

PEOPLE OF COLOUR, TREATED AS OTHER: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SYSTEMIC RACISM PORTRAYED IN HANIF KUREISHI'S "WE ARE NOT JEWS"

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Abstract

The study analyzes the distinguished short story *We are not Jews* written by Hanif Kureishi, by using the lens of Critical Race theory, examining the critique of systemic racism shown in the story. The short story critiques the internalized racism that is not only present on individual level but is deeply rooted on societal level. The portrayal of racism in the narrative is systemic and pervasive where even children are clear on the level of disrespect they can freely show to people who are Black, Brown, or Asians and the list goes on. By employing Critical Race Theory, this article explains that the unjustified behaviour faced by the family in the story is a case of racial harassment which needs to be addressed but the concept of racism is so ingrained in the entire society that this discrimination on the basis of colour, gender and identity becomes a normal part of everyday life. The study has used the concept of "ordinary racism" given by Delgado and Stefancic to scrutinize the deep-rooted racism in British society as depicted in the story. By conducting research on racism portrayed in short story *We are not Jews*, this research contributes to the contemporary discussions about racism in societies, urging that the negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviors are needed to be taken seriously on the government as well as individual level because only than humans can expect to live in harmony and peace without the constraints of hierarchy.

INTRODUCTION

Hanif Kureishi is a British-Pakistani writer, playwright and novelist, widely recognized for his Oscar-nominated semi-autobiographical novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), which also won Whitbread First Novel Award. Being a hybrid child of British mother Audrey Buss and Pakistani father Rafiushan Kureishi, Kureishi's works often explore the complexities of immigrant's lives who face the harsh realities of identity crisis, racism, cultural alienation and loss of belonging in multicultural places like London and Britain. Kureishi's writings mostly revolve around the

themes of multicultural identities, racism, relationships, postcolonial tensions, psychological contradictions and societal expectations. His short stories collection *Love in a Blue Time* (1997) includes a distinguished and multilayered story named *We are not Jews* which deeply portrays the racist practices common in Britain and how society does not stand against it. Author Bart Moore Gilbert, in his book appreciates the writing approach of Hanif Kureishi stating that "Kureishi belongs to a tradition of inquiry into the 'state of the nation' and the meanings of

'Englishness' which reaches back well into the nineteenth century. The short story collection *Love in a Blue Time* (1997) typifies Kureishi's consistent perception that even the most trivial details of everyday British life indicate how imbricated in this imperial past the nation nonetheless remains." (Gilbert, 2024) Researcher Ruvani Ranasinha, in her article states about Hanif Kureishi that: "In chronicling Britain's shifting racialised boundaries during the late seventies and eighties, Kureishi disrupts simple, monolithic notions of identity. His works show how constructs of generation, class, sexuality and gender impinge on the contested issue of what it means to be of Asian origin in Britain." (Ranasinha, 2001)

We are not Jews is a compelling short story which holds immense significance for highlighting the societal hierarchies and internalized racism of society, particularly postcolonial Britain. The story is set in Britain likely around the 1960s when World-War 2 just ended, illustrating the transformational period when people from former colonies including Caribbean and Asian majority were migrating into Britain with a large population. This changed situation also aggravated the racism in society because White British people didn't accept immigrants with welcoming gestures. Instead, they showed them very clearly that this land didn't belong to foreigners, especially the prejudice that was seen against Asian people who have strongly different appearance and lifestyles than the British majority. Thus, the immigrants struggle their whole life to get accustomed to racism that they encounter on a daily basis. Rima Saini, in her research, explores the negotiations of social identity across British-born Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani professionals who experience racial /ethno-religious marginality while living in Britain and other White majority countries. She also shares remarks from a Britain-born Bangladeshi girl who still feels a feeling of alienation in the country where she lived her whole life just because she has brown skin colour. She states that: "At the end of the day your brown skin gives it away according to them, so, you know, I think, I mean, do I still feel this need to say I'm Bangladeshi but I was born here". (Saini, 2022) The short story *We are not Jews* skillfully highlights the struggles of minorities while living in a society where

difference is seen as a threat and people are judged on the basis of their skin colour and ethnic background. Azhar, who is a young boy with hybrid identity gets bullied by his classmates and even their parents because he is a son of a Pakistani immigrant. He suffers from psychological tensions and internal conflicts at such a young age because the society he lives in does not respect his identity. His mother Yvonne who is a British woman also becomes a victim of this bullying system merely because she married an Asian man. This narrative clearly portrays the anti-immigrant approach of British White society and its people who think anyone who is different from them is inferior and must be ridiculed. The story focuses on the racist behaviour of most British people towards people of colour by showing the Big Billy and little Billy calling little boy Azhar as Darkie in order to mock him. The people of colour whether they are Asians or Africans are seen as "Others" and they experience social exclusion and isolation both physically and psychologically which is an alarming situation. Kim in his book "Asian Americans in an anti-Black world" argues that: "Where do Asian Americans fit into the U.S. racial order? Are they subordinated comparably to Black people or permitted adjacency to whiteness? How, then, do we theorize Asian American existence in an anti-Black world? How do we think about Asian American life and death, thriving and suffering, enjoyment and loss in the "afterlife" of slavery? How do we understand anti-Asian racism in relation to structural anti-Blackness?" (Kim, 2023) This research focuses on the critique of anti-Darkie and anti-immigrant approach prevalent in British majority societies by exploring the short story *We are not Jews* through the lens of Critical Race theory.

1.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research paper are:

1. To demonstrate the everyday life racism faced by marginalized groups in British society
2. To analyze the role of authorities and parents in the expansion of systemic deep-rooted racism
3. To explore the impact of racism on its victims through the character of Azhar and his mother

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does racism become a systemic approach beyond individual level as portrayed in the story "We Are Not Jews"?
2. What are the forces behind the proliferation of racist practices in so-called civilized societies?
3. How does racism affect the marginalized groups of society psychologically and socially?

1.3 Research Significance

This research addresses the root cause of racism in society, making it an important part of debates on racism. By analyzing systemic oppression of marginalized communities in Hanif Kureishi's *We Are Not Jews*, the research emphasizes that racism is a practice which humans have known for centuries but this discourse never gets old because of the unfortunate reason that people are still facing discrimination and oppression on the basis of their ethnicity, background, culture, colour and identity. The criticism of racism will remain significant until the day it actually vanishes from society. This study approaches racism not as an individual prejudice but as a structured oppression, emphasizing the constructive and collective responsibility of humans to erase these racial hierarchies prevalent in society.

1.4 Delimitation

This article solely explores the short story *We are not Jews* written by esteemed writer Hanif Kureishi, focusing only on the anti-racist perspective of the story. More precisely, only one main concept from Critical Race theory has been used, which is the concept of "ordinary racism" given by Delgado and Stefancic.

2. Literature Review

Delgado & Stefancic (2000) in their book *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* share significant and basic concepts of Critical Race theory, explaining that in American and British society, racism is not a specific event because it's very normal. People who are black or people from other ethnic backgrounds are treated with disrespectful attitude and no one seems to bother about it because it's a part of everyday life. Racism is so deeply ingrained in society that it can be considered an integral part of it. The formal laws of giving equal

opportunities to Black and White may apply in some extreme cases but it can't do anything about the discrimination that people of colour face living in White dominant society on a daily basis. So, the problem starts from a very basic level and common White people of society consider themselves as superior than people of colour, making the Brown and Black people feel alienated and miserable.

Taylor (1998) in his published research *A primer on critical race theory: Who are the critical race theorists and what are they saying?* explains the beginning and evolution of Critical Race theory. Taylor explains that CRT began in the 1970s as an academic and legal movement to discuss the sufferings of people who face discrimination due to the colour of their skin, their religion and their ethnic background. Until 1970, the typical efforts to gain civil rights were not working effectively and at that time scholars including Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw decided to develop Critical Race theory to display the corrupted law system which mostly supported domination of White people. They scrutinized how the very laws of society which should protect the citizens become the primal cause of Black and Brown people's misery. The law system is designed in such a way that it continues to abuse people of colour while reinforcing white supremacy. With the passage of time, CRT has become an integral part of academics and educational degrees like sociology, literature, humanities, social sciences and gender studies, challenging the belief that narratives revolve around White people. CRT focuses on the real life experiences of people of color to comprehend and grasp the sufferings and miseries of them that they endure while living in White society. Simpson (2025) in his recently published book *White Lies: Racism, Education and Critical Race Theory* examines the significant and transforming role of Critical Race theory in exposing the white lies of authorities in countries like the US and UK. He explains that both the educational institutions and the political powers are promoting a structured and systematic racism in society, distorting the real motive of CRT. Simpson scrutinizes that anti-CRT campaigns are nothing but white lies and false claims which are trying to suppress the serious discussions on racism and White supremacy. In the book, the white lies have been answered by using a balanced approach with clear and bold language, using verified sources

like media narratives and policy manuscripts. The first part of the book discusses the aims and objectives of Critical Race theory while the second part challenges the white lies propagated by anti-CRT sources. Although the focus of the book is complicated having multiple layers, the wide range of reliable information and use of hopeful and concise language make it easy for readers to comprehend this book.

Adebayo et.al (2024) in the research entitled *African American women's maternal healthcare experiences: a critical race theory perspective* scrutinizes the sufferings of pregnant Black women living in the United States of America. The researchers interviewed 31 African American women of Milwaukee and came to know that Black women face discrimination even in the healthcare domain. The research reveals that in the USA, Black women are three to four times more likely to die during pregnancy complications which is an alarming situation. When the pregnant Black women were interviewed, they disclosed that they go through severe mental and psychological problems because the racism is so deeply-rooted in society that Black women get limited and low-quality health facilities than White women. This study is quite significant as it highlights the double standards of highly-reputed healthcare systems of developed countries who pretend to be the best but in reality, they show discrimination and insensitive behaviour on the basis of socio-economic status and skin colour of patients, encouraging the racial disparities in society.

Marmot et.al (2024) in their study *Structural racism and the social determinants of health* explains the racism in the UK, especially in London where racism is so deeply ingrained that it affects the health situation of minority ethnic groups. Providing evidence from reliable reports, the researchers argue that racism has a negative impact on ethnic minority people's lives in nearly every realm of society including educational, healthcare, mental care and employment domains. Racism affects the health system of minorities in three different ways according to this study. The first direct source of minority's sufferings includes the endurance of unjust and poor racist behaviour coming from White natives on a daily basis, second cause is the unequal opportunities to healthcare and social facilities of life and the third factor is the biased behaviour that is shown to people within the healthcare system. The research emphasizes that these

inequalities and unjust behaviors are not prevalent because they are some inherent traits of people but the reason for extreme racism in societies come from systemic unequal approaches. The study advocates for reforms in order to engage the communities in a just and anti-racist manner, giving equal respect and opportunities to all people regardless of their colour, ethnicity and identity.

Akram (2024) in his work *Dear British politics—where is the race and racism?* employs the racial reflexivity theoretical framework based on the concepts given by Emirbayer and Desmond to criticize the content of discipline named British Politics. (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015) Akram argues that the discipline of British Politics has been neglecting the topic of racism for so long, although it should be a part of this subject. This exclusion of such a significant societal movement highlights the priorities of the British political system which propagates the narrative of racism instead of controlling it. This study also challenges the post-racial Sewell Report given by the UK's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which claims falsely that the UK has become an open society and there is no need to discuss the racial issues. (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021) This article proposes an innovative framework which revolves around CRT and exposes the racial legacy of Britain.

Naz et.al (2025) in article *Hanif Kureishi's "We are Not Jews" in the Perspective of Post Colonialism: Hybridity, Othering and Unhomeliness* explores the short story by applying postcolonial theory, particularly the concepts of Othering, hybridity and Unhomeliness given by Homi K.Bhabha. (Bhabha, 1994) The study examines that even after decolonization and freedom of colonized people, the colonial hegemony of us versus them persists. Characters of Azhar and his father represent the real life experiences of those people who suffer from identity crisis, alienation, social exclusion and discrimination while living in British White societies. While living in third spaces, the characters go through displacement, racism and marginalization. The life experience of Azhar portrays the difficulties of people having hybrid identities who battle with societal behaviors and inner turmoils at the same time. The suppression and subordination of immigrants while living in Britain reflects the relevance of Bhabha's theory in contemporary times.

Ahmed & Mahmood (2024) in their article *Locating Postcolonial Literary Aesthetic in Transcultural Contact Zone: A Politico-aesthetic Analysis of Hanif Kureishi's Selected Short Stories* analyze the two short stories written by Hanif Kureishi which includes *My Son the Fanatic* and *We Are Not Jews*. By employing the concept of "postcolonial aesthetics" given by Bill Ashcroft as a theoretical framework, this study scrutinizes that postcolonial literature has the capability of creating a contact zone where identities and cultures merge with aesthetics. This space of hybridity also transforms the way reader and writer engage with the stylistic approach of a postcolonial text. In both short stories, the protagonists struggle both externally and mentally which highlights the process of cultural transformation and its dynamic approach. Ashcroft also argues in his work that postcolonial fictions are the spaces where geopolitical and aesthetic issues converge. This article explores Ashcroft's concept by analyzing Hanif Kureishi's short stories. (Ashcroft, 2015)

Hohnjec (2024) in his thesis *Portrayals of Identity in the Works of Hanif Kureishi* explores five selected works of Hanif Kureishi including three novels: *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *The Black Album*, *Intimacy* and two short stories: *Love in a Blue Time* and *Midnight All Day*. The focus of the research is to explore the depiction of identity in literary fictions of Hanif Kureishi written in the 1990s. Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid Modernity which challenges the idea of fixed and stable identities, has been used in the research to explore the themes of class, religion and ethnicity. Bauman argues that identities are always evolving and changing as he stated in his work that: "The world is a tourist's paradise, and the tourist is a pilgrim without a shrine, a wanderer without a destination, a flâneur without a route". (Bauman, 2000) The study illustrates that Kureishi's works beautifully portrays the complex lives of hybrid people living in multicultural Britain society.

2.1 Research Gap

Although Hanif Kureishi's short story *We Are Not Jews* has been explored through the lens of postcolonialism, trauma and even hybridity but there remains a significant gap in the deep exploration of this story through anti-racist approach which is one of the main focus of Hanif Kureishi in this rhetoric. This

article aims to fill this gap by analyzing Hanif Kureishi's *We Are Not Jews* by employing Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework which scrutinizes the systemic racism described in the story.

3.1 Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach to analyze the crucial anti-racist message given by Hanif Kureishi in his short story *We are not Jews*. A close reading method has been used, carefully focusing on dialogues, characters and important moments reflecting the theme of systemic as well as individualistic racism. All the characters, scenes and conversations pointing to the racism experiences have been studied and examined closely. Theories related to Critical Race Theory have been studied mainly the concept of "ordinary racism" given by Delgado and Stefancic. Moreover, various research articles from google scholar and other online platforms have been studied to give a comprehensive and reliable overview of systemic racism prevailing in Britain.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This qualitative research employs the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory CRT, particularly focusing on the concept given by prominent anti-racist scholars. The main focused concept of this research is "ordinary racism," proposed by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic which was introduced in their co-authored book *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. CRT is an academic and legal anti-racist movement that developed in the United States during the 1970s in the post-civil war-era. While exploring the interconnections between race, power, media, law, ethnicity and society, Critical Race theory argues that the institutionalized and socially constructed racism enhances the interests of White people while people of color remain at the marginal part of society. Main thinkers of CRT including Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Cheryl Harris, Charles R. Lawrence III, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia J. Williams who advocate for a legal system that is colour blind so that people of colour whether they are Brown or Black can enjoy equal opportunities in life. Kimberlé Crenshaw, who is a female law professor and co-editor of book *Critical Race Theory* (The New Press) believes that "women of color need not await the ultimate triumph over racism

before they can expect to live violence-free lives.” She also asks the authorities to act against racism rather than strengthening it. She explains:

“The federal government was one of the most powerful actors in creating segregation in the United States. Those patterns of segregation that were created in the 30s and 40s not only unfairly excluded African-Americans and other people of color from the huge advantages that were created by the federal housing creation of housing stock. It extends those inequalities to this day.” (Crenshaw, 2021)

To understand the daily-basis racist practices that Hanif Kureishi shows in the story *We Are Not Jews*, this article uses the concept of “Ordinary Racism” given by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. They argue that for people of colour, racism is never a specific, rare, or shocking phenomenon because they are so used to it that they don’t even think at most times that they shouldn’t be treated this way. The scholars, intellectuals and educators related to CRT are attempting to transform the dominant narrative that racism is an individualistic approach and they emphasize that it is systemic, urging the entire social, legal and political systems to take a strong stand against this negative racist approach which sees Whiteness as a matter of supremacy. The common suffering that coloured people encounter and experience in everyday life turns racism into an ordinary thing which is inevitable and non-resistant. Delgado & Stefancic in their book *Critical Race theory: An Introduction* talks about little acts of racism that disturb the daily life of people of color. They state that:

“Race seems to play a part. When it does, social scientists call the event a “microaggression,” by which they mean one of those many sudden, stunning, or dispiriting transactions that mark the days of women and folks of color. Like water dripping on sandstone, they can be thought of as small acts of racism, consciously or unconsciously perpetrated, welling up from the assumptions about racial matters most of us absorb from the cultural heritage in which we come of age in the United States. These assumptions, in turn, continue to inform our public civic institutions—government, schools, churches—and our private, personal, and corporate lives.” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)

While discussing the basic and foundational tenets of CRT, they explain that: “racism is ordinary, not aberrational—“normal science,” the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country”. The other main concept they explain is that “system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material”. This theory considers racism as a systemic and socio-political construction rather than seeing it a result of inherent racial human prejudices. They explain the discrimination that Black and Brown people face in British societies, describing that: “By every social indicator, racism continues to blight the lives of people of color, including holders of high-echelon jobs, even judges. Studies show that blacks and Latinos who seek loans, apartments, or jobs are much more apt than similarly qualified whites to be rejected, often for vague or spurious reasons. The prison population is largely black and brown; chief executive officers, surgeons, and university presidents are almost all white. Poverty, however, has a black or brown face.....People of color lead shorter lives, receive worse medical care, complete fewer years of school, and occupy more menial jobs than do whites.”(Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)

By employing the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory and concept of Ordinary Racism given by Delgado & Stefancic, this research aims to uncover the significant anti-racist message conveyed by Hanif Kureishi in his short story *We are not Jews*.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The short story under discussion *We are not Jews* is from the short stories collection *Love in a Blue Time* (1997), written by British-Pakistan novelist who emerged as a strong literary voice from postcolonial Britain, a voice which stands out due to its vivid realistic narratives and deep exploration of human psychological conflicts. Kureishi reflects the brutal harsh reality of systemic racism in society by portraying a single incident of bullying of immigrants, making him a unique literary writer of this era. The narrative does not only highlight the racist people of society who bullies people on the basis of their colour, ethnicity and origin, but this story holds the silent complicity of the entire society responsible for the institutionalized and pervasive racism.

4.1 Examining Azhar's encounter with "Ordinary Racism"

The story starts with the appearance of young school boy Azhar and his mother Yvonne, who get on a bus in order to escape from Big Billy and Little Billy. They are both father and son representing a working class British family, having racist attitudes ingrained in them. They believe that they have the right to harass, bully and abuse a person who appears dark or brown as they are different and supposedly inferior. The hurriedness and fear that Kureishi has shown in Azhar and his mother's actions tells a deep story and the inner emotional feelings of people who feel marginalized living in a society. Yvonne takes his son and instead of confronting the opposite bullying party, starts avoiding them and running from them which reflects that the ordinary acts of racism affect the physical, psychological, emotional and social health of victims. Although they pretend to appear disregarded and unconcerned, these daily racist attitudes hurt them deeply as shown in the fear of characters Azhar and Yvonne. At such a young age, Azhar lives his life in fear of being bullied because his father is an Asian Pakistani immigrant. The language of the story clearly depicts that Azhar does not want to encounter Big Billy and Little Billy.

"As the bus pulled away Azhar spotted Big Billy and his son Little Billy racing alongside, yelling and waving at the driver. Azhar closed his eyes and hoped it was moving too rapidly for them to get on." (Kureishi, 1997)

The story narrates that Azhar suffers from a bully system in his school where little Billy and his other school mates insult, ridicule and mock him, making him feel inferior as he does not have white skin and his father is not a White British man. This encounter of young Azhar with bullying and racism in his school on a daily basis exposes the science of ordinary racism. School is a place where Azhar can't hold his mother's hand to hide from prejudices and abusive taunts and he can't even avoid going to school. This shows very strongly that marginalized ethnic minorities in White-dominated societies can't escape from racist behaviors because they follow them everywhere. Kids with hybrid identities or kids having immigrant parents keep facing and enduring this systemic and socially constructed racism throughout their life. Azhar was born in Britain and speaks fluent English just like

native people and he may be academically even better than others, but at the end of the day, his skin colour shows what his real identity is and he becomes vulnerable, an easy target for racists.

"Big Billy said: 'Look, he's a big boy.'

'Big Boy,' echoed Little Billy.

'So grown up he has to run to the teacher,' said Big Billy.

'Cry baby!' trumpeted Little Billy." (Kureishi, 1997)

Azhar endured this domineering behavior, bullying and aggressiveness shown to him in school as long as he could with silence but her mother noted it as he started to come home with a long dull face, devoid of spirit and energy. The story narrates: "Mother had begun to notice not only Azhar's dejection but also his exhausted and dishevelled appearance on his return from school. He looked as if he'd been flung into a hedge and rolled in a muddy puddle – which he had. Unburdening with difficulty, he confessed the abuse the boys gave him, Little Billy in particular." (Kureishi, 1997) Mother took a stand for him and talked with the head of school who just took the matter lightly, resulting in the shameless and bold open bullying of both mother and boy in a public bus. As the story says; "But the next day Little Billy came back with the renewed might of names new to Azhar: sambo, wog, little coon." This throws light on the prevalence of racism by the authoritative and powerful institutes who advocate for the supremacy of White British people. This is the point which the Critical Race theory emphasizes on, that racism is a socially constructed phenomenon, built in order to give benefits to small groups of White people. Even Azhar, being an innocent young school boy cannot escape from the harsh reality of racism which follows him everywhere living in Britain.

"Azhar had had Little Billy sitting right behind him in class. For weeks he called him names and clipped him round the head with his ruler. Now some of the other boys, mates of Little Billy, had also started to pick on Azhar." (Kureishi, 1997)

Big Billy and his son Little Billy start bullying Azhar's mother too and Azhar being a sensitive child feels heartbroken while seeing her mother weak and a victim of racism. Kureishi portrays it beautifully, writing that: "Mother turned back. Azhar had never seen her like this, ashen, with wet eyes, her body stiff as a tree. Azhar sensed she was making an effort to keep still. When she

wept at home she threw herself on the bed, shook convulsively and thumped the pillow. Now all that moved was a bulb of snot shivering on the end of her nose..... How he wished he'd said nothing and protected her". (Kureishi, 1997) Azhar being a hybrid identity feels alienation and loss of belonging living in society as well as his own house because his father's family has a different way of life, different culture and most importantly an alien language. As Kureishi narrates; "They were talking loudly in Urdu or Punjabi, using some English words but gesticulating and slapping one another in a way English people never did. Azhar was accustomed to being with his family while grasping only fragments of what they said. He endeavoured to make out the gist of it, laughing, as he always did, when the men laughed, and silently moving his lips without knowing what the words meant, whirling, all the while, in incomprehension." Hence, through the character of Azhar, Kureishi splendidly portrays the real life situation of racism encountered by people who have different ethnicity and skin colour, regardless of their age.

4.2 Scrutinizing the dominance of anti-immigrant and anti-Darkie approach in Britain as shown in *We Are Not Jews*

In short story *We Are Not Jews*, two dominant approaches and mindsets of British people has been displayed; one is anti-immigrant approach and the other is anti-Darkie hegemonic narrative. Immigrants in Britain are mostly Asians coming from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who face discriminatory attitudes of people and hear racist remarks as a daily routine. People love to mock them because of the food they eat, the getup they carry, the living style they follow and the brown skin colour they have. Hanif Kureishi has beautifully conveyed all these prejudices against immigrants through the characters of Little Billy and Big Billy and their racist remarks. They ridicule the small apartment of Azhar and the joint family system of his father's family, who all live together. The story narrates:

"Big Billy smirked. 'Thing is,' he said, holding his nose. 'There's a smell on this bus.' 'Pooh!' 'How many of them are there living in that flat, all squashed together like, and stinkin' the road out, eatin' curry and rice!' There was no doubt that their flat was crowded: grandpop, a retired doctor, slept in one

bedroom, Azhar, his sister and parents in another, and two uncles in the living room." (Kureishi, 1997) The specific mention of curry and rice here shows that even the eating habits and preferences of immigrants become a matter of their humiliation because racists see bad in everything and anything that ethnic minorities do. As Delgado & Stefancic says in their work *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* that this micro-aggression starts from very basic things and then goes to the macro-problems. Azhar's mother is a British woman but she also has to face racism merely because the man she marries is not some White British person, but a Pakistani immigrant. An Asian man who has moustache, who dresses differently, who doesn't have fair White skin and who can't speak fluent English, making him a perfect and easy target for racists, harassers and persecutors who judge people on the basis of their preoccupied knowledge about immigrants and people of colour. Big Billy shows his biasedness against people with dark skin, saying that: "Big Billy was saying across the bus, 'Common eh? Why don't you say it out loud to me, eh? Won't you say it, eh?' 'Nah,' said Little Billy. 'Won't!' 'But we ain't as common as a slut who marries a darkie.' 'Darkie, darkie,' Little Billy repeated. 'Monkey, monkey!' Mother's look didn't deviate. But, perhaps anxious that her shaking would upset him, she pulled her hand from his and pointed at a shop." (Kureishi, 1997)

Azhar's mother married an Asian man out of love but her society keeps reminding her that she was not supposed to marry a man who belongs to a different ethnicity which they believe to be inferior. She herself restrains her son to call his father an immigrant as it becomes a matter of shame and disgrace in Britain. Kureishi narrates in the story: "But mother always denied that they were 'like that'. She refused to allow the word 'immigrant' to be used about father, since it applied to illiterate tiny men with downcast eyes and mismatched clothes." (Kureishi, 1997) She becomes alienated living in her own homeland due to her close acquaintance with an immigrant which does not fit societal expectations and superficial standards. Azhar's father, being an immigrant himself, also faces discrimination and rejection living in postcolonial Britain. He writes articles and stories one after another with a lot of handwork but all he ever receives is blunt rejection from editors. Kureishi writes the

disappointment and frustration of him, using these lines;

"These pieces were regularly returned in the self-addressed stamped envelope that the Writers and Artists Yearbook advised. Lately, when they plopped through the letterbox, Father didn't open them, but tore them up, stamped on the pieces and swore in Urdu, cursing the English who, he was convinced, were barring him. Or were they?" (Kureishi, 1997)

Alongside racism against Asian immigrants having Brown skin colour, racism against Black people has also been highlighted in this thought-provoking short story. Kureishi explains the cruel apartheid of South African Black people who face extreme rude, racist, discriminatory and biased behaviour of White people on a daily basis which CRT scholars call ordinary racism. Azhar's mother explains to Azhar while travelling on the bus that Black people cannot go to White majority places and countries as migrants because White people don't like them and they deal with them harshly. The brutal reality of separate spaces and entrances for Black and White people has also been displayed in the story, explaining that coloured people always suffer both physically and mentally at the hands of White people just like Big Billy in his arrogance and superiority complex calls Azhar's father a "Darkie". According to them, being White and fair skinned make them somehow superior to other people, which is according to CRT not an individualistic or inherent human quality, but the result of falsely propagated racial narratives. Azhar's mother explains to him why Black people don't prefer traveling and settling in countries like Capetown, saying that:

"Azhar didn't know what she meant. In his confusion he recalled a recent conversation about South Africa, where his best friend's family had just emigrated. Azhar had asked why, if they were to go somewhere – and there had been such talk – they too couldn't choose Cape Town. She replied painfully that there the people with white skins were cruel to the black and brown people, who were considered inferior and were forbidden to go where the whites went. The coloureds had separate entrances and were prohibited from sitting with the whites". (Kureishi, 1997)

Thus, Hanif Kureishi masterfully critiques the anti-immigrant and anti-Black approach of Britain, explaining the difficulties and challenges encountered

by Asian and African people while living among people having white skin. This apparently ordinary racism is not harmless and non-alarming, but a slow torture and poison that racists inject into people of colour, making them feel alienated, ashamed, fearful and estranged. These racial practices need to be handled on societal as well as individual level because only an anti-racist society can nurture and raise healthy, happy children.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Hanif Kureishi's "We Are Not Jews" adeptly and competently exemplifies the problems faced by people of colour and immigrants. By employing the Critical Race Theory framework and concept of Ordinary racism, this study reveals that racism is not an individualistic problem restrained only to people's choices. It is a systemic, structured and institutional strategy of power structures in order to establish and maintain the racial and social hierarchies in the world. If concerned institutions, law making authorities and government organizations take responsibility for racism seriously, they can make it become minimal in a short period of time. Racism is spreading and strengthening because the decision-makers and ruling powers are trying to bolster racial stratification and supremacist ideology.

Recommendations

This research can be explored further by applying a postcolonial perspective on the same literary work. The idea of Orientalism given by Edward Said can be applied to this story too. Other short stories of Hanif Kureishi can be studied using the Critical Race theory approach. By implementing various other theoretical frameworks, ideas and concepts, this research can be widely studied and researched.

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