

# Contesting Spaces in Hanif Kureishi's *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's triad of conceptualized spaces and David Harvey's analysis of modernity, this paper delves into the spatial contestations of modern subjects represented by characters in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, Hanif Kureishi's screenplay and a film of the same name. Harvey insightfully centralizes the experiences of modernity that tend to orient the ephemeral while securing the immutable at the same time. Juxtaposing this insight with Lefebvre's dissection of the space into spatial practices, the representations of space, and representational spaces, I find each is saturated by the double edge of modernity. Based upon this, this essay anatomizes how individuals in this screenplay, whether as oppressive governors, the economic-political powerless or the defiant middle class, contest spaces to ensure a demarcated identity against all the mutability and uncertainty in the post/modern condition. This essay also renders the dichotomization of the officials and citizens as the spatial oppressors and oppressed dubious. Lumping together two nationalistic regimes, the unjustifiable violence of the oppressed rioters, and the exclusive desire of the leftist bourgeois together in terms of their usage of space, this study argues that governmental figures can be the oppressed in the private spaces, and the oppressed or excluded, such as rioters and radical bourgeoisie in this case, turn to be oppressors contesting spaces for their personal benefits. In this sense, a utopian solution for space usage has to negotiate the shifting and fixing dimension of modernity, as Kureishi has incarnated it by his nomadic subculturalists.

**KEY WORDS**

space, Henri Lefebvre, triad, modernity, nationalism, oppression, David Harvey, Hanif Kureishi, subculture



Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's triad of conceptualized spaces and David Harvey's analysis of modernity, this paper delves into the spatial contestations of modern subjects represented by the characters in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, Hanif Kureishi's screenplay and the film based on it. Harvey focuses on our experiences of modernity that tend to orient us within the ephemeral while securing a sense of the immutable at the same time. Juxtaposing this approach with that of Lefebvre, who dissects space into spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces, I find both are saturated by the double-edge of modernity. Drawing upon this theoretical context, this essay analyzes the ways in which individuals in Kureishi's screenplay, be they oppressive governors, the economic-political powerless or the defiant middle class, contest spaces in order to ensure a specific identity within the encompassing (post)modern mutability and uncertainty. It also analyzes the roles of officials and citizens as those of spatial oppressors and the dubious oppressed. Lumping together the oppressed rioters, driven by an unjustifiable violence, and the leftist bourgeois with their exclusive desire, in terms of their usage of space, this essay argues that governmental figures can also be oppressed within their private spaces, and the oppressed or excluded—rioters and the radical bourgeoisie in this case—can also be oppressors who contest spaces for their personal benefit. Thus a utopian solution to the problem of using space must negotiate between the shifting and fixed dimensions of modernity, as Kureishi shows *via* his nomadic subculturalists.

Modernity, a state or condition brought to the fore in contrast to Antiquity and the Middle Ages, is a continuing process in which the

closely-interrelated forces of industrialization, capitalism, enlightenment, and colonialism all take part. The beliefs fundamental to modernity are tied, though not limited, to disenchantment, rationalization, and linear progression. Thus modernity is tightly bound up with the enlightenment project, which commends “human creativity, scientific discovery, and the pursuit of individual excellence in the name of human progress” (Harvey 13). A maelstrom of change is thus created with a proliferation of knowledge, technologies, commodities, and representations, in all their ramifications, embroiling those hoping for stable advancement in a sense of fleetness, transitoriness and fragmentation. The lyric poet in the era of high capitalism, Charles Baudelaire, made a paradoxical observation: “By modernity, I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable” (12).

The paradox of modernity, its double-edgedness, gives rise to a contestation for spaces within and beyond the span of Western nations, beyond the “modern” West. In more recent postcolonial and cultural studies (in the wake of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*), it is not so clear that the progressive and “advanced” image of Western modernity can forge itself without creating the colonized Other. For colonialism went hand in hand with modernity in its zenith, providing capitalism with its indispensable territory of production and consumption for accumulating an unfailing supply of funds and experimental materials in this modern laboratory. Space was a very central part of this progressive scheme, whether it functioned as a site of production or consumption. It was also subjected to the changeability and transience bred by capital, technologies and the colonizers/colonized flowing all over the globe. To keep the fruits of modernity, modern space must then be secured for sustained usage, while still retaining its openness for the maximization of capital.

Yet since the mid-twentieth century it has been clear that “modern” forms of spatial contestation are no longer adequate. New technologies of transportation and communication, flexible accumulation as a new mode of production, and an omnipresent aestheticized consumerism have given rise to “postmodernity.” The

temporality represented by the progressive project of modernity has been annihilated, and replaced by the co-presence of heterogeneous materials, discourses, images and all the other representations. To put it briefly in David Harvey's term, the modern spaces of capitalism had been transformed by "the time-space compression" of postmodernity. As the leading sign of postcoloniality, the co-existence of different ethnic groups in a certain locale is also one of those postmodern conditions associated with space. Composing an important branch of postmodern theories, postcolonialism and postcoloniality come up with resistant nature against the colonial color of modernity. They symbolize how the Eurocentric modern project is challenged and rewritten, in as much as the outsiders are inside, and the ethnic Other, like Sammy in this screenplay, is no longer a synonym of the inferior in the contestation of spaces.

The urban context in the globalized era has become one of nodal points and stages, where various trans-world flows (be they material or non-physical) intersect and transient encounters occur. "World cities," the representatives of postmodern urban space, "are now read as displaying the features of Late Capitalism's accumulative ways; such as spectacular sites of consumption, architectural pastiche, gentrified neighborhoods and manufacturing sites reinvented as tourist destinations" (Jacobs 31). Diachronically and synchronically accumulated, postmodern urban space has witnessed a "'palimpsest' of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral" (Harvey 66). This is partly a result of the designers' recognition, more of an urban reality, in which the metropolis is impossible to be included within a general plan.<sup>2</sup> Thus speaking, the cities nowadays meet every postmodern fabric of heterogeneity. Mantled by consumerism, multiculturalism, and aesthetic pastiche, however, spatial unevenness keeps generating and relocating the weak. This is especially manifest in the urban racializations, "a taboo vestige of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation," argue Keith and Cross, despite all the announced celebration of the ethnic richness in the exoticized postmodern city (8).

Those modern and colonial forms of oppression do not turn the

ethnic groups into voiceless others awaiting Orientalist interpretations; neither are they purely resistant and challenging “others” fulfilling the imaginations of some optimistic postmodern/postcolonial discourses. Space struggles remains, not only between different ethnic groups, genders and classes, those modern categorizations, but also within individuals represented, visualized, imagined, or theorized as the same “challenging” groups forged by postmodernist critics. For those emigrating from third world countries into the first world metropolises, the postmodern cities reflect their upgrading desire for modern advancement. They are the *others* for the host citizens on the one hand, while on the other they have long been subjects as well as products of modernity, especially under gradual edification of the West colonizers. The ex-colonized/colonizers, after the independence of most colonies, are in need of both sides of modernity. Their appropriation of kaleidoscopic postmodern spaces is premised upon a living space of unbothered individuality and economic stability. Scrambles for space usually unfold when such a basis collapses.

To highlight the struggle for space, the move from a national boundary to a house, 1980s London was chosen as the screenplay’s contested setting or arena, where politicians of nationalism, ethnic minorities, social deviants and exploited middle/under-class suffer from all the disturbances of modernity. As de Certeau puts it, the city “is simultaneously the machinery and the hero of modernity” (95). People gather in the city to be embroiled in the peak experience of modernity, yet this spatial unity of urbanism—order and modern convenience—includes disunity between different class, sex and ethnic groups, in which modern subjects are constituted by different forces battling with each other. London is no normal city when it used to be the center of the Empire directing its colonies all over the world, and now becomes a miniature of the world while its ex-colonized citizens “lock back into its own administrative border. Moreover, it is the origin of industrialization and the center of service industry, culture and political power of Britain at present. Possessing all the features of modernity and now entering into a highly globalized era, London faces forces of synthesis and fragmentation, progress and decline, the desire

for sameness and difference. The explosion of urban postmodernism at '68 has been almost twenty years before the screenplay, yet it does not solve the anxieties of its characters. If the daily life in late 80s for a Londoner means sufferings from economic recession, then jostling with strangers of different ethnicity, class and gender and facing increasing disparity between socioeconomic groups (which might be termed as the postmodern condition) would leave them in an ever-changing city that resembles less and less closely with the British culture they learn from the official representations.

It is worthwhile to consult Henri Lefebvre's canonic space theories to consider modern space usages that cut across different groups and individuals. The traces of modernity are also left in Henri Lefebvre's specification of three moments of space. Space, as a process "continually being produced" (Liggett 245), is divided to be a triad, namely spatial practice (the perceived space), representations of space (the conceived space) and representational space (the lived space), each of them taking the position in the ever-shifting flow of time. Spatial practice is the living space that people experience without conceptualizing it, hence a *perceived space* without further decoding. Guaranteed by the reproductive forces of capitalism, spatial practice inscribes habitual activities into "the particular locations and spatial sets characteristics" (*The Production of Space* 33).<sup>3</sup> It in this way embodies "continuity and some degree of cohesion" (*PS* 33), a "spatial code" as the restrictive power of modernity (*PS* 16), "capable of bringing order to the qualitative chaos (the practico-sensory realm) presented by the perception of things" (*PS* 17). Under neocapitalism, spatial practice has separated work and leisure as it linked them together in an association between daily and urban reality (*PS* 38). It is in this perceived separation that postmodern individuals enjoy spaces for a variety of consumptions without bother, and so accumulate energies for production, a certain level of "competence" and "performance" in turn (*PS* 33). Without spatial practice, any adventure for a modern subject is unlikely to begin.

Even a space that urges to ensure its orderliness allows for dissidents, lest their discontent, a byproduct of the fragmented values

brought by modernity, grows into a destructive force that shatters any sense of discipline and regulation in the society. Representations of space involve “social relations of production” in their spatial expression, and “the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence [are related] to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations” (PS 33). Those who are with political and intellectual powers are most likely to forge such spaces, and made them “conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers [. . .] all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (PS 38). Representations of space embrace plans of modernity, since on the one hand, they restrict the chaotic nature and rebellious potentiality of the dominated, while on the other hand, their “practical impact” promises changeability that “intervene[s] in and modif[ies] spatial textures” (PS 42). Physical demarcation or linkage between spaces is not the sole product of this *conceived* space. Lefebvre further claims “conceptions of space tend [. . .] towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs” (PS 39). Discourses of nationalism, and its counterpart, urbanity against nationality claimed by some cosmopolitan in this play,<sup>4</sup> exemplify how representations of space enact through different locality in our age. The conceived space as a moment of space production is never isolated. To survive longer it has to consider other spaces beforehand, and all its discipline must leave free zones where the governed can not merely stretch their arms, but find opportunities of alternation. Therefore, the fluidity and changeability of modernity survives in the seemingly restrictive representations of space in the very beginning.

On the contrary, representational spaces, “essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic” (PS 42), do not avoid oppressive elements once they are put into exercise. As inhabitants’ subjective impressions and experiences on space, representational spaces are lived by those space users, exist in their minds, whether they are imaginary or utopian. Thus, representational spaces are on the opposite side to the verbal expressions in representations of space, “tend toward more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs” (PS 39). “[L]inked



to the clandestine or underground side of social life," representational spaces illustrate not merely "art" as a "code" of themselves (*PS* 33), but also riots ignited by the deprived citizens in the context of this screen script. Rioters and artist are no rational designers in charge of the representations of space, whose dominance their "imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (*PS* 39). Without being described with terms like "ideology and knowledge," those at times grouped under representations of space, representational spaces are ideally fabricated as non-ideological, resistant and obedient to "no rules of consistency or cohesiveness" (*PS* 41). However, this does not mean that we cannot observe any rules or cause-effect relations in certain representational spaces. One aspect of representational spaces in the postmodern city is pronounced in the imagination of the tourist, who usually has little willingness to resist the capitalistic shaping forces on his or her anticipations. What comes after the realization of representational spaces is another question at stake. Changing desires reflected from the representational spaces do not shut out a yearning to ensure that changed outcome (one of the characteristic dimensions of modernity), which thereupon conflicts with, and even oppresses dissidents with different imaginations and anticipations in the same space context.

Lefebvre also delineates modes of space in terms of their correspondences to different modes of production, and the result is a revision of Marxist historic periodization. Here I just appropriate absolute space, abstract space, and differential space, characterized by Bo Grönlund as "Lefebvre's second ontological transformation of space,"<sup>5</sup> to be theoretic equivalents to the age of pre-modern, the modern, and the postmodern.<sup>6</sup> The absolute space is mainly related to the pre-capitalist society, with agriculture as its main economic activity and religion inseparable from its political dominance. "[N]amed and exploited by peasants" and "pastoralists," the absolute space "is a fragment of agro-pastoral space," crystallized into a rigid, mystic, sacred or cursed character, and paradoxically made into a "part of nature" (*PS* 234). From hindsight, it is tinged with imaginary forces that a society lack of rational knowledge mostly put into their social spaces. To ensure social stability from the bottom, "absolute space thus

preserved and incorporated bloodlines, family, unmediated relationships” (PS 48). Social and personal relationships in the present time, as Sammy and Rosie’s mental struggle in excluding their fathers out of their domestic space remind us about sediments of the absolute space in our capitalistic society. Dominance of religious practices in some regimes, no matter in the West or East, reflects how the absolute space keeps orienting social and political demarcations. “Not that absolute space disappeared in the process; rather it survived as the bedrock of historical space and the basis of representational spaces” (PS 48). The absolute space, teamed up with the imaginariness of the representational space,<sup>7</sup> turns to be fixing power that more or less delimit modern subjects in their fleeting experiences.

The omnipresent and dominating capitalism in the West modernity has emerged with the production of abstract space. “The dominant form of space” in our age, abstract space stems from “the centers of wealth and power” as collusive forms of the state and capitalist (PS 49). To present an advanced national and social space, the former has to come up with measures that destroy or exclude the disfavored within its territory, just in the same way that the capitalists *abstract* spaces of production and consumption from traditional absolute spaces. “[V]iolent means” buttresses the state capitalism, a collusion of the former two groups, eliminates differences within space that violate their scheme, and differentiates things previously uncategorized at the service of their spatial production. “Differences, for their part, are forced into the symbolic forms of an art that is itself abstract” (PS 49). Spaces in the modernity hence witness a coexistence of intellectualization, hierarchization, homogenization, and fragmentation, all products of a new order of abstraction. The urban riot in this screenplay, largely as a discontent against the abstract space that eliminates their ethnic heterogeneity and class inferiority, illustrates the conflicting nature of modernity, a product “of a homogeneous and pathogenic political ‘medium’ at once aberrational and norm-bound” (PS 377).

The contradictory nature within abstract space sprouts differential space. Having been heated ever since the very beginning of

industrial capitalism, the continuous globalizing processes, together with colonialism that reterritorializes the world into sites of markets and production, pronounce fragmental dimensions of space that hardly fit in with rational divisions set by abstract space. Political administration, scientific and technical specialization, and most of all, the commodification of the space are in sharp contradiction to spatial realities discrepant and fragmental across the globe. In the way that Marx conceives proletariat revolution from a contradiction between the productive force and relations of production, Lefebvre anticipates “the space of a different (social) life and of a different mode of production” (PS 60). As Rod Shields puts it, “[Lefebvre’s] project returns to relevance when he takes aim at the *future*, proposing the possibility of generating a new spatialization—a more equitable world—out of the contradictions of contemporary spaces and relations of globalization” (Shield 183).<sup>8</sup> In view of its antithesis to abstract space that still dominates nowadays, differential space, “either the space of a counter-culture, or a counter-space” (PS 349), has appeared in practices since the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Leisure industry and subcultures are just two distinguishable exemplars to manifest a turn to postmodernity. Rebellious modernity in the same way that differential space is against its predecessor, postmodern space overlaps differential space because of their spotlighting on the libidinal, irrational, individual and utopian longings for non-oppression. “[I]nasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences” (PS 52). Heterogeneity, differences and peculiarities are not merely the defining terms of postmodernism, but also practical realities that witness how particularized spaces are produced to resist against, or being incorporated in an ever-evolving capitalism. The dualist sides of modernity do not cease in those revolts, grand or small, successful or not, as in many cases the revolutionary new spaces repeat the geographic exclusions like the old ones, and the libido for change is incorporated into a flexible market based upon the stability of capitalistic economy. The limited scale of the subcultural group, and

the resistant stance restricted in verbal practices of the defiant bourgeois are Kureishi's two textual illuminators that shed light on Lefebvre's ideal.

As Lefebvre himself specially underlines, three moments of space continuously intersect, coexist and rotate, and is therefore of equal importance. Nevertheless, his phrasing and argumentation in many sections impress us that representational spaces and differential space belong to the populace, non-oppression, and self-expression, while representations of spaces and abstract spaces are oppressive and homogenizing. Contradictions are manifest, for example, when referred to the idea of representational spaces and representational space. How could representational spaces be delineated in a theoretic work while they obey "no rules of consistency or cohesiveness" (*PS* 41), especially when they are one of the major shaping forces of abstract space (*PS* 45)? Similar problems occur in the delineation of representations of space. What acts before and together with knowledge and rationality when they give "practical impact" in representations of space? Is it not something closely related to the unconsciousness, irrationality, imagination and passion, those traits characteristically owned by the representational space? Considering that theoretic distinctions between representations of space and representational spaces are for our better understanding of different *facets* with a concerned space, we can distinguish representational spaces from representations of space in terms of their different intensity of power or rationality, rather than whether they are oppressive or homogeneous.<sup>9</sup>

In a world where "all that is solid melt into air," a modern longing for "the eternal and the immutable" is still kept by characters of this screenplay at a postmodern era. As the postmodern space eulogizes heterogeneity, mutability and fleetness, the postmodern subjects do not forsake seeking a sense of eternity in transmutation, their concrete being in becoming. In hoping so, they claim, produce, appropriate or contest space for their own use, whether public or private, as long as the space ensures their existence at a certain time or supports a process of becoming they favor. This differentiation of space does not completely

fulfill Lefebvre's visionary ideal as "differential space," in which unity and distinctiveness could be restored without oppression. Spaces within this screenplay have been imaginary mainstays without which characters would be drifted into the currents of modernity, while the riotous streets, a suburban house, a leftist residence in the inner city and a waste ground occupied by anarchists simultaneously demarcate the boundary of their existence. In addition to the physical space, we shall not ignore that the spatiality of modernity in this screenplay is related to both the external locations and derivate emotional responses of the characters. Accordingly, the agonized mental spaces would also be included in my discussion. For the convenience of anatomizing different modes of spatial contestation, I will divide the characters in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, imagined or real, into the ruler and the ruled in terms of their political position. Since Rafi, a former despot of Pakistan, appears to be a father seeking shelter from his son Sammy in London, I will discuss him in terms of two very general categories.

### Space of the Ruler

British Imperialism cartographized the map of the globe in its rising, and its falling left aftershocks all over the imperial center and periphery in their old meaning. When Sammy's father Rafi reaches London in Thatcher's era, Kureishi creates a surrealistic encounter not only between a former anti-colonial fighter and a nostalgic imperialist, but a British-educated feudal torturer and a patriotic politician whose free market policy distresses the lives of the middle/under-class. Although Kureishi seems to design Rafi the character to overshadow a general socio-political plight of some third world ex-colonies after their decolonization, the writer's Pakistani inheritance would guide his reader to relate Rafi with certain political figures in Pakistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the president and prime minister of Pakistan from 1971 to 1977. Owing to his Western cultural and intellectual base and a landowner class origin, Bhutto's dual consciousness is of much significance in his manipulation of space, especially when his influence goes from the tribal district to a national and even international

geopolitics, and his anticipation of a whole new nationalistic space has a chance to be realized after the independence of Pakistan. Before the British Raj, the revolutionists could gestate any blueprint whatever they wish, a Lefebvrian representational space that *lives* in the mind. Yet when put into practice, the representational space cannot help manifesting itself with a convergence of different accomplished realities, including people's spatial practices during the Raj and the representations of space that seek to rationalize and plan spatial formations. Once the representational space is carried out by the anti-colonialists, it does not completely differ from all the systematic doctrines (the representations of space) configured by the former ruler; neither could it escape the spatial practice of the local customs in the ex-colony.

The policy Rafi takes after his motherland rids itself from Britain reflects how a newly decolonized country particularizes its representations of space, domestic or international, so as to avert from losing its nationalistic identity in the global flows. Independence from the colonizers brings hope and dream-like future for those suffered from imperial oppressions, inducing them to ignore that the production of a new space has to be based upon new mode of production, a process that can hardly be reached without thoroughly modifying the Lefebvrian triad. Feudalism, a local spatial practice before the arrival of the imperialist, remained under the colonial regime for stabilizing its governing. While pronouncing an intact sovereignty in the new territory, the postcolonial local governor, represented here by Rafi, often launches a representational space evading any colonial inequality and oppression, yet still unable to alter former spatial practices, or negate some rationality left in the colonial representations of space. The spatial triad of modernity, which blurs the time/space differentiation in colonial and postcolonial reality, is best exemplified in feudalism and its modern variation, military dictatorship. To rid themselves from the colonial plan, the newly decolonized countries usually seek a powerful basis to execute its representations of space, hence encouraging the rising of dictators that might victimize their nations more than the colonialists. The new governors' root of power is

inseparable from the feudal system. A localized spatial practice before the arrival of colonizer, feudalism could easily be adopted after the externally imposed representations of space are unloaded (though never completely).

In Emma Duncan's *Breaking the Curfew: A Political Journey through Pakistan*, political figures there are named as "hereditary politicians" for their empowerment is still entangled with land possessions, a feudalist remnant lingers in its colonial and postcolonial politics:

Pakistan's hereditary politicians do one of two things: they either make themselves available to the government in power, or more rarely, they build themselves a constituency around an issue or an ideology. The first route to power is the traditional one, taken by landlords and tribal leaders under the Moghuls and the British. The second is a novelty, born out of the ideas and ideals that were shipped into Pakistan when it was created. (189)

While a Pakistani politician accesses power through the second route, traits of heredity politics do not easily vanish. A patriarch, despot and torturer, Rafi in the screenplay is apt at applying Western terminology to illustrate his ideological stance that a moviegoer would rarely relate with a third world tyrant. Education in University of Southern California and Oxford University enabled Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to extract from west political science populism and nationalism as the dual weapons to create his ideal space, while his spatially formed identity as a landlord or feudal patriarch carried the local color that has been practiced in the past. The local politics that survived under the British dominance had reclaimed its seat after Raj, turning out to be part of the representations of the Pakistan that orient the representational spaces and spatial practice of its people. In this sense, Bhutto/Rafi's producing a new Pakistan might be characterized as a merger between feudalism and nationalism, in which tribal influence is enlarged into a national scale. This explains why initially emerging as a democracy fighter and defender of the poor,<sup>10</sup> Bhutto made a brutal

reversal in the mid 70s, greeted the mullahs and landlords back to their original seats and hastened his own demise owing to the discontent of the previous privileged and the new intellectuals' feeling of being betrayed.

Except for the deep-rooted feudal politics, an internal demarcation and occupation of space, Bhutto's various political manipulations were conducted under the shadow of global capitalism, which waits for the opportune moment to profit by reterritorizing the newly established nation into its global territory. Three principles were set to resist the danger of current trends and past burdens. They are democracy as the polity, socialism as the economy and Islam as the religion, forging Pakistan in a mystified alchemy of a modern religious state capable of resisting the uneven social stratification and ethical indifference brought by capitalism. That is why Rafi proudly announces his achievements: "Our government awoke the down-trodden and expelled Western imperialists. I nationalized the banks! I forged links with the Paelestinians" (228)! Democracy is ushered in by the colonialists, yet its implied logic of grass-rootedness reminds the ruled that they are indeed the owner of the colony space, and without this system their new space cannot gain its equal status with their ex-ruler's modern nation, a representational space lingering in their minds.

In his embracing the universal value of modernity, Bhutto pushed through a new constitution in 1973 that recognized Islam as the national religion, miraculously grafting modern institutions onto a pre-modern value system. This merger of abstract and absolute space is for excluding the multiplied values mostly seen in the developed countries. Since "[t]he West has become very decadent, sex-mad and diseased," Rafi "shut all the night-clubs and casinos. The women have gone back in their place. There is restriction, there is order. There is identity through religion and a strict way of life" (245). Because of his academic background, Rafi has no reason to be ignorant of his tyrannical measures, of which his mistress Alice accuses him (245). His yearning for certainty leads to representations of space buttressed by imaginary power within the representational space. Suspending



rationality and erasing disharmony, Rafi's national space is *conceived* from "the aestheticization of politics," "the shift in emphasis from historical change towards national cultures and destinies, sparkling geographical conflicts between different spaces in the world economy" (Harvey 209). Asking for a "national culture and destiny" untainted by the imperialists, Bhutto held nonaligned neutrality by withdrawing Pakistan from the British Commonwealth of Nations and from the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) sponsored by the United States. Since the imperial remnants cannot be totally removed from the national boundary, a purposeful denial of all relations with the colonizers converts the local ruler's abject space, a representational space into the more forceful representations of space. Merely severing relations with the past is not enough to forge meaningful spatial contents for a new nation. Cultural and religious collisions that bring Pakistan into the world stage provide unfailing supply of hate that agglomerates elusive contents of cultural identifiers. That is how Islam is appropriated to create a myth of place against another mystified imperialism territorialized in the Euro-American location. Palestine, with all its traumatic past that could be imputed to the West, is a place that Rafi/Bhutto adds into his imaginary space of liberation movement against the imperial oppressors.

Holding the banner of religion aloft, Rafi's theocracy also aestheticizes its destiny by fighting against other regions that had once been demarcated within the British Empire. Bhutto's commencement of a "thousand year war" against India prolonged the religious conflicts between Hinduism and Muslim, while the Bangladesh genocide in 1971 exposed a desire of nationalism to consolidate its domestic territory according to Muslim. That is why in a welcome party held for Rafi, an Asian accountant only relates him with this genocide: "I was in Dacca when their army came in. How d'you think my father was killed" (237). A separatist insisting sovereignty from Britain, this freedom fighter countered secessionist movements in all of Pakistan's provinces for the sake of a unified national identity. Geographical exclusion of colonialist entails inclusion of diverse groups of revolt, reversing the spatially oppressed into an oppressor because of his assuming a

collective, homogeneous and concerted “down-trodden” (228).

Socialism is another necessity for resisting the correlative capitalism. To prevent the poor from being exploited in a new mode of production set by the imperialists and the feudal politicians rising after the Raj, socialism seems to be a perfect project that can be imposed on an original space. Rafi’s relation with Mao Tse-tung is a socialist version of his linkage with the Paelestiniens. By creating a cross-border alignment of the weak others, Rafi finds his own representations of space enlarged in a global scale, capable of forging a socio-economic logic outside capitalism. Yet the parallelism between Pakistan and China had another gloomy shadow. Although both leaders took anti-colonialism and socialism to be their guidelines for producing ideal spaces, their ideals were never fulfilled, and their governances turned out to be what they once criticized: the feudalistic dictatorship. In a supernatural conversation between Rafi and a ghost victimized from his policies, the former justifies his brutal deeds by saying that “[t]he country needed a sense of direction, of identity. People like you, organizing into unions, discouraged and disrupted all progress” (259). When socialism is born in mind as a representation of space, in which its productivity exceeds capitalism and therefore must be fulfilled at any expense, trade unions are ironically banned, and “rioters [are shot] dead in the street” (253). A product of socialism, nowadays the trade union has been an indispensable mechanism of capitalism. Through its everlasting struggles with entrepreneur runners the system reaches its dynamic balance. To counteract the trend of capitalistic mode of production and realize one’s own individualistic planning of socialism, Rafi has to utilize dictatorship so as to expel the whimsical modernity by creating direction, identity, and progress. Rafi’s mystification of a concrete and complicated place as a visionary and forward-looking space is not the only example mentioned in this screenplay. In the postcolonial London where Rafi roams about as a tourist, Margaret Thatcher, a leader who believes Britain is as great as it was, gestated another dream via invoking the past of the nation.<sup>11</sup>

### Space of the Ruled

*Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* begins with a brutal scene in which a black woman is murdered by a policeman who is searching for her son. This brings to mind of Cherry Groce's misfortune when the metropolitan police shot her in her bed for the same purpose. Mrs. Groce's accident on the morning of 28 September 1985, as in this film finished in 1987, ignited riots firstly in Brixton<sup>12</sup> then Toxteth, Liverpool and Tottenham, London. This shot accident, though not completely related to racism of the police, was realized by the ethnic residents of the inner city as an epitome of discriminatory police policies of "stop-and-search." The hidden context of inner-city riots traces to the industrial revolution, which drove the vigor of the business district in the central London and its subsidiary downfall of residential quality. After the rich left this adjacent area to find better living space, the economic inferiors, white or black, gradually crowded the inner city. Since the Thatcherite government reduced the taxation, limited the welfare expanse, and weakened the power of the local authorities, often the Labor, the inner cities were ignored as the subaltern, representative of Lefebvre's lived space. The private relation between police and residents, which was vital in keeping the relative harmony within the inner city, was deteriorated in that the central government was unwilling to inject subvention into the rotten area. Based upon the new right ideology that low tax was essential to free the market force manipulated by individual entrepreneurs, governmental expenditure was forced to cut, and the limited resources was applied to encourage forceful market participants, for they were deemed the major contributors for the economy. Not until the riots exploded did Thatcher's government include those problems in their campaign issues. Thatcher's third general election victory in 1987, around the process of Kureishi's film-making of *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, ended with the words: "We've got a big job to do in some of those inner cities . . . and politically, we've got to get back in there—we want to win those too" (MacGregor viii).

Thatcher and her partners' big job echoed the deep hope of her constituency, who were afraid of their living space invaded by the turmoil of the inner cities. Representations of space, a place in the mind of urban planners, have everything to do with the middle class's representational spaces, in which the disorder shall not occur in London as a worldly leading metropolis. Such representations of space are equal to the abstract space, by which the state-based capitalism wills to impose upon the concrete space of people's daily life. In "Space: Social Product and Use Value," Lefebvre characterizes this abstract space as

a space of quantification and growing homogeneity, a merchandised space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable; a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles. Economic space and political space thus converge towards an elimination of all differences. (293)

As for the inner city, Thatcherism (the political) in this respect went hand in hand with the merchandisers (the economic), whose power under capitalism was believed to absorb useful labors and knock out the dissenters. Police force was the most important weapons equipped for the investors to realize their representations of space authorized by the government. As a Tory MP in the screenplay says to a property developer, "[y]ou've got to invest in this area—for your sake and ours," the government reaped the achievements sufficient to be displayed before its voters, and the businesspeople reduced the risk of throwing in too much fund as they had the government at their back. The eviction scene at the end of this screenplay illustrates the collaboration of government and private developer not only in their rational designing but also their bourgeois-based ideology. As the jubilant property developer puts it, he is "making London a cleaner and safer place" (261).

Trying to forge representations of space without or within the British island, Thatcher's abstract space differed from Rafi's tyranny. While Pakistan was a newly independent country in Rafi's governance,

plagued by “poverty, imperialism, feudalism” (229) and susceptible to military despot, Thatcher’s government had to obey a democratic system that had been matured in Britain’s long history. In reality or this screenplay, the police do not shoot the protesters to death like what Rafi did, and if not attacked by the black woman “with boiling fat” (197), the white “hysterical cop” may not fire at her out of his misrecognition of an emergent condition in which self-defense is justified. At the same time, the urban planner cannot just evict citizens with ownership or rights of usage out of their places for the sake of public planning. These actualities are in need of little thought, yet they all belong to representations of space designed by the powerful legislators, and come to effect as spatial practices unnoticed by most British, including all critical characters in this screenplay. Rafi’s violence, more or less related to his religious absolutism, shapes his representations of space to be an absolute space, which Lefebvre takes to illustrate the pre-modern condition. Thatcher’s government and its collaborator the capitalistic entrepreneurs are forged by the abstract space and have to make its maintenance their task, for it is a spatialization of democratic legal system that “implies [. . .] a non-aggression pact, a contract,” and in turn “generate[s] ‘consensuses’ or conventions” as the “trouble-free” bedrock for the invigoration of representational spaces (*PS* 56). No legal system has realized fully in its corresponding reality, but the consensus it is based acts in the society. If the abstract space of Thatcherism promotes racism and the uneven distribution of wealth, it is also the abstract space of democratic process and rule of law obeyed by the Conservative Party that ensures the screenwriter to make his film, his deviant characters to make their free speech against the government, and above all, the rioters to throw bricks against the police without a fear for gunshot. In other words, the abstract place lurks into an unconscious space that supports the possibility of dissidence and alternation that sustain the ongoing of modernity.

A writer publicly refuting Thatcher’s policy, Kureishi renders the nuances of the riot subtly, calling into question the asserted righteousness of the revolution.<sup>13</sup> This riot’s fuse is brought to

epitomize the plight of inner-city black under Thatcher's "domestic colonialism" (221), and as a violent appropriation of space, the riot tries to transform the established representations of space, where things and spaces are no longer used in their original purpose and by their legal owners. Unlike Rafi's revolutionary experience in the subcontinent, this "revolt"<sup>14</sup> on the London streets is not well-organized, its request is unclear and no blueprint for the post-revolutionary space is designed. That is to say, the mass uprising on the street resembles a riot more than a revolution, which turns up with a plan ready to fulfill its own representational space after the current oppressive representations of space are overthrown. That is why the carnivalesque violence, as Danny puts it, only brings "attraction but not the achievement" (221).

Moreover, as Kureishi tries to hint the oppressive side of Thatcherism via Rafi's tyrannical past, his locating Rafi the anti-colonialist and the violent torturer in the riotous inner city renders the ambivalent character of the rioters' usage of violence. John McLeod's insightfully points out that in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, "violent protest and violent oppression are different in degree but not in kind" (142). Representations of space and representational space, as long as they are mental space unrealized and distinguish from each other by the possibility of fulfillment, are not totally different in nature. When black and white kids come together, gather bricks for weapons by kicking down walls, burn car and attack the firemen who are trying to reach the ablaze objects (208-09), and assorted people with different age and ethnicity take the chance to loot stores (209-10, 222), the legitimacy of their representational space becomes more dubious. The origin of this open violence is not so much as a righteous indignation at the murder of that black woman as a collective action that reverses the rioters' power relation with the police and weakens the standpoint of official counterattack by that incidental shot. Without bearing the concrete goal and its relative measures in mind, violence utilized to effectuate the representational space is more liable to cause unjust oppression.<sup>15</sup>

Rafi's private identity as an Anglophile tourist hints how the

imaginary representational spaces overlap the official representations of spaces in terms of purity and eternal perfection. While representations of space are fulfilled by urban designers and politicians like Rafi, they do not necessarily collide with representational space and spatial practices, since any official figures have their private lives and are initially shaped by the latter two spaces. A previous ruler and now a commoner tourist seeking the shelter from his son in London, Rafi's gaze has rich implications in the relation between an imaginary space and a concrete place, not only for an alien tourist but also for the local governors. It is the imperial and cultural heredity of Britain that attracts ethnic immigrants, international students like the young Rafi, and tourists flocked from other places in the world. It is the same heredity that burdens these Conservative politicians to maintain their beloved country in an imaginary realm. London as a representational space full of beautiful images then fits into the ruler's scheme, while the non-white immigrants are taints to the integrity of this mental picture. These attitudes are embedded in a context of reacting to modernity at large; they welcome the tourist as customers approving localized value and oppose immigrants of different cultures for fear that their long-term residence threatens the national identity.

Still, the cityscape of London in the globalized age violates hopes for integrity as the homogenizing lyric urge of a modern subject. En route from the airport to Sammy's house, Rafi tells the cab driver his hedonistic view of Britain: "For me England is hot buttered toast on a fork in front of an open fire. And cunt fingers" (200). While highlighting the entertaining function of Britain, Rafi also implies his affirmation of its civilization and orderliness. Or he would not express a sense of loss to Rosie, his daughter-in-law: "And before I die I must know my beloved London again: for me it is the centre of civilization—tolerant, intelligent and completely out of control now, I hear" (206).

After postwar acceleration of globalization, the present London seemed to be imbued with the ever flowing of labor forces, materials and funds. One of the most visible characters of this change is the urban infrastructure altered to suit needs in the eighties. Also in an early

scene within the cab, Rafi is surprised by the street scene of motorways bringing people in and out:

Above RAFI, and around him, he sees criss-crossed motorways, flyovers, huge direction indicators, and a swirl of fast-moving traffic, dream like, noisy, strange. We see it through his eyes as if for the first time. This isn't the England he remembers. (200)

The motorways, as “physical infrastructures” and hence “material spatial practices” (Harvey 220), try to eliminate time, passing on people, materials and information from all over the world into a metropolis of production and reproduction. The huge, gray and oppressive flyovers coexist with the great historical monuments as the representatives of the city, ruthlessly exposing a post-industrial metropolis is far from a simple and pleasant location for the enjoyment of Rafi as a tourist. The harsh existence of flyovers, except for shortening the time cost for the urban residents, bring the labor capital into the heart of Empire for lowering the cost of assorted industries. Both functions reflect what Harvey characterizes as time-space compression—to annihilate space through time, which is indispensable for a more flexible accumulation of capital in the eighties London, and makes the metropolis less resemble a fixed place than an open space, which is “a nexus of in and out conduits” (*PS* 93).

Bearing the nostalgic London in mind, and still unable to forsake his patriarchal feudalism forged in Pakistan, Rafi's tour in the inner city sees a hierarchical reversal when he is failed by a representational space forged by his nostalgic memory. Sammy and Rosie's home, a locale of leftist and radical liberalism that draws friends of a feather, turns into a contesting space no less fierce than his past experience in anti-colonial activities and the conflict between the underclass and police outside the window of his lodging. Despite Rafi's past glory, he appears in London “partly because his life is threatened” in his motherland (209). It is probably because that the rebelling power incurred by his previous tyranny had dethroned his representations of space. Being repelled by his motherland, Rafi revitalizes London from



the bottom layer of his memory, believes it more tolerant than before, and ignores that it could be equally exclusive in the specific space he later reaches. Though he seeks refuge in his natural son and overtly confesses that he is in Sammy's hands (209), he does not fully figure out the whole power structure of the community he attaches to. Otherwise, Rafi would not transfer all his money for his son in the hope that a harmonious family, constituent of his son, daughter-in-law, and him as the patriarch, will soon come true.

Even a home composed of avant-gardes has its politics. Postmodern or not, a domestic space is expected to be a space secure enough to hold memories and dreams. With all its emotional characteristics a home becomes a representational space at large (Harvey 221), whereas innegotiable representational spaces carried by its members transform this tranquil idea into a space of exclusion. Rafi's blindness of the micro-power-based private relations by blood again witnesses the power of representations of space by which he lived in Pakistan, where interpersonal relationship could be manipulated with money, land and power and the authority of a patriarch made him a leading figure in a feudal family. While this sort of representations of family space is carried to a sexually avant-garde family, they resemble representational spaces lacking power to guarantee their fulfillment. Since the male heritage is requisite for the persistence of Rafi's politico-economy, he is unwilling to accept any possibility of lesbianism for Rosie, his daughter-in-law, while feminism is accepted because it would not extinguish his wish for grandchildren (214). On the side of Sammy and Rosie, individual freedom is placed at the highest rank of their value system; accordingly, children and parents are better evaded from their private space.

The changeability of representational space can be ironically articulated *via* the image of country and/or home, a secure space that drifting modern subjects usually yearn for. Suffering from disillusionment in the "derelict zone," Rafi is unable to urge Sammy "back" to Pakistan:

RAFI: London has become a cesspit. You'd better come home,

Samir.

SAMMY: I am home, Pop. This is the bosom.

RAFI: What a sullen young man you are. I mean, home to your own country where you will be valued, where you will be rich and powerful. What can you possibly like in this city now? (233)

Rafi's country-home myth recalls his past glory in Pakistan, despite all his present danger there now. Once the spatial reality of London does not fit his representational nostalgia, his identification quickly drifts to his past glory, a space that has diminished in the present yet alive in his representational space. This was what Thatcher did in a national span when she tries to awake her citizens through a lost space and impose "a strong hand on this country" (206). The no longer existent home is redeemed again and again for those who once possess a great moment in a certain place. Rafi's home-coming desire as a private person and Thatcher's country-home narratives as a public propaganda are just two sides of the same coin, by which a favorable space mantles the current place in crisis.

In Sammy's hand and yet also "a stranger to him" (208), Rafi's desire to stay longer in London finally discloses that he himself is a "stranger," not "the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow" (Simmel 73). His former dictatorship in Pakistan procures the host group to fix him "within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries," which further endow him with different qualities that "do not and cannot stem from the group itself (Simmel 73). As Sammy puts it, Rafi is "a cheerful bastard with great spirit." With his past dominating character Rafi would try to have himself a seat within Sammy's "particular spatial group," including "the usual social deviants, communists, lesbians, and blacks, with a sprinkling of the mentally subnormal" (232). After the welcome party where characters are brought together and conflicts are fermented, Rafi is irritated by Rani and Vivia in bed together in Sammy and Rosie's bedroom (249). As lesbians and Sammy's core friends who had read records of Rafi's political persecution, the two women attack Rafi with homemade weapons in the drawer and force him flee from the

window. The deviant group's boundaries "are similar to spatial boundaries," within which any insider has the right to appropriate their collective space, while the stranger Rafi, regardless his previous funding for Sammy, hence the possible donator of the material house, and as the father of the legal occupant, is powerless in the spatial practice of the locals.

Since identity formation can hardly avoid the production of space, a political dominator in turn is usually asked to be responsible for all enormous wrongness in his or her pertinent space. As a stranger, Rafi's superiority in political power and wealth loses all its spatial support, and because of the increasing forces of globalization, his evils in Pakistan can be easily traced across the globe, hence snaring him in the hands of the colored, native Londoners. Despite all his nostalgia for London and quest for identification from his son, Rafi's representational space can hardly be involved in Sammy and Rosie's social intercourse with their dissident friends. Many of them are from the Subcontinent, and people who know the inside story like Rani "would accuse Rosie of lacking political integrity" for her accepting Rafi's long-term residence ("Some Time with Stephen" 132). These pressures add insult to injury at Rafi's distress. If discussing urban spaces is meaningless unless human relationship is involved, his past has made him fail to be a "pure private person" after his retirement (204). With the aid of infoscape and mediascape, "an organization rather like Amnesty" records oppressions globally and made them available for any residents in the first world (213). Some of his former victims no longer believed that their representational space would be fulfilled after the independence of Pakistan, and would rather look forward to the heart of the Empire. Their familiarity with spatial practices proceeding around Sammy's home and the inner city make them stronger than Rafi in his present residential space.

Rafi's glorious representational spaces thwart his true reunion with Alice in suburban London. Those lived spaces are memories, fantasies, and ambitions heavily influenced by gender distinction in its traditional sense. Granting that he has retired from politics and sold his factory out, Rafi never let his representational space fade away, for

there he is the freedom fighter (231), the planner of his motherland, a hero welcomed by female admirers and a respectful Dad that Sammy and Rosie will expect (249). Ever since Alice reunites with Rafi, her affection is discouraged by his flirtation with Sammy's mistress Anna, his homing desire to Sammy's family rather than hers, and an obsession on his memoirs recording past splendor (249). All this representational spaces document a masculine space without which one's own identity can hardly cross the modern chaos. On the other hand, Alice's major representational space is a very domestic space usually attributed to women. It includes two lovers mutually monopolize each other, "a true marriage" incarnated in her tranquil suburban house and memorabilia kept since she met Rafi, all in sharp contrast to Rafi's *domestic* policies that "introduced flogging for minor offences, nuclear capability and partridge-shooting into [Pakistan]" (255).

After being reproached by Alice for his forsaking her for thirty years, Rafi has no space to give him a sense of security, except for Danny's wasteland. Fatefully, the eviction scene in which Danny's group is forced to move out by the property owner is a decisive point of Rafi's suicide, in that the glorious anti-colonial past is frustrated by the despairing domestic colonialism. After Rafi suffers from a series of frustrations in fulfilling his representational spaces, Danny's anarchist territory temporarily becomes a stage for summoning his past glory. As a politician, he is quite aware of the impossibility of winning the present war with demographic inferiority while he suggests the kids of Danny's group that they should go yet never be defeated (258). However, in his subconsciousness at that time he has spatially identified with the waste ground as his last base, a site where the lost past can be resurrected and the exiled self could be anchored. Hardly awaking from a nightmare in which the ghost revenges him with his own instruments of torture, Rafi finds the incarnated devils—the white property developers and his fellows on bulldozers—invading his new site of resistance. His delirious words, raving to Alice who comes to his rescue, bring him back to a representational space he theoretically identifies: "I'm not leaving! Take me back! We must not allow those fascist bastards to drive us away! We must fight, fight!" (262).

Unlike Danny, Rafi does not have the mobility in producing a residential space in London, while this sort of space includes not only material base like a cozy house, but also a network of interpersonal relationship in which the spatial subject is identified with. Neither could Rafi simply go with Danny's convoy, for the nomadic life is not the spatial practice the elitist politician would take. Kureishi directly points out his real intention of designing Rafi's final suicide: "I don't want [Rafi] committing suicide out of guilt. It's that he's come to the end. No one wants him. There is *nowhere* for him to go, neither at *home* nor in Britain" ("Some Time with Stephen" 137, my emphasis). Once an ideal home including Sammy and Rosie is impossible, a reunion with Alice is foiled, and a fanciful fight against the fascist government fails, Rafi loses all hopes in accomplishing his representational space. By surrendering to an imaginary harmonious space—the death world, Rafi regains the harmony that gives him a sense of eternity in his forced drifting. That is why in shooting the film, the screenwriter and director want Rafi's suicide to be "a justified thing, chose, dignified, something of a Roman act" ("Some Time with Stephen" 147). Once a winner against the Imperial motherland, a dominator capable of realizing his representations of space, and now a loser in contesting for a harmonious family as his least request, Rafi evidences that the space war is not limited in international or national span. In the minutest space the micro power performs, locating the spatialized subject in a place he or she might never dream of. Whether he is a private or public figure, leaving his life stage turns to be a reasonable political measure for Rafi, as it helps reorient him again in a representational space.

Placing Rafi in the eighties London, Kureishi has more things to say than a dejected politician from the ex-colony of Britain. Rafi the "potential wanderer" brings the audience's eyesight to flyovers, street uprising, North London suburb, eccentrics in the tube, subcultural anarchist as squatters, and vagrant white elders sleeping on the snowy streets. Kureishi cannot expect Mrs. Thatcher walking along the rejected South London, so he designs a despot "[stopping] under a railway bridge where other wretched rejects are sheltering—the poor, the senile, the insane, the disabled. Some of them sleep in cardboard

boxes, others in sleeping bags” (255). These shots present the shock effects that many modernist artists adopt, trying to awake the socially-blunt middle class and politicians they support to the tough conditions of their beloved London. When a despot is excluded by the social deviants because of his past tyranny, and is therefore forced to roam after his retirement in the bleak streets under the spatial manipulation of another nationalistic leader, the screenwriter might expect the remote rulers to have a real comprehension of the plight in the inner city. Because of the spatial segregation between the rulers and their suffered people, just as Rafi’s shameless justification of his not being present while the ghost is maltreated (258), both rulers “gave the order” that leads to oppressive representations of space for reasons like “the country needed a sense of direction, of identity,” while “unions [. . .] discouraged and disrupted all progress” (259).

Rafi’s middle-class spatial practice is one of the decisive factors that renders him a contradictory person. This contradiction characterizes both Rafi’s identity and the high modernity at large, while the former is the product of the latter. As the elder generation in this screenplay, Rafi and Alice are overtly influenced by values held by the middle class of an earlier generation. They reject the ephemerality of modernity via embracing utopian certainties, for Rafi the grand narratives like socialism and Islam, and for Alice “an old world of certainty and stability,” where “[l]oyalty and honesty” in love are valued (238). Her insistence of staying in her suburban house with all the memorabilia dust-laden in the cellar is a nostalgic attachment to the past crystallized into certainty. In Alice’s loathing against the riotous inner city, rich implications of anxiety of modern uncertainties could be found as well as her belief in faithful love: “I [Alice] hate their [the rioters’] ignorant anger and lack of respect for this great land. Being British has to mean identifying with other, similar people. If we’re to survive, words like ‘unity’ and ‘civilization’ must be understood” (253). Alice’s remark not only manifestly echoes Thatcher’s new right ideology, but ambivalently responds to the motivation of Rafi’s tyrannical domination, which tries to resist the Western defects of *civilization* through a dictatorial *unity* from his own doctrines.

In the eighties Britain, this first world country has its one leg on a coming age which some critics would term as postmodernity. It is characterized by post-structuralist and anti-foundationalist scholars as a new age in which small narratives of the suppressed others in the modernity start to challenge or reverse the grand ones. Unlike Rafi, Alice and Thatcher's reminiscence of a great lost era, the new middle class find ephemerality an unfailing supply of consumer goods that echoes their wants in representational spaces. As the mystified Rafi puts it, "[f]or you [the young middle class] the world and culture is a kind of department store. You go in and take something you like from each floor. But you're attached to nothing. Your lives are incoherent, shallow" (239). This criticism is only half true. In companion with what Fredric Jameson called the "depthlessness" of postmodernity, the postmodern middle class does not completely "attach to nothing." Were it so, *Sammy and Rosie* would not find Rafi their burden after his tyrannical past is disclosed by their deviant friends. These conditions illustrate that values brought up by modernity keep going in postmodern spatial practices and representations of space, while the representational spaces, as spaces of "inhabitants" and "users" filled with small narratives, and deemed by Edward Soja as the liberating space of postmodernity, are not free from contesting for fixed values. Since private spaces are infiltrated by these narratives accompanied by micro-power and knowledge, these deviants who believe themselves within the alliance of the oppressed others contest spaces not only against other non-dissident individual, but also against the intimates of the same community.

It is no incident that *Sammy* appears as an accountant in this screenplay. In his extraordinary essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Georg Simmel points out that the urban economy has a great influence upon the metropolitan life: "Money is concerned only with what is common to all: it asks for the exchange value, it reduces all quality and individuality to the question: How much" (176). Based upon this, the

Through the calculative nature of money a new precision, a certainty in the definition of identities and differences, an unambiguousness in agreements and arrangements has been brought about in the relations of life-elements. (177)

Originally publishing his book in 1903, Simmel grasped the mental state of an urban individual under high capitalism. After the metropolis has been updated by the rise of late-capitalism, the calculating rationality that ensures a sense of predictability and immutability has been seasoned with flexible production and consumption propelled by service industry, which creates and fulfills the desire of customers with most variable services and products. In the new form of urban life, calculating nature differentiates its appearance in the separation of work and leisure. The arrival of the consumer society highlights individualistic consumption, hence tendering the rigid calculating mind under the surface of desire. With his Indian background, leftist tendency, multiple love partners, and a wife who “doesn’t want to possess any one” (199), Sammy is mantled by an image of a defiant ethnic professional capable of seeing through the plight of most non-white citizens and getting beyond the living pattern of petit bourgeois.

The resistant potentiality in Sammy’s representational spaces is largely cut by his demand for calculated safeness. For fear of damages to his secure life, Sammy’s support of a revolt as representational spaces does not lure him to be a participant. It seems that his postcolonial resistance at most is to attend “an Alternative Cabaret in Earl’s Court in the hope of seeing [his] government abused” (234). In such a representational space, Sammy insulates himself from the spatial practices of many non-white neighbors as underclass. His calculation goes on in representational spaces, where his affair with Anna is appropriated for eroticism and accounting business. Both ends miraculously meet the logic of capitalism, as the *consumption* of love and the *production* of capital are fulfilled at the same time. Sammy’s calculating nature is highest manifested in his acceptance of Rafi’s money (213), despite his unwillingness to give Rafi a longer



detainment, and his reluctance to share part of it to Danny (226), whose proletariat class and discriminated color he theoretically identifies with. Accordingly, Sammy's leftist beliefs only win him an ironic title of "radical accountant" (203). Like his father, a politician who believes in socialism yet lives in the way of a feudal patriarch and an upper class, Sammy resembles many middle-class intellectuals in carving out a harmless space capable of defiant imaginations.

With the aid of careful calculation, Sammy consumes spaces of London in a safer and more hedonistic style especially in comparison with the rioting residents in the inner city. The previous Sammy, perhaps a radical ethnic youth in a drifting lifestyle, is juxtaposed by Rosie with the present one, who asks her not to go anywhere because of the "bloody" riot: "When black people were attacked before and defended themselves, you [Sammy] didn't used to stay" (207). Another example of Sammy's turn is shown in his social intercourse. In replying to Rosie's question of whether he will continue his interests in politics in the future, Sammy answers quite ambiguously: "I find more and more that the worst thing about being on the left is the other people you've got on your side" (222). Peer relationship determines one's lived space (representational space), which can further be altered when a different sort of spatial practice (in Sammy's case the middle-class way of life) determines one's life. The leftist people that Sammy hints are probably of different class and educational background after he reaches a higher rank. Also, with a rise in class Sammy accesses different types of consumption, in which the fulfillment of the most private individual needs should be considered most. When a large-scale war against the ruler in a capitalistic society is almost impossible, Sammy's imagination ceases to "change and appropriate" (*PS* 39) the dominated space and turns to a relatively practical way of self-fulfillment, such as discourse generation, culture consumption and material purchase.

If Sammy's spatial practices as an accountant have brought him out of the world of the down-trodden non-white, his residence in the inner city of London reflects a calculated balance between provoking mutability and demarcated security. In his own explanation, the main

reasons for his choice are based upon its cosmopolitan character and cheaper rent (211), which echo well with Kureishi's own account:

My love and fascination for inner London endures. Here there is fluidity and possibilities are unlimited. Here it is possible to avoid your enemies; here everything is available. [. . .] In the inner-city you can barely step in the same street twice, so rapid is human and environmental change. ("Some Time with Stephen" 163)

For the writer as a racialized hybrid, the multiracial inner city provides a shelter from the discriminatory treatment of the whites. At the same time, conflicts, interactions and other cultural activities provide inexhaustible fascinations for his inspiration. Living in the inner city, for Sammy and Kureishi, hence becomes a modernistic strategy to deal with the ephemerality *via* total surrender and hedonism.

Nevertheless, this ideal cannot be achieved without a secure living space as its prerequisite, and an elitist mode of culture consumption outside the inner city yet still within the boundary of London. Both means are still located in the analytical structure for Sammy: the calculating mind and the consumerism. Gentrification, a term of urban sociology that refers to "the upgrading of the class composition of an area" and "the trend of middle class minority" (Savage and Warde 83), illustrates Sammy's calculating choice of housing.<sup>16</sup> Sammy and Rosie, an accountant and a social worker respectfully, belong to "professional and administrative workers" making up most gentrifiers (Savage and Warde 85). With longer education and their cross-cultural love, they are able to develop cosmopolitan values and consequently have a true appreciation of the kaleidoscopic life in the inner city. While the poor residents suffered from the policy of the Conservative government, they would not hide an aversion against the official crush for their neighbors.

Thus it is not surprising that, for the calculating mind of a dissident middle class, the riotous underclass can be safe objects for consumption, as well as places of high cultural taste in London. To achieve this aim Sammy and Rosie's spatial identification with the

social inferiors does not bring the latter into their interpersonal relationship as the screenplay shows.<sup>17</sup> While their underclass neighbors are irritated to riots and have little chance in their daily life to mind “extensive usage of the cultural facilities of central London” (Savage 85), Sammy and Rosie consume the same city in various cultural aspects. Scenic spots like Hammersmith Bridge are the background of their interaction between emotion and intellect; Alternative bookstores, such as “Any Amount of Books” that sells rare books and novels written by women fulfill their alternative style of cultural consumption; Theaters like Royal Court and Earl’s Court give performative entertainments that bring a sense of content for the dissident intellectuals; Colin McCabe’s seminar at the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts) about Derrida, while feeding their appetite for knowledge, is especially a space that the working- or underclass inner city residents least hear about and dream of (233–34). These entertaining spaces with “alternative” colors are elitist spaces that people without a certain degree of knowledge, taste and economic basis cannot afford. An accountant in the service of many cultural workers (205), and a yuppie spending his leisure in the aforesaid places, Sammy has little chance to include the home interiors of the lower class into the “mass fascination” of London (211).

By centralizing the inner city his spatial identifier and including the wealthy part of London in his territory of entertainment, Sammy reterritorializes different parts of this metropolis and weaves them into his representational spaces that forge his own cosmopolitanism. “We love our city and we belong to it. Neither of us are English, we are Londoners you see” (234). It is not hard to find which part of the city Sammy loves and identifies. A cosmopolitan is usually possible within a specific city, as the latter magnetizes and lays out kaleidoscopic cultural commodities and events to serve his or her need. In the process of time-space compression, things and messages lose their localized aura, reproduced to be consumed by the citizens. Sammy’s cosmopolitan view is a mixture of these mutable images and academic discourses, abstracting the perceived and lived space of the dark part of the city into easily-digestible culture snacks. In addition to excluding

the corrupted part of the inner city, Sammy ensures his dissident identity by dissecting himself from the English culture, with its heterogeneity homogenized, space abstracted, and abundance reduced.

Sammy's self-identity as a cosmopolitan of London ironically echoes the hegemonic influence of this city on Britain. The way Londoners separate themselves from the English ("Neither of us are English") is the way England replaces Britain, the city dominates the country, and middle-class ideology mantles the lower class viewpoints. While many leftist scholars criticize that Thatcherism led to a divided Britain characterized as the North and South, London at the South is not one. The part that Sammy loves is cosmopolitan, while the inhospitable part of the same city, also known to him yet purposefully ignored, is related to the plight of many non-whites and materializes as the riotous streets, ablaze buildings and cars. A new version revised by the late-capitalism, Sammy's cosmopolitanism consumes the riots, romanticizing them as revolts, or as Rosie puts it, "an affirmation of the human spirit" (212). Not until his car is burned does he find an internal conflict within his logic. With his car Sammy outclasses the riotous people who vent their anger of poverty against his possession, shattering his solipsist identification with the real inferiors. In this sense, Sammy's curse against his burned car ironically echoes Rafi's tyrannical orderliness and Alice's seemingly conservative claim for civilization and unity.

Sammy's car is decisive in his spatial practice in/from the inner city. Going out with a car keeps him from the frequent disturbances usually produced by residents with another class, while scenes rapidly pass by satisfy his visual consumption. The car also brings Sammy much more mobility than his poor neighbors. As a "private, enclosed, an individual vehicle in a pressing and merely aggregated common flow" (Williams 296), the modern car produces a new space for Sammy as an isolated atom. It endows him with a freedom of movement while eliminates his possibility of touching more deep-layered urban reality.

Sammy's metropolitan identity could be upgraded if his calculating mind gains more fuel of finance. Sammy's new car quickly becomes possible by Rafi's funding, and a new house in Fulham, a

district in London of which the gentrification had been going on since the 60s, is taken into consideration. This proves that beneath all cosmopolitan claims, the low living cost is the decisive factor of his residence in the inner city. Sammy's use of space is a well-calculated consumption of a certain type of a dissident middle class. By means of excluding the down-trodden spatial practices out of his representational spaces, and criticizing the governmental representations of space from his vintage position at the inner city, Sammy does a well-calculated consumption of his beloved London. Promised by Rafi's offering of a large amount of money, Sammy appropriates the inner London as a temporary dwelling for his later socio-spatial climbing.

Spatial contestation with and against strangers occurs in a middle-class house, no matter how cosmopolitan, liberal and defiant against the mainstream values its holder claims. Taking home his spatial incarnation, Sammy wants his home an enclave composed of people he authorized. Rafi and Danny are two strangers not welcomed, but because of Rafi's financial adds, plus his father's gratitude to Danny, all these fissures in his secured space have to be temporarily tolerated as the necessary cost for a future profit. As in my previous discussion, to homogenize a country by middle-class values, Thatcher excludes the lower class out of the inner London, and to ensure his tradition without being tainted by corrupted capitalism, Rafi refused alliances with the Western countries. Both rulers purify their country-home via geographical exclusion. In Sammy's *home*, a site asserted to be a gathering place for the dissidents, exclusion against the strangers goes on. Strangers would not be rejected once they are not within the host's space. Once the stranger appears at the subject's home—a locale supposed to be harmonious, secure, intimate and homogeneous—the politics of distance launches. As Simmel puts it:

The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized, in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him [*sic*], distance means that he [*sic*], who is close

by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near. ("The Stranger" 73)

Thus when Danny is invited by Rafi to Sammy's house, he is deemed a burglar as soon as the ignorant Sammy reaches his home. It is because that the *strangeness* between Danny and he has been *near* enough to ruin the harmony of his home. An upholder of the right of minority and a non-white himself, Sammy just can't wait to see Danny leaving his space. Geography of exclusion also occurs in Rafi's case. In a representational space that would be realized in Sammy's new house, there is "[s]o much room [he and Rosie] could go for days without seeing each other. Or without seeing [Rafi]," "who could have the basement, or dungeon" (252). The internal segregation of the house thus enables the extreme individualist Sammy not only to transform Rafi's physical existence to an abstracted father. It also eliminates the conflicts and dullness result from frequent touch with his spouse, hence keeping his marriage from disintegration. Sammy's usage of home brings to mind Thatcher and Rafi's urge for a homogenizing home-country that resists strangers from outside or quarantines them inside. It further evidences that home is a contesting space, in which a cosmopolitan intellectual becomes exclusionist and the nationalistic governors turn to be oppressors.

Before discussing why Danny's lifestyle and residence create an interstitial space where submission to the capitalistic system is reduced and the possession of spaces at the price of oppressing others is avoided, let us retrospect the space usage of his counterparts. The self-asserted dissidents, just as Rafi, Sammy and the riotous people try to resist the invasion of the flowing modernity either by demarcating their own spaces or venting their anguish temporarily on spaces where they are harassed. Sammy's enclave-like home, Rafi's nationalistic regime and his dream for a family, the rioters' occupation of the streets and looting into others' private spaces are all under the shadow of a sense of insecurity in the age of globalization. In the logic of late capitalism, spaces had been produced either for production or consumption, in many occasions for both ends. Related to this phenomenon is the

division of labor and leisure. Sammy's daily life is a well-calculated consideration of this distinction. A service provider emblematic of the rise of service industry, Sammy fluidizes his labor schedule by means of self-employment. In danger of less earning owing to insecure amount of customers, Sammy insists on freelance, in that it gives him more freedom for cultural activities than others. However, his cultural consumerism ironically binds him, as I have discussed previously, more closely with the late capitalism, which further brings a need for commodities, physical or virtual, at higher levels and of higher prices. Expansion and upgrading of consumption not merely fulfill private desires but also strengthen the individualistic urge for a more consummate space. Rafi's sense of being excluded is an appropriate illustration of this mechanism of individualism. For many other residents of the inner city, works are hard to achieve at the mid-80s, and anger at their derelict space has to be anesthetized via drugs and daily violence. The riots and the accompanying looting, as violent appropriation of the public space, are the most luxurious consumption they could afford under the temporary tolerance of the government. Sammy and the rioters, seemingly diametrically opposed to each other, ensure their space usage at the expense of jeopardizing others' living space.

The dark clouds of modernity do fall on Danny and irritate him, yet his non-violence strategy ensures his using and appropriating the urban spaces. As the spokesman of the kids in the anarchist community, Danny shows the audience an alternative way of living in the capitalistic society. If the urban life of a laborer (whether blue- or white-collar) at the present means a spatialized division between work and entertainment, Danny's *flaneurie* is emancipation from the dichotomized hence abstracted spaces of capitalism, which are best exemplified in the spatial practice under neocapitalism:

[The spatial practice under neocapitalism] embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure). This

association is a paradoxical one, because it includes the most extreme separation between the places its links together. (PS 38)

A commute via Underground is a spatial practice that a commuter usually takes as a medium for acquiring salary. It hides the *separation* between work and leisure by its appointed function of accelerating the accumulation of capital. Making the tube lines his office (217), Danny appropriates the perceived space to be a lived space where people's activities are observed. In so doing, the ephemeral images are more liable to be left in one's mind when the observing subject meets the commuters again and again. The weird finger man that is familiar to Danny but frightens Rafi is just one example of Danny's understanding of strangers in the public space (217). Streets, even in its riotous nightmare, can be a hopeful space in which his interpersonal space is expanded. Bearing his non-violence insistence in mind, Danny has the remains of strength to help the injured Rafi (216), and is consequently involved into his life. In this screenplay Danny's role is very like the author. With similar mind of discriminative observation, Danny witnesses the love between Rafi and Alice, enters Sammy's home, gets the kiss from Rosie, attends Rafi's welcome party and later gets laid with the "downwardly mobile" Rosie (246). Danny is not a flaneur in its original meaning. He goes into others' private space and participates in their lives. After he is back at the waste ground, Danny's typing of daily experiences translates images into language, visual expressions into verbal ones. Just like Kureishi, a critical writer who refuses to give any easy solutions for questions raised in this screenplay, Danny accepts modern ephemerality without saving the efforts in digging out its underlying implication. Although to achieve this, Danny is in a more difficult condition than the author himself. As a lower class he has to live in a more non-materialistic condition in a metropolis, and as a victim of Thatcherism owing to his ethnic and subcultural background, he has to repudiate the violent means to contest a living space. With the caravans his group appropriates open grounds that are inevitably left at the interval of capitalistic exploitation.

In a world overflowing with strangers, fragmented events and



information, modern people strive to locate their uniqueness in such a way as to avoid being "diluted." Since the modern subject is itself a product of multiple spaces, not to mention the innate differences within a sorted-out space, people cannot reserve a value that makes their own identity consistent, and hence look for spaces within or upon which to fasten or fix their identities. However, when they infuse their yearnings for homogeneity into a space they identify with, fissures occur, and to mend these inconsistencies by way of personal beliefs usually leads to some form of oppression. From Thatcher's nostalgic geopolitics to the store-looting in the riotous inner city, from Rafi's domestic tyranny to his being banished by lesbians in the name of liberalism, that is, in the name of "their" *country*, and from the country-home myth characterized by the new right to the home-enclave urged by leftist bourgeoisie, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* delineates spaces ranging from the most macroscopic to the most microscopic. For those who hardly have a chance to evade our now- omnipresent (post)modernity, a nomadic space like that of Danny in this screenplay might be open to experimentation, to the free possibilities of movement and change.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I deeply appreciate contributive suggestions from two commentators on this paper. Any error and insufficiency within my arguments, certainly, shall merely be attributed to the author.

<sup>2</sup> However, this recognition does not exclude partial plans for commodifying urban spaces, through which the economic and ethnic inferiors as residents or laborers are often victimized.

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter *The Production of Space* would be abbreviated as *PS*.

<sup>4</sup> This will later be expounded in Sammy's renounce himself as a British and self-identification with the Londoner.

<sup>5</sup> See <[http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Lefebvreindlaeg\\_21\\_3\\_97v2.html#anchor205216](http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Lefebvreindlaeg_21_3_97v2.html#anchor205216)>.

<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre himself did not apply postmodern, postmodernity or postmodernism in *The Production of Space*, yet the commentators would not forsake finding affinities between the differential space and postmodern traits

that I would explore later on.

<sup>7</sup> Lefebvre has no hesitation in claiming the intimacy between absolute space and representational space for their shared imaginariness: “[I]n every society, absolute space assumes meanings addressed not to the intellect but to the body, meanings conveyed by threats, by sanctions, by a continual putting-to-the-test of the emotions. This space is ‘lived’ rather than conceived, and it is a representational space rather than a representation of space” (*PS* 235–36). In following analyses, we would see its animation on different characters and scenes.

<sup>8</sup> Lefebvre would not equate his differential space with the postmodern complex, since until the end of his life, oppressive aspects of abstract space still prevailed and dissected human beings into functional and hence alienated pieces at the service of capitalism. Prophesizing the emergence of small and local narratives that equate people’s opportunities for making statements, and requesting the deconstruction of a homogenizing modernity, postmodernism shares similar ideal with differential space, and so these two ideas are theoretically juxtaposed (or tentatively equated) in this article for their mutually illuminating dimensions. However, whether this space is realizable or practicable is not the major concern of this paper. For criticisms on differential space, please refer to Rob Shield’s discussions in *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*, page 183–85.

<sup>9</sup> On Lefebvre’s triad, David Harvey might have similar interpretations to mine, for he subdivides categories of *appropriation* and *domination* both under representations of space and representational spaces (220–21). In Lefebvre’s major definitions, appropriation and domination belong to the two moments of space respectively.

<sup>10</sup> As Sammy puts it, his father “did miracles for the country” and “was a freedom fighter.”

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Thatcher, unlike Bhutto, is not involved in this screenplay as a character. However, as her political lecture fused into the sound effect at the near ending, Thatcher’s socio-political strategies act as the most dominating forces that alter the fate of all the characters in this story.

<sup>12</sup> Brixton is an area of South London, part of the London Borough of Lambeth. It is a vibrant inner London suburb and the capital of the Jamaican community of London, hence called the “soul of Black Britain.”

<sup>13</sup> About Kureishi's own stance on the riot, see "Some Time with Stephen," page 137–38.

<sup>14</sup> Danny, a representative of the subcultural ethnic group in this play and a believer of Gandhian non-violence, insists that the uprising shall be called *revolt* instead of *riot*.

<sup>15</sup> Ironically, without these disturbances the government would not pay so much heed to the inner cities. If the oppressed want their voices heard and spaces seen, there seems to be little choice except for an appropriation of the public space so violent that shakes the public sense of security.

<sup>16</sup> Case studies show that cosmopolitanism can be found especially in gentrifying areas: "In a study of two newly gentrifying enclaves in Hackney, one of the poorest boroughs in inner London, in 1988–9, Butler (1991) showed that the residents typically held cosmopolitan values, with positive images of city-living based on a deep dislike of suburban environments, an attachment to the area in which they were living, and strong political aversions to the Conservative Party and reductions in public expenditure. Leisure activities tended to involve sociability, involving quite extensive usage of the cultural facilities of central London. These features distinguished the interviewees, who were predominantly professional and administrative workers, from the average members of their occupational groups; indeed the gentrifiers had higher incomes, longer education and came from higher social classes than the average" (Savage and Warde 85).

<sup>17</sup> Rosie does bring some handicapped children to her flat (201), probably related to her occupation as a social worker. Yet throughout the screenplay, no working class or underclass person joins the circle of her social intercourse, except for Danny, who later becomes her love object.

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## 哈尼夫·庫雷西《山米與蘿西上床》中的空間爭奪

### 摘 要

本文挪用昂希·列斐伏爾的空間三元體（triad）以及大衛·哈維對於現代性的分析，探討哈尼夫·庫雷西的電影劇本及同名電影——《山米與蘿西上床》中現代主體的空間爭奪。哈維指出現代性經驗既追求易變又冀望不變。審視哈維的觀點與列斐伏爾的空間三元體，便可看出空間實踐、空間再現、與再現空間都飽含現代性的雙重性格。據此本文主張劇本中的角色，無論作為壓迫的統治者、政治經濟上的無權者、或是反叛性格強烈的中產階級，都設法爭奪空間，建立認同，以對抗（後）現代中的無常及不確定。本文也指出將官方與民間二分為空間的壓迫者和被壓迫者是可議的。以前述理論觀察本劇兩個國家主義的政權、群情激憤的暴動群眾、以及排他性強烈的左派中產階級，可以理解政府的領導者為何成為私人空間中的被壓迫者，而被壓迫者的代表，例如暴動的下層階級，或是激進的中產階級，如何為了自身利益犧牲或區隔他人空間。最後本文指出，為提供烏托邦式的解決方法，庫雷西創造了一群游牧的次文化者。他們協調現代性中流動及恆常的兩大面向避免空間的爭奪。

關鍵字：空間、昂希·列斐伏爾、三元體、現代性、國家主義、壓迫、大衛·哈維、哈尼夫·庫雷西、次文化