

# Migration, Islam and Masculinities: Transforming Emigration and Immigration Societies

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Elahe Haschemi Yekani, MA

## **Hybrid Crisis? British Muslim Masculinities between Acculturation and Resistance in Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album***

The discourse of a "masculinity in crisis" is one that has focused all too often exclusively on what is considered hegemonic masculinity. The (postmodern) crises of men have been the focus of much recent British literature. Hanif Kureishi, however, is one of the few authors who addresses issues of migration and second generation male Muslims explicitly in this context. His protagonists struggle with an identity between resistance and acculturation. On the one hand, they can be described as longing for what Raewyn Connell has termed the "patriarchal dividend", i.e. their share in male privilege and on the other hand, they have to come to terms with their marginalised status as migrants. Influenced by British popular culture, Kureishi's protagonists nevertheless turn to extremism and an idealised Muslim heritage. These young men actually have not had the experience of migration but were born and raised in Britain. This ambivalence that I describe – with reference to Homi Bhabha – as a "hybrid crisis" is especially rampant in his 1995 novel *The Black Album*. Its protagonist Shahid Hasan can be described as the archetypical Muslim male youth in crisis. However, it is interesting to note that Kureishi's more recent works such as *Intimacy* (1998) or *The Body* (2002) seem to have turned away from this explicit focus on ethnicity and race and deal much more intimately with "male angst". In my paper, I want to focus mainly on the *The Black Album* and its male protagonists while also discussing possible implications of Kureishi's more recent (male) introspection.