Faith] was named after a lovely goat [she] never questioned [her] mother about the animal" (*FL* 332). The goat as a comic tool represents her parents' desire and decision to force Faith to embrace her Jamaican background while it also signifies Faith's own decision to deny her roots as she avoids using her middle name. This can be illustrated clearly by Faith's experiences at work. When people at work ask her about the meaning of her middle name, she does not clarify that she is named after a goat and misinforms them that "[i]t's an old family name" (*FL* 103). As a result, Faith

prevents the laughter of her "white" colleagues by concealing the fact that she is named after a goat. The goat, thus, not only emblematises the influence of the family but also presents the impact of society on Faith's complex transnational identity. Whereas Carl consciously chooses to locate and relocate himself in different national contexts, Faith denies constructing a second subject position by eliminating her Jamaican middle name, Columbine.

Also, humour highlights Faith's problematic identity by contrasting it to Ruth's racial identity, Carl's girlfriend. As discussed previously, the last chapter starts with the laughter of Faith's flatmates, yet, it ends with a serious tone of Faith's nervous breakdown. Specifically, the humorous incongruity caused by Ruth and her family just before Faith's identity crisis underlines the seriousness of Faith's crisis. Ruth is a radical black girl, supporting the "Black" community and forcing the Jackson's to join the radical Black movement. Faith is shocked when she realises the contrast between Ruth and her "white" family (*FL* 159). Ruth has a white mother, white half-brothers, and a white stepfather. Her biological father, who met her mother when he was a student but had to leave England, is from Guyana. As a result, "[t]his revelation intensifies Faith's agony at a point when she thinks that Ruth is justified in her hatred of white people. Faith finally has to confront the fact that she is betrayed by friendly white people, and even by Ruth's family" (Toplu 2005, 5). The sudden dissimilarity between Ruth's blackness and her family's skin colour augments humour for a short instant, but it also creates discomfort. As a result, the reader is compelled to question the concept of racial identity as this is the breaking point that leads to Faith's identity crisis. The clash between laughter and seriousness highlights Faith's identity conflict and provides a space to question the notion of race and ethnic identity.

Laughter and humour yield to an intense serious tone of Faith's identity crisis. Her identity crisis is a reminder of the fact that it is impossible to form a stable British or Jamaican identity by also signalling her lack of a sense of belonging. The crisis starts with the rejection of her black existence. She closes the windows of her room so that it will be dark enough to avoid her own "blackness". When Faith still sees her reflection in the mirrors, she covers all of them: "I didn't want to be black any more. I just wanted to live. The other mirror in the room I covered with a tee-shirt. *Voilà*! I was no longer

black" (*FL* 160). Seeing her image in the mirror, Faith describes herself as a "black girl lying in bed" (*FL* 160), which reflects that "the first-person narrator speaks about herself in the third person. Faith now relies upon eyes no longer her own and comes to see herself like (and as) an outsider" (Stein 70). The loss of a sense of unity with the British society is the primary cause of Faith's nervous breakdown and her fragmented identity which is symbolically narrated through her differentiation between her existence and her image in the mirror.

In order to comprehend Faith's sense of fragmentation, Jacques Lacan's ideas on the concept of identity regarding the mirror stage should be discussed. Lacan argues that the subject is constructed from outside during the mirror stage, which implies that identities are not essential but fictional. At first, the infant sees an "ideal-I" in the mirror since he/she sees himself/herself as a "Gestalt" –a physical, psychological, and biological unity with the outer world (Lacan 45). In this context, Faith forms an "ideal-I" – an ideal British "self" – in the beginning, for she sees herself as a whole and as a complete unity with the British society. That is why she struggles to construct a stable British identity and escapes her Jamaican heritage that disrupts the unity between her identity and the British society. Lacan further argues that the "ideal-I" is actually a misrecognition, "méconnaissance", as the infant was never a Gestalt; consequently, this misrecognition leads to a sense of lack. As a result of the feeling of lack, the subject always strives for the completion of the self-image, which Lacan defines as "jouissance"; however, this completion will never happen since the "ideal-I" was always an illusion, a fantasy (48). In this sense, Faith realises that her unity with the British society includes "misrecognition" after she identifies herself with the attacked black woman. Accordingly, the mirror symbolically functions to represent this misrecognition. Faith cannot observe her complete and unified British identity, her ideal-I, in the mirror any longer. She only perceives her black identity as a consequence of the lack she realises; in other words, her misrecognition of her British identity leads to her sense of incompleteness and lack. Definitely, Faith loses the "jouissance" her reflection gives as a result of the disruption of her British identity. The covered mirror symbolises the disruption of the Gestalt image and means that her stable British identity

has always been an illusion. Thus, in Lacan's views, the covered mirrors and Faith's rejection of her black image demonstrate her fragmented and incomplete identity.

In conclusion, in the first part of the novel, Faith's fragmented ethnic and national identities are represented and intensified through humour and laughter. Especially, the amalgamation of humorous incongruity with superiority draws attention to Faith's transnational sensibility. The laughter of the "superior" British "self" defines and redefines Faith's identity, and situates her as the black "other". Indeed, "Western" laughter with the feeling of superiority refers to the absence of the authentic position of the "self" and "other". As a result of the superior laughter of the West, humorous incongruity is generated and British hegemonic dominance is criticised. Comic incongruous situations problematize Faith's sense of belonging and the clash between her British identity and Jamaican identity. These inconsistent circumstances provide a double frame of reference in order to emphasise Faith's struggle to define her Britishness, her "otherness", and the flexibility of the boundaries of identities. In brief, while the superior laughter of the white "self" is directed towards Faith as the black "other", comic incongruities blur the positions of Faith's "otherness" and the white British "self".

3.1.2. The Transformation of Humour in "Jamaica"

The second part of *Fruit of the Lemon*, entitled "Jamaica", narrates Faith's journey to Jamaica and the discovery of her extended family. It mainly focuses on Faith's own experiences in Kingston and also employs family stories mostly told by her aunt Coral in a non-chronological order. Faith explores the interconnected and complicated links between her British background and Jamaican heritage along with the stories and the collective histories of her extended family. In this part, Faith's experiences in Jamaica are tunnelled by the experiences of her family members since "different voices narrate the stories of Faith's family members reaching back many generations. Coral's becoming a secondary narrator likewise helps in making the spaces of Jamaica readable for Faith, as the layers of family history unfold, intersect and crossover" (Toplu 2005, 9). The branches of her family tree are revealed in a dissolving manner while she listens to the family stories. Faith learns that she is the descendant of

a Jamaican slave woman and a British slave owner. Furthermore, she discovers that she also has Irish and Scottish ancestors. Her extended family tree indicates that she is not purely white or black, British or Jamaican, but a mixture of all of them. The second part of the novel also pays a great significance on the transformation of the direction and source of humour. To clarify, in addition to "superior" laughter of the West, this part also includes the laughter of black characters at other black characters. Therefore, the part entitled "Jamaica" problematizes and displays the perspectives of the "self" and "other" with the laughter of not only British but also Jamaican characters. This complicated relationship between the laughing subject and object of laughter spotlights the tension in Faith's racial identity.

In the first scenes, humorous incongruity presents a double frame of reference like the first part of the novel; however, rather than contrasting the perspectives of "white" and "black" characters like in the first half of the novel, Levy contrasts these different perspectives within Faith in order to reveal the intensity of her identity conflict. When Faith arrives at Kingston airport, she describes her surroundings as follows, "[e]verywhere I turned – black faces. Black faces of people in uniforms. Black faces waiting for luggage. Black faces behind counters [...] I felt out of place – everything was a little familiar but not quite. Like a dream. Culture shock is how this feeling is described" (*FL* 169). This scene provides an example of humorous incongruity since Faith as a black woman, ironically, feels out of place among other black people. Schopenhauer argues that the realisation of the inconsistency between an abstract concept and the reality causes laughter (1966a, 59). The scene at the airport, thus, serves to maintain that the abstract concept is signified by the image of black people at the airport and the reality is indicated by the existence of Jamaican and British people of Jamaican descent (Menteşe 114). Whereas the reader observes black people at the airport, Faith's reaction projects that the reality contrasts with the image in the reader's mind. The realisation of this clash is a mode of humour which gives rise to a double-perspective on colour, race and identity. As Levy highlights in her article, "Englishness must never be allowed to attach itself to ethnicity. The majority of English people are white, but some are not" (2000). This double-perspective results from the incongruity between the reality of the plurality of identities and the abstract idea of

static or singular identities. The reality or the real object that diverges from the abstract idea is epitomised by Faith since her culture shock displays the fragmented and unstable aspects of identity. When the incongruity is realised, "it then becomes strikingly apparent from the entire difference of the objects [reality] in other respects, that the concept was only applicable to them from a one-sided point of view" (Schopenhauer 1966a, 59). The incongruity at the airport clarifies that a one-sided point of view is insufficient to comprehend Faith's transnational identity. The bitter humour produced by Faith's culture shock necessitates the vitality of a double-perspective regarding Faith's identity crisis and her lack of a sense of belonging.

The double-perspective provided by humour at the airport introduces the idea that Faith has adopted a "white" British or Western gaze, and the adopted gaze unveils Faith's feeling of superiority since "[t]he second part of Levy's novel, which is set in Jamaica, reveals the dominant British side of her hyphenated identity: away from Britain, Faith's first impression of Jamaicans is ironically equal to that of a colonizer" (Toplu 2005, 8). The "superiority" of Faith's British gaze is clarified when she enters aunt Coral's home. Faith is afraid of her aunt's dog since "[r]abies! I'd read about it – the Third World is full of it. A death of rabies is horrible" (*FL* 179). She imagines that her aunt's house is a typical "mud hut with a pointy stick of roof and dirt floors" and "a black cast-iron range with a cooking pot permanently bubbling with something made from goat" is situated in the kitchen (*FL* 180). Evidently, Faith expects that her aunt Coral lives in an uncivilised place with a primitive lifestyle. This suggests that her expectations strongly mirror the colonial discourse. Similar to the bullying of the little boys at the beginning of the novel, Faith has interiorised the subjective knowledge about the "other", the non-European. As Said states, orientalism or colonial discourse is a political imagination created to promote the binary opposition between the "self" and "other" in order to maintain the colonial rule (1978, 43-44). Though Faith suffers as a result of the colonial discourse and racism in her life in London, she is unable to eliminate the Western gaze in the very beginning of her arrival in Jamaica. However, when she enters aunt Coral's home, she sees that the kitchen has "[f]ormica worktops! […] The floor was not made of mud and straw – it was solid and covered with a geometric-print lino. And up on a high shelf above the kitchen cupboard was a food

liquidiser. My mum didn't have a liquidiser" (*FL* 180). The ironical juxtaposition between the image Faith has in her mind and the real Jamaican home hints at the idea that Faith cannot hold a stable British "self". On the contrary, humorous and ironical incongruities at the airport and at Coral's home exhibit that Faith's ethnic identity is not static but unstable. With the integration of incongruous humour, the first chapters provide a space to question the opposition between the reality and the concepts of racial, national and ethnic identities.

Apart from emphasising humour evoked by the British "self", the second part of the novel represents also the laughter of the Jamaicans at British people. Whereas Faith's black "otherness" in London initiates the laughter of the Western "self" as discussed in the previous section, her British "otherness" in Jamaica generates the laughter of the Jamaican. This can be illustrated by the laughter and humour at the family wedding in Kingston. When Faith attends the wedding, she dresses like a typical English woman, and wears trousers. As she enters the church where the wedding will take place, Faith notices that everyone is staring at her:

> The woman beside her nudged the woman beside her and whispered, 'Pants.' […] Other people looked up, twisting round, stretching to get a better look. […] Little girls hid their laugh behind their hands, men shook their heads and old women sucked their teeth. I walked down the centre aisle to my aunt with the congregation's gaze following me like I was the bride. (*FL* 295)

Faith is the centre of attention due to her "otherness" caused by her Western style of clothing at the wedding. With her different looks, she is the object of laughter and criticism; as a result, her British "otherness" turns her into the object of laughter among Jamaican people. As Werbner argues, second and third-generation diasporans are shocked when they arrive in their ancestral homeland since "they are regarded in their homeland as foreigners and aliens" (2013, 111). Although Faith is as black as the Jamaican guests, her British looks transform her into the "foreigner" or the "other". Faith is perceived as the "other" at the wedding since even the pastor "stood by a lectern waggling his head to get a better look at the foreigner [Faith]" (*FL* 295).

One of the fundamental reasons for the laughter and mockery at the wedding is Faith's inability to embrace her transnational identity. As previously discussed, Faith's

aim to construct a static British identity gives rise to humorous incidents in the first half of the novel. Likewise, in Jamaica, she attempts to form a stable Jamaican identity which is disrupted by the laughter and criticism of the wedding crowd. Faith finally feels at "home" after listening to all the stories about her extended family. Also, she is not "othered" because of her skin colour and expresses that "[n]o one noticed me. I smiled at anyone who looked in my direction. But no one did. I was blending in. I was just one of the crowd. I was just another guest. It was wonderful" (*FL* 293). Consequently, Faith thinks that "I could even live here. Work in Jamaican television. […] I could be a director, a producer. In Jamaica I could be anything." (*FL* 293). This attempt to define herself as Jamaican and reach a fixed Jamaican sense of belonging produces a sharp contrast between Faith's identification as a Jamaican and the wedding guests' perception of her as the "foreigner". Thus, when she finally embraces her Jamaican background and tries to construct a fixed Jamaican identity, she becomes the object of laughter among Jamaican people. Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein argue that although postcolonial humour has a subversive function, it is not particularly directed at the coloniser. They assert that the target of laughter may be either the coloniser or the colonised, "[b]ut it will always raise the complex question 'Who laughs at whom?'" (12). In this context, one of the critical points is the complexity of the object and subject of laughter at the wedding since the laughing person and the laughable cannot be clearly comprehended. The reason for this is that Faith is both the laughable British person and the Jamaican second generation diasporan at the same time. That is, Faith is the target of laughter as the coloniser, yet she is also simultaneously the colonised. Thereby, the complexity of the direction and the target of laughter indicate the chaotic and fragmented nature of racial and national identities.

Furthermore, the relationship between humour and mimicry, as in Homi Bhabha's terms, in the family stories reflect the struggles of the British "self" and Jamaican "other". As Mark Stein scrutinises, Faith's "affiliations with Jamaica come about in the course of Faith's visit, and are constructed rather than 'given.' The genealogy which the novel develops is a *historically produced formation*–it does not result from a direct connection between Faith and Jamaica" (78)(emphasis original). The significance of humour and mimicry in these stories lies in the fact that they

substantiate Faith's identity conflict by complicating the direction of laughter. Also, these stories provide Faith with a space to reach a sense of belonging since they represent that there will never be a totality in her identity. The desire of certain Jamaican family members to imitate the British "self" is ridiculed by other "black" characters. To illustrate, Mildred, Faith's mother, endeavours to behave and appear like a typical British woman during her youth in Kingston. Mildred longs to move to England and she does not miss any opportunity to talk to Jamaican women who come from England. As Faith's Jamaican aunt, Coral, narrates, "Mildred loved the way they dressed and curled their hair and she loved to listen to the women speak. She would go down to the department store and listen to them talking in their English accents" (*FL* 249). Later at home, "Mildred spent hours in front of the mirror reciting, 'What a beautiful weather for the time of the year,' over and over. 'She was mad! She would practice walking like them and trying to curl-up her hair like them" (*FL* 249). In this case, Mildred imitates the culture of the coloniser as a colonised subject. Homi Bhabha delineates colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (1994, 86)(emphasis original). Mimicry, thus, is repetition rather than representation; therefore, the mimicking subject can never reach an authentic "self" (88). In this sense, Mildred cannot form a complete British "self" due to the fact that the more she tries to resemble a British person, the more she is considered "mad" by Coral. The critical point is that humour observed in Mildred's mimicry casts a new light on Coral as the black laughing subject. Previously, Coral comments on Jamaicans who try to act like the British as follows, "they all think they so high-class because they have light skin. Cha. Sipping their drinks with their little fingers in the air. It was comical" (*FL* 193). This expresses Coral's perception of Mildred's mimicry. Mildred is ridiculed by Coral since she acts as "comical" as other Jamaicans who imitate the "white" upper class. Indeed, Mildred is the object of laughter while Coral is the laughing and ridiculing subject. As a consequence, mocking laughter is directed from one black character to another black character, which blurs the notion of identity and race.

In the second part of the novel, the stories of Faith's relatives crystallise her transnational identity by pinning down the humorous incidents. To begin with, the

parents of Faith's father, Margaret and Obadiah, represent humour initiated by inelasticity of human beings. The criticism of the imitating black subject should be underlined by Henri Bergson's ideas of laughter and humour. Henri Bergson claims that a mechanical inelasticity leads to laughter which is why we laugh at someone who falls while running. Thus, humour is produced when a machine-like formation is interrupted, for "*[a]ny arrangement of acts and events is comic which gives us, in a single combination, the illusion of life and the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement*" (Bergson 66, 84, 105)(emphasis original). The story of Margaret and Obadiah is told by Violet who is a Jamaican childhood friend of Faith's mother. Violet conveys that Wade's parents are of a partly black and white racial background, still, they insist that they are everything but black. In order to blend in Jamaican high society, Margaret and Obadiah throw parties at their big house, "[b]ut only light skin and white could come through their door. […] And every Friday night these people have dances. All the light skin and white people dancing with each other. And there is Margaret and Obadiah acting like one of them, doing foxtrot and waltz" (*FL* 284). Apparently, Margaret and Obadiah imitate the colonisers and the Western culture. Their mimicry employs a machine-like characteristic since they live according to a certain structure. As Bergson asserts, the comic figure is a "piece of clockwork" or maintains "puppet-like" movements unlike the spontaneous and natural activities and motions of a human being (156, 152). In this fashion, the amalgamation of the comic with mimicry reveals and criticises Margaret's and Obadiah's inability to shape a natural "self"; in other words, their comic characteristic illustrates their impossibility to reach an authentic "self".

The aspect of "repetition" of the comic subject is another point that should be discussed in the mimicry of Wade's parents. Bergson highlights that comic characters live according to certain formulas or repetitions (in Sypher xi). Margaret and Obadiah apply their formula of imitating the "high society" into every part of their life which represents that their whole lifestyle consists of mimicry. They expect, for instance, their sons to marry white or light skinned people and they "teach them to bow and speak like an Englishman" (*FL* 284). They do not like Wade's girlfriend, Mildred, since "she was too dark" (*FL* 288). When Wade and Mildred announced their wish to get married, "Margaret hired a man to investigate Mildred's family background. She wanted to know

was Mildred a quadroon, an octoroon, a half-breed or just black" (*FL* 288). Margaret's and Obadiah's imitation is so intense that they are perceived as comic characters, for their behaviour does not demonstrate actual and real life. As Bergson elucidates, humour is originated by the machine-like person since "life should be a negation of repetition. So we laugh at him" (in Sypher xi). Humour created by the mimicry of Obadiah and Margaret, reveals and criticises their inflexible attitude towards life. Ironically, Obadiah dies because of their machine-like and repeating mimicry, for he slips on the floor shining like glass which is intensively polished to host guests at their house since Margaret "liked her floors to shine" (*FL* 289). The death of Obadiah is the interruption of their mechanical inelasticity. Similar to Bergson's example of laughter caused by a man who falls while running, Obadiah's fall and death ironically expose a moment of distraction to his "puppet-like" life of mimicry.

As the subject of laughter, Violet embodies social criticism against Margaret and Obadiah's mimicry of the British. Bergson states laughter has a social signification; therefore, it must "[a]lways [be] rather humiliating for the one against whom it is directed, laughter is, really and truly, a kind of social 'ragging'" (65, 147-148). Bergson, thus, asserts that the fundamental function of laughter is social humiliation in order to correct the faults of the society (148). Violet's comments on Margaret and Obadiah's lifestyle present the corrective function of humour regarding their mimicry. She expresses that Margaret describes her father as "part French and part Arawak. 'Some days he was part-Indian and part-Spanish. Other times I have known him to be part-Irish and the other part-Indian Maharaja who was at the court of Queen Victoria" (*FL* 282). Moreover, Violet explains that "even when her sons born with picky-picky head, big lip, broad nose, she still say is no West-Indian, no African in them" (*FL* 282-283). She humiliates and criticises Margaret's desire to identify herself with some racial backgrounds other than the African. Violet exposes the mechanical structure of Margaret's mimicry, and her mockery becomes the social corrective of mimicry. As the aim to correct someone demonstrates the laughing subject's superiority over the object of laughter, Violet is the superior laughing subject who reveals the faults of "mimicking" Jamaicans.

One of the critical points that requires attention is that Violet is a black Jamaican woman just like Margaret. Violet, as a black woman, criticises and mocks the desire of other black people who reject their roots. Interestingly, she is the social corrective who exposes the comic characteristic, mimicry and ambivalent state of Margaret and Obadiah. Her laughter is the laughter of the black subject towards another black subject who imitates the "white" ones. As Obadiah and Margaret resemble the coloniser, it is complicated whether Violet only mocks their mimicry or also the attitude of the colonisers themselves. The ambivalent direction of laughter is linked to the ambivalent identity position of the black subject and the white subject who is imitated. Bhabha states that "[t]he *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (88)(emphasis original). In this sense, it can be argued that Violet's ambivalent laughter disrupts the colonial discourse since, through Obadiah and Margaret, she possibly also mocks the colonisers. The ambivalent direction of laughter and humour create a double vision which evinces the impossibility of an authentic identity. Mimicry and the change of the direction of humour demonstrate the tension between British and Jamaican identities, which manifests Faith's problematic identity construction.

Humour takes on a new significance through Faith's great-aunt, Constance, and it contributes to trace Faith's transnational identity, too. Machado Sáez asserts that "[Constance] is a mirror image of Faith, foreshadowing Faith's own complex and ambivalent negotiation of her Caribbean diasporic identity" (2015, 63). Constance is a white coloured blue-eyed Jamaican woman of partly Jamaican and partly British descent. During her childhood and youth, Constance's mother forces her to embrace only her white British roots. Therefore, she sends Constance to her British grandparents in Britain for an English education, yet when Constance returns to Jamaica, she realises that her British looks and style are criticised and not admired anymore by the ex-colonised Jamaican society. Consequently, Constance rejects her British background and searches for her African roots by joining the Rastafarian[17] community and also travelling to Africa. Later, she is also refused by the Rastafarians and African people

[17] A religious Jamaican community that believes in the idea that Africans are the chosen people.

due to her white skin colour. As a result, Constance adopts the name "Afria" and insists on her black African roots. As Ashcroft et al. suggest, identity crisis in postcolonial subjects is the result of dislocation since the loss of a self is initiated by enslavement, migration, transportation or oppression (1989, 9). In this regard, Constance experiences a lack of a sense of belonging as she is physically and metaphorically dislocated and alienated. Mark Stein argues that Constance can be perceived as Faith's alter-ego since, like Constance, Faith is rejected by the society she lives in and denies her racial background (75). This suggests that both Constance and Faith travel metaphorically and literally across borders with the objective to reach a sense of belonging.

The function of Constance in Faith's identity quest is her embodiment of a carnivalesque sense of humour, which displays the construction of racial identities. Mikhail Bakhtin argues that carnivalesque laughter reflects a world of topsy-turvy in which certain codes and norms are transgressed and disrupted (8). Alternatively stated, carnivalesque humour subverts authority in order to create a free and alternative life through change and revival. Before analysing Constance's subversion of codes, the power of colonial hegemonic dominance on her identity construction should be clarified. Constance's mother compels her to appear like a British lady and to eat "lemons with sugar and a tiny spoon" since "this is what the English do" according to her mother (*FL* 313). Her mother urges her to imitate the English, yet, ironically, eating lemons with sugar is not an eating habit in England. When Constance moves to Britain, her grandparents are surprised at the fact that she eats lemons with sugar and find it a "strange" habit. Stein contends that the "fruit of the lemon thus stands for a failed intercultural transaction, an inedible food eaten for the sake of it" (77). He adds that "Constance is made to eat the bitter fruit by parents who think it is for her and their own good. The child is geared to chase seemingly English ideals, only to reject them when older. But the technique of mimicry remains with her" (77). In this fashion, while her act of mimicry represents the construction of racial identities, her specific ways to imitate produce a carnivalesque atmosphere which transgresses racial norms. To clarify, Constance disrupts authority and adopts an alternative life by rejecting her white skin colour, British roots, and her given name. As a colonial subject, Constance creates an identity independent from the colonial rule. She "told her mother that she was proud of

her black race" and "stopped combing her hair, sat in the sun, wiped her skin with cocoa butter. And told everyone she was letting her black inside out" (*FL* 317). Later, Constance travels to Africa to search for her roots. After her return from Africa, she "insisted that everyone call her Afria", which implies her African roots (*FL* 318). She establishes an alternative reality and identity free from the norms of the ex-colonised Jamaican community or the colonial discourse. As Bakhtin remarks, "[d]uring carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom" (8). Regarding her racial identity, Constance forms her own laws by transforming her skin-colour into black and changing her name into Afria.

Moreover, Constance's corporeality highlights the carnival spirit that renders her freedom by disrupting racial codes. Bakhtin points out that grotesque realism is the essential aspect of the carnivalesque and "exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness are generally considered fundamental attributes of the grotesque style" (303). Constance's body and bodily movements are examples of exaggeration that indicate her longing for the African body. Apart from the fact that she "still sits in the sun, 'to keep herself dark'", Constance desires to represent her African roots in every part of her corporeality (*FL* 319). Faith observes Constance's excessive physical movements as follows, "[Constance] danced like a woman whose name was Afria. […] She tilted her hips from side to side with a precision that made her bottom look disconnected from her body. She waggled her head in time with the motion and stamped her feet. Her eyes were closed – she was in a world of her own" (*FL* 303). The most notable component of the grotesque reality in the carnivalesque sense of the world is that the orifices of the body such as the mouth, anus or reproductive organs are emphasised to stress the incomplete aspect of the body (Bakhtin 19, 317). Constance's mouth is the orifice that is reiteratively and exaggeratedly emphasised; for instance, "[e]very few minutes she took a small plastic bottle from out of the fold of her dress and tipped up the contents into her mouth" (*FL* 303). Constance drinks rum blended with goat's blood so as to spit on the bride for good luck, which is an African tradition. She "took a large bulbous-cheek mouthful of the drink" and "shook her arms then sprayed the fine mouthful of spray onto the bride who was dancing with her groom. The droplets rose from her mouth in an arc and sprinkled down like confetti all over the bride's hair" (*FL* 304). Coral stops Constance and

comments on her spitting as "juju rubbish" (*FL* 304). In the end, Constance falls asleep "with her rum-scented mouth wide open and a loud, rhythmic snoring rattling from her throat" (*FL* 304). Evidently, drinking rum, the African tradition of spitting rum on the bride, and her snoring all are indicatives of Constance's mouth and, thus, of her grotesque and incomplete body. The grotesque realism of her physical actions signals and criticises the impossibility of the construction of a static and complete black identity. Constance is the comic character who engenders carnivalesque laughter and, thus, forms a critique of the codes of racial identity and national identity. In other words, she is the portrayal of the "nonofficial" world, the world outside the colonial discourse or Jamaican norms.

Constance complicates reality and idealism with her comic but also anomalous and atypical actions, which implies that she seems like the "clown" in Bakhtin's carnival. Bakhtin discusses that clowns are the central constituents of carnivalesque laughter since they represent travesty in both their physical appearance and social rank. In fact, they exist in-between art and life as they are the representations of reality and idealism (Bakhtin 8). Constance changes both her appearance and social position in order to identify with the black community. Her renewal draws attention to the contrast between idealism and the reality of racial identities. The reality of her fragmented identity is opposed to the idealism defined by Constance's youth when her cousins were forced to call her "Miss Constance" out of respect because of her skin colour (*FL* 312). The imposed binary oppositions of racial and ethnic identities contravene the reality of fragmented and fluid identities. Indeed, carnivalesque humour acts as a tool to question the "other" and the "self". As Bakhtin argues, "this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival" (11-12). The ambivalent position of Constance's identity merges with the ambivalence of carnivalesque laughter, for her comic character confounds colour and nation attached to ethnic identities. Consequently, carnivalesque humour constituted by Constance's rejection of her identification with the "superior" white British society criticises and subverts the authority of the colonial hegemonic dominance and the colonial discourse.

Within the context of ambivalence of identity, Constance represents the de-centred subject who subverts and challenges Eurocentrism. Linda Hutcheon argues that the marginal or the ex-centric takes on a new critical role from a decentred perspective. To be ex-centric is to have a shifting perspective as there is no centre (Hutcheon 62, 67, 69). Constance, as the marginal subject, adopts a new identity position in which she subverts the centre and forms her own laws. Nevertheless, the centrifugal perspective cannot be observed in her character since she makes the marginal and the African the new centre. Constance's identity formation does not comply with Hutcheon's idea that the postmodern view celebrates differences (62). The reason for this is that Constance defines herself still through binary oppositions as she identifies herself with the non-white and non-European. Even though Constance represents the subversion of colonial hegemony, her venture to fixate her racial identity juxtaposes Faith's identity at the end of the novel. Accordingly, "with the paradox of her fair skin and radical ideas, she belongs nowhere, alienated by the black Jamaicans and not capable of tracing her African past" (Toplu 2005, 10). Although carnivalesque laughter functions as the criticism of the formation of the binary oppositions of racial identities, Constance fails to embrace a double perspective and a fluid sense of self like Faith.

Despite her struggles to reach a sense of belonging, Faith slowly adopts a humorous perspective which discloses her double-perspective of British and Jamaican attitudes. Faith's struggles to locate herself in a specific and static identity position leads us to observe that she slowly realises, enjoys, and consciously creates humour by regarding the difference of British and Jamaican perspectives. Pnina Werbner discusses that "double consciousness" is one of the critical points in diasporic identities since it enhances the split identity of the diasporan. "Double consciousness" implies "seeing oneself through the eyes of others; a doubling up of a subject's sense of belonging and alienation" (Werbner 2013, 107). Therefore, Werbner contends that a "homecomer must manage the insider and outsider perspectives simultaneously, seeing herself through the often disapproving eyes of those who stayed at home" (2013, 107). While Faith is unable to see herself from the eyes of the Jamaicans who criticise her "pants", she slowly forms a "double consciousness" during her analysis of the reactions to the wind. During the wedding ceremony, the wind begins to shake the windows and doors of the

church. Faith beholds that "[t]he church felt like a box made of sticks as the wind huffed and puffed. But no one expect me seemed to care. […] Only I turned round every time the wind crashed at a door like a stampede of bulls" (*FL* 297). She adds that "[i]n England, a wind like this would be on the evening news – a wind like this would be honoured with plaques in several woods around the country. But here only my eyes opened wide. Only I ducked. Only I gasped. Only I muttered, 'Jesus Christ'" (*FL* 298). In contrast to Faith's reaction, the pastor refers to the wind as "a little bit of wind" and the crowd talks about it as a "a little bit of breeze" (*FL* 298). After analysing the reactions and her own reaction to the strong wind, Faith expresses that "[t]his hurricane would be called Faith – because only I noticed it" (*FL* 298). It can thus be suggested that Faith learns to look from both point of views, and begins to shift perspectives, which are significant phases before embracing her transnational identity.

Faith's humour-conscious attitude toward her own and the crowd's reaction to the strong wind draws attention to the incongruity of the situation and, as a result, portrays her realisation of multi-locality. For the first time, Faith adopts a playful standpoint towards her "otherness". John Morreall claims that "a play mode rather than a serious mode" is required to create humour since having a playful perspective indicates that the person maintains the specific distance to understand the cognitive shift which produces humour (2009, 50). In this regard, Faith's playful perspective represents that she maintains the required distance to recognise the cognitive shift that creates humour. Faith's comprehension of the cognitive shift and humour critically manifest her ability to shift between British and Jamaican viewpoints. Michael Ross asserts that "[i]n contemporary works of comic fiction […] 'English giggles' at the expenses of the not Entirely English have yielded to a cosmopolitan amusement better suited to the new England's unexampled cultural diversity" (279). As Ross remarks, contemporary postcolonial comic fiction writers "rely on ironies of situation and paradoxical clashes of individual perspective" rather than representing laughter at colonial stereotypes (279). In this regard, instead of humour produced by laughter at the stereotypical "self" or "other", Faith's analysis of the wind through her shifts between the "self" and the "other" reveals her transnational sensibility. Thus, Faith, as a transnational identity, forms social fields through daily practices, such as attending a wedding.

After listening to the stories of her extended family and observing Constance's identity conflict, Faith ascertains to relocate her position in society. Levy is "describing a journey through which the character of Faith is enabled to reconstruct her true background as she learns about Jamaica, and in so doing forms a positive transnational identity instead of pretending she is truly British" (Toplu 2011, 174). Through the end of the novel, Faith understands that she needs to react to the requirements of both nations. She contemplates during her return to London that she is going "home to England"; on the other hand, she discerns that she has "learnt to adopt to Jamaican ways" (*FL* 320). Faith embodies the transnational existence that her identity cannot be categorised into certain types. As she contemplates, "I thought my history started when the ship carrying my parents sailed from Jamaica and docked in England on Guy Fawkes' night. But I was wrong" (*FL* 325). Levitt and Glick Schiller assert that transnational identities reflect a combination of "ways of being" and "ways of belonging". While "ways of being" are the cross-border connections or activities they practice daily, "ways of belonging" are the cross-border activities and relations they identify with (287). Until she embraces her fluid identity, Faith maintains a "way of being" regarding the relations with her family and her connection to her Jamaican heritage. In the end, her interaction with her roots and family transforms into a "way of belonging". Faith discovers that she is involved in the trans-border processes of both nations as she travels back and forth across borders. Thus, Faith holds a transnational identity that is created and re-created through her simultaneous existence in multiple nations.

In conclusion, humour generated by the juxtaposition between different point of views and by a double perspective ceases at the end of the novel. In other words, until the end of the novel humorous incongruity is created by the clash between Faith's British identity and Jamaican identity caused by the superior laughter of the colonial hegemony. As the tension between her British and Jamaican roots is resolved in the end when Faith discovers that her identity extends across borders, humorous incongruity ceases. The reason for this is that Faith adopts a double and shifting perspective; therefore, the opposition between her British identity and Jamaican identity is eliminated. Faith's perception of the banana boat has changed in the end of the text: "I

was coming home. I was coming home to tell everyone … My mum and dad came on a banana boat" (*FL* 339). Whereas the banana boat signifies the laughter of the colonial hegemony at the start of the narrative, it represents the acceptance of her Jamaican heritage in the end of the novel. The meaning of the banana boat is deferred throughout the novel. As in Derrida's terms, there is no total sign but only "différance" since the displacement and deferral as signification reflects that there are no fixed signs (87-93). This deferral underlines that the banana boat is freed from the superior laughter of the West. Parallel to the deferral of the meaning of the banana boat, Faith's identity is deferred since she does not maintain a fixed, total and single identity. As Linda Hutcheon states, the postmodern thought adopts the language of differences; thus, rather than "either-or", "and-also" is the language of the postmodern view (62). Faith adopts the language of "and-also" since she realises that her identity is formed by plurality of her racial and ethnic heritage: "Let them say what they like. Because I am the bastard child of Empire and I will have my day" (*FL* 327).

From a specific standpoint, in the "Jamaican" part, humour undergoes a critical transformation as the laughing subject changes from white British into black Jamaican. The change of the laughing subject disrupts the stable positions of the "self" and the "other" since it is not certain who laughs at whom. As a result, the direction of humour problematizes the relationship between the "self" and "other". The shifting direction of humour reflects not only the criticism and laughter of Coral and Violet as black Jamaican narrators, but also the transformation of humour regarding Faith's ethnic identity. Firstly, her "superior" Western gaze produces incongruous humour, which discloses that a single perspective is not enough to reach a sense of self. Then, she learns to adopt a double frame of reference. In addition, the lack of the superior laughter of the colonial hegemonic rule and the presence of a carnivalesque atmosphere through Constance indicate the disruption of racial codes that construct identities. Faith embraces her shifting identity and rejects being the object of laughter by adopting a double perspective and a "playful" attitude towards her society of origin and society of settlement.

The function of humour in *Fruit of the Lemon* transforms from the start to the end of the text. The complex direction of laughter throughout the novel creates a space

to question Faith's racial identity. In the first half of the novel, entitled "England", humour is employed to represent the clash between Faith's British identity and Jamaican identity. This clash is reinforced through the "superior" laughter of the white character at the black "other". Especially, the humorous incongruities Faith experiences reveal the realities of Britain's imperial past. In the "Jamaican" part, one of the functions of humour is to criticise not only the colonisers but also ex-colonised Jamaicans who practice mimicry to construct a British "self". Unlike the first part, the second part also includes the laughter of black characters which reveals the "construction" of racial identities by exposing and celebrating a double or shifting perspective. The fluid and complex direction of laughter and humour demonstrates that Faith's ethnic identity is far from static. In this framework, the transformation of humour is mirrored in Faith's identity construction. Faith is the object of laughter both as the black "other" in Britain and as the British "other" in Jamaica. However, while Faith is not able to laugh and recognise the humour in the first part as a result of incongruity caused by superiority, she is able to see the humour after adopting a double perspective.

On these grounds, the transformation of humour in the novel is a strategic tool to transgress ethnic and cultural boundaries. As Levy notes in her article, "I am English. Born and bred, as the saying goes. (As far as I can remember, it is born and bred and not born-and-bred-with-a-very-long-line-of-white-ancestors-directly-descended-from-Anglo-Saxons)" (2000, 30). Levy employs humour in *Fruit of the Lemon* to question the concept of identity and transgresses ethnic boundaries through the unstable, changing and contradictory aspects of humour. While the first part of the novel represents Faith's fragmented ethnic identity through the combination of humorous incongruity with superiority, the second part of the novel further complicates the concept of identity by changing the subject of laughter into the black Jamaican. Unlike the first half, the second half of the novel employs a carnivalesque atmosphere through Constance which also blurs the laughter of the "self" and "other". It can be observed that the superior laughter of the West ceases through the end of the narrative and humour functions as a tool to question and celebrate Faith's transnational identity. Critically, comedy regarding race prefers the construction of stereotypes, yet the postcolonial novels which

Ross discusses, such as Andrea Levy's *Small Island,* get their humorous power from creativity and liveliness with which they disrupt racial stereotypes (Ross 279). In this sense, Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* represents and transgresses the stereotypical laughter of the "self" by obfuscating Faith's sense of "self" and "other". Therefore, the plurality of identities and the fluidity of Faith's transnational identity portray the "liveliness" of racial and national identities Britain.

3.2. *Mr Loverman* by Bernardine Evaristo

Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013) explores the concepts of ethnic, cultural and sexual identities through its protagonist Barrington Jedidiah Walker, also called Barry. The novel mainly narrates the story of Barry, a seventy-four year old closet-gay of Antiguan[18] descent who lives in London. Barry leads a double life since he is married to his wife, Carmel, but is in a romantic homosexual relationship with his Antiguan lover Morris. Barry desires to come out as homosexual, divorce his wife and continue his romantic relationship with Morris; however, his wish to come out clashes with the cultural norms of his Antiguan or Caribbean origin. Evaristo casts a new light on the issues of identity, race, and sense of belonging by amalgamating sexual identity and ethnic identity. Although the novel employs the bitter realities of colonialism and cultural oppression, humour maintains a fundamental role in *Mr Loverman.* Barry's humorous perspective on life, his comic anecdotes and jokes emblematise the fluidity of his identity. In this chapter, I argue that humour holds a critical function as it complicates and exposes Barry's transnational identity by presenting the ambivalence of his Caribbean identity.

Mr Loverman is Bernardine Evaristo's seventh novel and received the Publishing Triangle's Ferro-Grumley Award for LGBT Fiction in 2015. Unlike many other contemporary black British novels, Evaristo's work dramatizes the old age of a homosexual first generation immigrant. Barry is an Antiguan-born character who has been living in London for fifty years. Apart from being a former factory worker, he is a rich landlord as he is the owner of numerous houses in London. Also, he is the father of two adult daughters Maxine and Donna, and the grandfather of Donna's teenage son, Daniel. Barry has been in a homosexual romantic relationship with Morris since their teenage years in Antigua. After Morris immigrates to London and marries an Antiguan woman, Odette; Barry marries Carmel in Antigua and they immigrate to London as a part of the Windrush generation. In London, though married, Barry and Morris continue their romantic relationship secretly in Britain. After many years, Odette discovers their

[18] Antigua is a small island in the Caribbean belonging to island sovereign state of Antigua and Barbuda which gained its independence in 1981.

affair and divorces Morris; however, she does not explain Carmel her reason for divorce and moves to Antigua. Carmel is aware of her problematic marriage and blames Barry for his infidelity, but she is unaware of his homosexuality. Although late twentieth-century and twenty-first-century London is a place where homosexual relationships are not a taboo and gay marriage is allowed, Barry continues his love affair with Morris in secret. Eventually, after fifty years of unhappy marriage, Barry decides to divorce Carmel, come out as homosexual and live with Morris; however, he struggles to accomplish his objectives as he is still affected by the heteronormativity of his Caribbean roots. While Maxine who has gay friends supports Barry, Donna who is a more conservative character supports Carmel during the complicated divorce process. Although it appears that Barry does not experience a lack of a sense of belonging and that he feels at home in London, his sexual identity exposes the tensions of his Caribbean sense of belonging. In the end, Barry and Carmel divorce, Barry comes out, and begins to live with Morris; as a result, Barry finally escapes the oppressions of his cultural and familial background. In this context, Barry holds a transnational existence since he feels at home in Britain yet maintains the heteronormative rules of his Caribbean background.

The aspect that Bernardine Evaristo writes from a transnational space should be underlined while analysing *Mr Loverman.* Evaristo is a second generation black British writer who is born in London and who is the daughter of an English mother of English, Irish and German heritage and a Nigerian father of Nigerian and Brazilian roots ("Bernardine Evaristo: Biography"). Significantly, Evaristo is the first black woman and the first black British author who won the Booker Prize[19]. As a black British writer from multiple racial roots, Evaristo focuses on race, identity, and cultural heritage. Her works explore Britain's imperial past, the links between Britain and the Caribbean, transatlantic migration, and racism. Şebnem Toplu states that "Evaristo's thematic concerns, although principally focusing on racism, extend to multifarious social realities" and "Evaristo's bold style renders a revolutionary stance embracing a vision of the world defined by colour or patriarchy" (2011, 75, 76). *Mr Loverman* is an

[19] Bernardine Evaristo won the Booker Prize in 2019, sharing it with Margaret Atwood, for her novel *Girl, Woman, Other*.

outstanding representation of the unification of Evaristo's transnational existence and her revolutionary stance. In an interview in 2015, Evaristo points out that "I wanted to present a very different kind of Windrush character, because we have just assumed they are heteronormative and all heterosexual. I don't know if we've seen any portrayals of homosexual men from that generation" (Gustar 443). By representing an extraordinary character, Evaristo explains, "[t]hat's why I wrote the book, and that's why I chose an older character as well, rather than a young guy, because I wanted him to be deeply rooted in black British history" (Gustar 444). Certainly, *Mr Loverman* disrupts colonial and patriarchal hegemony by including the voice of the "other", the queer black character.

Evaristo clearly underlines her alternative perspective on race and culture in her PhD thesis in Creative Writing entitled as "*Mr Loverman* and The Men in Black British Fiction", which she completed at Goldsmith, University of London in 2013. As *Mr Loverman* is first written as a part of Evaristo's thesis, her comments on her novel in relation to black British fiction expands the critical conversation around her work. In her thesis, she discusses the representation of black male characters in black British fiction, explains her creative writing process of *Mr Loverman* and her objectives to create a marginalised protagonist. Evaristo asserts that old black men are overlooked in former black British novels and states as follows, "I hope that the research for this essay opens up a critical revaluation of the imagining of the black diasporic male in Afro-diasporic fiction" (2013, 366-367). Furthermore, she argues that another ignored issue in Anglophone Caribbean literature is the homosexual black character (2013, 329). It can be observed that these two aforementioned deficiencies in black British literature are dramatized in *Mr Loverman* as Barry is both an elderly first generation immigrant and romantically interested in another man. Evaristo contends that

> Barrington Walker is an older version of the younger fictional characters in [black British novels]. Yet my intention was to continue what Sebnem Toplu describes in *Fiction Unbound: Bernardine Evaristo* as my project of taking 'an alternative stance to mainstream history.' By convention, Barrington should be heterosexual. Instead, what I do with the novel is to take an ostensibly familiar archetype and subvert it. (2013, 382)

As a result of her alternative perspective, Evaristo designs a marginal character, an elderly queer diasporan, who does not experience melancholia like a typical immigrant but who is continually repositioned in cultural space.

Apart from Evaristo's own dissertation, several critical studies have been conducted on *Mr Loverman*, concerning its significance within the scope of race and gender. Before demonstrating the studies written on the novel, the first monograph on Evaristo's fiction, *Fiction Unbound* (2011) written by Şebnem Toplu, should be discussed briefly. Toplu's inclusive study explores all of Evaristo's works published until 2011. Although the work does not cover *Mr Loverman* as the novel is published after 2011, Toplu's book provides a basis for comprehending Evaristo's fiction and reflects her perspective not only on African-Caribbean history but also on certain concepts such as racial identity, culture and gender. As Laurence Raw states in the foreword of the book, "Toplu argues that Evaristo is interested in alternative constructions – not only of nationalism, but of other basic issues as such as race, gender and class" (in Toplu 2011, xii). Furthermore, in "Queer Home-Making and Black Britain: Claiming, Ageing, Living", Caroline Koegler focuses on the concept of "home-making" of the queer black immigrant and underlines that *Mr Loverman* is an under-researched novel which narrates queer diasporic home-making (2020a, 4). She proposes that *Mr Loverman* "queers" the home-making of the Windrush generation by displaying the secret queer relationship of Barry and Morris within the borders of the Caribbean "home". In other words, Koegler asserts that Evaristo's work represents the problems of queer home-making in a diasporic setting (2020a, 11). She notes that "Evaristo provides an alternative vision of the very roots of black British identity and masculinity, performing a distinct homing of queer attachments in a long-standing British canon" (2020b). Moreover, in *Domestic Intersections in Contemporary Migration Fiction: Homing the Metropole* (2020), Lucinda Newns explores *Mr Loverman* among other three novels in the light of immigrant home spaces and argues how "home-making" can be regarded as a political act. Newns discusses Barry's coming-out in relation to the queer and heterosexual domestic space and queer black diasporic space (154). Furthermore, *Mr Loverman* is one of the novels in Katie Danaher's PhD thesis which she analyses with reference to racial, cultural, and sexual passing. She argues that Barry

"passes" as heterosexual and that he disrupts the image of the stereotypical Caribbean man. In short, these discussions on *Mr Loverman* highlight Barry's racial and sexual identities without any focus on humour.

Stephan Karschay's and Joanna Rostek's article is the only study exploring the function of humour in *Mr Loverman*. Karschay and Rostek probe into the function of humour in "'Man haf fe do wha man haf fe do:' Humour and Identity (Re)Formation in Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman"* (2016). They discuss Barry's humour and its relationship to his path of self-knowledge. In other words, they analyse to what degree Barry uses the comic to deal with his problems related to race, gender, and age (126). Also, Karschay and Rostek briefly point out the significance of different humour theories in situations where Barry tries to handle his conflict. While referring to Karschay and Rostek at certain points in the analysis of the novel, this chapter concentrates on Barry's jokes with reference to the Freudian joke theory and expands the critical conversation around the function of humour in *Mr Loverman*. In this study, I open up a new line of enquiry and argue that humour is a strategy to transgress the concept of identity by drawing attention to Barry's transnational identity.

3.2.1. Laughing at the Caribbean Diaspora Community

Barry's "otherness" disassociates him from the traditional description of the first generation black immigrant. Evaristo comments that

> my task with this novel is to write back to the 'postcolonial' margins by taking a blatantly gay man from the periphery of the periphery and placing him downstage centre. I consider Barrington to be the othered other; a minority within a minority. But his othering in my fiction is not directed by Ashcroft et al.'s 'imperial authority,' rather, it is turned inwards to his own community. (2013, 359)

Evaristo also underpins that "Barrington might look like a familiar kind of older Caribbean man, but I hope he comes across as a stereotype-buster" (2013, 362). In this sense, Barry is not a typical racial "other", but he is positioned and repositioned as a homosexual Antiguan man in Hackney's diasporic community he is a part of. Interestingly, in the novel, the Antiguan society in London does not consist of a large

group of diverse people, but it mainly includes a small number of Caribbean women in Barry's life. Therefore, the Antiguan diasporic community is represented by Barry's wife who thinks that "marriage is a gift from God" and her friends, a group of conservative Caribbean women (*ML* 236). Concordantly, it can be argued that Barry's laughter which is directed towards his wife and their marriage actually targets his diasporic community. This part focuses on the idea that the direction of humour towards the Caribbean diasporic community reveals and complicates Barry's complex ties to his national and cultural heritage.

One of the most essential points of humour in *Mr Loverman* is that it is fundamentally generated by Barry's comic anecdotes, humorous stance, and witty sayings. I propose that his witty sayings which are combined with humour should be discussed and analysed in relation to the joke form. Freud argues that jokes require three people: the first person is the one who is telling the joke, the second one is the laughable person in the joke and the last person is the listener who laughs at the joke. In other words, "in addition to the one who makes the joke, there must be a second who is taken as the object of the hostile or sexual aggressiveness, and a third in whom the joke's aim of producing pleasure is fulfilled" (Freud 100). In this context, Barry is the first person who tells the joke to the listener. Although Barry does not directly tell a joke to another character in most instances, his first-person narration transforms his humorous thoughts and comic anecdotes into the joke-form. Barry is a first person narrator who tells his stories to the reader; thus, the reader is the listener of Barry's humorous thoughts and comments. Freud asserts that the listener decides whether the joke is laughable or not; therefore, the listener maintains the power to reject or unmake the joke (Richter 63). This suggests that the reader decides whether to accept or reject Barry's jokes. The uncertain position of the listener intensifies the fluidity of humour. In this regard, as a result of the absence of a character who directly listens to the joke and the presence of the reader as the one who maintains the control over the joke, the narrative provides a space for the reader to question the direction of laughter and humour regarding Barry's cultural identity.

One of the primary subjects of Barry's jokes is the concept of marriage which provides an insight into Barry's problematic sense of belonging. His jokes about his

own marriage and the idea of wedlock in general unravel the cultural and psychological oppressions he experiences. He encounters social and cultural tension since his diaspora community assumes that marriage is a gift from God, marriage should last forever and that homosexuality is a disease (*ML* 236, 151, 51). One of his humorous expressions is a good illustration of his ideas about marriage as follows, "[d]ivorce: such a spiteful-sounding word – but such an appealing concept. Marriage: such a softly seductive word – but such a spiteful reality" (*ML* 189). Barry positions marriage in such a place that it exposes his hate and disgust towards the concept. The combination of hate and humour should be elucidated within the frame of Freud's tendentious jokes. Freud discusses that tendentious jokes generate humour through the satisfaction of hostile or sexual feelings. These hateful or sexual jokes release energy that normally suppresses hostility or the libido; as a result, jokes create a certain relief as the saved psychic energy is released (Freud 101, 148-149). The aforementioned witty statement about marriage occurs when Barry struggles to accept the idea of divorce and when he tries to figure out how he can explain it to his family. Barry's jokes about marriage initiate a certain relief in the dominant normative space he is forced to live in. This implies that when Barry confronts social and cultural oppression about marriage, he unconsciously employs the joke-form as a tool to relieve social tension. The social tension discharged by marriage-jokes manifests that his sense of belonging to the Antiguan community is disrupted by the community's dominant heteronormative space.

Furthermore, Barry's tendentious jokes represent his struggle to justify his deviation from Antiguan norms. Apparently, "[f]or Barry, humour is a strategy that imitates, masks, and helps to bridge the tensions between 'nature' and 'culture' that act upon him" (Karschay and Rostek 126). Barry's affair with Morris is traditionally unacceptable for the Caribbean community and in order to make it acceptable, he chooses to discharge his suppressed energy in the joke-form. As Freud renders, tendentious jokes contain thoughts that are normally censored but are made acceptable through the joke-form (103). Barry tries to convert his homosexual affair with Morris into an acceptable situation with his joking attitude. To illustrate, when Carmel imagines that he has an affair with another woman, Barry thinks that "I can honestly say to my wife, 'Dear, I ain't never slept with another woman'" (*ML* 13). Furthermore, he

thinks that "what Carmel should realize, is that her man here is one of the good ones, because he is coming home to her bed for fifty years. All right, all right, sometimes it's the next morning, maybe the afternoon, occasionally a day or two might pass" (*ML* 13). By relieving himself of the cultural oppression to come each night to his marital bed through the joke-form, Barry tries to legitimise his sexual instincts which deviate from Caribbean norms. Indeed, by joking about and criticising the oppression of marriage, he inwardly justifies himself to the Caribbean community and struggles to form a sense of belonging to the Antiguan cultural and national space.

Barry's jokes also reveal the complex social and cultural connections he maintains to form points of identification to the Antiguan community. His use of humour in family issues reinforces the idea that he is afraid of losing his subject position in his ethnic community. While his marriage-jokes expose his hostile feelings towards cultural norms, his family-related humour represents that he is frightened of losing his position in his family. This can be illustrated briefly by his reaction after his thoughts about divorce as follows, "[o]ur fragile nuclear family is about to explode. […] I will go from head of the family to dead of the family" (*ML* 90). Barry's fears are intermingled with a special joke technique in the last sentence of the quotation. Freud clarifies that "[m]ultiple use of the same material" is a joke technique which includes the repetition of the same word or a modified version of the word (33). While the play with the words "head" and "dead" stimulate humour and discharge his repressed energy, it uncovers Barry's unconscious fear of losing his position as the traditional father figure in his ethnic community. This fear draws attention to Barry's cross-border practices since he desires to maintain his powerful and patriarchal position in the family, but simultaneously denounces his ethnic heritage that causes familial oppression. Transnational spaces are formed as a result of "shared practice and performance, such symbolic complexes are elaborated, hybridized, creolized, revitalized, and redeployed by transnational migrants in their efforts to form circles of trust and in their agonistic vyings for power and distinction" (Werbner 117). In this context, Barry constructs transnational social fields that cross cultural borders. The clash between Barry's wish to attack the Caribbean culture and his desire to maintain his patriarchal power of the same culture demonstrates his complex sense of belonging.

Furthermore, Barry attempts to discharge the pressure of the clash between his homosexual identity and Antiguan identity by mixing the joke-form with dramatic relief. Shortly after his joke about his position as the "dead of the family", the cultural and familial pressure intensifies when he meets with Maxine – his daughter – and Morris. Maxine interrogates Barry about his behaviour towards Carmel and she expresses that he does not behave decently since he comes home late at night and is mostly drunk. Barry tries to relieve the oppression of his thoughts about divorce and his secret homosexual affair with the integration of a dramatic relief. He answers Maxine and utters that "it is true, I am a sinner and a drinker and as the porter says to Macbeth, 'Faith, Sir, we were carousing to the second *cock*.' Morris splutters so much he practically spits out his drink. 'Dad, you are totally incorrigible,' she says, just managing to resist a laugh herself" (*ML* 91)(emphasis original). The function of the porter scene in *Macbeth* is to create a dramatic relief after the murder of Duncan by Macbeth. Likewise, Barry employs the porter scene to produce a specific relief. Clearly, he achieves his aim as Maxine hardly manages to resist laughing. The negative atmosphere of Barry's fight with Carmel, his non-normative lifestyle and the oppression of familial norms are all relieved. In addition to the creation of the relief of the negative atmosphere, Barry's dramatic relief also satisfies his sexual instincts. Freud remarks that an obscene joke exposes and satisfies sexual instincts which are normally repressed (103). Barry's porter scene, which he employs as a joke, implicitly includes obscene aspects. To illustrate, "carousing to the second cock" means partying until late, yet the word "cock", which is written in italics and thus emphasised by Barry, transforms the joke into an obscene one since the word also implies sexuality. The emphasis on the word "cock" secretly satisfies Barry's repressed homosexuality. As Freud contends, direct indecency cannot produce laughter or humour as it creates shame or disgust; however, when an indecent situation is demonstrated through a joke-form, it will cause laughter (101). By the inclusion of an indecent word in his joke, Barry satisfies his needs since he even catches Morris's attention as he almost spits his drink out. Barry's porter scene, thus, consists of two layers: the discharge of familial oppression and the satisfaction of non-heteronormative instincts. Indeed, he aims to relieve the oppression

as he tries to remain the traditional father figure for Maxine, yet the emphasis on the word "cock" exposes his culturally repressed instincts.

The impact of colonialism is another cause of the oppressive familial atmosphere which creates cultural tension that needs to be relieved with humour. The effects of colonialism and slavery on families in the colonies demonstrate the requirements of Barry's homeland. The text specifies the effects of slavery and colonialism on families with minor husband and father characters who are the subjects of the stories about past experiences in Antigua. The problematic father figure in Antiguan families can be detected in almost each male figure in the novel. Husbands or fathers of Carmel's Antiguan friend group, for instance, are all absent and problematic. Furthermore, Carmel's mother and Barry's grandmother are victims of severe domestic violence. Barry clarifies the problematic male figure in black families by stating that "our men don't know how to stay with our women. Our women don't know how to raise men who do" since "[i]t is embedded in our psyche from centuries of slavery, when we wasn't allowed to be husbands or fathers. We was breeders for the stud of the farm, and our pickneys' *totemic* (and morally criminal) father figure was the owner of the plantation, who held the power of life and death over us" (*ML* 226)(emphasis original). His explanation provides an insight into the formation of the colonial discourse created by Western hegemonic forces. The slave-owner is described as the only "father figure" since he is the only one who maintains power and control in the plantation. As Edward Said asserts, the colonial discourse defines the racially "other" as the dependent and feminine while the European "self" is described as powerful and masculine (in Loomba 45). In this regard, it can be argued that Barry implicitly challenges the colonial discourse by constructing a masculine Caribbean "self" who is the head of the family and the father of his two daughters, Donna and Maxine. To be specific, in order to form a Caribbean identity that is not defined by the colonial gaze, Barry attempts to create a powerful and protective father and husband figure defined outside the colonial discourse. For Barry, the Caribbean "self" can only exist in a traditional family outside the colonial discourse. As Arthur Schopenhauer notes, the opposite of irony would be the seriousness concealed behind a joke, and this is *humour*" (1966b, 100)(emphasis original). The seriousness that haunts Barry's jokes reveals the

creation and recreation of Barry's racial and cultural identities through his involvement in the serious "requirements" of postcolonial Antigua.

Barry disrupts the seriousness of the dominant normative space by maintaining a playful distance towards his Antiguan background. Morreall states that "distance" is a critical aspect for the augmentation of humour, for humour is triggered only when the laughing subject observes the situation from a playful mode. The sudden change of perception which generates humour is only produced by the existence of a "play mode" that is created as a result of a certain "distance" (2009, 50). Barry shifts into a playful mode when the "seriousness" and tragedies of his cultural heritage are addressed. His shift from a serious to a comic tone can be illustrated by his reaction to cultural norms after narrating domestic violence practiced by black men. When Carmel decides to go to her father's funeral in Antigua, Barry reminds her that her father does not deserve her attention since he broke almost each bone in her mother's body. He further points out that his own grandmother is beaten up so bad by his grandfather that she had to have a surgery after which she could never walk again (*ML* 15-16). Directly after the aforementioned tragic incidents, the serious tone changes into a comic one as a result of Barry's playful mode. When he remembers that his mother warned him to "treat women good", he thinks that "that's what I been doing, never once laying a finger on my wife" (*ML* 16). Barry implies his lack of sexual intimacy with Carmel and relates it to his mother's warnings about domestic violence by employing a certain distance. The playful distance which Barry keeps in the production of humour interacts with the distance he maintains to the normative alliances of nationhood. In *The Postcolonial Body in Queer Space*, it is underlined that "[i]f the notion of reproduction is removed from the timeline of life, if the present no longer pivots around the past and future, then the subject lives in 'queer time,' both freed and excluded from normative societal expectations" (Fine Romanow 6). In this context, by directing humour towards normative and heteronormative requirements of his ethnic heritage, Barry attempts to release the cultural oppression on his non-normative identity. Precisely, he employs a playful mode to create "queer time" in-between the requirements of the Antiguan society. In short, the shift from a serious to a comic tone, which is initiated by his playful "distance", enhances his complex sense of belonging.

Another point that should be discussed regarding Barry's jokes is the misogynist aspects of his jokes which expose the power of the repressive patriarchal and hegemonic forces on Barry's national identity. Barry is described as a misogynist, normative and patriarchal person; for instance, his daughter, Maxine, defines him as "the post-Victorian, pre-feminist Antiguan generation" (*ML* 93). As a black ex-colonised person, Barry's subject position plays a significant part in the construction of his misogynist character. Significantly, "black men have adopted certain patriarchal values such as physical strength, sexual prowess and being in control as a means of survival against the repressive and violent system of subordination to which they were subjected" (in Newns 148). Barry's jokes about women include patriarchal perspectives which suggest his strive to form a masculine, powerful and an independent "self". He humorously mocks that, like childbirth, women pass down their ability to give men grief, that they can "put on an emotional performance" unlike men, and that supermarkets are their territories as they especially dress to go the market (*ML* 167, 168). By highlighting the physical features of women and by including sexual bravery into his jokes, Barry attempts to adopt a powerful position. During the "Introduction to Feminism" class he takes to improve himself intellectually, he comments that the problem with women is that they "menstruate twelve times a year, or, as I like to say, 'mentalate'" (*ML* 127). Barry tries to trigger laughter by mixing the words "menstruate" and "mental", which should be analysed with reference to Freud's joke-condensation. Freud states that joke-condensation is created by compressing certain words in order to create laughter. He illustrates that abbreviations or modifications of words in jokes reflect a person's hidden desires since jokes have the same structure like dreams. Therefore, joke-condensation is one of the significant aspects of humour that links jokes to the unconscious (159). Barry's condensation reveals his unconscious strategy to display his masculine physical strength as the postcolonial subject. Barry condenses the physical and psychological effects of a women's cycle in order to create a superior and masculine position not only for his non-heteronormative but also for his racial "otherness". In this fashion, he transforms the female into the object of laughter with the objective to maintain his powerful position as the laughing subject.

Apart from his jokes about women in general, Barry's humorous description of black women in the same feminism class complicates his racial "otherness". He claims that the ones who think that women are oppressed "should meet some of the bush women from my part of the world. Trust me, if they could get away with it, they'd cut off a fella's balls, pluck them, chop them, marinate them, stew them, serve them up on a plate with rice and peas and present the fella with the bill" (*ML* 127). This example holds a significant place in the understanding of racial and cultural repressions of Barry's unconscious. As Freud states,

> [jokes] are not at the disposal of our memory when we want them; but at other times, to make up for this, they appear involuntarily, as it were, and at points in our train of thought where we cannot see their relevance. These, again, are only small features, but nevertheless indicate their origin from the unconscious. (168)

Consequently, one of the critical points is that his joke not only implies the tension of his sexual identity but also indicates the ambivalence of his racial identity. Barry defines Caribbean women as savage, uncivilised, cruel, and wild; as a result, his description corresponds to the colonial discourse. His definition parallels with Edward Said's view regarding the construction of the colonised and "inferior" "other". Said asserts that the "other" is constructed by the Western mind since the binary oppositions of the "self" and "other" were created by the "West" to define itself as superior and the "other" as inferior (1978, 43-44). In this regard, Barry develops a racially "other" in order to construct a superior "self". Thus, in order to rationalise his stance, he unconsciously employs the colonial discourse that regards cannibalism as a typical feature of the racially "other". By adding humour into his description of the "irrational" and "harmful" black woman, Barry endeavours to become the laughing subject. Barry's colonial discourse reconstitutes the Antiguan woman and transforms her into a laughable "object" by making her the target of laughter.

Despite Barry's attempt to stabilise the subject position of the black woman, the listener of the joke rejects his attempt. To explain, Freud denotes that "a 'coalition' is formed between the first person (who tells the joke) and the third person (who listens and laughs) at the expense of the second person (the butt of the joke). Freud makes it

clear that the primary impulse of the joke is not 'funny' but hostile, intended to humiliate and vanquish the 'enemy'" (Richter 63). After Barry's description of the Caribbean woman, "Mzzzzz recovered enough to banish [him] from the class" (*ML* 127). Barry is the teller of the joke who tries to triumph, but the listeners of the joke, other students and the professor of the feminism class, do not laugh. Thus, the listener, who has the authority to reject the joke as a joke, does not confirm Barry's misogynist views and the "otherness" of the black woman. With reference to Freud's joke-theory and Bhabha's ambivalence of the other, Richter states that, although Freud argues that the target of the joke is a well-specified "other", the laughable "other" is not neatly separated from the laughing subject (65). As a result, the comic "other" interacts with the laughing "self" which demonstrates the ambivalence of racial identities, when considered from Bhabha's perspective. In this case, Barry's aim to construct a black "other" by employing humour to position himself as the "self" reflects the fluidity of the "self" and "other". While Barry's humorous perspective on black women reflects his desire to maintain patriarchal power, the implications of the colonial discourse expose his ambivalent state as the racially "other".

Furthermore, Barry's "joker" identity is disturbed by the colonial discourse which indicates the ambivalent position of the black "other" and Western "self". During Barry's retirement ceremony, his "white" boss comments that "[Barry] [y]ou are quite the joker, I hear, quite the anecdotalist, quite the raconteur" (*ML* 7). Barry realises that "[h]e paused to study me, like he wasn't so sure I understood words of five syllables or ones that was a bit Frenchified, then added, 'Oh, you know, one who regales others with stories'" (*ML* 7). Barry's subject position as the laughing "self" or the teller of the joke is disrupted by the colonial perspective of his boss. His boss believes that Barry's non-British identity prevents him from understanding complex words. Barry's "joker" identity forms a great contrast with his "uncivilised" "otherness" from the racist perspective of his boss. Morreall argues that comprehension and creation of humour depends on a sophisticated conceptual system. Humour is a complex occurrence that is generated by a sudden psychological change, which can be only achieved through the acquisition of language or, in other words, through abstract concepts (1983b, 299). Barry's intellectual and sophisticated character as the "joker" is violated and unsettled

by the Western hegemonic power. When Barry gets furious after the comment on his "inferiority", he thinks "[o]h, boy, I catch so much fire when people talk down to me like I'm some back-a-bush dumb arse who don't understand the ins and outs of the Queen's English. Like I wasn't educated at Antigua Grammar School, best one in the country. Like all my teachers didn't come from the colonial mother ship" (*ML* 7). As a colonial subject Barry is forced to construct a British identity with his education, but he is also forced to maintain his "distance" from the British society. In short, Barry's intellectually originated jokes are ignored by the British society in which he only exists as the black and inferior "other".

Barry challenges the construction of his "otherness" within the colonial discourse by his use of language. He generally speaks non-standard English, also called patois. Following the insult of his boss, he notes that "what if me and my people choose to mash up the *h-english linguish* whenever we feel like it, drop our prepositions with our panties, piss in the pot of correct syntax and spelling, and mangle our grammar *at random*? Is this not our *post-modern, post-colonial* prerogative?" (*ML* 7-8)(emphasis original). Significantly, language has a critical role in the process of decolonisation and in the struggle against colonial rule. Barry attempts to define himself outside the colonial discourse by using a form of non-standard English. He employs patois as a tool to challenge the colonial rule and to form an "imagined community" outside the dominant Western hegemonic forces. As Benedict Anderson remarks, language spoken by any person in a nation makes them imagine that they are a part of the same community, that is through language "pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed" (154). In the light of Anderson's view, Barry tries to be a part of the "imagined" Caribbean community with his use of patois. It is significant to highlight the fact that Barry does not always speak patois, but he occasionally shifts from Standard English to non-standard English. To illustrate, he explains to his grandson, who is not allowed to speak patois and who speaks Queen's, that he should consider patois as a different language. Therefore, he proposes to his grandson that he should speak patois only when it is socially acceptable to speak. Barry further points out that "I can speak the Queen's when I feel like it. But most of the time I just do me own thing. Fear thee not, though, I know my syntax from my semiotics, my homographs from my

homophones, and don't even get me started on my dangling participles" (*ML* 173). In fact, Barry's interchangeable use of patois and Standard English foregrounds his transnational sensibility. Levitt and Glick Schiller contend that transnational experience can be compared to a gauge that is fixed but simultaneously rotates between the homeland and land of settlement. The motion of this gauge is not linear or chronological since it changes direction in the course of time, and moves back and forth (288). Barry's use of language clearly epitomises his changing and fluid identity. Depending on the context, Barry's "gauge" rotates between the "official" world of Standard English and the "non-official" world of patois.

Humour continues to unsettle the borders of Barry's cultural and national identities with the concept of home and homeland. In her analysis of *Mr Loverman,* Koegler points out that "home-making" is linked to heteronormative notions, and therefore contradicts with the "queer". This contradiction is also perceived in diasporic communities since queer diaspora challenges the link between home and diasporic community (Koegler 2020a, 12). The interaction of humour and "home" underlines the rupture of "home" and homeland. Especially Barry's comic description of the design of the house which is practiced by Carmel discloses the dynamic relationship among "home", heteronormative home, and homeland. Barry criticises Carmel's style of decoration in their house and mocks that he "[c]ould write a cultural-studies essay about that particular phenomenon: 'Coming from sparsely furnished homes, the women of the West Indies went goggle-eyed at the veritable cornucopia of colourful fripperies on sale in the Land of Hope and Affordable Ornaments'" (*ML* 186). Barry continues to explain that Caribbean women are fond of abundant supply and silly and unnecessary decorations which may drive one insane. He humorously comments that "I confront the concentric, psychedelic and positively hallucinogenic orange discs masquerading as wallpaper and realize nobody need bother with LSD no more. No wonder Daniel got a headache. I should line up the local junkies and charge them to look at this wall" (*ML* 186-187). His tendentious joke is directed not only towards Carmel but also towards all Caribbean women. Barry maintains a powerful position as the teller of the joke and transforms Carmel and the Caribbean home into the "object" of criticism and laughter. Thereby, he tries to position his queer "self" outside the traditional Caribbean

heteronormative home. In fact, by constructing Carmel and Caribbean women as the strange, unfamiliar, and "other", Barry distorts the link between "home" and the Caribbean diasporic community. It should be noted that "[tendentious jokes] penetrate the social order, indeed they derive their particular force from opening the social world by freeing repressed material and then making their comment (with purpose) on the world" (Neve 40). Barry's joke frees the repressed aggression regarding his heteronormative culture and, as a result, penetrates the social order of his ethnic community.

Barry's description of the Caribbean home also represents the transnational social field he and Carmel exist in. While Barry tries to create Carmel as the static and laughable "other", his humorous description of their home implicitly defines her fluid identity. As aforementioned, on the one hand, the room is excessively decorated as a result of the "sparsely furnished homes" West-Indian women lived in their homeland (*ML* 186). On the other hand, there is also a "wooden clock above the gas fireplace doubling as a giant map of Antigua" (*ML* 187). Carmel constructs a home that is different from the scarcely furnished homes of her homeland; nevertheless, she still possesses objects that connect her to her homeland such as the map of Antigua. Thus, it is observed that Carmel's room and her house exceed their literal meanings and embody the concept of a sense of belonging. As Avtar Brah contends, rather than a geographical location, home is the imagined place where one dreams to return to or a place of "homely" experience. "Home" is a mythic place for the diasporic; therefore, it is a place which is regarded as the place of origin. Simultaneously, "home" also includes the experiences of the present time (188-189). Whereas the map of Antigua indicates Carmel's "origin" which is the place that she imagines as "home", other decorative objects like "ceramic dogs and cats", the Persian carpet, and "crochet dolls" reflect her lived experience in London (*ML* 187). Indeed, the abundantly decorated home transcends the geographical location of Antigua or London as it reflects the complex cultural relations of the Caribbean diaspora and the transnational social sites Carmel lives in.

Although Barry criticises Carmel's diasporic existence at home, he identifies himself with the same familial home. When he contemplates on divorcing Carmel and moving out of his house, he thinks as follows:

> It is what I used to. It is what I know. It makes me feel safe. Yet I go leave it? Yes, I go be brave enough to do that, right? The smell of goat curry and rice and peas in coconut milk is slow-cooking on the stove, making me salivate. A big pot that will last the week. No one can beat Carmel's culinary skills. I will miss them for sure. (*ML* 40-41)

The diasporic home creates a sense of belonging in the society of settlement since Barry cannot think of any other place which he can define as "home". Certainly, "[m]oving in with Morris and thus forsaking the house, Barry would need to leave behind a part of himself and his culture; he must 'dismantle' and 're-mantle' himself – a multi-dimensional challenge" (Koegler 2020a, 13). It is interesting that Carmel's food defines Barry's sense of belonging, for it motivates him to feel safe and at "home". Her food includes diverse ingredients that span from India to Antigua since she cooks goat curry which is a traditional Indian meal and mixes it with peas which are mostly used in the Western cuisine. The multicultural dish is slow-cooked in coconut milk that is one of the primary elements of the Indian and Caribbean cuisine. As Carmel's food signifies Barry's sense of belonging, it can be stated that, like Carmel, Barry's identity is also defined and redefined across national borders. Basch et al. comment on transnational spaces by stating that "many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Basch et al. 1994, 8). Similarly, Carmel's home and multi-national food can be regarded as a cultural space which manifests that Barry's sense of being at home extends across borders.

Barry's joke-like comments on Carmel's comic and physical existence at home solidify his repressed desire to disrupt the heteronormative Caribbean home. Barry humorously depicts Carmel as a violent character in the house. During their fight, she is described as "the Sphinx guarding the city of Thebes. Head of a woman, body of a lioness, wings of an eagle, memory of an elephant, bite of a saltwater crocodile with 2,000 pounds per square inch of pressure, ready to snap my head off" (*ML* 14).

Karschay and Rostek interpret the aforementioned description by asserting that although Carmel is represented as the comical object, Barry's "making fun of Carmel is but projected self-loathing" (129). In addition to Barry's projected self-deprecation, Carmel's comic description displays Barry's hostile feelings towards the heteronormative home. To illustrate, when Barry arrives home late and he senses that there will occur a fight between him and Carmel, he describes the house as "the lion's den", defines Carmel as "getting ready to invade Poland", and compares their fight to a boxing match by stating that he will have "another round in the ring with Carmel" (*ML* 5, 11, 31). It can be observed that Carmel is the object of aggression in Barry's tendentious jokes. These jokes about Carmel's threatening position include a certain form of joke-displacement. Freud states that displacement can be identified in certain jokes when an idea replaces another one. He points out that "displacement" is a joke technique which exposes unconscious desires as joke-work and dream-work have mainly the same structure (50). Barry's description of Carmel's existence in the house is a significant illustration of displacement since he replaces the idea of the "wife" with the idea of the threatening and guarding animal. By replacing the idea of wife and "guardian", Barry unconsciously implies his hidden desire to form a non-heteronormative home.

Although Barry tries to satisfy his hostile feelings by transforming Carmel into the object of laughter, the narrative rejects accepting Carmel's "otherness" by giving her a narrative voice. To explain, whereas Barrington is the narrator of ten chapters, Carmel is the narrator of six chapters in which she refers to her past as a young girl in Antigua, her romantic relationship with Barry, and her experiences in Britain as an immigrant. The contrast between their narrative voices is foregrounded with the titles of the chapters since the titles of the chapters Barry narrates begin with the phrase "The Art of" and the titles of the chapters in which Carmel is the narrator of start with the words "Song of". Barry's narration is structural, written in prose, and contains a humorous tone whereas Carmel's narrative style is non-structural, includes a lyrical poetic voice and a serious tone. "The Art of" chapters imply the idea that "[t]o master an art requires an approach that is well-informed, calculated and measured. By comparison, the melody and rhythm of song reflects a more instinctive expression of emotion [in the "Song of"

chapters]" (Danaher 133). In the "Song of" chapters, Carmel imagines immigrating to Britain and living a typical British life during her youth, but later on she does not approve of the taste of her children as they only like to eat Western food (*ML* 29, 148). Furthermore, Carmel's chapters also narrate her unhappiness in her marriage which results in a love affair with one of her colleagues (*ML* 199-207). Carmel's expression of her own experiences highlight that the construction of her static "otherness" in Barry's jokes is imaginary. Concisely, her cultural identity exceeds the borders of the fixed Antiguan collective cultural identity.

Barry's perspective on the concept of "home" also signifies his attempt to create a fixed "home" in order to reach a sense of belonging. The homes he has lived in demonstrate his longing for the construction of a static "home". He contemplates that "I only ever lived in three houses my whole life: parental, rental, familial. I was transplanted to Stokey over fifty years ago and I gone native. This. My. Home" (*ML* 118). He further points out that "it took a while, because when we first arrived here the locals didn't know us, couldn't understand us, and they certainly didn't like the look of us" (*ML* 118). This suggests that Barry's racial "otherness" generates his firm sense of belonging to the heteronormative home, which he unconsciously violates through jokes. As Evaristo comments on *Mr Loverman,*

> [t]he idea of moving from his house and neighbourhood fills him with trepidation. His marriage is built on falsity, his public heterosexual identity a façade, but nonetheless this has become his (dis)comfort zone and the idea of de-territorialiazation represents emotional destabilization. In a sense he has re-created the tiny island community of his past in this small patch of East London – an area of land he knows well and in which he is well known. Barrington's attitude to home explains much about his attitude to coming out of the closet after so long. He says he's not big on change: clearly this is an understatement. (Evaristo 2013, 357)

Barry cannot embrace his queer diasporic identity since it disrupts his Caribbean sense of belonging to his familial home. He cannot imagine a "home" in which he will be defined outside the normative alliances of nationhood. Thus, moving out of his "home" seems to compel him to identify himself outside the Caribbean space as his identity will be defined in the queer diasporic space. John Hawley states that in postcolonial or

decolonised nations that try to define themselves outside the Western ideology, a common national identity is needed for self-definition. He emphasises that sexual identity is dismissed in the global world where borders are blurred, for the only way to construct an imagined community is the presence of a strong national identity. Consequently, "[i]n such nation-building cultures, sexual dissidence is a distraction: you are either one of us, or you are not" (Hawley 9). Barry's familial home represents the national Caribbean identity he has constructed to maintain a sense of belonging to his homeland. Stuart Hall notes that cultural identity can be divided into two categories and "[t]he first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (2003, 234). In order to survive as a minority and as the non-normative "other", Barry has to form solidarity with his heteronormative ethnic community. In this sense, Barry's familial home reflects the collective cultural identity which creates a stable Caribbean "self".

Barry's persistence to live in his familial home juxtaposes the numerous houses he owns, which complicates his cultural identity. Barry is the landowner of many houses in his neighbourhood. He explains how he bought broke-up houses, repaired and rented them out and states that "most of the babies is now worth three hundred times what I paid for them" (*ML* 117). Nevertheless, he does not wish to move to another house as he still insists on staying in his own house, even after his divorce. As Barry expresses, if he moves out and lives with Morris, it "feels like climbing Kilimanjaro with no clothes, crampons, rope or SOS flare" (*ML* 134). He rejects embracing the fluid notions of identity. While he achieves forming a collective cultural identity, he fails to embrace a cultural identity regarding the second category of cultural identity in Hall's definition. Hall establishes that cultural identity in the second sense is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. He underlines the aspect of "difference" in the second category (2003, 236). Cultural identity in the second definition is unstable, incomplete and always in flux. In this sense, Barry's homosexuality is the difference that deviates from the collective cultural identity of the Caribbean diaspora. However, Barry is unable to interiorise his fluid, unstable and changing queer cultural identity since he

cannot think of living in a place outside the borders of the Caribbean familial home. Consequently, it is the tension of the clash between his collective cultural identity and individual cultural identity that is exposed or relieved through his jokes.

As the text revolves around Barry's fear of "homelessness", the humorous incongruity regarding Barry's home should be pointed out. Barry's fear of being homeless contrasts with his status as a landowner of rental homes. Although he owns many houses, he thinks, "where will I live after this possible divorce" (*ML* 189). He also expresses that "[h]ouses don't turn into homes straightaway. They need years of a life lived to feel comfortable" (*ML* 39). The inconsistency in the meaning of "home" generates certain humorous incongruity. Schopenhauer claims that humour is the result of the perception of the incongruity between an abstract concept and a concrete object. He delineates that "two or more real objects are thought through one concept, and the identity of the concept is transferred to the objects; it then becomes strikingly apparent from the entire difference of the objects in other respects, that the concept was only applicable to them from a one-sided point of view" (1966a, 59). In this sense, at first sight, Barry's home and the houses he owns are thought in relation to the concept of "home". Barry's sense of home is the abstract concept and his familial home and the houses which he owns are the concrete objects. The meaning of "home" is transferred to each house he owns. However, it then becomes clear that his sense of home is totally different from the concrete object of home. The humorous incongruity between the abstract and concrete meaning of home underlines his transnational identity by reinforcing the tension of his sense of belonging.

In conclusion, Barry's humorous attitude towards heteronormative marriage, Carmel, and his familial home emblematises the complex social and cultural ties that also present his ethnic and cultural heritage. Analysing Barry's humorous criticism within Freud's joke theory exposes the ambivalent position of the "self" and "other" in the Caribbean diaspora society. Barry's jokes hold diverse functions such as relieving cultural oppression, justifying his Antiguan identity, attacking the normative Antiguan community, and satisfying non-normative instincts. To be specific, as jokes represent repressed and unconscious wishes, Barry's jokes reflect his repressed non-heteronormative instincts which are oppressed by the Antiguan culture. Furthermore, he

endeavours to justify his deviation from Antiguan norms by adopting a comic perspective since he struggles to form points of identification to the Antiguan cultural and national space. Also, Barry employs the joke-form as a tool to attack his diaspora community by targeting Carmel and his marriage as the comic object. Consequently, these jokes demonstrate the disruption of his sense of belonging to the Antiguan community. It is notable that Barry's jokes present him a space to construct a laughing "self" in order to avoid being the laughable "other". His joking attitude portrays the tension between his fixed cultural Caribbean identity and his fluid homosexual identity. As jokes determine the power position between the laughing subject and object of laughter, it is observed that Barry's jokes create and recreate these power positions as a result of his fluid identity.

3.2.2. Laughing at the Queer Diasporan

It is possible to further improve the discussion of Barry's transnational identity by specifying his queer diasporic identity. Apart from the jokes about the heteronormative diaspora community, Barry's humorous attitude towards the non-heteronormative society also implies his complex relations to his homeland and land of sojourn. On the one hand, as argued in the previous part, Barry criticises the normative norms of the Caribbean society. On the other hand, he mocks homosexuality and rejects identifying himself within the queer space. After the first half of the novel, following Carmel's departure to Antigua for her father's funeral, the tension of Barry's homosexuality increases. Barry progressively begins to contemplate on his sexual identity as a result of the absence of the Caribbean culture which is represented by Carmel. Kate Houlden establishes that works which employ the queer in the twenty-first century portray how queer disturbs racial, national and gendered categorisations (569). Indeed, Barry's queer and unstable sexual identity induces the representation of his fluid national identity. Although he does not directly challenge national and cultural boundaries, his jokes and his humorous perspective demonstrate how he implicitly ruptures racial and national boundaries.

Before delving into the function of humour in Barry's interconnected sexual and national identities, the origin of this correlation ought to be explained. When Barry

meditates on his past life in Antigua, he thinks that it is extremely difficult to succeed in a colonised or ex-colonised country as a black person. He remembers that the white colonisers are considered as the upper class and the light-skinned Antiguans, who are referred to as "red-skinned", are in the second place of the social hierarchy. The "darkies" are inferior to both the colonisers and the light-skinned Antiguans. He explains that, in the past, it was impossible to unite, and resist the colonisers since "we [Antiguans] wasn't like those badass, kamikaze Jamaicans full of the blood of Yoruba warriors living on an island twenty-six times larger than ours. No, sah, and we was cut off from each other on remote plantations and villages. The Jamaicans had massive mountain ranges to escape. What we have? *Volcanic mounds*" (*ML* 158)(emphasis original). His thoughts about the colonial past and his racial "otherness" disclose and disrupt the notion of a singular and fixed black identity. Barry's statement displays the multiple subjectivities and the differences of the Caribbean identity. Stuart Hall conveys that "[v]isiting the French Caribbean for the first time, I also saw at once how different Martinique is from, say, Jamaica: and this is no mere difference of topography or climate. It is a profound difference of culture and history. And the difference *matters.* It positions Martiniquains and Jamaicans as *both* the same *and* different" (2003, 238)(emphasis original). In this context, while Barry's anecdote illustrates the position of black people regarding the Caribbean "self", it also underlines the "difference" of the Antiguan identity. Although Barry tries to construct a static black diasporic identity, his thoughts reveal the fluidity and plurality of his ethnic identity and national identity.

Right after his narration of racism in Antigua and his thought about how his father did not have the right to vote for most of his life, Barry mentions that "I don't like to buck the so-called 'system', like those gay exhibitionists Morris loves so much. I like to infiltrate the system and benefit from it. Same goes with my marriage. I don't like being an outsider" (*ML* 159). Barry's racial "otherness" generates, thus, his struggle to resist sexual "difference" and "otherness". Newns points out that there is a certain analogy between the queer and the postcolonial subject since both challenge borders. That is, "[b]oth have ultimately been seen as troubling to national coherence: where the diasporic subject explodes the fantasy of ethnic homogeneity, the queer citizen challenges the nation's privileging of heterosexuality" (Newns 138). Barry is both the

diasporic subject and the queer citizen; therefore, his "otherness" is troubling his homeland in two ways. Barry's black "otherness" in Antigua challenges the national unity of postcolonial Antigua and of the British Empire. In addition, his sexual "otherness" challenges the heteronormative stance of Antigua. This suggests that his racial and sexual identities cannot be comprehended separately since one reinforces the other. Therefore, Barry's hostile jokes towards the queer implicitly reflect his fear of "being an outsider" both racially and sexually.

Specific joke techniques reinforce Barry's rejection to be defined as homosexual. When Morris tells Barry that "'[y]ou homosexual, Barry […] 'We established that fact a long time ago'", Barry answers him by expressing that "'Morris, dear. I ain't no homosexual, I am a … Barrysexual!'" (*ML* 138). "Barrysexual" is an example of Freud's "joke-condensation" since the word Barry and homosexual are abbreviated and compressed with the aim of creating laughter. As Freud states, abbreviation in jokes represents the repressed thoughts in the unconscious (17-19). While Barry seeks to relieve his tense discussion with Morris with word-condensation, he actually reflects his desire to create an identity which is defined outside the non-heteronormative space. Furthermore, during his conversation with his daughter Maxine, Maxine utters that "'[i]f you'd been paying attention, it would have been obvious I'd be totally cool with your homosexuality' and Barry contemplates that "[t]*he only homo I am is sapiens, dearie*" (*ML* 220)(emphasis original). The employment of the word "homo" is an example of Freud's "joke-displacement" since the meaning of "homo" is displaced which produces humour. Like the "Barrysexual" example, this "joke-displacement" exhibits Barry's desire to be recognised outside the fixed and stable definitions of homosexuality. These fixed definitions overlap with "the global gay" image. Dennis Altman remarks that "the global gay" is described as "young, upwardly mobile, sexually adventurous, with an in-your-face attitude toward traditional restrictions and an interest in both activism and fashion" (20). He asserts that it is this image that leads to the struggle of non-Western homosexuals to define themselves within the queer space. In other words, there is a certain ambivalence of identifying oneself as homosexual in the Western defined homosexual space. Altman points out the views of a non-Western homosexual as follows, "[w]hen we say to straight people, or,

more rarely, to Western gay people, 'We are like you' we must remember to add, 'only different'" (35). Barry, clearly, does not fit into the image of "the global gay" as he is traditional, old, and prefers to ignore any kind of activism. Therefore, rather than "homosexual", Barry prefers to reflect his difference from the "typical" homosexual by defining himself as "Barrysexual".

Barry's mocking disapproval of homosexuality demonstrates his struggle to create a national identity. As Hawley states, the Western "gay life-style" is perceived as anti-national or elitist in non-Western or developing countries (5). When Barry thinks about homosexuality, he automatically visualises as follows, "'[i]magine it. We can live anywhere we so-to-choose. How about Miami? I hear that place is full of pooftahs[20]. Maybe we can live in a luxurious bungalow in Florida with sprinklers on the lawn and half-naked butlers serving up our evening aperitif'" (*ML* 45). Karschay and Rostek state that this "sexualized image of decadent wealth and the designation of other gay men as 'pooftahs' show to what extent Barry has internalized the prejudices of his own culture" (129). Moreover, after Morris prepares breakfast during Carmel's absence, Barry humorously mocks the croissants and expresses that first croissants and then it will be cupcakes and "before you know it, flower-arranging classes. Croissants are just the beginning of the slippery slope, my man" (*ML* 273). His humorous definition of the gay lifestyle is in accordance with the elitist image of homosexuality in non-Western cultures. Barry considers homosexuality as a Western identity position outside the Caribbean cultural space. Evaristo travels to Antigua during her research on *Mr Loverman* and she observes that gay men are accepted by the society only in two ways. In Antigua, "[e]ither they are outrageously camp cross-dressers called 'shims', and as such are seen as eccentric, possibly mad figures of fun and entertainment, or they live quietly on the 'down low' and do not speak or show their homosexuality, although people in their tight circle might know or suspect. There are no self-declared homosexual public gay figures in the country" (Evaristo 2013, 368). As Barry positions himself in the Caribbean normative space, he is unable to identify himself as homosexual both in cultural terms and in national terms. Regarding the aforementioned

[20] Pooftah is slang for homosexual.

examples, being gay is to be eccentric from Barry's perspective. His diasporic identity in Britain consolidates his rejection to practice an "anti-nationalist" act such as identifying himself as homosexual. In this context, by referring to the mocking and humorous image of the global, eccentric, and elitist gay, Barry directs his laughter towards the homosexual. However, as Barry is homosexual himself, the direction of laughter disrupts his subject position as the traditional Caribbean man. Indeed, his mocking humour directed at the non-heteronormative lifestyle unsettles both his Caribbean "self" and homosexual "otherness".

Apart from the rejection of a Western "global gay image", Barry also rejects the prejudices and the "gay image" of the Caribbean society. The direction of humour and ridiculing of Carmel's conservative friend-group towards homosexuality substantiates the non-Western image of the homosexual. Before Carmel's departure to Antigua, her friends visit her after a sermon at the church. During their conversation, they criticise non-conservative people such as homosexuals. Carmel states that "Pastor George delivered a very fine sermon this morning, Barry. All about philanderers, homosicksicals, and moral reprobates" (*ML* 51). Carmel incorrectly pronounces homosexuals as "homosicksicals". Her attack on non-normative people is represented through this unintentionally uttered comic word. This unintentional hostile joke targets Barry's sexual identity. As the laughable "other", Barry counterattacks the homophobic friend-group through hostile jokes which are expressed only in his thoughts as he is a closet-gay. When, for instance, Asselietha –one of Carmel's friends– makes harsh homophobic statements, Barry thinks that "[t]his is what I truly believe happened to Asselietha. Someone sliced off the top of her head, scooped out her brains, put them in a blender and turned on the switch. Once it was all mash-up, they poured the mixture back in through her scalp and stitched it all up" (*ML* 62). Instead of coming-out or openly defend his sexual identity, Barry relieves social tension through a comic, but at the same time, cruel and graphic image of Asselietha. The "silent" comic and violent jokes targeted at the Antiguan friend-group reveal that Barry is compelled to doubly struggle to identify himself as both homosexual and Antiguan. To explain, queer people of colour are not able to identify themselves by only regarding the deconstruction of binaries of gender, for "to ignore the multiple subjectivities of the minoritarian subject

within and without political movements and theoretical paradigms is not only theoretically and politically naive, but also potentially dangerous" (Johnson and Henderson 5). Barry is unable to define himself as a homosexual person as he fears of being re-positioned outside the Caribbean community. On the other hand, he rejects the Caribbean perspective on the "immoral" gay image. Thus, while Barry positions himself in the Caribbean national space, his hostile jokes that attack homophobes define his identity position in the non-heteronormative space. This implies that Barry feels at home in the Caribbean community and simultaneously lacks a sense of belonging to the same community.

The humorous incongruity of Barry's appearance is another significant factor in the comprehension of his desire to construct a fixed identity. Barry wears a "suit in authentic fifties style" and describes himself as a "gentleman of the Caribbean, attired in the sharp-suited style of his early years" (*ML* 10, 113). He attaches great importance to his 1950s-style suit and as the authentic style cannot be found in any contemporary shops, he acquires it from his tailor Levinsky, the only one Barry knows who can still make the suit (*ML* 10). Evidently, Barry's out-dated clothing forms a strong contrast with the setting of the 2010s London. This juxtaposition creates humorous incongruity which provides an insight into Barry's identification process. John Morreall states that humorous incongruity is initiated as a result of the contrast between two or more concepts. To clarify, human beings live according to certain patterns and when an object or thought appears to be out of place, humour emerges (1983a, 15-16). In this context, Barry seems out of place since his existence in contemporary Britain clashes with his vintage appearance. His authentic look transforms him into a comic "object" that does not fit into the modern world. Barry's lack of adaptation to the modern world implies his rejection of change and fluidity. To exemplify, when Morris tries to convince Barry to think about homosexual marriage, Barry refers to his suit as follows, "[a]ny half-brained person seeing me wearing a Homburg and wide-lapelled 1950s suit will understand I am a fella not big on change. I ain't never worn a pair of jeans in my life, and I like my socks gartered, which says it all" (*ML* 140). Barry has been wearing this type of suit since his twenties when he was living in Antigua; thus, he appears to be frozen in the past. The 1950s suit which represents his youth and past in Antigua

displays his inability to embrace change and flexibility. Evidently, his comic and incongruous appearance demonstrates his transnational sensibility as he positions himself within the Antiguan society of the past while living in London.

When Barry's authentic appearance is introduced into the non-heteronormative space, humorous incongruity intensifies. After he is compelled to disclose his homosexuality to his daughter Maxine, Maxine decides to invite Barry and Morris to a gay bar where she occasionally hangs out with her gay friends. Barry uneasily accepts Maxine's invitation, but when they arrive at the bar, he recognises that it is different from what he had imagined. Barry thinks that "[i]t's not as Village People as I expected. Fellas are dressed quite normal and not all *Gay-Pride-Parade-Wearing-Only-a-Sequinned-Thong-and-Peacock-Feather-Headdress* (*ML* 246)(emphasis original). He realises that "the global gay" image contrasts with the reality. As a result, the intensity of his mocking laughter towards the gay community ceases. On the contrary, humour is directed at Barry's appearance in the non-heteronormative society, for "[a]ctually, me and Morris is the ones getting *anthropological* looks, with our smart fifties suits, spats, fedoras and, in my case, a chunky gold chain around my neck. I give them anthropological looks right back. Don't they understand that we the *visitors* here, not the natives?" (*ML* 246)(emphasis original). Although Barry's authentic look amplifies humorous incongruity, his existence as the "native" in the gay bar reflects the disruption of his "Barrysexual" "self".

While his sexual identity confronts the reality of change, his national identity is simultaneously re-defined. Maxine tells Barry that "'[y]ou're an old Caribbean queen, but don't worry, most people won't notice. You're a dying breed, Daddy'" (*ML* 223). Maxine's perspective re-defines Barry's national and sexual identities. Barry is not recognised as a traditional first generation immigrant of the Caribbean anymore, but he is identified as a Caribbean queen. For the first time, through Maxine's voice, his sexual identity and national identity are amalgamated. Hall scrutinises that cultural identity as the second category is a matter of becoming and difference. Thus, "[w]e cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean's 'uniqueness'" (Hall 2003, 236). In Barry's case, his

Caribbean "uniqueness" is not related to the local culture of Antigua, but it is connected to Barry's difference regarding his queer diasporic existence. With reference to his visit to the gay bar, Barry's stable Caribbean "self" and homosexual "otherness" are unsettled. His multiple national and sexual experiences position him in a "new" cultural identity which is the homosexual Caribbean black identity. The course of his identification process can be illustrated by Maxine's statement as follows, "I can't wait to haul you two out of the 1950s and into the twenty-first century" (*ML* 240). Evidently, Barry's entrance into the gay bar demonstrates the positioning and re-positioning of his Caribbean homosexual identity in the contemporary setting of Britain.

In the last chapter, the transformation of the function of humour foregrounds Barry's construction of queer diasporic practices and networks that exceed the requirements of the heteronormative Caribbean community. As aforementioned, Barry employs tendentious jokes and hostile humour in order to create relief in a culturally oppressive atmosphere. While this oppressive atmosphere lessens after Carmel's visit to Antigua, cultural oppression ceases after their divorce. During her visit to Antigua, Carmel learns from Morris's ex-wife, Odette, about Barry's and Morris's homosexual relationship. As a result, she confronts Barry and asks for a divorce. The last chapter of *Mr Loverman* is set one year after their divorce and briefly narrates Barry's and Morris's new life in Barry's familial home. The finalisation of Barry's marriage initiates the termination of the culturally oppressive atmosphere. Therefore, Barry does not seek to discharge repressed feelings or create relief anymore. In fact, his humorous perspective on life transforms from hostile humour into innocent jokes. To illustrate, when Barry tries to convince Morris to buy a Lamborghini, he shows the car and expresses that it is the "Lambo-you-getti". Morris disapproves of buying such an expensive car and Barry reacts to Morris's objection by stating "Lambo-for-getti" (*ML* 294). Furthermore, as they are driving in their car with loud music, Barry amusingly mentions that people "probably think we are two famous American jazz musicians: Little Morris and Big Daddy B of the Louisiana Jazz Ensemble" (*ML* 304). As Freud remarks, unlike tendentious jokes, innocent jokes or non-tendentious jokes do not have a distinct purpose. They are the "purest" form of jokes since their only aim is to create amusement (Freud 90, 94). Barry's jokes in the last chapter can be identified as

innocent jokes since they do not target an object or a person. Thus, the laughable object or the comic "other" is absent. In other words, the comic homosexual "other" and the comic normative Caribbean "other" are not the subjects of his jokes any longer. As the familial and cultural oppressive atmosphere diminishes, it is observed that Barry's hostile jokes come to an end. Barry is still the teller of the joke and the laughing "self", but his use of innocent jokes reveals that his desire to construct a static "other" in order to create a powerful identity position ends.

As hostile jokes reinforce hierarchical power relations between the "self" and other", their absence in the last part creates a space to question and reject static notions of identity. Maggie Gee states in her review of *Mr Loverman* that "[t]he ending of Barrington and Morris's tale offers a rounded 19th-century satisfaction. [Evaristo] has given her characters room to change, and her readers time to move from laughter to sympathy". Unlike their previous authentic style, Barry and Morris wear "navy Crombies" and "new cashmere scarves". Barry wears a "muskrat fur hat" and Morris a "sheepskin steppe hat" (*ML* 292). Their authentic 1950s suit which represents their desire to construct a fixed identity is replaced by a new fashion style. This new style demonstrates the disruption of static identities and the existence of fluid and unstable identities. Furthermore, Barry and Morris reconstruct the ex-familial house for a larger bedroom, larger living room, and larger bathroom. Barry describes the reconstruction process as "the day the builders moved in to obliterate all traces of my former life, wife and strife" (*ML* 295). Evidently, "[t]his counter-narrative of black identity 'queers' the national home of the Caribbean rather than presenting rejection and escape as the only option for those who follow nonnormative patterns of living" (Newns 154). Instead of moving into a new house, Barry and Morris decide to transform the heteronormative Caribbean house into a place that is defined outside the normative alliances of nationhood. Furthermore, change is also reflected by the rebuilding of Barry's Buick car which has not been used since 1975. Barry states that "we dismantled and remantled the Buick, chased all over London getting parts; ordered from the States whatever we couldn't find" (*ML* 295). Like the negation to move into a new house, they refuse to buy a new car and decide to reconstruct the old one. It can thus be observed that Barry embraces the changing and fluid nature of his queer diasporic identity. By "dismantling

and re-mantling" his car, his appearance, and his home, Barry disrupts the dominant heteronormative Caribbean regime of representation and is re-positioned in the queer diasporic space.

As Barry's sexual identity and national identity are interacting, his acceptance of his sexual identity leads to the acceptance of a changed and fluid homeland. During his car trip with Morris, Barry contemplates that "[i]f we feel like it we can drive all the way to Manchester, York or even Glasgow. Why not? Nothing stopping us now. Don't need to report back to nobody. Only person I got to answer is Morris" (*ML* 304). As a result of the elimination of cultural restrictions, Barry reaches a sense of freedom. Finally, he is able to define himself as homosexual and states that his grandson "might be okay with having a Barrysexual, correction, *homosexual* (la-di-dah) grandfather" (*ML* 299)(emphasis original). Barry does not need to penetrate the social order through hostile jokes anymore such as using the word "Barrysexual". He re-positions himself in cultural space which represents the fluid and shifting nature of his identity. As Hall contends, identities "are subject to a radical historicization, and are in the process of change and transformation" (2004, 17). It is significant to note that his acceptance of his homosexual identity generates a confrontation with "home". Barry, who has not gone to Antigua since many years, contemplates that "I been thinking how maybe it's time to go home too, just for a visit, to test the water" (*ML* 304). Only after accepting his sexual identity can Barry confront his transnational identity. He expresses that "we must-a lost part of ourselves being in England so long" (*ML* 305). Until the last chapter, Barry does not maintain a lack of a sense of belonging, he does not long for home and his problematic belonging is connected to the Antiguan diasporic community as a homosexual. However, in the last chapter, after acknowledging his sexual identity, Barry's shifting nature and transnational identity is revealed. His longing for "home" reflects that he cannot be described as a "traditional" black immigrant. Although it seems that he has fully adapted to a new life in Britain, his metaphoric and physical journey with Morris displays his existence in more than one state. The more they penetrate into the countryside with their remantled car, the more Barry questions his national and racial identities. He comments that "[a]s we were driving deeper and deeper into [the greenery of the countryside], I starting to feel like a tourist, like we

somewhere foreign, somewhere abroad" (*ML* 304). From a decentred perspective, the marginal, off-centred or the ex-centric takes on a new significance since to be ex-centric is to have a different and shifting perspective. As a result, not fixed individuals but contextualized identities appear; alternatively stated, there is no single otherness and there are no fixed binary oppositions (Hutcheon 61-62). In this sense, Barry's sexual and national identities cannot be fixed or categorised. He is neither an immigrant who fully adapted to the land of settlement nor an immigrant who plans to return home. On the contrary, Barry's national identity is created and recreated through his shifting involvement in Antigua and Britain. Also, Barry fits neither into the Western "global gay" image nor into the heterosexual immigrant image, but he is homosexual and also a diasporan. In the light of Linda Hutcheon's view, the fixed principle of "either-or" is challenged in the postmodern world and transmutes into "and also" which represents the language of the decentred world. Likewise, Barry is positioned and repositioned in the queer diasporic space.

The journey metaphor enhances Barry's cross-border and fluid identity. During his car-trip with Morris, Barry thinks that "maybe it's time to go back to where it all began. A flying visit, but not flying, of course. We can go by sea, same way we came, leisurely" (*ML* 305). Barry is afraid of flying and prefers to go by boat to Antigua. His reference to the Windrush generation and their arrival in Britain attributes a critical meaning to the journey. The route from Antigua to Britain coincides with Paul Gilroy's views on roots and routes. Gilroy asserts that the concept of "route" can be elucidated by the portrayal of the ship image as "[t]he image of the ship — a living, microcultural, micro-political system in motion — is especially important for historical and theoretical reasons" (Gilroy 4). Gilroy points out that ships draw attention to the circulation of ideas, practices, and culture such as books and records. Thus, the image of the ship discloses that black diaspora does not have a single and fixed origin. This interconnectedness, the travel of ideas and culture are also perceived in Barry's passage from Antigua to Britain and his planned journey from Britain to Antigua. These passages have the same route but imply changed and transformed "roots". Barry's return passage indicates his transnational identity. This experience of a complex sense of belonging to more than one "home" or country is narrated in novels written by

transnational authors and about transnational identities. Schultermandl and Toplu demonstrate that transnational characters often physically and metaphorically go on journeys in order to reach a sense of belonging. They further argue that "[t]hese protagonists learn, often at crucial moments in their character development, that only by embracing a fluid sense of self can they reach a sense of belonging amidst this hyper-mobility" (Schultermandl and Toplu 3). Barry learns from his metaphorical journey throughout the novel to embrace his fluid sexual and national identities. As a result of his metaphorical journey, he can finally leave the setting of London which he has not left for many years. Thus, he retains the freedom to travel to the countryside and Antigua. While Barry's car journey into the countryside portrays his lack of a sense of belonging in Britain, his reference to the sea passage to Antigua indicates the cross-border and fluid cultural connections of his transnational identity.

In conclusion, although Barry does not directly challenge national and gendered categorisations, his joking attitude represents how he disturbs national and cultural boundaries. Barry epitomises the analogy between the queer subject and the postcolonial subject in terms of the rupture of normative categories. His racial and sexual "otherness" substantiate that his Antiguan and homosexual identities are interconnected. He is unable to define himself as homosexual as a result of his fear to be re-positioned outside the Caribbean community. In this regard, Barry's comic illustrations of the Western "global gay" image reveal his conservative Caribbean "self". However, as Barry is homosexual himself, his laughter, which is directed from his traditional Caribbean "self" to the eccentric homosexual "other", complicates the notions of ethnic, cultural and sexual identities. Indeed, his mocking humour directed at the non-normative lifestyle unsettles both his Caribbean "self" and homosexual "otherness". While ridiculing homosexuality, Barry simultaneously rejects the Caribbean perspective of the "immoral" gay image. This suggests that he belongs to the Caribbean diasporic community, but simultaneously lacks a sense of belonging to the same community. Accordingly, his hostile jokes towards homosexual identities disrupt the stable position of the "self" and "other" and reinforce his transnational identity. When the culturally oppressive atmosphere ceases in the last chapters, Barry does not feel compelled to relieve or attack the normative or non-normative "other".

Mr Loverman complicates and underlines the incongruity of the "self" and "other" by portraying a queer diasporic and transnational "joker". As jokes determine the power positions among people, Barry's jokes display the power positions between the "self" and "other" in terms of cultural and gendered identities. These power positions are created and recreated in relation to Barry's fluid identity. In fact, his tendentious jokes present him a space to construct a powerful laughing "self" in order to avoid being the laughable "other". By employing humour, Barry positions and repositions himself in or outside the Caribbean diasporic community. The incongruity between Barry's position as the laughing traditional Caribbean "self" and the laughable homosexual "other" is reinforced by the ambiguous nature of humour. This ambivalence is also intensified by the absence of the listener of Barry's jokes or by the presence of the listener who especially rejects his jokes. On this basis, the text disrupts Barry's attempts to create a comic "other" which blurs the borders of cultural identity and ethnic identity. In other words, Barry is the subject of laughter, yet he is simultaneously the "object" of his own laughter that attacks the non-normative "other". Furthermore, the tension between his collective cultural identity and individual cultural identity ceases in the end of the novel. The absence of hostile jokes in the end of the text provides a tranquil and a comfortable atmosphere, which is reinforced by Barry's innocent jokes as they have benevolent functions. Certainly, the absence of Barry's vulgar humour in the last chapter represents that he can create a sense of belonging to his own community and accept his transnational existence only by embracing his fluid national, cultural, and sexual identities. In this context, Barry's joking attitude is a strategic tool that complicates and transgresses cultural and national boundaries. As a queer person of colour, Barry represents the fluid and unstable links between the culture of one's homeland and the land of settlement. While *Mr Loverman* presents a space to question the borders of identities through Barry's tendentious jokes, it celebrates fluid and transnational identities by creating a non-tendentious atmosphere in the end. This non-oppressive atmosphere in the last chapter reflects that Barry can confront his transnational identity only after accepting his sexual identity. Morris utters the last words of the novel to Barry: "enjoy the vibes" (*ML* 307). Evaristo demonstrates a non-

oppressive and cheerful ambiance in the end of her novel in order to foreground that one can “enjoy the vibes” by only accepting a cross-border existence.

CHAPTER 4

HUMOUR AND SOUTH-ASIAN BRITISH TRANSNATIONAL NOVELS

4.1. *The Buddha of Suburbia* by Hanif Kureishi

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) explores the notions of race, ethnicity, belonging and Britishness through its protagonist Karim Amir. The novel narrates four years in the life of the seventeen-year-old Karim, who is born to an Indian father, Haroon[21], and an English mother, Margaret. *The Buddha of Suburbia* is set in the tense political and social climate of 1970s Britain. Karim experiences identity problems as he is from both British and Indian decent. While he insists on his British identity as he is born and raised in Britain, the British society regards him as the Indian "other". The experiences of his family and friends play a critical role in Karim's identification process. The text, thus, revolves around Karim's and other immigrant characters' struggle to reach for a sense of belonging. Among the tragic incidents regarding racism, ethnicity and social class, humour maintains a significant role while explaining the fluidity of ethnic identities. In this chapter, I argue that the shifting direction of humour generated by the construction and deconstruction of comic ethnic caricatures exposes the transnational sensibility of ethnic identities, and particularly of Karim's identity.

The Buddha of Suburbia is Hanif Kureishi's first novel which won the Whitbread Award for the best first novel. The novel consists of two parts. The first part, entitled "In the Suburbs", focuses on Karim's desire to escape the monotonous and lower middle class life in Bromley, the suburbs of South London. In addition to the dull life in the suburbs, Karim also struggles to escape the racist attitude of the white

[21] As Haroon is Muslim and as the novel is discussed as a semi-autobiographical text by some critics, it is implied that Haroon holds both an Indian and Pakistani background. As a result, Haroon and Karim can be defined as Pakistani/Indian; however, they usually describe themselves and are described as Indian. To be specific, the opposition to the British rule resulted in the Indian independence in 1947, which caused the "Indian Empire" or the "British Raj" to be divided into India and Pakistan. In this context, Haroon, who migrates to Britain in 1950, spent most of his childhood and youth in the Indian Empire rather than Pakistan. Therefore, while Haroon's Muslim background positions him as a Pakistani, his ethnicity is regarded as Indian. In the novel, Haroon and Karim are defined as Indian in most cases. In various articles, they are usually referred to as Indian or in few examples as Pakistani/Indian. Accordingly, this study also interchangeably uses Pakistani/Indian, Indian or the term "South Asian" in order to refer to the ethnic identity of these characters.

suburbanites. Although he is partially of British origin, his dark complexion prevents him from fitting in the British society. As a result of his "hybrid" identity, Karim's sense of belonging fluctuates between "othered" immigrants and white supremacists. The South Asian community is represented by first generation immigrant characters such as Karim's father and their family friend, Anwar. Also, the novel employs second generation immigrant characters such as Anwar's daughter, Jamila, and a fresh immigrant character from India who is Anwar's son-in-law, Changez. Furthermore, Karim romantically loves, idealises and admires Charlie who is the most popular white boy in his high school. While Karim maintains a partial sense of belonging to the South Asian community, he simultaneously desires to belong to the white British society through his love for Charlie. The divorce of Karim's parents and his father's romantic relationship with Eva, Charlie's mother who is a white suburbanite, further complicate Karim's sense of "home". The second part, entitled "In the City", centres on Karim's experiences in London where he starts to work as an actor. While the metropolitan and multicultural character of London is foregrounded in this part, Karim's acting career is simultaneously affected by the racist attitudes of white British directors. In London, Karim ignores the problems of his South Asian family and friends whom he left in the suburbs. His romantic relationship with an upper middle-class white actress, Eleanor, and his continuing admiration of Charlie intensify Karim's ignorance of his family and problematic sense of belonging. Towards the end of the novel, Karim slightly realises that his father and Indian friends are a part of his identity. While still striving to reach a sense of belonging in London, Karim is offered an acting role in a TV soap opera. In the end, he contemplates on his past struggles and hopes that his life will be more meaningful in the future. The end of the novel does not include a clear resolution regarding Karim's ethnic and social identity. Ironically, the novel ends on the night of the 1979 general election when the Conservative Party, led by Margaret Thatcher, wins the elections. In this context, it can be argued that throughout the novel, Karim holds a transnational existence as he fluctuates between his Indian origin and his British sense of self.

It is crucial to underline that Hanif Kureishi's own experiences with racism and his familial background provide a basis to analyse *The Buddha of Suburbia* from a

transnational perspective. Like Karim, Kureishi contemplates on his sense of belonging since he is born in London to an English mother and a Pakistani father. Kureishi lived in the suburbs during his teenage years. In "The Rainbow Sign" (1986), he articulates that he always desired to leave the suburbs as a result of the neo-Nazi attitude of white suburbanites (1992, 4). Kureishi explains that his white friends and their parents violently talked about race and "the Pakis". As a consequence, he states as follows, "I was desperately embarrassed and afraid of being identified with these loathed aliens. I found it almost impossible to answer questions about where I came from. The word 'Pakistani' had been made into an insult. It was a word I didn't want used about myself. I couldn't tolerate being myself" (1992, 7). Evidently, Kureishi did not want to identify himself as Pakistani, but he also criticised the racist attitude of his white friends and family. In his adulthood, Kureishi visited Pakistan for the first time. During his stay in Pakistan, he noted that "[s]trangely, anti-British remarks made me feel patriotic, though I only felt patriotic when I was away from England" (1992, 12). On his return to England, he reveals that he "came home"; however, he still maintains a problematic sense of belonging to England since he does not want to identify with England. Nevertheless, he indicates that "despite all this, some kind of identification with England remains. […] It is strange to go away to the land of your ancestors, to find out how much you have in common with people there, yet at the same time to realise how British you are" (1992, 33-34). In an interview, Kureishi states he is British and that he is not caught between two cultures (in Nasta 176). In another interview, he emphasises his sense of belonging in Britain as follows, "I'm no Britisher, but a Londoner" (in Yousaf 36). In this context, Kureishi's Pakistani and British origin and the fact that he is born and raised in Britain position him within different national and cultural contexts, which signifies his transnational existence. Although Kureishi identifies himself as British or Londoner, he does not propose a fixed and static British identity but one that transgresses borders. It can thus be suggested that his mobility across borders contributes to the transnational location he writes from.

Kureishi's sense of humour is closely linked to his complex ethnic background and identity. He explicates his sense of humour by stating that "I guess you develop your humour from your family, out of the sense of humour your parents have. But I also

grew up on British sitcoms. […] My humour is very British in that sense" (Yousaf 11). In this regard, while Kureishi identifies his humour as British, he also links it to his British and Pakistani parents. Furthermore, he adds that "[a]ny writer's humour comes from the sort of person you are – just as your whole style, the language you use, the characters you create – comes from your own character and how you see the world" (Yousaf 11). As Kureishi directly connects an author's sense of humour to his/her character, it can be stated that his own identity and sense of belonging play a significant role in his humorous perspective as an author. His views on humour imply that his use of humour is affected by the interaction of both his British and Pakistani parents and the British society. He comments that "[t]ragedy and comedy are closely interwoven. And I wouldn't say I am particularly interested in making political points. I'm more interested in exploring character. And I think describing our lives in Britain is important. […] That kind of logging of experience: what was it like to come to Britain?" (Chua). Therefore, it can be argued that Kureishi's use of humour is highly affected by his transnational identity and his fluid identity regarding his Pakistani background and British identity. Moreover, he asserts that the use of humour in each of his novels differs and that the humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* "comes from the point of view of a young man" (Yousaf 12). In order to explain the humorous perspective of the "young man", Karim, Kureishi clarifies that "[w]hen you're a kid adults are hilarious, your teachers all seem to have one leg and one eye and they're just funny. And you sort of deconstruct the world as a kid: you deconstruct the power and authority of the world by mocking it. People's parents are very funny to their kids" (Yousaf 12). In this sense, Kureishi's sense of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is related to the construction of comic figures of authority from Karim's humorous perspective. When Karim's construction of comic characters interacts with race and identity, humour serves to reflect the ambivalence of ethnic and national identities. As Kureishi states, "[h]umour depends on your mood, on what the subject is, and on what you're thinking about at the time" (Yousaf 12). Therefore, Kureishi's view on both his sense of humour as a writer and the use of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* unravel the critical function of humour in the novel. Karim's construction of hilarious characters of authority to deconstruct their

power reveals not only the need for disruption of authority but it also discloses his identity and his perspective of the world.

Prior to delving into the details of humour and transnational identity in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, it must be noted that numerous critical studies have been conducted on the novel. As humour maintains a significant function in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, several critical studies revolve around the function of humour in the novel. Sangeeta Ray discusses the novel within the concept of Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque by stating that *The Buddha of Suburbia* is "a carnivalesque celebration of the composite realities of bastard identities rather than a nostalgic longing for a remote paternity" (230). Similarly, Frederick Holmes scrutinises the significance of the carnivalesque, comedy and the representation of English society in Kureishi's novel. Anna Wille contends that humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is created as a result of Homi Bhabha's mimicry. She adds that mimicry is especially foregrounded in characters that are unaware of their subversive nature (448). In addition, Luke Ferretter analyses the political importance of comedy in Kureishi's works by mainly focusing on the role of jokes and irony. In *Race Riots* (2006), Michael Ross provides an extensive analysis on the function of humour in Kureishi's novel by asserting that Kureishi's humour is bold and offensive to English morality. He states that Kureishi courageously mixes the norms and codes of society by employing humour (228). Furthermore, Mehmet Ali Çelikel analyses the function of humour by considering the interaction of humour and tragedy in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Çelikel argues that the migrant's cultural position involves contradictions and conflicts. As a result, these conflicts and contrasts interconnect humorous and tragic incidents (2017, 13). Çelikel further claims that the incongruities the migrant experiences in the host country position the migrant in comic situations. On the one hand, the migrant's comic inferiority creates laughter, but on the other hand, the migrant actually feels deep sorrow in the comic situation he/she is situated in. Thus, humour creates a space in which two antithetical feelings interact (2017, 58). Concisely, these discussions on Kureishi's novel substantiate that humour holds a significant place in the representation of the experiences of immigrant characters in Britain. This study expands the critical conversation around the function of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* by discussing that humour is employed as a strategy to transgress the notion of

ethnic and racial identities. To be specific, this chapter focuses on comic ethnic caricatures and argues that the construction and deconstruction of these comic caricatures expose their fluidity and transcend the concept of identity.

4.1.1. Comic Ethnic Stereotypes

Karim's humorous perspective of the world reinforces the questions around the concept of racial and ethnic identity. Humour is particularly produced by comic characters which are narrated from Karim's point of view. As Kureishi comments on the humour in the novel, Karim mocks certain adults and his parents by perceiving them as hilarious comic figures (Yousaf 12). The function of humour takes on a significant role in Karim's narration since he combines humour and ethnic stereotypes in the representation of certain characters; thus, it can be argued that Karim creates ethnic caricatures. Significantly, laughter and humour generated by the combination of ethnicity and caricatured characters provide an insight into national and ethnic identities. This chapter discusses that comic caricatured representations of both migrant characters and white British characters expose and complicate national identities. In other words, I argue that the representation of ethnic characters constructs and deconstructs comic caricatures, which transgress ethnic and cultural boundaries.

One of the significant migrant characters who is caricatured from Karim's humorous perspective is Haroon, Karim's father. Sigmund Freud delineates in *Jokes and Their Relations to the Unconscious* that a caricature triggers humour and laughter by degrading a subject and by emphasising a single feature which is normally overlooked in the general observation of that person (201). Caricatures, thus, focus on a certain characteristic and exaggerate it with the aim of criticism and of creating laughter. Karim caricatures his father by exaggerating Haroon's South Asian appearance and culture. Haroon is an Indian immigrant who works as a Civil Service clerk in London. He suddenly decides to practice yoga and Buddhism as a result of Eva's[22] motivation. One day, Haroon asked Karim to bring him a towel and "[d]ad spread [the towel] on the bedroom floor and fell on to his knees. I wondered if he's

[22] Eva is Haroon's friend, but later they are involved in a romantic relationship. Eventually, Haroon leaves his wife, Karim's mother, and moves into Eva's house.

suddenly taken up religion. But no, he placed his arms beside his head and kicked himself into the air. […] He was standing on his head now, balanced perfectly. His stomach sagged down" (*BS* 3, 4). Karim expects that Haroon will pray on the towel since he is a Muslim and ridicules his father's decision to practice yoga and Buddhism. Haroon is narrated as a comic figure with his non-Islamic attempt and his sagged stomach. Apart from his sagging stomach, Karim continues to exaggerate Haroon's ethnic physical features such as his hairy chest and big nose. He states that Haroon "told me that in India he shaved his chest regularly so its hair would sprout more luxuriantly in years to come. I reckoned that his chest was the one area in which he'd been forward-thinking" (*BS* 4). Moreover, "[o]n the train Dad would read his mystical books or concentrate on the tip of his nose, a large target indeed" (*BS* 28). Haroon is represented as a comic caricature with his Indian appearance and his desire to practice mysticism. As Lippitt conveys, "the word [caricature] signifies a method of making portraits aiming at the greatest possible resemblance of the whole of the person portrayed while yet, for the purpose of fun, and sometimes of mockery, disproportionately increasing and emphasizing the defects of the features" (in Lippitt 36). In this context, Haroon's sagged stomach, hairy chest, and big nose are disproportionately portrayed for the purpose of mockery. In addition to his physical features, his interest in yoga and Buddhism is also emphasised with a sense of humour. Thereby, he is transformed into the comic portrait of the ethnic "other" as a result of his Indian appearance and interests. Indeed, from Karim's humorous perspective, Haroon embodies the "typical" and "static" migrant identity. Laughter, thus, is directed from Karim's British "self" to the immigrant "other". Consequently, Haroon becomes the object of humour as a result of his ethnic identity.

Additionally, humour reinforces Haroon's lack of adaptation to the country of sojourn through his caricature-like migrant identity. Karim exaggerates and mocks Haroon's inability to integrate into the British society. He describes that his father has been living in Britain since 1950, "[y]et still he stumbled around the place like an Indian just off the boat, and asked questions like, 'Is Dover in Kent?'" (*BS* 7). Haroon constantly struggles to find his direction although he has been living in the same place for many years. Rather than an integrated migrant, Haroon is described as the "stranger"

in Georg Simmel's terms. Simmel suggests that "[the stranger] is, so to speak, the *potential wanderer*: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going" (in holm et al. 9)(emphasis original). The "stranger" can never be fully integrated into the host society since he maintains the possibility to be gone one day. Haroon's lack of interest in remembering the places and directions refers to his existence as the "stranger". In the light of Simmel's view, Haroon is not the "wanderer" who stays today and leaves tomorrow, but he is the "potential wanderer" or the "stranger" who holds the possibility of leaving while staying. While Haroon's "strangeness" is mocked and marked by Karim's British "self", it is also highlighted by the members of the British society. To exemplify, when Haroon and Karim are talking to each other outside, a passer-by shouts at them saying "get back in yer rickshaw" (*BS* 76). Interestingly, immediately after he is reminded of his "otherness", Haroon asks Karim if "this [is] the right bus stop?'" (*BS* 67). Haroon's lack of information about transportation and directions reappear when he is reminded of his "otherness" and of his possibility to leave one day. As a result, the gaze of both Karim's British "self" and the racist British society ridicule Haroon by emphasising his migrant background. That is, their gaze caricature him by exaggerating his ethnic background and fixating his migrant identity. Consequently, Haroon becomes the object of humour as his lack of mobility is ridiculed and laughed at. Briefly, humour produced by Haroon's caricatured character draws attention to his position as the "other".

Although his ethnic identity is the object of laughter from Karim's British sense of self, Haroon employs his stereotyped ethnic identity to be a part of the "white" British community. Mehmet Ali Çelikel remarks that Haroon uses yoga and Buddhism as tools to be accepted by the British society. With Buddhism and yoga, he enters the homes of British people who are interested in mysticism (2017, 105). To illustrate, Haroon begins to teach yoga and mysticism to "white" Britons at Eva's home. As Karim underlines the "white" audience, "[f]our middle-aged men and four middle-aged women, all white, sat cross-legged on the floor" (*BS* 11). During the yoga session, Haroon emphasises his ethnic background by "hissing his s's and exaggerating his Indian accent" (*BS* 21). He embraces and exaggerates his "otherness" in order to be accepted by the British society. This implies that Haroon stereotypes himself by

exaggerating certain ethnic figures such as his Indian accent. Once more, he is narrated as a caricature due to his representation as a comic Buddha figure in the Western society. Annibale Caracci states that a caricaturist is able to "grasp the perfect deformity, and thus reveal the very essence of a personality. A good caricature, like every other work of art, is more true to life than reality itself" (in Garland 78). Haroon's "perfect deformity" is his conflicted sense of belonging. His comic caricatured character displays the tension between his Indian identity and his longing to belong to the British society. In fact, humour produced by his exaggeration of the Indian accent stresses his "deformity" and criticises the idea that, as an immigrant, he can only be accepted as the "other". Haroon "spent years trying to be more of an Englishman, to be less risibly conspicuous and now he was putting it back in spadeloads" (*BS* 21). Bhabha argues that the coloniser creates the knowledge of the "stereotype", which is a fixated knowledge and limits the "other" to define itself; however, it also limits the "self" to define itself. Thereby, the colonised subject does not have an authentic position to construct a "self", and he/she is always the "Oriental stereotype" confronted with its difference (1994, 46-47). In this sense, Haroon spends years to disrupt his fixed "otherness" and to construct an authentic "self"; however, as there is no authentic British "self", Haroon can only exist as the "Oriental stereotype" or as a comic caricature by embracing his "otherness". Thus, only by exaggerating his ethnic "otherness", is he able to draw the attention of the white British crowd in Eva's house and "[n]ow he [is] the centre of the room" (*BS* 31). In this regard, while Haroon's humorous representation criticises his lack of integration, it also questions the reality to what extent the British society allows the integration of the migrant.

Another critical issue at Haroon's yoga session is the laughter of the "white" British which represents the hegemonic dominance of the British society. Two white men in the audience at Haroon's yoga session ridicule his ethnicity by asking "'[w]hy has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?' 'He's going to give us a demonstration of the mystic arts!' 'And has he got his camel parked outside?' 'No, he came on a magic carpet.'" (*BS* 12). Haroon is perceived as the strange, oriental, and unfamiliar "other", which parallels with Edward Said's ideas on the colonial discourse. Said renders that Western colonial powers produce the "reality" of

the colonised "other"; to be specific, the binary opposition of the Oriental and Occidental is the "reality" produced in the Western mind. Said notes that not a single actual author produces this reality but the complex relationship of identity and language as ideology form a certain reality through texts which represents the complicated colonial relationships (1978, 94, 3). In this sense, Haroon is defined as the inferior comic "other" by the subjective knowledge of the two white men who represent the hegemonic power and colonial discourse. Çelikel discusses that while Haroon enjoys teaching yoga classes to the English middle class, he is the object of ridicule and the "other" for the same crowd (2011, 176). Furthermore, the quotation above highlights the complex connection between humour and racism. Morreall asserts that the tellers of racist jokes reinforce the circulation of racist stereotypes. In fact, "[w]hat usually makes these jokes harmful is that they present characters with exaggerated degrees of undesirable traits who represent groups that some people believe actually have those traits" (Morreall 2009, 106). In this context, the references to the camel and magic carpet indicate that Haroon's non-British origin is perceived as an undesirable trait. As his Indian origin is exaggerated and mocked in the racist joke, his identity is defined within the stereotypical description of the Indian community. Indeed, Haroon is again caricatured by the gaze of the British "self". Morreall also underpins that the inclusion of humour in racist jokes disregards the destructive effect of racism. As a result, in racist jokes, ethnic stereotypes are not evaluated from a moral perspective, but they are simply observed as objects of enjoyment (2009, 107). In this regard, the racist joke transforms Haroon into an object of enjoyment as "the two men […] glanced at each other as if they wanted to laugh" (*BS* 13). This suggests that these men do not notice any kind of racism, discrimination or abuse in their joke. With reference to the problematic relationship between humour and racism, Kureishi, in "The Rainbow Sign", states that racist television comics celebrate the racist view of white Britons. During his teenage years, television comics employed Pakistanis as source of humour which contributed to a racial hatred that was accepted as a form of enjoyment (Kureishi 1992, 6). Likewise, the racist joke of the two white men represents the collective view during the 1970s. Their joke degrades Haroon's "non-Western" identity and neglects the effects of racism by highlighting the racist joke as a form of amusement.

The racist joke about Haroon's Indian origin also problematizes and discloses the relationship between the colonised "other" and the colonial "self". Christie Davies argues that the pattern of each racist or ethnic joke is identical and clarifies that "[p]eople tell ethnic jokes not about a group they despise, but about a familiar group, much like themselves, who live at the margin of their culture […] What the joke tellers are laughing at is a slightly different version of themselves" (in Morreall 2009, 98-99). Alternatively stated, the laughing subject does not laugh at a complete outsider, but at someone that lives in the margins of the society. In this framework, the aforementioned racist joke of the two white Britons demonstrates that Haroon is not situated on the outside but on the inside of the British society. The reference to British carpet brands illustrates this point clearly. After one of the white men comments that Haroon came on a magic carpet, the other one asks if the carpet is a "Cyril Lord or Debenhams" (*BS* 12). The reference to these British carpet brands implies that Haroon is not a complete outsider. While Haroon is perceived as the "unfamiliar" on account of his Indian origin, he is simultaneously positioned inside the British social space due to the imagination of his possible use of British carpets. Bhabha suggests that "in the discourse of colonialism, colonised subjects are split between contrary positions. They are domesticated, harmless, knowable; but also *at the same time* wild, harmful, mysterious" (in McLeod 53)(emphasis original). In this context, the colonised subject seems totally outside the boundaries of the West; however, he/she is also described as "harmless" and domestic, which positions him/her inside the Western boundaries. Humour directed at Haroon's ethnicity reflects that Haroon is both on the inside and outside of the boundaries of the British society. Thus, while the two white men attempt to fix Haroon's "otherness" through racist laughter, their reference to British carpet brands disrupts his fixed "otherness". On the one hand, Haroon is "knowable" and "harmless" since he enters Eva's house with the imagined British carpet brands. On the other hand, he is "mysterious" and "strange" as he is defined as the oriental "other" who teaches mysticism. Haroon's "unfamiliarity" as an Indian and his "familiarity" as a British citizen complicate the relationship between the "self" and "other". In short, by means of Haroon's caricatured character, humour discloses the construction of the migrant

"other", racism, and the complex and problematic relationship between the colonised and the coloniser.

Humour takes on a different significance regarding carnivalesque laughter during Haroon's first yoga session. Frederick Holmes argues that the whole novel is the embodiment of Bakhtin's carnivalesque and grotesque realism. He renders that "[a]s does the work of Rabelais, Karim's narrations feature what Bakhtin calls 'grotesque realism,' in which 'the material bodily principle, that is, images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation, and sexual life, plays a predominant role. Images of the body are offered, moreover, in an extremely exaggerated form'" (Holmes 647). While Holmes discusses numerous scenes with reference to the carnivalesque, he does not draw upon Haroon's first yoga session in relation to the carnivalesque. I argue that Haroon's first yoga session at Eva's house is the first event which initiates a carnival and humorous spirit that disrupts "static" identities. Mikhail Bakhtin establishes that carnivalesque laughter reflects a world of topsy-turvy in which codes and norms are transgressed and disrupted (8). Therefore, carnivalesque humour subverts authority in order to create a free and alternative life through change and revival. Haroon's yoga session offers Haroon and Eva an alternative life by disrupting social and cultural hierarchies since they change both appearance and social position for the yoga class. Haroon is described as a "renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" and Eva looks different than normal wearing a "kaftan" and having "darkened her eyes with kohl so she looked like a panda" (*BS* 16, 9). It is evident that Haroon constructs a Buddhist "self" and that Eva creates an "exotic" appearance. As Bakhtin asserts, travesty, the revitalisation of physical and social appearance, is one of the critical concepts of carnival laughter since it questions the relationship between realism and idealism (81). Thus, Haroon and Eva epitomise travesty in both their physical appearance and social status. Haroon struggles to escape from the reality of his Indian "otherness" by disguising as an Indian Buddhist in order to penetrate the British society. Eva endeavours to get rid of her suburbanite identity by impersonating an "exotic" and mystical South Asian woman with the aim of drawing the attention of non-suburbanites. Consequently, the yoga session offers Haroon and Eva an alternative reality to construct identities free from the codes of the British society.

Grotesque imagery in Haroon's yoga session is another significant aspect of the carnivalesque atmosphere which renders freedom by disrupting social codes. Bakhtin discusses that in grotesque realism, physical features of the body are emphasised (303). He also underpins that eating, defecating, childbirth, and death are all imageries of the grotesque (19). During and after Haroon's yoga class at Eva's house, cultural, social, and sexual codes are transgressed and unsettled through grotesque images. This can be illustrated by Haroon's and Eva's sexual intercourse immediately after the yoga session. When Karim accidently witnesses their sexual act, he observes that "Eva had only one breast" (*BS* 15). Haroon's and Eva's intercourse challenges the cultural codes of marriage since Haroon is still married to Karim's mother. Also, the fact that Eva has one breast underlines both the reproductive and the incomplete aspect of the body. Furthermore, Charlie, who is Eva's son, and Karim have sexual interaction while Haroon teaches yoga downstairs (*BS* 17). This interaction reflects that Karim transgresses sexual and cultural norms since his bisexuality is implied for the first time. Grotesque imageries in these examples reflect that Haroon, Eva, and Karim realise the possibility of transgressing their suburbanite, social, racial and cultural identities. Bakhtin also suggests that the orifices of the body like the mouth, anus, and reproductive organs are all stressed within grotesque realism (19). The first yoga session highlights the openings of the body as there is excessive drinking and smoking. Karim and Charlie use drugs and Haroon drinks too much alcohol. As Karim expresses, "[Haroon] was drunker than I was stoned" (*BS* 18). The exaggerations of the orifices are once more highlighted when Haroon is described as "that man stinking of sick and puking all night" (*BS* 18). Through excessive drinking and vomit, the earthliness of Haroon's unstable and incomplete body is emphasised. His body, thus, is not narrated as a static or comic caricatured object, but becomes a dynamic formation which is in the process of becoming. Therefore, carnivalesque laughter draws attention to fluidity by unsettling the idea of a static corporeality.

Haroon's yoga session is the threshold that marks the end of fixed identity categories and the beginning of change and transformation due to the regenerative aspect of carnivalesque laughter. Bakhtin argues that the carnivalesque celebrates the end of the old world and the birth of the new world. Therefore, it includes a dual

perspective and "[t]his is why in carnivalesque images there is so much turnabout, so many opposite faces and intentionally upset proportions" (410). Karim's mother, Margaret, for instance, reinforces the dual perspective in the carnival spirit of the yoga class since she is serious, does not attend the yoga session and is trapped in her lower-middle class suburban life. When Karim arrives home after the yoga session, he comments that "[s]he reminded me of the real world. I wanted to shout at her: Take that world away!" (*BS* 18). It can thus be suggested that Margaret enhances the contrast between the old world and the new world. To clarify, the old world is represented by the suburban and stable life of his mother whereas the new world includes transformation, freedom and laughter as in Eva's house. Karim's observation displays the dual perspective of his carnivalesque laughter since the new world and the old world simultaneously exist in Karim's family home. This clash demonstrates that Haroon and Karim become aware of the possibility of an alternative life and an alternative "self". As a result, the old world of static identities ceases and a new world of transforming and alternated identities is introduced after the threshold of the yoga session.

After the carnivalesque yoga session, the function of humour changes regarding Haroon's comic representation. To be specific, rather than Haroon's comic caricature-like character, the humorous incongruity of his existence as the "Buddha of Suburbia" starts to trigger laughter. Buddha and suburbia are two terms which are used in different contexts, but Haroon's new "self" amalgamates these terms. As a result, when Haroon identifies himself as the "Buddha of Suburbia", his stereotypical migrant identity is deconstructed. Morreall remarks that human beings live according to certain structures in a certain order among things and situations. Humour emerges when a certain object or a thought seems to be out of place in that certain order human beings live in (Morreall 1983a, 15-16). Evidently, when a person's thought or perception violates his/her normal mental patterns, humour is created. In this context, Haroon's whole existence as the "Buddha of Suburbia" is the target of humour. The reason for this is that his Buddhist identity seems out of place in the suburbs of London. Indeed, the image of a Buddha in the suburbs violates the normal mental pattern in which Buddhism and the suburban are situated in totally separate contexts. In this context, humour's direction and function change after his yoga class as Haroon's incongruous

existence starts to generate laughter rather than his caricatured ethnic identity. Therefore, Haroon's transnational existence becomes more apparent after the threshold of the yoga session since his complex identity as the "Buddha of Suburbia" epitomises the clash between his Indian identity and British citizenship. Concisely, while the construction of Haroon's humorous caricature-like character portrays his migrant identity, carnivalesque laughter changes the function of humour by deconstructing his comic caricatured image and by continuously redefining his national identity.

Humour underlines the flexibility of boundaries also by the representation of another caricatured character, Changez. Changez is Anwar's[23] son-in-law who immigrates to Britain from Bombay in order to marry Anwar's daughter, Jamila. As their marriage is forced and arranged, Jamila rejects marrying Changez, but he is eager to marry Jamila. Later, Jamila agrees to marry Changez since Anwar threatens to starve himself to death if she does not marry him. Despite their wedlock, Jamila never engages in a romantic relationship with Changez. Like Haroon, Changez is also caricatured from Karim's humorous perspective. Yousaf indicates that *The Buddha of Suburbia* portrays and questions stereotypical images of the Asian family. He points out that "[t]he 'popular' image of the Asian family involves tropes of the authoritarian patriarch, the unhappy arranged marriage, and the Asian woman as submissive victim of the family itself. These features would seem to characterize the family unit that is Anwar, Princess Jeeta[24], and Jamila in Kureishi's novel" (Yousaf 41). It can be argued that Changez is another stereotype in the typical Asian family since he represents the "imported" Indian husband. From Karim's perspective, this stereotype is transformed into a comic caricature for Karim exaggerates certain features to criticise, ridicule, and laugh at his migrant identity. He defines Changez as an ugly, old and ridiculous Indian migrant (*BS* 57). In this sense, it can be suggested that Changez's caricatured identity displays Karim's laughter from the gaze of his British "self". Aristotle's view on laughter is a critical point in order to comprehend Karim's laughter directed at the caricature of Changez. Aristotle articulates that laughter is initiated by the feeling of superiority over

[23] Anwar is Haroon's Indian friend and he is like an uncle to Karim. Anwar and Haroon immigrated together to Britain and have been close friends since many years.
[24] Jamila's mother

someone or something. He asserts that this superior laughter is the result of contempt and mockery caused by the ridiculous. He defines the ridiculous as a "certain sort of missing mark and a deformity that is painless and not destructive" (25, 1449b). Karim laughs at Changez with a sense of superiority; for instance, he mocks that "as a dowry the ageing boy [Changez] had demanded a warm winter overcoat from Moss Bros., [and] a colour television" (*BS* 57). While Changez is the inferior "other" whose demands are laughable, Karim is the "superior" laughing subject who mocks the comic "other". In short, Karim perceives Changez from the gaze of the British "self" since he feels a sense of superiority while describing Changez's humorous "inferiority" related to his migrant identity.

Furthermore, it can be argued that Changez is the "ridiculous" in Aristotle's terms, since he has a deformity which is painless and non-destructive. Changez has a deformed arm and his arm is not narrated as a tragic incident but as a comic deformity which generates contempt and mockery. His deformed arm is repetitively reminded in the narrative while his comic actions or characteristics are described. To illustrate, Anwar dreams of a son-in-law who will work at his grocery shop, but when he learns that Changez has one arm, he is disappointed. Karim observes that "I couldn't see Changez decorating Anwar's shop with one arm. In fact, had he four Mohammed Ali arms I doubted if he'd know what to do with a paintbrush, or with a toothbrush for that matter" (*BS* 81-82). Moreover, when Anwar forces him to work at the shop, Changez acts as if he does not know how to do the work and sleeps during his shifts. The moment Anwar sees Changez sleeping at the shop, "[h]e picked a bunch of bananas and threw them at his son-in-law, hitting him so hard in the chest that Changez toppled off his stool and badly bruised his good arm" (*BS* 97). In the above mentioned examples, Changez's deformed arm and his "ugliness" are disproportionately increased and emphasised which indicate his "ridiculous", comic, and caricature-like character. As John Lippitt comments, the finest caricatures usually exaggerate and distort the characteristics of the caricatured person. As a result of these exaggerations and misrepresentation, the caricature does not resemble the real person any longer (36). Changez does not resemble a real person anymore, but his deformity and "otherness" are narrated as comic and farcical aspects by Karim's British "self". Evidently, Karim

closely associates Changez's deformed arm to his "inferior" and comic migrant identity. Concisely, humour produced by the portrait of the caricature-like Changez accentuates the superior laughter of Karim's British "self".

The transformation of the direction and function of humour regarding Changez's character casts a new light on Changez's ethnicity. Like Haroon, who disrupts his caricatured "otherness" by identifying as the "Buddha of Suburbia", Changez deconstructs his caricatured ethnicity by repositioning himself in the British society. Throughout the novel, Changez changes from a fixed comic caricature into a flexible character. His decision to move to a communal house, since Jamila desires to live there, marks the start of the distortion of his static identity. Karim describes Changez in the communal house by stating that "he looked like Oliver Hardy[25] in a room of Paul Newmans[26], and was as frightened as a new boy at school" (*BS* 217). Although Karim still struggles to caricature Changez as the object of humour, Changez's extreme transformation rejects being caricatured and laughed at by Karim's gaze. To exemplify, Changez "love[s] the communal life", babysits the "communal baby" who is the child of Jamila and another man named Simon, and accepts Jamila's newly discovered bisexuality by expressing that "Jammie loves two people, that's all. It's simple to grasp. She loves Simon, but he's not here. She loves Joanna, and Joanna is here" (*BS* 222, 231, 273). In this sense, Changez deconstructs his migrant "self" as a comic character and positions himself in the cultural and social space of the communal house. Referring to Stuart Hall's concept of "identification", which includes the idea that identity is a combination of the ways we are positioned in and in which we position ourselves, Friedman and Schultermandl assert that "no longer does it suffice to look into specific locations, such as within a nation-state, to determine identities. We must also look into how these locations confine, interfere with, and contradict individual projects of selfhood" (Friedman and Schultermandl 13). In this regard, the text portrays that Changez cannot be identified within the limits of the comic and caricatured Indian

[25] Oliver Hardy (1892-1957) was an American comic actor with an overweight, moustached, and comic appearance. He performed in silent comic films.

[26] Paul Newman (1925-2008) was an American actor with striking good looks and charisma. He performed in numerous dramas in which he was the antihero.

"self". The disruption of the caricaturing function of humour which is caused by the interaction between Changez's communal life and his migrant identity demonstrates that identity is an ongoing process. This suggests that his Indian "self" interferes with this individual project of selfhood in the communal life. Consequently, humour opens up space for the formation of flexible identities through the destruction of Changez's caricature-like character.

Apart from characters that disrupt their caricature-like representations such as Haroon and Changez, the text also narrates migrant identities who are unable to transgress their comic caricatured identities. Michael Ross comments that "the more inflexible a character's conception of identity, the more vulnerable will that character be to Kureishi's corrosive laughter" (236). Anwar is an appropriate illustration of a comic caricature who rejects change and fluidity. Laughter is directed towards Anwar who is portrayed as a typical migrant character. Anwar is a caricatured Indian character since he holds a capitalist perspective, he gives much importance to earning money, he works from eight in the morning until late at night in his shop, and he "didn't even have Sundays off" (*BS* 27, 51). Furthermore, he is a fundamental Muslim, forces his daughter into an arranged marriage, does not drink or sell alcohol, and criticises Haroon's Buddhist practices. It is evident that Anwar is a stereotypical migrant "other" as a result of the exaggerated representation of his religious, capitalist and cultural views. As Mark Stein states, "[*The Buddha of Suburbia*] also treats with humor the stereotypical expectations supposedly held by those from a migrant generation" (Stein 120). Humour in Anwar's stereotypical expectations should be explained by referring to Henri Bergson's view on laughter. Humour created by Anwar's caricatured character is remarkably generated by his "machine-like" existence. Henri Bergson notes that a lack of "elasticity" leads to laughter and that the laughable person is machine-like and inflexible. The comic figure resembles a "piece of clockwork" or has "puppet-like" movements different from a naturally behaving human being (156, 152). In Bergson's view, "[h]e [the comic character] lives by formulas, not by animation, and his behaviour is a series of repetitions. But life should be a negation of repetition. So we laugh at him" (Sypher xi). In this context, Anwar is transformed into the object of laughter due to his "puppet-like" character. He works in a machine-like manner and expresses, for instance,

that "[o]nly three hundred and fifty-seven days until we can rest freely again" (*BS* 51). Furthermore, he dreams of raising his grandchildren as perfect Muslims (*BS* 80). Anwar lacks "elasticity" as he refuses to integrate into the British society. Although he lives in a multicultural Western society, Anwar strictly maintains the cultural and social customs of his Indian/Pakistani background and, as a result, he becomes a comic figure.

Anwar's "machine-like" character generates humour since it clashes with the spontaneity of life. Bergson's analysis of laughter mirrors his philosophy that life is a "vital impulse", "an élan vital", which cannot be comprehended only by reason or rational science, but which should be explained by instinct and experience (Sypher viii, xi). Thus, life is not mechanical; therefore, incongruity appears when human beings act like a puppet instead of living according to the changes in life. Anwar's "puppet-like" character clashes with the realities of multicultural Britain, and this contrast triggers humour as his machine-like character is recognised and disrupted. Crucially, "Anwar becomes over the course of the novel ever-more dictatorial and closed-minded, ever more hostile to the pluralistic mores of secular British society and ever-more nostalgic for the authoritarian India of his memory, the 'imagined India'" (Holmes 655). Laughter created by the clash between Changez's spontaneity in life and Anwar's inelasticity is intensified through the end of the novel. When Anwar gets infuriated as he sees Changez and his Chinese girlfriend, Shinko[27], holding hands, Changez knocks Anwar unconscious with a sex toy he had bought for Shinko (*BS* 211). As a result, Anwar's "puppet-like" character is disrupted by the spontaneity of life represented by Changez and his new relationship with a Chinese woman. Humour in this scene is created by the incongruity between the spontaneous aspect of life and the inelasticity of Anwar. In brief, Changez's adaptation to a new and free life in Britain contrasts with Anwar's fixed cultural norms which underlines his lack of fluidity.

Anwar's comic caricature-like character delineates that it is impossible to exist with a lack of fluidity in multicultural Britain. The reason for this is that after Changez

[27] Shinko is a Chinese prostitute. Changez and Shinko have a stable relationship which is based on affection and sexual intercourse. Although Changez is officially married to Jamila, he maintains his affair with Shinko. When Jamila learns about the affair, she accepts and encourages their relationship. Consequently, both Jamila and Changez have relationships with others, but they stay officially married.

attacks Anwar, Anwar experiences a heart failure and dies. Although Anwar dies of a heart failure, Changez's attack on Anwar is the thing which indirectly kills Anwar. Bergson implies that the function of laughter is humiliation which reflects that laughter is used as a social corrective by humiliating certain situations or people. Laughter must "[a]lways [be] rather humiliating for the one against whom it is directed, laughter is, really and truly, a kind of social 'ragging'" (Bergson 147-148). Regarding Anwar's comic representation and his humiliating but comic death, it can be suggested that humour functions to correct or criticise static migrant identities who reject spontaneity, fluidity and adaptation. Anwar, for instance, rejects integrating as he attempts to go back "home" to Bombay. As he declares, "I want to go home now,' […] 'I've had enough of this damn place" (*BS* 172). Clearly, Anwar's situation epitomises the "myth of return" since he imagines an ideal India to which he will return to. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie rejects the melancholic context of the myth of return which disrupts the assimilation process in the land of settlement. He declines to recall home with a gloomy view as it hinders adapting to the country of sojourn since the protection of a "fixed" ethnic or cultural identity restrains assimilation that causes a "ghetto mentality" (19). In this context, Anwar's desire to return to Bombay prevents his integration into the hostland. His fixed cultural identity is criticised through humour caused by his caricatured and "puppet-like" representation. While Haroon is able to transform and position himself in the fluid transnational space, Anwar rejects change and, therefore, cannot exist within the transnational perspective of the narrative and in the multicultural atmosphere of Britain. Whereas humour functions to represent Haroon's and Changez's transformation from caricature into a fluid migrant "self", it humiliates and criticises Anwar's "ghetto mentality".

In addition to the function of humour which targets migrants, humour is also directed towards the white British characters. The direction of laughter changes when Karim is confronted with a racist attitude. The racist suburbanite attitude is foregrounded when the racist person becomes the target of laughter. As Sukhdev Sandhu states, "Kureishi thinks that suburbia is incorrigibly xenophobic" (134). While Karim's British "self" mocks the migrant "other", his Indian "self" laughs at the racist and British "self". The most significant suburbanite racist character is Helen's father.

When Karim arrives at Helen's house, he encounters her father and describes him as follows, "[h]e was a big man with a black beard and thick arms. I imagined that he had hairy shoulders and, worst of all, a hairy back" (*BS* 40). Subsequently, "'You can't see me daughter again,' said Hairy Back. 'She doesn't go out with boys. Or with wogs.' […] We don't want you blackies coming to the house […] However many niggers there are, we don't like it. We're with Enoch" (*BS* 40). Karim exaggerates the large and hairy body of Helen's father which mocks and degrades his suburbanite and racist view. Thus, it can be argued that Karim's Indian "self" caricatures British and racist people. Freud articulates that the most significant aspect of a caricature is that it produces laughter by targeting people of authority (200). Similarly, Nicholas Garland agrees that caricatures direct laughter at authority and points out that through caricatures, "we create a kind of distorting glass through which [figures of authority] are seen" (77). In this context, by naming him "Hairy Back", Karim ridicules and laughs at the man's authority as a father and as the representative of the oppressive racist society of the suburbs. Also, the text does not provide "Hairy Back's" given name or surname, which distorts his individuality and reinforces his comic caricatured image. Rather than a British citizen who has authority over racial "others", "Hairy Back" is represented as a deformed and comic character. Remarkably, the change of the target of humour displays that Karim is involved in complex cross-border spaces. A transnational perspective indicates "how migrants and their descendants participate in familial, social, economic, religious, political, and cultural processes that extend across borders while they become part of the places where they settle" (Levitt and Jaworsky 130). In this regard, Karim participates in the social and cultural practices of the British society by laughing at the migrant "other"; however, he is also involved in the Pakistani or Indian community since he laughs at and degrades the British "self".

"Hairy Back's" dog is another significant figure which problematizes the racist attitude in the suburbs with the integration of laughter. When Karim confronts Helen's father, the man is accompanied by a "Great fucking Dane" (*BS* 40). Karim tries to run away from the big dog, but "suddenly there was a flurry and I felt something on my shoulders. […] The dog was in love with me" (*BS* 40-41). The text implies that the

Great Dane ejaculates on Karim's clothes. Holmes comments on the incident between the dog and Karim by stating that

> [i]n its virulence, the racism of Helen's father has dehumanized Karim; in effect, it has reduced him to the level of the family's large dog, who has selected him as a sexual partner. But the abusive language that peppers Karim's depiction of the scene works to degrade Helen's father in turn and with him the racist National Front, to which he proudly proclaims his allegiance. (649)

In this sense, it can be suggested that while Karim degrades and caricatures "Hairy Back", he is himself degraded by the racist society represented by "Hairy back" and his dog. Briefly, Karim's encounter with "Hairy Back" and his dog imply British laughter's hegemonic dominance over the ethnic "other", yet, this encounter also signifies Karim's attempt to challenge the racist view by constructing a caricatured version of Helen's father. As a result, humour is directed both at the oppressed "other" and at the oppressor which disrupts the "stable" positions of the "self" and "other".

In conclusion, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, humour generated by caricatured representations of migrant and non-migrant characters exposes and complicates national and ethnic identities. Directing the course of humour towards both the "other" and self" by caricaturing specific characters the text unsettles essentialist notions of identity and provides an alternative perspective to the concept of national and ethnic identity. In this regard, laughter produced by the caricatured version of Haroon's national identity discloses the construction of the migrant "other" and the problematic relationship between the colonised and coloniser. Likewise, the shifting direction of humour portrays that Changez cannot be identified within the limits of the caricatured Indian "self", which opens up new spaces to define his fluidity. While humour reflects Haroon's and Changez's transformation from a fixed comic caricature into a fluid migrant self, it criticises Anwar's lack of ability to transgress his caricatured migrant identity. Anwar maintains his "static" and comic caricature-like identity which reflects the impossibility of his survival in a transnational space. Moreover, the shifting direction of laughter complicates the relationship between the British "self" and Indian/Pakistani "other" by caricaturing the racist suburbanite "Hairy Back" and by

ridiculing Karim. Briefly, comic caricatures of both migrant and British characters provide an alternative and distorted perspective of "static" identities. Both the Indian community and the British community are mocked and caricatured by the British or Indian gaze, which challenges the fixed notions of the British "self" and the migrant "other".

4.1.2. Performing Comic Ethnic Stereotypes

The relationship between Karim's acting career and his hybridity expands the critical conversation around the function of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Apart from the construction and deconstruction of comic caricatures, Karim's theatrical roles as these comic figures further problematize the notion of identity. To be specific, after he moves to London, Karim is sequentially offered three acting roles which are all based on a character of migrant background. Firstly, Karim is offered an acting role in which he performs Mowgli from *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. In his second acting job, he is asked to play an Indian immigrant, and in his last acting role, he performs the child of an Indian migrant. Roger Bromley asserts that "the theatrical metaphors enable Kureishi to examine the structure of identification which, as Hall, Bhabha and others have pointed out, is always produced through *ambivalence*" (154)(emphasis original). In this sense, it can be stated that the text questions the construction of the Indian "other" and the British "self" through Karim's acting roles. Regarding his theatrical performances, it is significant to discuss that the issue of who laughs at whom maintains a critical function since the function and direction of humour in Karim's performances complicate his Indian and British identity. This section argues that all of Karim's above mentioned theatre roles excite laughter and include humour, yet, the direction and target of humour changes continuously, which complicates Karim's national identity and discloses the transnational links he forms.

Karim's acting role as Mowgli[28] is the first theatrical performance which blurs the position of the laughing subject and object of laughter. Jeremy Shadwell, the

[28] Mowgli is the main character in Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. He is an Indian boy who is raised by wolves in the jungle.

director of the play, forces Karim to perform Mowgli due to Karim's dark and Indian appearance. Karim, who identifies as British, does not comprehend why he is the perfect candidate for the role. In response to Karim's curiosity of Shadwell's choice, Shadwell explains Karim that "you are Mowgli. You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry" (*BS* 142). Then, Shadwell continues to speak in Punjabi or Urdu and asks Karim about these languages and about India. Karim, however, does not know anything about Punjabi, Urdu and India since he is born and raised in Britain. Certainly, Shadwell observes Karim's identity from an Orientalist perspective by creating an Oriental "other" who is "exotic", "strange", and different from the "self". As Edward Said suggests, Orientalism promotes binary oppositions by constructing "unfamiliar" non-Western subjects (1978, 40). Regarding the formation of "realities" through Orientalism, Said marks that language of the colonial power is the main device that constructs the realities of the "otherness" of the colonised subject. In this sense, Shadwell's Orientalist perspective clearly fixates Karim's identity by referring to the "strange" language and "exotic" experiences in Bombay. The function of Shadwell's laughter holds a critical position when he learns that Karim has not visited India:

> He shook his head and did a series of short barks in his throat. This was him laughing. I was certain. 'Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!' he went. He said, 'What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to. If the pioneers from the East India Company could see you. What puzzlement there'd be. Everyone looks at you, I'm sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear now from him. And you're from Orpington […] Oh God, what a strange world. The immigrant is the Everyman of the twentieth century. (*BS* 141)

Shadwell laughs at the incongruity between Karim's appearance and his identification as a British person. Rather than the incongruity, however, Shadwell's sense of superiority in his laughter should be underlined. His laughter, which is directed towards Karim's ethnic identity, exposes and reinforces his sense of superiority over the "other". Hobbes unravels the relationship between superiority and laughter by arguing that "[s]udden glory is the passion which maketh those grimaces called laughter; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own that pleaseth them; or by the

apprehension of some deformed thing in another" (1651, 44). In this regard, Shadwell experiences a sudden glory when he realises that Karim's hybridity and his immigrant background are "inferior". Shadwell's superior laughter displays the perspective of the racist society that observes difference, fluidity, and migrant roots as "deformed things". Consequently, Shadwell's laughter towards Karim's ethnicity not only demonstrates his sense of superiority over the racially "other" but also represents his reluctance to define second generation immigrants who are born and raised in Britain as British people.

Before analysing the function of humour regarding the role of Mowgli, the relationship between mimicry and Mowgli as a stereotype should be explained. Shadwell continues to construct Karim's "otherness" by stereotyping his role as Mowgli. Both the "exotic" appearance and the language of the Indian "other" is enforced on Karim. To exemplify, Karim's costume in the play consists of a small scarf and brown cream which he has to put on his body; thus, he is basically naked. He reveals his distress to Shadwell that "I feel wrong in it. I feel that together we're making the world uglier" (*BS* 146). Furthermore, Shadwell forces him to speak in an Indian accent while acting as Mowgli, but Karim rejects it as he finds it uncomfortable since he does not regard himself as an Indian. After Shadwell continuously compels Karim to use the Indian accent, Karim surrenders and performs in an Indian accent in the rehearsal. In Karim's performance as Mowgli, "[a] complex splitting is taking place which Karim, for all his knowingness, does not command or control; he has been reduced to a stereotype" (Bromley 155). Indeed, Karim is transformed into an ethnic stereotype in the theatre play as he is forced to imitate and mimic the exotic "other". When Shadwell stresses that Karim should not speak in a British accent but in an "authentic" accent, the relationship among authenticity, identity, and performance further mystify (*BS* 147). Although Karim has an English mother, speaks and dresses like an English boy and has never been in India, he is automatically defined as an Indian due to his father's migrant background. Therefore, in order to perform as an "authentic" Indian boy, Karim has to act and mimic since he does not consider himself as an authentic Indian (Ray 233). In order to discuss and comprehend the problematics of authenticity and mimicry in Karim's performance, Bhabha's views on mimicry should be briefly stated. Bhabha describes that mimicry is the state when colonised people

imitate the culture of the colonisers. Yet, rather than representation, mimicry deals with repetition; as a result, it increases the power of the coloniser since the mimicking subject is "not quite the same", and, therefore it can never be authentic (1994, 86-88). In this sense, it can be suggested that Karim's imitation is a deviated or reversed version of Bhabha's mimicry. The reason for this is that Karim is the "colonised" who imitates the culture of the "other" rather than the culture of the coloniser. In particular, he is the subject with an Indian migrant background who is forced to imitate the stereotyped Indian. On the other hand, considering Karim's hybridity, it can be stated that Karim is the British "self" who imitates the colonised "other". Indeed, as Karim identifies as British, he is a British person who imitates the Indian "other". Both perspectives, however, disclose the ambivalence of his identity as a result of mimicry in his acting role. Although Karim's performance implies a reverse-mimicry, it still increases the power of the coloniser since it stereotypes the non-Western "other". Consequently, the text questions authenticity of identities with the integration of an "authentic" accent imitated by Karim's British and Indian identities.

Karim's acting role as Mowgli is observed as the source of humour by fellow actors, which problematizes the construction of the Indian stereotype. At the rehearsal, other actors scornfully laugh at Karim's Indian accent. After his performance with the "authentic" accent, Karim expresses that "I despised the other actors for not sticking up for me, and for sniggering at the accent" (*BS* 148). Kureishi comments in an interview that "*Buddha* is a comedy of character. And of expectation, I suppose" (Chua). The caricatured characters and the expectations attached to these static and comic figures are primary motives of humour. In her study focusing on the relationship between accents and humour, Susanne Mühleisen states that not the accent itself but the stereotypical characteristic related to a specific accent is what creates humour (225). This suggests that the actors laugh at the stereotype of the Indian subject who is represented as inferior, wild, and comic. Mühleisen also points out the relationship between a comic accent and Freud's notion of mimicry. To explain, Freud contends that mimicry creates laughter only when the audience thoroughly knows the imitated object. Thus, laughter caused by mimicry is based on expectation rather than the performance itself since "[i]n the case of mimicry, accordingly, the source of comic pleasure would be not the comic

of situation but of expectation" (Freud 209). Considering Freud's views, Mühleisen suggests that the imitation of an accent depends on the knowledge of the imitated object (228). Karim's performance and accent create humour since the audience expects to see the Indian "other". Evidently, Mowgli or the stereotypical Indian "other" is a specific reference point for the audience. In fact, his performance is not the source of comic pleasure, but his imitation of the stereotypical accent becomes the source of humour. This implies that while Karim's fellow actors hold a reference point to the caricatured Indian "other", they lack a reference point concerning migrant or hybrid identities such as Karim. Thus, their laughter caricatures Karim and his identity problems by observing only the exaggerated accent in Karim's performance. As a result, while Karim caricatures migrant identities in real life as discussed in the previous subchapter, he himself is caricatured by the gaze of the white British actors.

Karim attempts to subvert the stereotypical image of the "other" in his performance by changing the target of humour. In the following performances of *The Jungle Book*, Karim "sent up the accent and made the audience laugh by suddenly relapsing into cockney at odd times. 'Leave it out, Bagheera,' I'd say" (*BS* 158). Yousaf comments that both Haroon and Karim disrupt the Indian identity that is imposed on them. He explains that Haroon subverts the imposed Indian identity through wisdom and teaching and that Karim subverts it by including a Cockney accent in his role as Mowgli (48). While performing as Mowgli, Karim shifts to the Cockney accent in order to shock and amuse the audience. This shift between the Indian and Cockney accents automatically highlights and exaggerates Karim's British identity. However, it also emphasises the constructed and caricatured Indian "other". Karim, thus, unsettles and unmasks the construction of the Indian caricature by employing a Cockney accent. As Mühleisen states, exaggerating a specific accent or highlighting aspects of received pronunciation might be considered as caricature since the exaggerated lexical features might be perceived as a tool to criticise a certain group or class (228). In this sense, Karim distorts the stereotypical representations of non-British or non-Western identities by the Cockney-speaking-Indian he constructs. Therefore, the target of humour changes as the audience does not laugh at the Indian "other" but at the unmasking of the "other". The change of the direction of laughter also draws attention to the "double vision" of

mimicry in Bhabha's terms. Bhabha discusses that "[t]he *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (1994, 88)(emphasis original). Thus, mimicry can also be unintentionally subversive since it intimidates the colonial discourse by exposing its constructed realities. Karim changes the direction of humour by disturbing his caricatured and mimicked performance as Mowgli with the integration of the British accent. The change of the target of humour exposes the constructed realities of the colonial discourse. Furthermore, his use of the British accent also reveals his struggle to define himself outside the colonial discourse. Karim implicitly tries to demonstrate his British identity by employing language as a tool to position himself in the British society. As Benedict Anderson claims, language spoken by any person in a nation makes them imagine that they are a part of the same community, that is through language "pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed" (154). With the integration of a Cockney accent, Karim attempts to display his sense of belonging in Britain. Briefly, the shifts between the Indian and Cockney accents change the object of laughter which subverts and unmasks the constructed nature of the "other", and which marks Karim's British identity.

The function of humour takes on a new significance in Karim's second acting role which is offered by Matthew Pyke, a very famous director. Pyke explains to the actors that they should choose someone they know and perform that person in the play. Karim decides to choose Charlie, Eva's son. Like Shadwell, Pyke defines Karim's identity within the diasporic South Asian community as he discourages Karim's choice by stating that "[w]e need someone from your own background,' he said. 'Someone black'" (*BS* 170). As a result, Karim decides to choose Anwar for his acting role. It is significant to underline that, as discussed in the first part of the discussion, Anwar is observed as a comic caricature by Karim's British "self". Consequently, when Karim goes to Anwar's shop in order to observe his character for the play, he solely observes Anwar's comic migrant identity. He sees that Anwar has a walking stick and is shouting at the racist boys who attack his grocery shop. Karim describes Anwar as follows, "[h]e seemed to have shrunk in the past few months: his legs and body were emaciated, while his head remained the same size, perched on him like a globe on a walking stick" (*BS*

171). This comic and caricatured image is one of the examples Karim employs for his acting role as Anwar. During the rehearsal, Karim performs a monologue in which he imitates Anwar and introduces him "followed by an imitation of him raving in the street" (*BS* 179). He ridicules Anwar's fury at the racist boys by exaggerating his cultural and national characteristics. Evidently, "[i]t seems that the harder Karim struggles to be taken seriously as an actor – maybe he tries too hard – the more bitterly he fails to be taken seriously as part of English middle class society, becoming 'even more perilously enmeshed with stereotypes'" (Wille 459). His decision to exaggerate and mock the cultural and ethnic features of Anwar exposes Karim's inability to perceive Anwar's individuality. Thus, it can be observed that whereas Karim struggles to subvert the colonial gaze of the British society by changing the direction of humour through his use of the British accent in his former performance, he reinforces the colonial gaze by caricaturing Anwar's "otherness". As a result, in his second performance, Karim fails to unsettle the laughter of British hegemonic dominance of the "other".

Regarding Karim's acting role as Anwar, the lack of humour of one of his fellow actors, Tracey, intensifies the tension between Karim's Indian and British identities. Tracey, who is a black actor, harshly criticises Karim's performance as a comic migrant character. Tracey comments that the character of Anwar is "irrational, ridiculous, […] hysterical [and] fanatical" (*BS* 180). She further points out that "[y]our picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs. […] Why do you hate yourself and all black people so much, Karim?" (*BS* 180). Tracey denounces that Anwar is represented as the object of laughter due to his cultural and ethnic features. Therefore, she rejects observing Anwar or a racially "othered" identity as object of humour. Michael Ross discusses that Tracey's attack on Karim demonstrates Kureishi's own comic treatment of South Asian characters. Like Karim, Kureishi is also criticised for representing the deformities of Asians. In an interview, Kureishi states that "I'm not really writing about Asians as a category … We are all people. I don't think because [a character] is Asian I have to be reverential" (in Ross 243). Therefore, Ross contends that Tracey is the one who lacks humour and that Karim's performance is not a reflection of a specific hatred towards black or Asian

people (243). Indeed, his performance as Anwar does not imply any antipathy or disgust against Asian identities; however, it reflects that static migrant identities cannot maintain their presence since Pyke rejects Karim's performance as Anwar due to Tracey's response. Like Kureishi, Karim caricatures Anwar; however, as Anwar cannot exist as a comic caricatured migrant in the transnational space of the narrative, Anwar is not allowed to exist on stage as a comic character due to Tracey's rejection of static notions of nationality.

Although Karim experiences a serious identity conflict, he insists on creating a migrant character as the object of laughter. Mark Stein underlines that "Karim's career resembles his father's in that both are theatrical characters who 'invent' an 'Asian' personality for the consumption of their audience" (117). Karim not only invents an Asian personality but also intentionally creates a laughable or caricatured Asian character. When Karim's performance as Anwar is rejected by Pyke, he decides to base his character on Changez. He observes Changez from a humorous perspective and point of view of his British "self" and, as he caricatures Anwar, he caricatures Changez by exaggerating his migrant background and stereotypical assumptions about Indians. Karim names his character Tariq that is based on Changez. Tariq/Changez is a fresh immigrant from India whose clothes, platform boots, accent, and character form the typical image of an Indian migrant. As aforementioned, Changez is already caricatured from the British gaze of Karim; therefore, Karim's performance demonstrates Tariq/Changez as a massive comic caricature of the migrant rather than a realistic representation of immigrants. Karim declares that during his performance "there was laughter […] from the belly […] I was a wretched and comic character […] They laughed at my jokes, which concerned sexual ambition and humiliation in England" (*BS* 220). His role is such an exaggerated and comic version of a character that one of his fellow actors accuses him of not fitting in the play since he "seemed to be in a different play to the others, a farce, perhaps" (*BS* 221). Tariq/Changez is observed only as the object of laughter since he is degraded, ridiculed and caricatured as a result of his ethnic features. Whereas Karim tries to subvert the stereotypical Indian image imposed on him in his Mowgli performance by using the British accent, he tries to reinforce the stereotypical migrant image in his role as Tariq. It can be suggested that he insists on

the presence of his British identity by increasingly fixating the Indian "other" or Tariq/Changez, and transforming him into the target of superior laughter. Bhabha states that the colonial "self" defines itself with the colonised "other"; however, the "other" is always invisible. To clarify, the "Oriental other" or the "missing person" does not hold any authentic "self". As a result, when the "self" wants to define itself with the "other", the mirror structure is lost as the "other" is always "invisible" (1994, 47-51). In this context, Karim struggles to define his British "self" with its difference from the Indian "other" by constructing Tariq/Changez as the object of humour. However, he cannot construct a stable British "self" since the mirror structure is lost as Tariq/Changez does not hold an authentic "self" but is only a comic stereotype.

The amalgamation of Karim's identity and his role as Tariq/Changez is another critical point which should be discussed with reference to the direction of humour. At the rehearsal of the play, Pyke utters that there is a specific paradox in acting since "[t]o make your not-self real you have to steal from your authentic self. […] The closer you play to yourself the better" (*BS* 219). Changez's comments on Karim's performance as Tariq/Changez illustrates Pyke's statement since Changez expresses that "I am glad in your part you kept it fundamentally autobiographical and didn't try the leap of invention into my character" (*BS* 231). While Karim thinks he bases Tariq on Changez, he unintentionally bases the character on his own identity. This implies that Karim takes Pyke's view into consideration in order to be a talented actor. As Pyke points out, "to be someone else successfully you must be yourself" (*BS* 220). Indeed, Karim unintentionally steals from his "authentic" self, which is partly Indian, with the aim of presenting a successful Indian character. Ross argues that

> [c]omic performance then, for all its Chaplinesque pitfalls and pratfalls, can be in Kureishi a mode of discovery, indeed of self-discovery. What Karim brings to creating the comic role of Tariq/Changez, a man he has cuckolded and causally teased, is not simply dégagé mockery but empathy. (246)

Furthermore, it can be suggested that his self-discovery of his ethnic identity and empathy towards the Indian migrant community are created in the liminal reality in terms of performance and reality. His performance as Tariq/Changez is formed in the

"Third Space" in which "fixed" identities of the colonised or the coloniser are reshaped. As Bhabha states, this space provides postcolonial subjects a site to reconstruct their identities since the contradiction of certain cultures in this liminal space includes the potentiality of new cultural practices (1990, 211). Karim reshapes his British identity and the stereotypical Indian "other" by performing unintentionally a new ethnic identity who is neither Changez nor himself but a new political subject. In other words, by keeping his character "autobiographical", Karim amalgamates his British "self" and his Indian roots. As a result, humour created by the caricature of Tariq/Changez becomes a tool to unsettle Karim's British identity which he tries to stabilise.

Laughter directed at Tariq/Changez complicates the positions of the British "self" and the migrant "other" as result of the ambivalence created by Karim's "autobiographical" performance as Tariq/Changez. On the one hand, Karim categorises all members of the Indian community as having certain shortcomings by caricaturing Changez. On the other hand, he is himself stereotyped and caricatured by Shadwell, Pyke, and some other fellow actors. Consequently, Karim's performance blurs the idea whether his caricaturing of Changez or he himself is the target of laughter. Thus, humour complicates whether Karim's hybridity or his constructed "fixed" British identity is the object of amusement for the audience. Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein assert that the target of postcolonial laughter may be either the coloniser or the colonised since it may have a self-approving or stereotyping function, "[b]ut it will always raise the complex question 'Who laughs at whom?'" (12). Certainly, humour in Karim's performance as Tariq/Changez complicates the direction of laughter and, therefore, discloses Karim's shifting and fluid identity as a result of the ambivalent object of laughter. Karim's performance as Tariq/Changez, thus, signifies that he creates new centres of belonging. As Stuart Hall remarks, "[d]iaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (2003, 244)(emphasis original). In spite of the fact that Karim stereotypes his act in the play, it reflects his continuous construction and deconstruction of his national and ethnic identities. Evidently, although he is aware of his sense of belonging in Britain, he becomes involved in a complex cross-border space.

Towards the end of the novel, humour and laughter cease in Karim's acting roles which are based on migrants or Indians. After his acting role in Pyke's play, Karim is "offered a small part in a television film, playing a taxi-driver" (*BS* 235). The national or ethnic background of the role is not explicitly stated in the text; however, it can be inferred that Karim will act an Indian or Pakistani taxi-driver. Clearly, there is no reference to humour or a caricatured version of an Indian character. Later, he is offered a role in a soap opera which addresses contemporary issues such as racist attacks on migrants and non-Western people. In this soap opera, Karim will perform the rebellious son of an Indian shopkeeper (*BS* 259). His new role as the rebellious son of an Indian shopkeeper is clearly not the target of humour or a caricatured version of an Indian character since the soap opera reflects serious contemporary issues. Karim's new roles demonstrate that he fails to unsettle his subject position as the migrant or Indian "self" in the British society. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that although Karim's new acting roles are based on a non-Western character, it can be observed that these roles lack a comic and caricatured representation of the migrant or Indian. As Karim states, this soap opera he will act in, approaches abortions and racism which are "stuff that people lived through but that never got on TV" (*BS* 259). As a conclusion, his new acting role reflects a certain destabilisation of the Indian as the object of humour.

The absence of the "other" as the object of laughter in Karim's new acting role uncovers Karim's perspective regarding the future. As Karim is offered a role which does not include a caricature-like other, he is finally able to thoroughly question his position in society. The ambivalence of his position is represented in Karim's thoughts at the dinner as follows:

> 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. (*BS* 283-284)

Karim's expression that he feels happy and miserable at the same time refers to his complicated sense of belonging. He experiences a sense of belonging in Britain as he is happy to live in London, but he feels miserable at the same time as a result of his hybridity which he cannot and is not allowed to locate in Britain. Karim's miserable feeling maintains a certain relation to the election which is stated at the end of the novel. This election implicitly refers to the election of the Thatcher government in 1979 which hindered the practices of anti-racists and advocates of multiculturalism. Both anti-racists and multiculturals were being denounced during the 1980s since "[f]or the New Right these projects, together with the policies towards gender equality and gay and lesbian rights, constituted an assault upon 'the British way of life'" (Brah 227). It is implied that racism, Karim's identity problems, and his complex sense of belonging will all continue to exist in future Britain governed by the Conservative Party. Jamel Oubechou asserts that "Karim does not really end up 'claiming his origins', but that he rather becomes aware that identity is problematic, that a re-definition of 'being British' is needed and that this implies a dis/location of this identity and its synthetic reconfiguration and redefinition" (in Ross 235-236). Indeed, Karim maintains mobility across the borders of his British identity and his Indian identity. It is this ambivalent sense of identity which disrupts the boundaries of Britishness. The end of the novel, thus, does not demonstrate a peaceful atmosphere in which Karim achieves to balance his British and South Asian identities. In contrast, the end implies hope but simultaneously an ongoing tension regarding his transnational identity in multicultural yet a racist Britain.

On these grounds, the presence, change, and absence of humour in Karim's acting roles from the start of his career until the end of the novel destabilise the positions of the Indian "other" and the British "self". As Karim's first performances depend on the humorous and caricatured versions of the Indian, his acting roles complicate and reveal the constructed, positional, and unstable nature of national and cultural identities. The novel portrays Karim's identification process and the significance of ambivalence in his subject position both as the "self" and as the "other" through his acting roles which continuously shift the direction of humour. His first performance as Mowgli reflects that the laughter of the British gaze stereotypes the Indian "other" by foregrounding the "exotic" accent and appearance. Karim mystifies

the direction of humour by using a Cockney accent which unmasks the constructed nature of the "other" and which reveals his attempt to demonstrate his British identity. His second performance as Tariq/Changez unsettles his British "self" and creates new ways of belonging in the liminal reality since he inserts autobiographical aspects in his performance as the laughable Indian "other". Furthermore, the absence of a laughable and a stereotypical Indian "other" in his new acting roles implies a hopeful future in which the superior laughter of the British society at the Indian "other" ceases and in which a new space is created for the discussion of racist attacks. In brief, Karim's acting roles represent the continuous construction and deconstruction of his British and Indian identities which mark his involvement in a cross-border space. The fluctuating direction of humour which produces a transnational space highlights a need for the disruption of a fixed notion of "Britishness". As Kureishi states in an interview, Europe has to remake society and "it's that remaking that Europe is experiencing at the moment. But it's really tricky to have your identity shattered and remade" (Donadio). It can be concluded that the shifting direction of laughter in Karim's acting roles ruptures the boundaries of British and Indian identities by destabilising the notion of "Britishness".

Humour is employed as a strategic tool in *The Buddha of Suburbia* to transgress the notion of ethnic and national identities. The fluidity of the "I" and "other" is underlined by the shifting direction of laughter. It can be suggested that the novel consists of two layers. The first layer includes comic caricature-like characters who deconstruct their position as the target of laughter or who are unable to challenge their stereotyped versions. The second layer involves Karim's performances of these comic caricature-like characters which mystify the target of humour. In other words, while the British gaze or Karim's own British "self" caricatures certain Indian characters by exaggerating and fixating their ethnic or cultural features from a humorous perspective, his acting roles as these caricatured characters complicate the target of laughter and, thus, the subject positions of the "self" and "other". As humour leads us to re-evaluate certain categories by changing our perception, humour created by the comic ethnic characters in the narrative and in Karim's performances provide an alternative perspective to national and ethnic identity categories. Kureishi states in "The Rainbow Sign" that "[being British] [n]ow it is a more complex thing, involving new elements.

So there must be a fresh way of seeing Britain and the choices it faces: and a new way of being British after all this time" (1992, 36). In this sense, the fluctuating direction of laughter in *The Buddha of Suburbia* ensures a new perspective on British identity in a society which includes transnational identities such as Karim, Haroon, and Changez. The unresolved end of the novel regarding Karim's identity problems and Britain's political atmosphere renders that much remains to be done to create a new perspective to "Britishness".

4.2. *Anita and Me* by Meera Syal

Anita and Me[29], (1996) which is Meera Syal's first novel, won the Betty Trask Award and was shortlisted for the *Guardian* Fiction Prize. The novel portrays the issues of race and identity from the perspective of its protagonist Meena Kumar. Syal's work is a coming-of-age story of the nine-year-old Meena who is born and raised in England to Indian parents. The story revolves around her desire to reach a sense of belonging as a girl with Indian parents living in a white British society. Meena's lack of a sense of belonging is reflected by her relationship with her Indian family and her friendship with Anita, a white British girl. The novel is a retrospective narrative which is told in the first person since Meena as an adult narrator tells the story of her nine-year-old self. Thus, the narrative includes two voices, the voice of Meena's adult self and the perspective of her child self. *Anita and Me* explores racism and identity problems with the use of both a serious and a humorous tone. Although the serious tone of Meena's bitter experiences relatively highlights the difficulties she faces, humour serves as a pivotal element to delve into these experiences. I discuss that different perspectives of humour in the depiction of Meena's identity conflict open up new lines of enquiry regarding her transnational sensibility. In this chapter, therefore, I argue that the perspectival characteristic of humour in *Anita and Me* reflects Meena's transnational identity by intensifying the clash between her British and Indian identities.

Meena narrates two years of her life in a fictional Midlands village, Tollington, near Birmingham in the 1960s. As the descendant of first generation migrants, she identifies as British since she is born in Britain and has never been to India. Although she desires to belong to the British society, her Indian origin and appearance compel her to define herself as Punjabi. She experiences racial discrimination in school and among her friends, and therefore, struggles to be accepted by the white British society of Tollington. Meena is fascinated by and idolises Anita who is blonde, English, unruly, popular and three years older. In order to fit in the society, Meena befriends Anita.

[29] *Anita and Me* is a part of the school curriculum in England due to its child protagonist and narrator. The novel is used as classroom material in schools and it is also employed as a GCSE, The General Certificate of Secondary Education, set text for English literature examination.

When Anita participates in the racist actions of the skinhead gang in town, Meena ends her friendship with Anita. Simultaneously, Meena begins to discover the racist attitude of other British characters. As a result, the tension between Meena's British and Indian identities builds up since she is racially discriminated by the British society she identifies with. On the other hand, she is unable to define herself as Indian since she cannot identify with the immigrant Indian community which consists of numerous uncles and aunties. The reason for this is that the Indian community forces her to be the perfect Indian daughter who is traditional and submissive. As a consequence of racial discrimination, her problematic friendship with Anita and the oppression of the conventions of traditional Indian culture, Meena gradually notices the clash between the British society and her Indian heritage. She realises that she is positioned in an in-between space that is neither British nor Indian. At the end of the novel, Meena's parents are constantly concerned about racial violence as racial tension increases in Tollington. When Meena passes her eleven plus exam which qualifies her for a better school located in Wolverhampton, the Kumars decide to leave Tollington and move to Wolverhampton to start a new life. In this context, Meena holds a transnational existence since her identity is embedded in more than one society. While she embraces a British identity in the beginning, she realises that she can never be totally British since the society defines her identity in terms of her Indian origin and brown skin colour.

It is significant to highlight that *Anita and Me* is a semi-autobiographical novel which draws attention to the transnational position Meera Syal writes from. The novel is semi-autobiographical as it refers to Syal's childhood spent in a village called Essington. Like Meena, Syal is born in Britain and is the daughter of Punjabi parents who migrated from India. In a BBC interview, she explains that she "used to swap masks all the time" between her Punjabi origin and her identity as a "Midlands wench" (Stadlen). Syal's use of humour plays a significant role in the representation of the descendants of first generation immigrants. She emphasises the role of humour in her works by stating that humour is a powerful tool to create an opportunity to change the opinion of people while making them laugh. She points out that in *Goodness Gracious*

Me![30] "we made fun of ourselves [the migrant Indian community], but we also made fun of the host community. Everyone was fair game. There is something very healing about sharing a joke" (Sharma). Creating an atmosphere in which Asians were not only the target of jokes but could also be the ones who make the joke, Syal remarks that the TV programme changed people's ideas about the "other" by means of the power of humour. Accordingly, Syal specifies the objectives of humour in her works by asserting that she employs humour both as a tool to examine people's prejudices and as an instrument to dismiss these prejudices through laughter and amusement (Gallacher). Thus, Syal's transnational stance allows her to direct humour at both the Indian community and British community in order to demonstrate and change the preconceptions of both communities.

Before discussing *Anita and Me* in terms of humour and transnational identity, it should be noted that various critical studies have been conducted on the novel. Roger Bromley focuses on the conflicted sense of home and belonging in Syal's novel by referring to Avtar Brah's "homing desire"[31] (143). Furthermore, Berthold Schoene-Harwood and Mark Stein concentrate on Meena's journey towards a sense of belonging. Schoene-Harwood argues that *Anita and Me* is an "anti-Bildung" novel as Meena learns to resist social integration in order to reach a sense of belonging (160). Stein discusses that Syal's work is a novel of "transformation" since it not only reflects the character formation of Meena but also represents the transformation of the British culture (53). While Stein and Schoene-Harwood highlight Meena's identity formation as a positive image, Sara Upstone claims that the novel does not indicate a mood of optimism such as Stein's idea of "transformation" or Schoene-Harwood's notion of "anti-Bildung". By referring to the use of humour in the novel, Upstone asserts that the novel challenges an atmosphere of racial optimism by underlining the continuous problems of British Asians (127-128, 120). Furthermore, Graeme Dunphy is also one of the critics who points at

[30] *Goodness Gracious Me!* is a comedy programme televised on BBC and co-produced by Syal. Apart from being a novelist, Syal is a producer, scriptwriter and an actress. She wrote several screenplays such as *Bhaji on the Beach* (1994) and *My Sister Wife* (1993), which is the first play written by an Asian woman produced by the BBC. Although she acted in several TV series, she is particularly known for her roles in the BBC comedy series *Goodness Gracious Me!* and *The Kumars at Number 42*.

[31] Susheila Nasta asserts that, for diasporans, "homing desire" is a desire to reinvent home and create a place of homely experience; thus, it does not always refer to a longing for a specific homeland (194).

humorous instances in the novel. While his main discussion is that *Anita and Me* is a post-colonial "writing back", he remarks that some instances of laughter against British characters imply not only relief but also self-defence (637, 651). This study specifically focuses on the function of humour in *Anita and Me* and analyses the relationship between Meena's identity and humour. In this chapter, I argue that the miscellaneous functions and changing direction of humour is employed as a strategy to explore, expose and enhance Meena's transnational identity.

4.2.1. Humour and the Voice of the Transnational Child

Anita and Me includes two perspectives which are the views of Meena as the child-character and Meena as the adult-narrator. Meena the child-character is the one who experiences everything and Meena the adult-narrator is the voice that narrates the adventures of her childhood. That is, Meena the character is continuously confused while trying to reach a sense of belonging and Meena the narrator looks back at her childhood problems as an adult character. Meena as a child perceives the world from a static point of view due to her childhood ignorance of the fact that identities are continuously redefined. This subchapter takes Meena's perspective as the child protagonist as its central point and argues that humour in child Meena's point of view of home, belonging and identity, her use of child phrases and informal vocabulary, her reactions to racism, and her perspective of other white or Indian characters expose her transnational identity. Alternatively stated, this part discusses that humour unfolds Meena's problematic sense of belonging and identity construction by focusing on her perspective as the child-character.

To begin with, humour in Meena's childish lies indicates her struggle to construct a powerful "self" in a society which perceives her non-white origin as the "other". Meena is a compulsive liar who uses lying as an identity creating-strategy; in other words, "[h]er characteristic lying is part of an endeavour to endlessly create a self" (Bromley 146). She struggles to construct a fascinating "self" in order to be accepted by her white British friends. To exemplify, she tells her friends that she is a Punjabi princess, owns an elephant, ate fire during a religious festival, stayed in a mud hut in India and ate tiger for breakfast there (*AAM* 28, 118). Furthermore, when her non-

English-speaking maternal grandmother from India meets with the local townspeople, Meena lies that her grandmother is shy and actually speaks English and even French, Russian and Latin. She further tells the townspeople that her grandmother came to Britain to search for gold since she is in the precious mineral mining business in India. Her lying continues as she narrates that her grandmother's mine in India was destroyed by a volcano and she had to escape a sea of lava on a motorbike (*AAM* 220). Meena's aforementioned lies generate humour since they interrupt the logic, reality, and congruity of the ordinary world. As, Terry Eagleton states, "humour happens for the most part when some fleeting disruption of a well-ordered world of meaning loosens the grip of the reality principle" (89). Evidently, the lies transform a small Indian girl into a tiger-eating princess and a traditional Indian grandmother into a motorbike-riding gold miner. Humour caused by her bizarre lies draws attention to the aspect that she employs Indian stereotypes created by the Western gaze. She tries to be interesting by creating a courageous, wealthy and noble "self"; however, this fascinating "self" emphasises her "otherness" by reflecting an "exotic" Indian image. Thus, she unconsciously creates an "exotic" image which reinforces the prejudices of the white society. Syal states that "[y]ou use humour to look at people's prejudices. And once you start laughing, a lot of those prejudices start to peel away" and she adds that "[c]omedy can strip away your perceptions of people" (Gallacher). It can be argued that, through Meena's comic lies, Syal portrays and mocks the "exotic" Asian stereotype created by the white "self". By employing humour, Syal not only draws attention to the prejudices of the British society represented by Meena's lies, but also attempts to dismiss these prejudices through laughter and amusement.

Apart from humour that is detected in Meena's lies, the British society's superior laughter directed at her Indian "self" also problematizes her identity construction. Although Meena occasionally tries to construct a fascinating ethnic identity to survive in the racist atmosphere of Britain, her primary aim is to create a static British "self". She aspires to eat fishfingers like other white children, deliberately exaggerates her Tollington accent, and does not want to spend time with other Indian girls of her age (*AAM* 60, 97, 148). However, Meena's British "self" is destabilised by the superior laughter of the white British society. To illustrate, when the teacher asks

the class why their region is called the Black Country[32], a mischievous boy answers by saying that the area is called the Black Country since many "darkies" live there. The whole class laughs at the boy's joke and Meena "laugh[s] along with everyone" although she feels humiliated (*AAM* 22). The feeling of superiority in the laughter of the class is a critical point in the representation of the dominant white British culture. Thomas Hobbes states that laughter is strictly connected to the feeling of superiority since it is produced by the sudden recognition of deformities in others. He adds that humour is the representation of the wish for power since human beings strive always for power (Hobbes 1651, 44). The boy's comparison of the "Black Country" to "Black" Indians creates a sudden recognition of the "inferiority" of coloured people, and therefore, triggers laughter in the all-white class. This implies that the superior laughter of the class situates Meena as the black "other" while disrupting her British "self". In fact, humour directed towards Meena's "inferiority" exposes the power relationship between the dominant British culture and the diasporic South Asian community.

Meena does not surrender to her position as the object of laughter which further renders her complicated identity position. After a while, she kicks the boy in the face and is punished by the teacher. While being hit by the teacher, Meena tries to explain that they are the only Indian people living in Tollington and that "the country looked green if anything" to her (*AAM* 22). Clearly, she rejects being the black "other" by attacking the boy and by humorously explaining that the country does actually look green. Humour in Meena's explanation enhances the reader to interrogate the position of the "self" and "other". Regarding Syal's works, Sara Upstone points out that the reader should "look beyond laughter" since only then can the reader discover "how close laughing is to crying" (138). Critically, Meena's reference to the green-looking town invites the reader to laugh, but simultaneously forces him/her to question his/her amusement. As Morreall contends, humour is an amalgamation of both negative and positive feelings since "[i]t seems possible for us to enjoy something and

[32] Their region, the West Midlands, is called the Black Country since the area was a significant place for the production of metalwork during the Industrial Revolution. Coal mines were used to power and heat the factories that produced metalwork. The area is named Black Country due to the air pollution caused by coal mines. As these industries declined in the mid-twentieth century, many coal mines were closed.

simultaneously be disturbed by our ability to enjoy it – 'guilty pleasure,' we call it" (2009, 54)(emphasis original). In this sense, Meena's references to the colour of the English landscape and the lack of "black" migrant people generate humour and simultaneously create a sense of regret. The coexistence of pleasure and displeasure compel the reader to question and contemplate on the notion of racial identities. Syal remarks that "I wrote *Anita and Me* because I wanted some kind of legacy for British Asians. Growing up, I didn't have anything that spoke to me, that I could relate to. All the Indian girls I knew were 'good girls' with long straight hair and were studying pharmacy or medicine. And they thought I was mad" (Majumdar). Therefore, it can be argued that rather than representing a positive image of an Asian British girl, Syal portrays a rebellious girl who interrupts the superior laughter of the boy by physically kicking him. Thus, creating a non-conventional subject position for Meena, Syal defies the stereotype of the innocent and submissive Asian girl.

The superior laughter of the British society is also detected in instances when Meena is the target of humour from Anita's gaze, which reinforces the clash between Meena's Indian and British identities. To exemplify, the two girls believe that there is a witch who kills children in the abandoned house in their neighbourhood. Anita mentions that the witch directly sees Meena's bedroom as the desolated house is just across Meena's house. Meena implies that her mother's prayers protect her from the witch since her mother prays each night. As a reaction, "Anita laugh[s]" and adds that "[t]hem's no good! The witch is English, in't she? Yow need proper English prayers. Like Uncle Alan[33] knows" (*AAM* 101). Anita's laughter is initiated by the feeling of superiority over Meena's Indian identity since her laughter implies that the Indian language and culture are not included in Britain's cultural space. In this fashion, Anita's laughter mirrors the colonial discourse since she constructs certain fictional realities about the "inferiority" of non-Western people. To be specific, she produces the "reality" of the inferiority of Punjabi prayers and the superiority of English prayers. As Edward

[33] Uncle Alan is the Reverend of the Church and he is the teacher of the Sunday school. Meena's parents have a liberal perspective on religion and are not religious; therefore, they send Meena to the Sunday school since Uncle Alan keeps the children from misbehaviour, is against racism, and works for the community.

Said discusses, the Western colonial discourse forms the identity of the colonised since power produces knowledge. He argues that texts that seem as if they reflect the reality "can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time, such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse" (Said 1978, 94)(emphasis original). The "reality" produced by Anita's colonial gaze is accepted by Meena as she and Anita begin to pray in English while passing by the abandoned house. Meena points out that she only remembers the chant they uttered before lunch at the Sunday school. As a result, in order to protect themselves from the witch the two girls pray as follows, "[f]or what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen" (*AAM* 101). Their prayer generates humour as a result of the discrepancy between the prayer before a meal and the desire to ensure their safety from the witch. This humorous incongruity epitomises Anita's superior laughter by disclosing the subjective "reality" of her Western gaze and the unreliability of the "knowledge" she provides as a representative of the hegemonic colonial rule. In brief, Anita's laughter reinforces her power over Meena's "otherness" which exposes the dynamics of the colonial discourse in their friendship. In this context, Anita's laughter directed at Meena's "otherness" enhances her inability to interiorise her Indian origin and motivate her formation of a static British "self".

While laughter and humour generated by her Western friends define Meena's "otherness", she herself employs humour as an instrument to position herself in the British social and cultural space. Her attempt to tell a joke, which she considers amusing, to her classmates illustrates this point clearly. Meena is watching a British movie in which a soothsayer says "Woe! Woe! And thrice Woe!" (*AAM* 56). "Woe" signifies sorrow in the English language; however, Meena realises that "Wo Wo was our family Punjabi euphemism for shit" (*AAM* 56). The first time she realises this, she expresses to her parents that the soothsayer "must have constipation"; as a result, her father laughs and her mother tries to hide her smile. When Meena understands that "Woe" indicates "distress" in English, she laughs out loud every time she hears the soothsayer's "Woe". The word becomes a source of amusement for Meena and her

parents due to its "double meaning"[34], as in Sigmund Freud's terms. Henri Bergson suggests that laughter maintains a social signification since laughter is always a part of a group. Although laughter appears as a spontaneous practice, it always indicates a secret solidarity and involvement in a specific group (Bergson 64). The "double meaning" of "Woe" creates a particular freemasonry and complicity for Meena regarding her position in the diasporic Indian community, for she laughs at the word together with her parents. Later on, she repeats the same joke in the playground, which implies that she desires to construct the same sense of belonging in the Western society represented by the outer world. As no one understands the joke, she states as follows: "I realised it lost in translation and vowed I would swot up on a few English jokes" (*AAM* 56). Bergson suggests that it is impossible to translate humorous situations to another language as they are the products of a specific social group (64). Similarly, Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein note that "[i]f we do not share the requisite cultural references, a joke or pun might be lost on us" (14). Meena's wish to amuse the English community with a joke that belongs to the migrant Indian cultural space reflects her inability to shift between her British and Indian identities. As Schoene-Harwood articulates, "[i]n Meena's case hybridity signifies a state of not being able to fully meet the standards of either culture. Meena cannot switch elegantly from authentic Indianness to authentic Englishness" (161). Likewise, she is unable to shift between the sense of humour of the Western society and that of the migrant Indian community. It can be indicated that she desires to be the laughing subject and not the object of laughter in the British society. However, her childish ignorance of cultural and linguistic differences demonstrates that she is not a part of the British society. Indeed, the failed humorous joke underlines that Meena is only allowed to laugh with the Indian community or to be laughed at by the British society.

Meena's aim to laugh with the British society is further represented in humorous situations in which Anita is the primary laughing subject. The scene when Anita laughs

[34] Sigmund Freud argues that "double-meaning" is a joke technique which includes the use of metaphors and their literal interpretations (36). A word may be comprehended regarding its literal meaning by one person and regarding its metaphorical meaning by another person. Humour is produced as the same word is differently perceived by each person (49).

at her friend Sally is a clear illustration of this point. Sally, nicknamed as "Fat Sally", is Anita's best friend who constantly flaunts her pony since she is the only girl with a pony in her social circle. One day the pony gets so excited that she starts to spit at Sally's legs. Consequently, Sally tries to run away, but she almost falls on the ground while escaping from the pony's spit. When Anita and Meena see Sally's comic and humiliating escape, they laugh until their belly's ache (*AAM* 237). Meena expresses that "[i]t felt so good to be back here and to be laughing at someone else. Anita and me bumped hips and laughed some more" (*AAM* 237). It is significant to underline that the above mentioned scene occurs after Meena's sense of "otherness" increases as a result of incidents such as her reluctance to wear a sari at a cultural celebration, her thought that "there was a corner of me that would be forever not England" and her quarrel with Anita due to Anita's affection for the gang leader of a racist group (*AAM* 107, 112, 195). Meena clearly enjoys laughing at another object of laughter, Sally, with Anita, who represents the "self". Indeed, this collective laughter provides Meena a subject position in the British society due to the feeling of sudden superiority over Sally and the fact that she shares this feeling of superiority with Anita. Significantly, laughter forms and reflects the links between the laughers (Bergson 64). In this regard, Meena struggles to create a solid connection with Anita by including herself in the group that laughs at the "other". That is, she attempts to fixate her subject position in the British society by laughing with the gaze of the Western "self" that is represented by Anita.

Apart from humour that targets the Indian "other", humour directed at the British "self" further intensifies the clash between Meena's Indian and British identities. In contrast to Meena's wish to belong to the British community, her mother – Daljit – and Daljit's Indian friends construct an Indian community, which laughs at their English neighbours. Meena perceives that "in front of the Aunties[35], [her mother] would reduce [the neighbours] to tears of laughter by gently poking fun at the habits of her English friends" (*AAM* 29). Daljit and the aunties continuously criticise and mock the Western way of life by uttering that "[their English neighbours] treat their dogs like children, no, better than their children", "[t]hey expect their kids to leave home at sixteen, and if they

[35] "Auntie" and "uncle" are terms used for Indian family-friends although they are not related by blood. The aunties and uncles form a kind of extensive family for Indian migrants.

don't, they ask for rent! Rent from your kids!", "[t]hey don't like bathing, and when they do, they sit in their own dirty water instead of showering", and "[t]he way they wash up, they never rinse the soap off the dishes" (*AAM* 33). Daljit and her friends construct a sense of superiority by humiliating the English lifestyle. The target of their laughter is the dominant British culture which they caricature by degrading and emphasising specific traits. Freud asserts that the most significant aspect of a caricature is that it produces laughter by targeting people of authority (200). It is notable that Daljit and her friends criticise and mock the authority of the British society. Correspondingly, their humour creates an inferior British "self" who is uncivilised and illogical. It can be argued that the construction of a caricatured British lifestyle reverses the binary oppositions of the colonial discourse. Ania Loomba states that the non-Western subject is perceived as the barbaric and uncivilized in the colonial discourse. Thereby, the "self", the West, is described with terms related to superiority and the East is only described with inferior terms (Loomba 45). In this sense, the superior laughter of Daljit and the aunties subverts the inferiority of the non-Western subject by overpowering the customs of their English neighbours.

Besides destabilising the power position between the colonised and the coloniser, the superior laughter of Daljit and her friends indicate a sense of relief from racial tensions. To exemplify, Meena recognises that, after gossiping about and mocking their English neighbours, "[t]here was much affectionate laughter, but laughter all the same, tinged with something like revenge" (*AAM* 34). While the friendly laughter is linked to their sense of superiority that ridicules English customs, the word "revenge" points out that their laughter is also generated by negative feelings. Freud argues that tendentious laughter is initiated through the satisfaction of hostile feelings. This kind of laughter contains thoughts that are normally censored but are made acceptable through laughter; as a result, it ridicules the enemy indirectly which creates pleasure in the laughing subject (Freud 101, 103). Daljit and her friends criticise their neighbours with the integration of humour instead of directly insulting them. Consequently, their laughter creates a sense of relief by releasing social tension and repression. As the release of their repressed energy occurs through the satisfaction of hostile thoughts, the narrative rejects to present Daljit and her friends as completely submissive and

innocent. Their laughter generated by hateful feelings evinces Syal's aim to construct diverse subject positions for Indian migrants. Procter asserts that second generation authors such as Syal avoid creating "black" characters that are "necessarily always and only positive" (in Donnell 251). In order to demonstrate shifting and diverse identities in the Indian community, Syal creates Indian characters such as Daljit who are culturally oppressed but never fragile and innocent. Regarding her TV programme *Goodness Gracious Me*, Syal states that the "programme is a phenomenal success, with its cross-over audience and appeal and refreshingly non-PC[36] humour" (in Procter 111). She refuses to be politically correct or to be held responsible for the representation of the British Asian community (Procter 112). Evidently, Syal's humour with a non-politically correct aspect provides a space to demonstrate the fluidity of identities and borders rather than presenting a positive and stereotypical Asian image. In this context, she re-invents the image of Indian migrants by portraying Indian characters such as Daljit and her friends who discharge hostile thoughts through laughter.

In addition to overpowering English customs and destabilising fixed Indian subject positions, the laughter of Indian characters is also employed as a means to mock the colonial discourse. The reaction of Meena's parents to the conversation among religious people exemplifies how the Indian character challenges the colonial discourse through humour. To explain, Mr Ormerod, a shopkeeper who tries to convert everyone into Christianity, collects money for the charity of the church that buys the needs of poor people in Africa. He tells a choir lady that, rather than buying material objects for people in Africa, they should give them "culture as well, civilization" and he rhetorically asks the lady "we ain't a charity, are we?" (*AAM* 172). The choir lady reacts as follows, "I thought we was a charity" (*AAM* 172). Humour in this conversation is created by the "displacement" of the meaning of the word "charity", as in Freud's terms. Freud states that displacement in a joke is connected to the unconscious and can be identified when one idea replaces another one (163-164, 50). In this sense, the meaning of "charity" is displaced between the two characters as it signifies raising money for those in need for the choir lady and converting non-Western people into Christianity for

[36] "Non-PC" is the abbreviation of "non-politically correct".

Mr Ormerod. By presenting the displacement of the word "charity", the text reveals the hidden colonial attitude of Mr Ormerod. Although the above mentioned example is not expressed as a joke, it is transformed into a joke-form when Meena's father, Shyam, overhears the conversation and tells it to his wife, Daljit. When Shyam tells the conversation to Daljit, "they laughed till they wept, playing both the characters in the scene" (*AAM* 172). Daljit and Shyam are amused since they recognise the infirmities in Mr Ormerod who stands for the colonial and racist society. Thereby, it can be argued that Shyam's and Daljit's laughter at the joke-like conversation positions the colonial "self" as the laughable "other". Thus, rather than the target of jokes, they are the laughing subject. Although Meena herself does not laugh at the British society, the superior laughter of her mother at white neighbours and her parents' laughter at Mr Ormerod shift the direction of laughter from Indian characters to English characters. By directing humour from Daljit's and Shyam's view towards the host society, Syal attempts to disclose the "other's" perspective on issues regarding the colonial attitude in Britain. As Syal states, "[w]e were always the butt of jokes, we were never the people telling the jokes. And then we were. That's the power of humour, to be able to change people's mind" (Majumdar). In this sense, the narrative reverses the direction of humour in order to construct laughing Indians who ridicule and criticise a racist society, which draws its power from Britain's colonial past.

Syal also positions the Indian as the object of laughter in order to disrupt stereotypical images that are constructed by first generation immigrants. Meena occasionally observes the humorous character of her Indian grandmother, Nanima, who arrives in England from India to stay with the Kumars for a short period of time. Nanima is perceived as a representative of the Indian culture and heritage since the Kumars and their Indian friends are "anxious to meet one of the generations they left behind" (*AAM* 201). They bear gifts and ask questions about the political and cultural situations in Delhi. Nanima, however, gives a long monologue about her friends in India, their family situations, and the new road they are building in her village. As a result, nobody understands what Nanima is talking about. The disappointment of the Kumars' guests is enhanced when Nanima loudly slurps her tea while massaging her feet. Despite Nanima's comic portrayal, the Indian guests still adore and respect her

since she is a "familiar symbol in her billowing salwar kameez[37] suit whose slow deliberate gestures and modest dignity reminded them of their own mothers" (*AAM* 201). In order to imply the absurdity of constructing a mythological image of India, the text presents a contrast between Nanima's comic character and the admiration of first generation Indians. As Syal asserts, the mythological image is induced by first generation Indian immigrants who impose a fixed image of "homeland" and idealise India (in Ranasinha 224). Portraying Nanima as a comic character disrupts the idea of an authentic India since humour detracts her from an idealised, fictionalised, and mythic India. Nanima's farcical manners continue and are even more foregrounded when Anita visits the Kumars. Nanima sits next to Anita "making Anita sink into the cushions, and gradually edged towards her until she gave up and moved to the floor, allowing Nanima to lie at full stretch, massaging her feet which she occasionally waved under Anita's nose, making her jump and hold her breath" (*AAM* 254). Then, she lets out a burp which is the loudest burp Meena has ever witnessed. While Meena and her parents struggle to impress Anita with their manners, Nanima remains uninvolved in their acts to please Anita. Nanima's farcical manners, which ignore Anita's – a white subject's – presence, foreground the Kumars' aim to make a positive impression on Anita. The Kumars struggle to construct a multicultural space which includes a white character such as Anita and Indian friends with the aim of surviving in multicultural Britain. On the other hand, Nanima's indifference to Anita signifies her non-migrant position. Concisely, through Nanima's humorous characteristics, the text draws attention to a changed India and the differences between non-migrant Indians and the migrant Indian community in Britain.

Another point that should be discussed regarding the function of humour is Meena's inability to perceive humorous instances which exposes her lack of knowledge of the Indian diaspora. Her parents keep several old but shiny suitcases on the top of their wardrobe. These suitcases include Indian clothes, old photographs, letters from Indian cousins, and her father's harmonium which her father plays during mehfils[38] with

[37] Salwar Kameez is a traditional Indian dress.
[38] Mehfil can be defined as an Indian concert that is performed in an intimate setting. People sing folk songs and perform poetry during this event.

their Indian friends (*AAM* 35, 71, 267). The old suitcases, which include the Indian past of the Kumars, reveal their formation of an ideal and mythic India. Diasporic identities perceive their homeland as an ideal home and maintain to relate themselves to their homeland which defines their ethnocultural union in the host society (Safran 83-84). Although the Kumars have no intention of returning to India, their belongings in the suitcases represent their creation of and relation to a mythic "ideal" homeland. The fact that also other Indian families' "wardrobes were similarly crowned with this impressive array of luggage" epitomises their attempt to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity in the host society (*AAM* 267). The bitter experiences symbolised by the suitcases are interrupted by Meena's comic thoughts. She wonders why these suitcases are located on the top of her parent's wardrobe separated from the rest of the household objects. Meena "always assumed this was some kind of ancient Punjabi custom" and when she hears about Enoch Powell's racist comments, she asks her mother "if the cases were ready and packed in case we had to escape back to India at short notice" (*AAM* 267). The text shifts from a serious tone of her parents' experiences to a humorous tone as a result of Meena's innocent and comic reaction. Schopenhauer asserts that the shift from seriousness to laughter generates a stronger sense of humour as the harmony of the congruity of an ordered world is destroyed (1966b, 99). Meena's response forms a contrast with her parent's tragic experiences which highlights the humour in her reaction. Her unawareness of the humorous situation is a vital marker to understand her lack of knowledge of her Indian background. Thomas Schultz and Jerry Suls discuss that humour is created not as a consequence of incongruity but as a result of the resolution of incongruity. They explain that while the first phase of humour includes incongruity, the second phase is the resolution of the discrepancy. When one cannot comprehend the explanation behind the incongruity, then, no humour is created (in Morreall 2009, 15; Suls 41). Meena cannot perceive the humorous incongruity in her own response as she lacks information about the experiences of first generation migrants. She cannot access the "resolution phase" which renders her lack of information about her parents' sense of "home" and that her sense of home differs from that of first generation Indian migrants. Consequently, her comic reaction to her parents' desire to create a sense of home exposes the different senses of belonging of first

generation migrants and their descendants. When Syal meets with other second generation Indian co-actors, she expresses that "[t]he first time we met up, it was like coming home. We asked each other, 'do your parents have suitcases on top of the wardrobe?'" (Majumdar). Thus, it can be suggested that Syal underlines the differences between the two generations through Meena's humorous reaction to the storing of suitcases. As a result, Syal also demonstrates the presence of a new and changed sense of "home" for the children of first generation migrants such as Meena.

In the novel, humour also maintains a critical function in Meena's childish fantasies in which she combines the Indian cultural space with the British cultural space. Meena "frequently blurs boundaries between inner and outer and between fantasy and reality […] her practical and reflective identities do not match up, she constantly feels a sense of alienation and splitting" (Ilott 63-64). Despite the fact that Meena tries to create a static British identity as aforementioned, her fantasies signify the impossibility of the construction of a fixed identity. In other words, although Meena the child does not consciously refer to or embrace her transnational identity, her fantasies reveal and indicate her fluid existence. To illustrate, she does not know the exact story of how her parents fell in love and got married. She only hears whispers from their family-friends and guests about the fact that her parents fell in love at first sight. As a result, she imagines her parents' love story as follows, "I kept myself awake imagining them chasing each other around old Indian streets" (*AAM* 32). Interestingly, she adds that these Indian streets "were basically English streets with a few cows lounging around the corners" (*AAM* 32). Meena's imagination in which she amalgamates the Indian love story and the English streets generates comic incongruity. Schopenhauer argues that one of the reasons that creates humour is the incongruity between an object and a concept. Particularly, humour is created when the abstract concept and the real object are appropriate from a one-sided point of view and when the audience realises this one viewpoint (1966b, 9; 1966a, 59). Humour in Meena's imagination is created from the clash between the abstract image of English streets in India and reality of English streets in England. This discrepancy seems congruous only from child Meena's one-sided point of view. The comic incongruity in her imagination not only demonstrates her lack of information about India but also reveals her shifting identity by

blurring the boundaries of fantasy and reality. Regarding humour and maturation in fictions of development, Lewis suggests that "[i]n the early childhood years, when the world lies before us so various and so new, a wonderland in which the familiar and the unfamiliar are in flux, when our sense of reality is elastic, each incongruity, however alarming, points toward and area of potential growth" (109-110). Meena's comic incongruous imagination accentuates her potential growth regarding her transnational identity since her fantasy rejects essentialist notions of national and cultural borders by uniting the Indian and English cultural spaces. Indeed, "if we remove the blinders of methodological nationalism, we see that while nation-states are still extremely important, social life is not confined by nation-state boundaries" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 285). Meena's comic fantasy, thus, implies her transnational existence by presenting that social and cultural lives are not confined by nation-state boundaries. As a result, on the one hand, humorous incongruity is employed as a means to emphasise the clash between the Indian and English cultural spaces, yet, on the other hand, it highlights the necessity of rejecting static notions of nationality.

The aspect of "simultaneity" of Meena's transnational identity is another point that is disclosed by comic incongruities in her fantasies. Meena is fascinated by the caravans of the fair-people since they travel to many other locations and she wonders how many countries, deserts, and jungles they have visited. She thinks that maybe they even travelled to India and expresses that "I suddenly had a vivid picture of all my grandparents dressed as they were in their photographs, being sedately whirled round in their waltzer cars. Dadima[39] holding a goldfish in a plastic bag, Dadaji sucking on candy floss" (*AAM* 102). She further imagines that "Nanima sang along to the thumping soundtrack of 'All You Need is Love' and Nanaji kept time with a tapping sandalled foot, holding onto his turban with long brown fingers" (*AAM* 102). Meena's imagination generates humour as a result of the inconsistency in her imagination. Immanuel Kant asserts that humour is the result of the incongruity between the expectation of a logical idea and the violation of this expectation (161). The expectation of the image of traditional Indian grandparents is challenged by the picture of

[39] Dadima is the Indian word for paternal grandmother, Dadaji means paternal grandfather, Nanima stands for maternal grandmother and Nanaji signifies paternal grandfather.

grandparents amusing themselves as children in an English fair in India. This humorous discrepancy highlights the fluid social space which Meena constructs in her thoughts. Steven Vertovec argues that simultaneity, which is the sense of feeling concurrently at home and not is a key concept of transnational identity. The transnational person maintains multiple identifications as he/she simultaneously desires to identify with the host nation and homeland (450). Meena's simultaneous embeddedness in more than one national and cultural space can be exemplified by her fantasy of her Indian grandparents in an English fair. Moreover, by including the Indian cultural space in her fantasy, Meena tries to construct an Indian background in order to reach a sense of belonging. She does not know anything about her extended family in India, has never been to India, and has never met her grandparents until this point. In this regard, Meena struggles to create an Indian heritage by integrating her Indian grandparents in the British national space. Providing the amalgamation of the Indian and English social spaces, her imagination represents that her connection to the country of sojourn, to her homeland or to certain family members in India can exist simultaneously. In addition, although she tries to construct a British self in her daily life, this simultaneity represents her wish to create a partial sense of belonging to her Indian origin. In short, the use of different social fields in her fantasy reflects the absurdity of forming a stable British identity and that her experiences cannot be defined as contradictory but should be defined as simultaneous practices. Humour created by the violation of normal patterns in Meena's fantasy not only unites the two diverse social fields but also reveals her wish to balance the two national spaces.

In conclusion, humour regarding Meena's perspective as a child manifests her conflicted sense of belonging. Humour is directed at diverse subject positions which expose Meena's problematic identity construction. In this regard, the superior laughter of white characters such as her classmates and Anita situates Meena as the "other". Meena employs jokes and tries to laugh with Anita to belong to the British society; however, she is only allowed to laugh with the Indian community or to be laughed at by the British society. On the other hand, Syal also creates Indian characters, such as Daljit, her friends and Shyam, who laugh at the white British people. As a result, by reversing the course of laughter, Syal renders the "other's" perspective on issues related

to race and ethnicity. The superior laughter of Indian characters and Meena's challenge of the superior laughter of white characters re-invent the submissive and stereotypical Indian image. Furthermore, the narrative not only mocks the "exotic" image of Indians created by the European self through Meena's comic lies, but also ridicules the idealised image of India and Indians with the integration of Nanima's comic manners. Thus, Syal ridicules ethnic stereotypes which are created by both the British society and the Indian community. Moreover, the humorous incongruities that result from Meena's lack of knowledge about her Indian heritage highlights a changed sense of "home" for the children of first generation migrants. This suggests that Syal employs these comic discrepancies to reveal the emergence of new centres of belonging for Meena. Concisely, directing humour at both the "self" and "other", Syal defies ethnic stereotypes and prejudices.

4.2.2. Humour and the Stance of the Transnational Adult

It is possible to further improve the discussion of the function of humour in Meena's conflicted sense of belonging by analysing her perspective as the adult narrator. Although the text portrays Meena's childhood experiences, Meena's voice as the adult narrator intermittently appears or comments on her childhood experiences. It should be noted that "Meena as a child has, in fact, not yet learnt how to survive; it is the narrator, rather, who has achieved this" (Upstone 128). Although the text only includes her childhood experiences, it can be ideated that she has matured following the end of the narrative. As a result, the narrator should be distinguished from the child-character since the narrator holds an adult perspective which refers to insights she acquired later in life. In this regard, one of the critical points that should be considered is the role of humour in Meena's process of growth. Paul Lewis asserts that humour has a significant function in fictions of development since it points to elements in the process of the character's growth. He clarifies that, for instance, the different instances that trigger humour in the character, the character's lack of humour, or his/her fixed sense of humour portrays his/her process of development (75-76). In this context, this part argues that the transformation of the role and position of humour in Meena's adult perspective exposes her growth towards a transnational sensibility. This subchapter

discusses that Meena's narrator voice produces a comic tension between her Indian and British identities which intensifies and reflects her fluid sense of self.

Humour which is created as a result of incongruity at the start of the novel represents the disruption of static identities from Meena the narrator's adult perspective. The narrative starts when Meena's narrator voice expresses her early memories such as her parents' arrival in foggy Britain, their culture shock, and their life in a boarding house room shared with other immigrants. Meena continues explaining that she, as a baby, "slept in a drawer, probably, swaddled in back copies of the *Daily Mirror*" and that her mother "found out about Kennedy's assassination two weeks after the event, when she read the reversed newsprint headlined on my damp backside" (*AAM* 9). Suddenly she confesses that the above mentioned story is just a lie, an imagination and an "alternative history I trot out in job interview situations or, once or twice, to impress middle-class white boys" (*AAM* 9). The narrator mocks the typical migrant narrative that includes melodramatic instances and mocks common stereotypes of migrant identities. As Upstone remarks, "[Meena] has emerged unscathed, with a humour that announces her distance from the stereotypical definitions of Asianness into which she might be placed" (Upstone 123). It can be argued that Meena's distance from the stereotypical migrant, which Upstone refers to, holds a critical role in the initiation of humour which highlights her fluid identity. Morreall clarifies that "distance" is one of the main aspects of humour since when a person keeps his/her distance, it signifies that he/she is in a "play mode". "Distance" and "play mode" are the two factors that are required for the perception of comic incongruities (Morreall 2009, 50-53). Meena's adult perspective maintains a "play mode" as she keeps a certain "distance" from the typical Asian "other". Particularly, Meena the narrator is able to enjoy the discrepancy between her melodramatic imagination and the reality, for she expresses that this is an "alternative history" which she sometimes flaunts in order to create a subject position in the white British society. Evidently, humour generated by incongruity emblematises that the narrator is able to laugh at the construction of the "other", which signifies her process of growth. Referring to *Anita and Me*, Nasta states that "rather than glorifying the 'immigrant movement' as a mode of perennial liminality, 'the diaspora self' seeks in [novels of Asian British writers] to 'reterritorialize itself and thereby acquire a name'"

(Nasta 186). Meena employs humour while mocking the "immigrant movement" and while relocating her position in society by occasionally creating an "alternative history". Significantly, her use of humour implies that, unlike Meena the child, Meena the narrator internalises the idea of being positioned and repositioned in cultural and national space.

The narrator's reference to a childhood joke portrays her process of development regarding her sense of humour and its relationship to her identity. The narrator states that her actual earliest memory is the moment when she understood the punchline to a joke. She remembers that, as a child, she laughed out loud during a show in which a man shoots a ballerina "in the tutu". Child Meena realises that "tutu" both signifies the ballerina's skirt and is used a slang word for vagina. When she recognises the discrepancy caused by the double meaning of the word tutu, she laughs so much that she feels unwell and throws up (*AAM* 10). Referring to Schopenhauer's incongruity theory, it can be argued that the moment Meena the child perceives the incongruity resulted by subsuming different objects under the same notion humour is produced. After her anecdote of the "tutu", the adult narrator's voice explains that she is "a sucker for a good double entendre; the gap between what is said and what is thought, what is stated and what is implied, is a place in which I have always found myself" (*AAM* 10). It is perceived that like Meena the child, Meena the narrator also praises and is amused by "double meaning" and the incongruity between an abstract concept and the reality. However, the adult narrator draws a parallel between the fluidity of humour and the fluidity of her identity since she links her sense of belonging to the gap caused by a "double entendre". Lewis asserts that "a child's sense of humour moves from an early delight in sheer incongruity or nonsense to an appreciation of more abstract and resolvable incongruities" (75). Likewise, Meena's sense of humour moves from the admiration of the simple incongruity of the "tutu" to the enjoyment of complicated incongruities which she links to her ambivalent identity position. Her appreciation of humour resulted by a "good double entendre" reveals her state of "liminal reality", as in Bhabha's terms. Bhabha argues that there is always the existence of liminality since the "image" represents absence and is continuously deferred in language (1994, 46-51). In this sense, expressions with a "double meaning" exist in the liminal space and are

deferred in language similar to Meena's identity that is continuously displaced and deferred. It should be noted that, in her works, "[Syal's] achievement is to broaden the self-definition of the minority community, rather than to focus exclusively on the refutation of white stereotypes" (Ranasinha 249). As a result, Syal goes beyond criticising, disrupting and ridiculing ethnic stereotypes by underlining the narrator's appreciation of humorous playfulness and comic abstract incongruities which draw attention to Meena's fluid identity.

Furthermore, Meena's adult voice produces a comic tension by contrasting the British culture and the Indian culture. The issue of the "Bike Shed" illustrates this point clearly. The Kumars use the bike shed as a bathroom since there is no bathroom built inside the house; therefore, this shed contains an old tub with pans and hot water so that they can take a bath (*AAM* 57). Daljit comments on the lack of bathrooms in many English houses by expressing that the English "don't like bathing" (*AAM* 33). She prefers to call it the "Bike Shed" as she is ashamed of the "uncivilised" condition of their bathroom. The description of the shed triggers humour due to the contrast between the English word and the real use of the shed as the narrator states that "[w]e'd never had a bike between us" and her mother "would have cut out her tongue rather than give its real, shameful name" (*AAM* 57). The bikeless "Bike Shed" creates a specific comic duality which draws attention to the clash between the English and the Indian culture. Morreall discusses that both the superiority theory and the incongruity theory accept that laughter is created by a duality; however, whereas the superiority theory claims that this duality is between the laughing person and the laughable, the incongruity theory focuses on the contrast between certain concepts in the comic situation (1983a, 15). The comic duality of the bike shed is generated by the clash between the two cultures and not as a result of the superior laughter by one of the cultures. In other words, this comic duality moves the focus from the superiority of certain cultures to the incongruity of clashing cultural spaces. Dunphy notes that Meena "must be both English and Indian to survive, and this duality is at the core of her struggle for identity" (650). It can be argued that she achieves to embrace this duality when her adult voice describes the shed as a "bike shed/bathroom" (*AAM* 137). Meena dismisses the capitals of "B" and "S" in "Bike Shed" and prefers to combine the two descriptions by using a slash. This implies

that she rejects the superiority of a single description and, thus, of a single cultural perspective. Rather than creating pure laughter or amusement, the narrator's comments on the absurdity of the "Bike Shed" are satirical observations of Indian and British customs. The incongruity between the two cultures and the distortion of the meaning of the "Bike Shed" enhances her satirical comments which become the central motif of the comic duality. To explain, "the basic technique of satire is distortion ... and distortion implies disorder. A popular satiric method of achieving distortion is incongruity, which also results in disorder" (in Barshay 58). In this sense, the narrator uses comic expressions to describe the "Bike Shed" problem in order to satirise both the "all-knowing" Asian community like Daljit and the partly unhygienic construction of English living spaces. As she creates incongruity between the two cultures, she is able to attack both cultures which positions her in an in-between space. Indeed, through the narrator's voice, Syal uses the satiric edge of her humour to position the narrator's gaze outside fixed customs and borders of the Indian community and British society in order to unsettle national and cultural boundaries.

Like the "bike shed" duality, the issue of the "front garden" is another example which represents the change of Meena's sense of humour in relation to her British and Indian identities. Meena the child criticises their front garden as it does not have the appearance of a typical English garden like their neighbours. All the other front gardens are purely for display and include objects such as miniature ponds, stone wishing wells, flowers and hedges (*AAM* 15, 16, 203). On the contrary, the Kumars' front garden is a bare garden with grass and herbs which are used in their Indian meals. Meena is embarrassed of their front garden and thinks that "I did not want things growing in our garden that reminded me of yesterday's dinner; I wanted sunflowers and manicured hedges and fountains where the blackbirds would come and sip" (*AAM* 16). She later adds that "could [her mother] not possibly consider buying an ornamental well, make some effort to fit in the neighbourhood" (*AAM* 33). Clearly, Meena the child is not amused by the contrast between her mother's garden and the gardens of their neighbours. Yet, Meena the narrator is able to recognise the humour of the two clashing cultures since she describes the above mentioned conflict as the "Front Garden dilemma" (*AAM* 33). The "Front Garden dilemma" is an expression which reflects that

adult Meena is amused by child Meena's struggle to "fit in" with the British society. Adult Meena mocks and enjoys child Meena's problems by naming it a "dilemma", which underlines the ambivalent position of the two cultural spaces. Once again, by employing irony and humour, the narrator criticises stereotyped customs regarding Indian gardens and English gardens. In Meera Syal's works, "humour derives from the uncertainty of whose cultural values are being ridiculed, and whose position is being laughed at" (Reichl and Stein 14). In other words, it is uncertain whether Meena's adult voice mocks the English garden with excessive garden objects or the Indian garden with practical plants such as herbs. Like the "Bike Shed" example, the word "dilemma" complicates the direction of ridicule since it is questionable whether it is directed at the English culture or at the Indian culture.

Meena's process of growth is also revealed by the contrast between Indian and English food. Meena the child desires to eat English food such as fishfingers and chips; however, her mother cooks Indian food every day. She lengthily describes her mother's cooking which is chaotic, complex and sophisticated in comparison with the English cuisine. While she rejects to learn to cook Indian food, she is delighted when their English neighbour teaches her to bake jam tarts (*AAM* 61). She is surprised when she sees the neighbour's oven, for her mother only uses the oven to store pans since the Indian cuisine does not include baking recipes. She expresses that "I'd never seen my mother use our oven, I thought it was a storage space for pans and her griddle" (*AAM* 62). This baking experience is an important incident for child Meena since she relocates her identity position in the English cultural space which is represented by the neighbour's kitchen. In this context, child Meena observes the Indian cuisine with a sense of prejudice and from a British gaze. On the other hand, adult Meena explores the deeper issues of her mother's desire to cook Indian food as she realizes that "food was not just something to fill a hole, it was soul food, it was the food their far-away mothers made and came seasoned with memory and longing, this was the nearest they would get for many years, to home" (*AAM* 61). Yet, her humorous comment interrupts her mother's serious motivation to cook Indian food as follows, "Punjabis and baking don't go together, I've since discovered. It's too easy, I suppose, not enough angst and sweat in putting a cake in the oven and taking it out half an hour later" (*AAM* 62). Although

the narrator is aware of her mother's creation of a "myth of home" through cooking, she implies the absurdity of cooking complicated meals each day by exaggerating the Punjabi cooking style. The shift from a serious tone to a playful and humorous tone is significant since it eradicates negative emotions. As Morreall argues, "[i]nstead of responding to the cognitive shift with shock, confusion, puzzlement, fear, anger, or other negative emotions, we enjoy it" (Morreall 2009, 50). The shift demonstrates that the narrator does not maintain anger towards Indian food like the child character and that she does not hold other negative emotions such as grief regarding the relationship between home and food like her mother. In this sense, the narrator's choice to blend humour with criticism reflects that she fully identifies neither with the Indian community nor with the English society, unlike child Meena who entirely denounces the Punjabi cuisine.

The portrayal of ethnic stereotypes is another aspect which exposes adult Meena's altered sense of humour in accordance with her embracement of a flexible identity position. Adult Meena's humorous perspective on Indian stereotypes differs from child Meena's descriptions of the same stereotypes. To exemplify, the child protagonist unconsciously creates Indian stereotypes of the Kumars' female family friends, who are called "aunties". The aunties are like a control mechanism which represents the Indian community and their presence always signifies the overpowering existence of the Indian culture. When Meena's mother feels depressed and pessimistic, she describes her mother's mood as a "silent guest, whom I saw as an overweight sweaty auntie with lipstick-stained teeth and an unforgiving expression" (*AAM* 25). In another scene, for instance, when the aunties hug and kiss Meena, she feels as if she is "drowning in a sea of rustling saris, clinking gold jewellery and warm, brown, overpowering flesh" (*AAM* 110). The child protagonist does not recognise any humour regarding the aunties, for the migrant Indian is only a threat for her since the migrant metaphorically prevents her from constructing a British "self". On the other hand, the narrator describes the aunties with a humorous tone by stating that the aunties are like a "formidable mafia" whose approval is an advantage and whose disapproval is a curse (*AAM* 33). Adult Meena consciously enjoys and ridicules the communal power of the aunties. Unlike child Meena who is continuously terrified of the aunties, adult Meena

mocks their existence as a group by describing them as a "mafia" which diminishes their authority. Bergson states that we laugh at people who are automated, trapped in a vicious cycle, and incapable of adapting themselves to their environment. Laughter, thus, is a social corrective which modifies their rigidities and creates a psychological flexibility (Bergson 79, 147-148). In the light of Bergson's views, adult Meena mocks the aunties' fixed Indian identities and their inability to adapt themselves to the British society. Identifying them as a "mafia" does not reinforce their power but humorously underlines their lack of flexibility and individuality. Also, it displays Meena's British identity which perceives the aunties with a certain "white" prejudice. By directing the course of humour towards the Indian community through Meena's British gaze, Syal not only criticises the lack of flexibility of the Indian community but also the British gaze which constructs the stereotype of the Indian auntie. Syal claims that "[h]umour is a powerful weapon. A country or community that can laugh at itself is a confident community" (Sharma). Thus, by mocking Indian aunties from Meena's British gaze and from within the Indian community, Syal invites both the Indian community and the British society to laugh at and to contemplate on their failures regarding racial tension.

Apart from ridiculing Indian stereotypes, the narrator also mocks British stereotypes. Both the child voice and the adult narrator construct white British stereotypes; however, while these stereotypes confuse the child's perception of the British society, they are a source of humour and criticism for adult Meena. Bromley states that the town people are "often constructed as figures in a Dickensian gallery of working-class stereotypes" (145). To illustrate, the protagonist has "difficulty matching up the husbands to the wives as their lives seemed so separate" (*AAM* 85). Furthermore, she refers to the "Ballbearings Committee" which consists of working class women who work at a metal casings factory. These women appear to "run the village" as they earn money while their husbands stay home and look after the children. Women of the "Ballbearings committee" are flirty, independent, and they love to go to nightclubs and bingos. Meena the child perceives these women as both glamorous and shocking (*AAM* 19). She contemplates that, unlike her parents, the English couples and the "Ballbearings committee" lack affection and sentiment; however, this lack intrigues her since it contradicts with her parents' "almost claustrophobic connection" (*AAM* 86).

Evidently, the child voice creates white stereotypes that are emotionless and forward which confuses and fascinates her at the same time. Her fascination by these British stereotypes reveals her desire to create a British "self". Unlike the child's serious and relatively admiring perspective on the working-class women, the adult narrator's comments reflect a humorous tone which disrupts the "ideal" and superior British "self". The adult narrator implicitly interrupts the descriptions by commenting that these women worked, lived, and played together: "They appeared ensemble as coiffured maenads in belted macs and bright lipstick […] they seemed to exist and function as a group" (*AAM* 19). The comic image of maenads –female followers of Dionysus- with styled hair and a "communal tone of voice" can be considered as a "reversal joke", which is frequently used as a source of comedy in the TV Programme *Goodness Gracious Me!* co-produced by Syal. To explain, Anil Gupta, one of the producers, expresses that the reversal jokes in the TV show are jokes that are turned inside out. For instance, Indian characters have difficulties pronouncing the name of a British character called Jonathan. These jokes reverse Indian stereotypical images and apply it to white characters; therefore, they display the "other side of things" (Channing). Similarly, the group existence of the Ballbearings Committee can be compared to the group existence of the Indian aunties. The controlling, all knowing and dominating characteristics of Indian aunties are now applied to these British women; for instance, "[t]here was not much room for dialogue with these women, whose communal tone of voice said, I know the answer but I'll ask you anyway but make it quick" (*AAM* 19). As a result, by reversing the course of humour and constructing comic white women, Syal subverts the established comic image of the Indian auntie. The creation of white stereotypes by child Meena and the criticism of these reversed stereotypes by adult Meena compel the reader to look from the other side.

The similarity between the aforementioned stereotypes should also be underlined since it provides an insight into Meena's transnational identity. Regarding the relationship between humour and the maturing process of a character, it should be noted that "a growing person's relation to his or her family and society will in many cases be apparent in his or her sense of humor and that one measure of an adult's alienation will be his or her tendency to use or appreciate humor that either supports or

attacks social norms and practices" (Lewis 76). In this sense, it can be argued that the society's and Meena's family's one-sided perspective initiates her descriptions of caricature-like characters such as the aunties and the Ballbearings committee. That is, the migrant Indian community, Meena's parents and the British society encourage child Meena's construction of stereotypes and, thus, her lack of sense of humour towards the "other". On the other hand, adult Meena who has embraced a fluid identity is able to shift her gaze; therefore, she is capable of creating and employing humour while describing the two different groups of women. Her maturing process is clearly recognised when she humorously criticises and mocks both the migrant Indian society and the British society. In other words, the narrator's voice disrupts the static identities of both the Indian and the British communities by detecting comic similarities between the two groups. Significantly, "[t]ransnational migrants take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states" (Basch et al. 2008, 263). Adult Meena's laughter and ridicule directed towards both groups not only reflects the disruption of static identities but also indicates her simultaneous connection to both the Indian and the British society. As a result of the narrator's bilateral direction of humour, Syal creates a new position for the British Asian laughing subject. As Syal states regarding her TV programme, "[t]he comedy, she says, showcased [the British-Asian actors'] abilities to be a part of two different cultures, swim against the "either-or" tide, all the while creating a brand of British humour that was distinctly original" (Majumdar). Likewise, adult Meena's two-sided laughter creates a new kind of humour which attacks and embraces multiple subject positions. Indeed, as her laughter shifts between the Indian and British stereotypes and communities, her identity position fluctuates between these two national spaces.

The end of the novel does not include a clear resolution in terms of Meena's identity regarding both her child self and adult self. Indeed, "the novel offers a sense of final resolution but this resolution in fact only indicates a deep uncertainty and instability" (Upstone 126). The narrative ends with the child voice that bids farewell to Anita since the Kumars are going to move to Wolverhampton due to better schooling options for Meena and as a result of the increase of racist attacks in Tollington. The last

words of child Meena are directed towards Anita in her letter: "I'm going to grammar school, so at least you won't be around to tease me about my tam-o'-shanter[40]! See you around" (*AAM* 328). Meena's expression may seem as if the narrative provides a sense of resolution since she is going to start a new life without the prejudices of Anita and the racist society of Tollington. Upstone asserts that "*Anita* is a comedy of entropy masking as a comedy of order" (126). A comedy of entropy does not offer a resolution like the comedy of order and reveals narrative play, destabilisation, disorder and anxiety at the end of the text. It includes "the crumbling of ordered systems, the breakdown of traditional perceptions of reality, [and] the erosion of certainty" (in Upstone 125). Analysing the critical function of laughter in child Meena's last words reveals the instability of her formation of a "self". Although her last words demonstrate her relief that Anita will not be at the same school to laugh at her appearance, her words still represent her feeling as the object of laughter and her perception of Anita as the laughing subject. As Anita represents the dominant British "self", it is recognised that, in the end, child Meena is still unable to shift the direction of superior laughter which indicates that she is incapable of positioning herself outside the gaze of the white "self". Also, the absence of the narrator's voice at the end puts emphasis on the narrative play of the novel. Although the adult voice is absent at the end and the narrative does not provide any information about Meena's growth into adulthood, her previous comments on her childhood reveal that the novel's end does not include any resolution. At the beginning of the novel, the adult narrator explains that she occasionally positions herself in the subject position of the Indian "other" in job interviews or to impress white boys (*AAM* 9). This suggests that the Indian is still regarded as the "other" in Meena's adulthood. Certainly, the novel masks a comedy of order by ending with child Meena's escape from Tollington while it signalises disorder, conflict and tension through adult Meena's implicit comments about racism. In this context, the end of the novel does not display a sense of humour which solves Meena's conflict. In other words, humour does not transform into a tool to reach a resolution or embrace certain tensions. On the contrary, humour ceases and the satiric edge of Syal's voice increases as a result of the

[40] Tam-o'-shanter is cap that is a part of a school uniform.

contrast between child Meena's escape from conflicts and adult Meena's ongoing racist experiences. Therefore, by avoiding a clear resolution, it can be suggested that Syal foregrounds her criticism of continuing white prejudice and racism.

On these grounds, unlike the child protagonist's serious attitude towards the conflict between the Indian and British cultures, the adult narrator holds a playful tone which disrupts cultural and national borders. Her appreciation of humorous playfulness such as double meaning, alternative histories and humorous incongruities draw attention to her fluid identity. Furthermore, the comic incongruities created by the "Bike Shed", "Front Garden Dilemma", and the Indian cuisine complicate the direction of ridicule since it is uncertain whether humour is directed at the Indian culture or the English culture. As a result of the ambivalence, the narrator is positioned outside the borders of the two communities which enhances her transnational stance. As the narrator is able to laugh and criticise from both the Indian gaze and British gaze, she implicitly creates Indian stereotypes and subverts these comic stereotypes by constructing white stereotypes. Thus, by creating racial stereotypes and reversed stereotypes, the text invites both communities to laugh and contemplate on racial prejudice. In contrast to Meena the child, her adult perspective appreciates the flexibility of humour by correlating it to the fluidity of her national and ethnic identities. Lewis suggests that unlike a character who fails to grow, mature characters might employ humour to control early experiences of pain, to explain suppressed desires and to support their self-development. That is, a mature character is "a protagonist who accepts a world that contradicts expectations and who accommodates identity in response to new facts and conditions" (Lewis 75). Evidently, Meena's adult voice masters her early experiences of pain and fear by reflecting the incongruities between the two cultures in a humorous tone. Her subject position extends across borders when she enjoys and criticises the cultural dualities of her childhood. Although Meena becomes humour-conscious regarding her transnational identity in the process of her growth, her story does not end with a non-oppressive atmosphere but with a racist and chaotic society in which she has learnt to shift between her identities.

Consequently, the multifaceted characteristic of humour sheds light on Syal's use of humour as a strategy to transgress ethnic and cultural boundaries. Procter argues

that black British literature of the 1970s and early 1980s is characterised by the challenge of racist mythologies. He explicates that literary works that belong to the above mentioned period challenge racist representations by representing a single and positive black experience. After the early 1980s and in the 1990s, however, authors aimed to represent not an essentialised black experience, but the diversity of subject positions for black characters. Thus, rather than a single version of blackness, black British authors after the early 1980s portrayed multiple versions of black characters and "productively [polluted] 'blackness', making its boundaries less fixed and more fluid and its contents more multiple and shifting" (in Donnell 251-252). Syal identifies the period after the 1980s as a second stage and comments that an "interesting stage was beginning now the anger was abating, in which we could now explore deeper issues of identity with confidence and, we hope, humour" (in Ranasinha 249). *Anita and Me*, written in 1996, belongs to the period after the 1980s in which monolithic views of minorities in Britain were challenged. It can be stated that Syal demonstrates the plurality of subject positions in the migrant Indian community with the integration of humour as a strategy. Child Meena's observations of the superior laughter of the white society and of the Indian community disrupt the stable positions of the "self" and "other". The superior laughter of Indian characters creates non-submissive, non-stereotypical and not always-positive Indians. Syal adds a second level to the function of humour through the comments of adult Meena. The narrator's representations of incongruities between the two communities display a satirical exploration of racial prejudice. Thus, by employing laughter, humour and satire, Syal directs humour and criticism at both the Indian community and British community in order to demonstrate and change the preconceptions of both communities. The narrator's sense of humour and satirical comments defy another prejudice since Asians were perceived as only the target of jokes. Syal comments that Asians were not associated with humour (in Procter 111). Thus, adult Meena's satirical comments which produce repercussions of humour create a new Indian subject position that involves humour and criticism. By evaluating Meena's migrant experience in the 1960s, Syal explores the diversity and fluidity of

migrant experiences from her transnational stance of the 1990s. [41] She revisits, mocks and unmasks racial stereotypes, white prejudice, and racial hypocrisy in order to impact racist attitudes of mainstream British culture.

[41] Britain accomplished limiting the amount of migrants from its ex-colonies in the 1960s and 1970s, but restricting immigration, and at the same time, promoting a multicultural stance induced extreme criticism regarding government policy. This strategy was observed as "Janus-faced" as a result of the contradiction between the firm rules against further immigration and the promotion of a multi-ethnic and cultural society (Ashcroft and Bevir 5).

CONCLUSION

Having discussed the role of humour in the analysis of transnational identities in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013), Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* (1996), this study demonstrates that the authors employ humour as an essential strategy to transgress the concept of national and ethnic identities. This dissertation exposes that rather than amusing, the selected novels employ humour as a tool to make the "self" and "other" laugh or be laughed at positionally in order disrupt national and cultural borders. In the introduction to *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Postcolonial*, Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein state that it is incorrect to narrow down the function of laughter in postcolonial texts. Therefore, they remark that it is simplistic to claim that these texts only aim to "laugh back" at the coloniser or the oppressor (12). Accordingly, the selected novels move beyond the aim of "laughing back" as they underline the fluidity of transnational characters through humour by "laughing in turn". This dissertation emphasised that Levy, Evaristo, Kureishi and Syal do not exclusively utilize humour in relation to the superiority theory to attack the "self" but that they use different types of humour on diverse levels in order to foreground transnational spaces and identities in contemporary multicultural Britain. Thus, this study reveals that the ambiguous, multifunctional and multi-layered characteristics of humour in *Fruit of the Lemon*, *Mr Loverman*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and *Anita and M*e consolidate the fluidity of transnational identities in order to enhance that "Britishness" is not confined in fixed national borders or Western genetic codes. Although all the selected novels unsettle the stable notions of national and ethnic identities, the different types and functions of humour in each novel point out the authors' different stance regarding their transnational characters' identification process.

The changing direction of humour in *Fruit of the Lemon* and *Mr Loverman* crystallises Faith's and Barry's transnational identities. In these two novels, the function and tools of humour change according to the character's metaphorical or physical journey towards a sense of belonging. In other words, the progress of humour is analogous to Faith's and Barry's fluctuating identities. An analysis of Levy's *Fruit of*

the Lemon in terms of transnational identity and humour renders that Levy employs humour as a tool not only to question the concept of identity but also to celebrate the mobility of transnational identities through Faith's experiences. By focusing on Faith's position as a subject who is laughed at, I observe that Levy employs superior laughter and incongruous humour in the first half of the novel to interrogate Faith's ambivalent identity position. First of all, the superior laughter of "white" characters defines and redefines Faith's identity as the black "other". The laughter of Faith's classmates at her parents' arrival on a "banana boat", Mr Bunyan's laughter at Faith's identification as British and at other ex-colonised people who are named after slave-owners, and the laughter of her flatmates at a racist attack all situate her as the black "other". In this sense, by directing the laughter from the British "self" at the black "other", Levy accentuates Faith's problematic sense of belonging in Britain. Furthermore, while superior laughter situates Faith as the "other", comic incongruities reveal the blurred positions of her "otherness" and "Britishness". Humour produced by the comic incongruity between Faith's imagination of a "banana boat" with Jamaican migrants sitting among bananas and the real banana boat with proper cabins and bananas only in the cargo department reflects her inability to form a Jamaican "self". In addition, the discrepancy between Faith's image of home as London and her parents' sense of home as Jamaica, and the dissimilarity between Ruth's blackness and her parents white skin colour further reinforce the clash between Faith's Jamaican identity and British identity. These comic incongruities do not create laughter or humour for Faith as she does not recognise the incongruities due to her desire to form a static British "self". The lack of Faith's realisation of humour in these incongruities manifests her inability to adopt a shifting perspective and to embrace a fluid identity. In addition to comic incongruities, the ambiguous direction of laughter presents Faith's involvement in complex cross-border spaces. Faith's enjoyment of Thatcher jokes and her engagement in the comedy performances cease when the black poet appears on stage. Her inability to laugh at the black comedian's jokes represents her shift from a British gaze to the gaze of the black "other". Through the aforementioned comic incongruities and the ambiguous direction of laughter, I can state that Levy provides a double frame of reference which includes and clashes Faith's British gaze and her Jamaican gaze. Ulrike Erichsen asserts that

postcolonial humour provides a double frame of reference by code-switching in order to represent a double-perspective. Consequently, "[t]his double-focus of humorous utterances forces the reader or listener to switch between two perspectives and two frames of reference" (Erichsen 32). Providing a double-perspective through amalgamating superior laughter and humorous incongruities, Levy's novel exposes transnational social fields and compels the reader to contemplate on the ambivalence of national and ethnic identities via Faith's experiences.

The mobility of humour which parallels with Faith's mobility is a critical point in transgressing the concept of national identity and reaching a celebrative atmosphere in the end of the text. Levy situates Faith as the object of laughter in the first half of the novel, yet, I suggest that Levy's change of the course of humour in the second part of the novel discloses that a unilateral perspective is not enough to reach a sense of self. Rather than contrasting the perspectives of "white" and "black" characters like in the first half of the novel set in Britain, Levy contrasts these different perspectives within Faith in order to reveal that her identity is far from stable by depicting her experiences in Jamaica. Humorous incongruities caused by Faith's feeling out of place among black people in Jamaica and the image of her aunt's home as a primitive mud hut reveal her British gaze. Moreover, by employing the laughter of black characters in the second part of the novel, Levy reverses the course of humour to highlight the creation of "othered" identities. In this sense, the laughter of Faith's Jamaican family at her Western style of clothing, Coral's mocking attitude at Jamaican characters who mimic the British, and Violet's comic representation of Faith's grandparents who try to mimic and repeat the British lifestyle all display that both the "self" and "other" do not have an authentic position. Furthermore, carnivalesque humour produced by Constance's attempt to change her white skin colour into black by sunbathing and wiping her skin with cocoa butter enhances Faith's recognition that her identity cannot be categorised into certain types. Also, Constance's exaggerated African dancing, the hyperbolic representation of her drinking and spitting rum with goat's blood for good luck as an African tradition, her rum-scented mouth and her rhythmic snoring as a result of her excessive drinking are indicatives of her grotesque body due to the representation of the orifices along with exaggerations and excessiveness which contribute to the carnivalesque atmosphere. The

grotesque realism of Constance's physical actions signals and criticises the impossibility of the construction of a complete black or "white" identity. The carnivalesque atmosphere produced by Constance's travesty in both appearance and social position reflects her adoption of a new identity position in which she forms her own laws. Bakhtin states that "[c]arnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (10). In this fashion, Constance's "renewal", rebirth and transformation regarding ethnic codes and norms portray a festive atmosphere which underlines and celebrates the fluidity of identities. Through the mocking laughter of black characters and Constance's grotesque image, Faith is compelled to see the absurdity of forming a static British or Jamaican identity. In addition, the change of Faith's attitude towards humour and laughter emphasises her realisation of her multi-locality since she starts to recognise humorous incongruities through the end of the novel. Faith's adoption of a "playful" attitude towards both societies is disclosed by her humour-conscious attitude toward her own and the Jamaican crowd's reaction to the strong wind which she perceives as a hurricane whereas the Jamaicans consider it as a little breeze. Her consciousness of her "British" reaction to the strong wind reveals her playfulness which enhances the celebrative mood regarding her shifting sense of self. That is, she adopts a humour-conscious view which discloses her double-perspective of British and Jamaican attitudes. While Faith is not able to laugh and recognise the humour in the first part, she is able to see the humour and embrace her transnational identity after adopting a double perspective. In other words, the novel's ending lays the foundation for her ambivalence since the superior laughter of the West ceases through the end of the narrative and humour functions as a tool to celebrate Faith's transnational identity due to the carnivalesque atmosphere produced by Constance's presence and Faith's adoption of a "playful" attitude towards both societies. Through the fluid and complex direction of laughter and humour, Levy cements the idea that Faith's identity extends across national borders. Whereas Faith is the object of laughter in Britain, she becomes the laughing subject in the second half of the novel set in Jamaica. Transforming Faith into the laughing subject who embraces a shifting sense of self, Levy portrays the dynamic and ambivalent characteristics of transnational identities as notions for celebration.

In Evaristo's *Mr Loverman*, Barry's humorous perspective, his comic anecdotes and his jokes emblematise the fluidity and ambivalence of his Caribbean identity. *Mr Loverman* complicates and underlines fluctuating identities by portraying a queer diasporic and transnational "joker". Analysing Barry's humorous criticism within Freud's joke theory, this study exposes the ambivalent position of Barry's fluid identity in the Caribbean diaspora society. Like in *Fruit of the Lemon*, the function and tools of humour change according to the main character's journey towards a sense of belonging in *Mr Loverman*. Whereas Faith physically travels to Jamaica which leads to her realisation that her identity is beyond categorisation, Barry metaphorically travels to a sense of belonging. Unlike Faith, who learns to adopt a humour-conscious attitude through her experiences, Barry is humour-conscious from the start of the novel. Thus, in contrast to Faith's humorous attitude at the end of the novel which reveals the acceptance of her shifting sense of self, Barry's humorous stance from the start of the novel reflects the disruption of his sense of belonging to the Caribbean community. Barry is unable to define himself as homosexual due to his fear to be re-positioned outside the Caribbean community. His lack of belonging to the diasporic community is revealed by his struggle to create a powerful position as the teller of jokes. His tendentious jokes towards his wife, his marriage, and the Caribbean "home" transform the Caribbean community into the laughable "other". By creating a Caribbean "other" through his hostile jokes, Barry maintains his power as the laughing subject. In other words, his playful attitude presents him a space to construct a powerful laughing "self" in order to avoid being the laughable queer "other". On the other hand, Barry's hostile jokes also target queer people and the eccentric gay life style which expose his identification with the conservative Caribbean community. Thus, he struggles to construct a powerful identity position as the normative "self" in the Caribbean society. Unlike Faith, who is the target of superior laughter, Barry is himself the laughing subject who attacks the "other". Thus, while Faith is attacked by the laughter of the white "self" or the Jamaican "other" which underlines the clash between her Jamaican and British identities, Barry himself attacks the Caribbean "other" and the homosexual "other", which highlights his ambivalence within his own diasporic community. In other words, his mocking humour directed at the non-normative lifestyle unsettles both his

Caribbean "self" and homosexual "otherness" since he is both the laughing "self" and the laughable "other" due to his queer diasporic identity. This suggests that he belongs to the Caribbean diasporic community, but simultaneously lacks a sense of belonging to the same community. By employing Barry as both the object of laughter and the laughing subject, Evaristo accentuates the absurdity of the construction of fixed national and cultural spaces as she blurs the boundaries between target of laughter and source of laughter.

As the culturally oppressive atmosphere ceases in the last chapters, Barry does not feel the urge to attack the normative or non-normative "other". Almost at the end of the novel, by divorcing his wife, coming out of the closet as homosexual and starting to live with his boyfriend Morris, Barry disrupts the dominant heteronormative Caribbean regime of representation and is re-positioned in the queer diasporic space. This demonstrates that he does not need to penetrate the social order through hostile jokes anymore such as by using the word "Barrysexual", but he is able to define himself as "homosexual" (*ML* 299). Although he maintains his "joker" identity, he starts to employ innocent jokes which reveal the end of his desire to construct a static "other" in order to create a powerful "self". He jokes only for the purpose of amusement which demonstrates that his desire to construct a static "other" in order to create a powerful identity position ends. The absence of hostile jokes in the end of the text provides a tranquil and a comfortable atmosphere in which Barry embraces his queer and transnational identities. While Evaristo presents a space to question the borders of identities through Barry's tendentious jokes, she offers a celebration of fluid and transnational identities by creating a non-tendentious atmosphere in the end of her novel. Like in *Fruit of the Lemon*, a linear movement of humour is recognised in *Mr Loverman* which enhances the mobility of the main characters. In both novels, superior laughter changes into a celebrative sense of humour. In the end, both Faith and Barry neither laugh at the "other" nor are laughed at by the "self", but they learn to enjoy their cross-border existence. While Faith learns to laugh with both the "self" and "other" by adopting a double-perspective, Barry achieves to adopt a non-destructive sense of humour through his non-tendentious jokes. The change of their perspectives in terms of humour reflects that they interiorise their shifting identities. As humour moves to a

celebrating atmosphere, the characters embrace their incomplete and unstable identities. Thus, the linear movement and mobility of humour are parallel to the mobility of Faith and Barry regarding their physical and metaphorical journeys. This movement marks the significance of "routs" in Paul Gilroy's terms. "Roots" and "routs" indicate that rather than a fixed racial origins or "roots", one should consider mobility, interconnections or "routs" in order to define African diasporas (Gilroy 4, 19, 190). Both novels move from the negative and destructive effects of humour into a celebrating, positive and benevolent impact. This linear transformation from chaos to order throughout both narratives renders that Levy and Evaristo utilize the positive and productive functions of humour to celebrate the mobility of transnational identities.

While Levy and Evaristo use the mobile aspect of humour as a strategy to highlight and celebrate the mobility of their characters throughout their journeys to reach a sense of self, Kureishi's and Syal's use of humour lack a sense of celebrative mood. Rather than a linear movement of humour, they use a two-layered strategy of humour which not only displays the fluidity of their characters but also foregrounds their criticism towards the cultural and political environment. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the two-layered characteristic of humour is formed by the construction and deconstruction of ethnic caricatures which reveals Karim's transnational identity. The first layer of humour involves comic ethnic characters in Karim's life and the second layer consists of his theatrical performances of these ethnic characters. At the first layer, Karim creates comic caricatures out of South-Asian characters such as Haroon, Changez and Anwar, which reveals Karim's British gaze. He represents the aforementioned characters as static identities by caricaturing them and by exaggerating their migrant origins. He caricatures Haroon as a "hairy" and exotic migrant, Changez as an "imported" Indian husband, and Anwar as a "machine-like" hard-working migrant. Like Barry, who tries to justify his identity position by directing humour at the "other", Karim also creates a laughable "other". Yet, while Barry uses humour to endorse his Caribbean identity, Karim employs humour to establish his British identity. Karim's British gaze transforms the migrant into the object of laughter which underlines his struggle to identify as British. Furthermore, the in-depth analysis of these migrant characters in terms of comic caricatures in Kureishi's novel reveals that the formation of

a stable identity is impossible as Haroon and Anwar transgress the borders of their caricatured descriptions. Haroon redefines himself as the "Buddha of Suburbia" which amalgamates his Indian and British sense of belonging and Changez repositions himself outside the conventional Indian community into an eccentric communal life. By representing the rejection of both characters to be defined as comic migrant caricatures, Kureishi renders the fluidity of their identities. The narrative reveals Haroon's change after the carnivalesque atmosphere of his yoga session. This carnivalesque atmosphere is evoked by revitalization of physical and social appearance due to Haroon's transformation from an Indian "other" into a Buddhist "self, grotesque imageries of sexual intercourse, and orifices of the body through excessive drinking, smoking and throwing up. Regarding the carnivalesque yoga session, Haroon is not narrated as a static or comic caricatured character but is in the dynamic process of becoming. Haroon's yoga session is the threshold that marks the end of fixed identity categories and the beginning of change from the old world of static identities to a new world of transforming and alternated identities as a result of the regenerative aspect of carnivalesque laughter. Like Levy, Kureishi employs carnivalesque laughter to offer alternative identities free from the codes of British society. While Levy's carnivalesque laughter at the end of her novel leads Faith to realise and embrace her fluctuating identity, Kureishi's carnivalesque atmosphere at the start of the narrative offers the possibility of alternative identities which further complicates Karim's British gaze that tries to form static migrant identities. Anwar, however, is unable to adapt and transgress his caricatured representation. Through Anwar's death, the narrative disrupts static migrant identities who reject spontaneity and conveys that it is impossible to exist with a lack of fluidity in multicultural Britain. Kureishi, thus, employs caricaturing as a strategy to amalgamate the comic and ethnic stereotype in order to underline the absurdity of representing ethnic clichés in present day Britain. Different from *Fruit of the Lemon* and *Mr Loverman, The Buddha of Suburbia* also portrays white characters as the target of laughter by caricaturing them through Karim's gaze. While Levy and Evaristo create "white" characters as only the laughing subjects, Kureishi transforms them into the object of laughter. Karim caricatures Helen's "white" father as the racist "Hairy Back", which exposes Karim's Indian gaze. In this regard, Karim participates in

the social and cultural practices of the British society by caricaturing the migrant "other"; however, he is also involved in the South Asian community since he laughs at and degrades the British "self". Constructing a comic "white" caricature along with Indian caricatures, Kureishi directs humour at both societies. Both the Indian community and the British community are mocked and caricatured by Karim's British and Indian perspective, which challenges the fixed notions of the British "self" and the migrant "other".

In the analysis of humour and Karim's transnational identity, I regard Karim's theatrical performances of comic ethnic characters as the second layer of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* as the tone and mode of humour takes on a different course and scope. While Karim's British "self" caricatures Indians from a humorous perspective in the first layer of humour, his acting roles as these caricatured characters further complicate the subject positions of the "self" and "other" in the second layer of humour. This demonstrates that Kureishi uses humour in the second layer as a tool to criticise stabilised Indian caricatures that are reflected in the first layer. Through Karim's acting roles which continuously shift the direction of humour, the ambivalence of his British "self" and Indian "otherness" is emphasised. His comic performance as Mowgli directs the laughter of the white gaze at Karim's "exotic" "otherness", which he tries to challenge by including a British accent in his role to reinforce his Britishness. His theatrical performances of Anwar and Tariq as caricatured migrants direct the laughter of the "white" audience at Karim's roles as the "other". Although Karim tries to construct migrant characters as the object of laughter to represent that his British identity is different from his comic performances, he unintentionally steals from his "authentic" self while acting as Tariq. Humour created by the caricature of Tariq becomes a tool to unsettle Karim's British identity which he tries to stabilise. Thus, it becomes uncertain whether laughter is directed at his comic performances or at his own identity. The blurred direction of laughter highlights Karim's ambivalent identity position. The fluctuating direction of humour in the second layer, becomes a tool to criticise Karim's British gaze which caricatures Indian characters in the first layer. In the second layer of humour, criticism overrides a humorous tone as the narrative criticises the comic caricatured ethnic identities through Karim's performances. The end

of the novel, thus, does not demonstrate a peaceful atmosphere in which Karim achieves to balance his British and Indian identities. The end implies an ongoing tension regarding his transnational identity in a multicultural yet a racist Britain due to the election of the Thatcher government. Although the bilateral direction of laughter renders his awareness of his shifting identity, he does not embrace his fluidity and reach a sense of belonging like Faith and Barry. Therefore, different from *Fruit of the Lemon* and *Mr Loverman*, Kureishi's novel does not propose a celebrating atmosphere. Unlike Levy and Evaristo, Kureishi portrays a pessimistic end that increases the satiric edge of his humour which underlines a politically corrupt Britain. As a result, I believe that the absence of benevolent humour in the end proposes that any resolution to Karim's identity problems is absurd in a society which involves a Thatcherite stance and a racist atmosphere.

Similar to *The Buddha of Suburbia*, my analysis of Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* suggests that the novel includes a two-layered humour which exposes Meena's fluctuating identity. The first layer of humour includes Meena's child perspective as the character and the second layer involves her adult view as the narrator. Like Kureishi's novel, the second layer of humour underlines the main character's ambivalence and criticises the ethnic stereotypes created in the first layer. In *Anita and Me*, humour in the first layer is mainly based on laughter which portrays fixed positions of the "self" and "other" through child Meena's gaze. The superior laughter of Anita and other "white" classmates reinforces Meena's Indian "otherness", the laughter of Meena's parents directed at their English neighbours constructs a British "other", and Meena's British gaze creates an Indian "other" as she represents Nanima as a comic but "exotic" Indian character. Also, Meena tries to construct a fixed British "self" by using comic jokes to laugh with her "white" friends. In terms of power relations, as Barry uses humour to construct a superior "self", Meena employs the power of jokes and laughter to avoid being the laughable "other". However, she fails to be the "joker" in the white British society as her jokes are only accepted as funny by her Indian parents, which disrupts the stable British identity she tries to form. Thus, Meena's child perspective forms the first layer of humour which displays fixed British and Indian subject positions. Portraying both Indian characters who ridicule the British and British characters who laugh at

Indians, Syal draws attention to the racial prejudice of the British society and the Indian community. Furthermore, while Kureishi renders the fluidity of his characters in the first layer by representing their rejection of their caricatured migrant identities, Syal portrays child Meena's fluidity by the comic incongruities in her imagination. Humour produced by the incongruities in child Meena's imaginations of India with English streets and her fantasy of Indian grandparents at an English fair exposes her involvement in transnational space.

The second layer of humour involves adult Meena's perspective which comments on child Meena's experiences in the British society as a person of Indian origin. Similar to Kureishi's novel, the second layer of humour questions the static "self" and "other" created in the first layer of humour. As Kureishi focuses on the deconstruction of ethnic caricatures in the second level of humour, Syal deconstructs ethnic stereotypes created in the first level of humour through Meena's adult gaze. Meena's adult perspective ridicules both the Indian community and the British society by emphasising comic incongruities. The comic incongruities created by the "Bike Shed", "Front Garden Dilemma", and the Indian cuisine complicate the direction of ridicule since it is uncertain whether humour is directed at the Indian culture or the English culture. Moreover, she represents the comic features of Indian aunties and simultaneously portrays the comic aspects of "white" woman characters in her neighbourhood. In this sense, adult Meena reverses the Indian stereotype and applies it to "white" characters. By reversing the course of humour and constructing comic white women through the narrator's perspective, Syal subverts the established comic image of the Indian auntie. Thus, like Kureishi, Syal also includes comic "white" characters which reinforce her criticism of the racial prejudice of both societies. Adult Meena's humour targets both communities, which positions her outside fixed national borders and inside a transnational space. Unlike the child protagonist's serious attitude towards the conflict between the Indian and British cultures, the adult narrator holds a playful tone which disrupts cultural and national borders. Like Faith, adult Meena holds a double-perspective since she has learnt to shift her identity position as she mocks both the Indian community and the British society. While Faith's shifting sense of self marks the celebration of her fluidity, adult Meena's shifting gaze displays a satirical

exploration of racial prejudice through the representation of incongruities between the two communities. By targeting both communities through Meena's shifting and playful perspective, Syal criticises racial prejudices and stereotypes formed by the British society and the Indian community.

Like the end of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, humour is absent in the end of *Anita and Me*. Although Meena becomes humour-conscious regarding her transnational identity in the process of her growth, her story does not end with a celebrating atmosphere but with a gloomy mood regarding racist views in Britain. As child Meena's family moves to another town due to the increasing racist attacks and as the adult narrator's voice implicitly points out ongoing racist prejudices in her life, it is recognised that Meena is unable to fully embrace her transnational identity. Unlike *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the second layer of humour in *Anita and Me* presents a slight hope as the narrator's shifting sense of humour represents that she has learnt to shift between her identities. By analysing the function of humour in the second layers of Kureishi's and Syal's novels, I can state that criticism overrides laughter and humour. This elucidates that Kureishi and Syal attempt to use humour as an instrument of satire to question the racist attitude of the British society and the prejudiced perspective of the South Asian community. While Kureishi uses the satiric edge of his humour to foreground a stronger pessimistic view on the position of shifting identities in a Thatcherite atmosphere, Syal attempts to unmask racist attitudes and prejudices of mainstream British culture by employing a sense of hope through adult Meena's flexible humorous gaze. Therefore, unlike *Fruit of the Lemon* and *Mr Loverman*, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *Anita and Me* start and end with a racially chaotic atmosphere which reveals Kureishi's and Syal's objections to propose a resolution in such a racist atmosphere. In other words, while Levy and Evaristo generate a productive and benevolent sense of humour to proffer the possibility of a sense of belonging in transnational spaces by considering mobility, Kureishi and Syal foreground the satiric tone of their humour to accentuate the political and racist atmosphere in Britain as an obstacle for fluid identities to reach a sense of belonging. Yet, by employing the positionality of humour as either a productive tool or a satirical tool, it can be

recognised that all authors agree that their transnational characters cannot be defined in "fixed" borders of nation-states and cultural communities.

In conclusion, in the beginning of the selected novels, humour functions to reinforce that all the main characters try to stabilise their "British" identity like Faith, Karim and Meena or their diasporic identity like Barry. When humour becomes multi-directional and multi-layered, the stable identities of the characters are questioned; thus, when the characters start to "laugh in turn", the ambivalent identities are underlined as both the "self" and "other" laugh. Rather than amusement, the positionality of humour offers a different perspective to the serious issues of belonging and identity problems. As Morreall asserts, when humour is integrated into tragic situations, rather than a "time out" from the real world, it offers a different perspective to serious issues (2009, 119). In this sense, the authors refocus the attention of the reader from the "centre" or "off-centre" on the existence of new spaces in-between the two by oscillating the course of humour between the "self" and "other". Portraying the characters' bitter experiences by employing humour, the novels draw attention to the enriching aspect of the tension between the "self" and "other". As Robin Cohen asserts, "there should be more recognition of *the positive virtues of retaining* a diasporic identity […] The tension between an ethnic, a national and a transnational identity is often a creative, enriching one" (7)(emphasis original). As a result, by employing fluctuating directions of laughter, they invite the reader to reconsider identity categories. Furthermore, I believe that each novel creates, clashes and amalgamates different "communities of laughter" in order to emphasise the shared norms, views, and cultures in the British society which consists of multiple "communities of laughter" due to its hegemonic past and multicultural present. "Communities of laughter" is a term coined by Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein, which reflects the idea that humour and laughter include shared norms and views; in other words, people that are positioned in the same cultural space belong to the same "community of laughter". As Reichl and Stein assert, a "community of laughter" is not based on place of birth or geographical location but on the cultural space shared by the members of the community (14). Thus, the subjective characteristic of humour establishes and strengthens the ties of people belonging to the same cultural space. In this sense, *Fruit of the Lemon* involves the laughter of Jamaicans, white

British characters, and black British people; *Mr Loverman* includes the laughter of normative Caribbean and non-normative Caribbean people, and a queer diasporic character; *The Buddha of Suburbia* narrates the laughter of Indian/Pakistanis and white British and Indian British characters; *Anita and Me* contains the laughter of Indians, white British and Indian British characters. Thus, each novel forms diverse communities of laughter within its narrative. The ambiguous direction of laughter between these "communities of laughter" emphasises the flow of ideas, norms, and identities which diminish the importance of national and cultural borders. As Steven Vertovec argues, transnational identities exist in an "arena of activity" where certain links have been formed regardless of national and international borders (47). The employment of a fluctuating humour between communities creates another dimension for the "arena of activity" of transnational identities. By this new dimension motivated by humour, these authors generate a need to look beyond nation-states and cultural borders to scrutinise cultural and national identities in contemporary multicultural Britain.

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APPENDIX

The White Man's Burden (1899-Rudyard Kipling)

Take up the White Man's burden –
Send forth the best ye breed –
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild –
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden –
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden –
The savage wars of peace –
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden –
No tawdry rule of Kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper –
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go, make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White Man's burden –
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard –
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light: –
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden –
Ye dare not stoop to less –
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden –
Have done with childish days –
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.

Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Menteşe, Dilek. “Altering Alterity: A Stylistic Analysis of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Bernardine Evaristo’s *Blonde Roots*”. Representing Alterity in Society in Crisis: The Construction and Representation of the Other in Society and in Texts. University of Genoa, 28-31 July 2014. Genoa, Italy.

Menteşe, Dilek. “Reversing the ‘Self’ and ‘other:’ Humour and Horror in Bernardine Evaristo’s *Blonde Roots*”. The Outlandish, Uncanny, and Bizarre in Literatures and Cultures. Opole University, 29-30 September 2014. Opole, Poland.

Menteşe, Dilek. “The Construction of a Stable Identity: Transnational characters in Roma Tearne’s *Bone China*”. Midwest Popular Culture Association and Midwest American Culture Association Annual Meeting: Race and Ethnicity. MPCA/ MACA, 3-5 October 2014. Indianapolis, USA.

Menteşe Dilek. “Humour and Transnational Identity in Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon*”. IV. BAKEA International Western Cultural and Literary Studies Symposium: Humour. Pamukkale University, 7-9 October 2015. Denizli, Turkey.

Menteşe, Dilek. “Judith Butler’s Gender “Performativity” in Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* and *Hedda Gabler*”. 10th International IDEA Conference: Studies in English. Boğaziçi University, 14-16 April 2016. İstanbul, Turkey.

Menteşe, Dilek. “Reaching a Sense of Belonging in Bernardine Evaristo’s *Lara*: A Journey into Past Traumas”. 16th Cultural Studies Symposium: Narratives of Trauma. Ege University, 10-12 May 2017. İzmir, Turkey.

Menteşe Kıryaman, Dilek. “Objectification of the “Self:” Torture in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*”. 12th International IDEA Conference: Studies in English. Akdeniz University, 18–20 April 2018. Antalya, Turkey.

Menteşe Kıryaman, Dilek. “Thinking beyond Borders: Refugee Narratives as Sites of Resistance in *Refugee Tales III*”. 15th International IDEA Conference: Studies in English. Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, 11-13 May 2022. Hatay, Turkey.

PROJECTS

Toxic in Literatures in English. Project Supervisor Önder Çetin. Researchers Funda Civelekoğlu, Dilek Menteşe Kıryaman and Erkin Kıryaman. Scientific Research Project (BAP). 2018-2019.

TRAINING

Summer School “Beyond Horizons: Transmitting and Writing New Identities of Minorities and Migrants in and Beyond Europe”. University of Groningen, 19-23 June 2017. Groningen, the Netherlands.

Winter School “OSL Seminar: Ravenstein Seminar 2021: Literature, Language and Belonging”. Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies, 20-22 January 2021. Online.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

2014 - 2019	324 Victorian Novel (Spring)
2015 - 2016	311 18th Century Life & Literature (Fall)
2016 - 2018	143 Academic Thinking and Writing (Fall)
2017 - 2018	146 Research & Writing Process (Spring)

ACADEMIC INTERESTS

Victorian Literature, Postcolonial and Migrant Literature, Multiculturalism, Contemporary British Literature, Identity Studies, Humour Studies.