

MEENA'S MOCKINGBIRD: FROM HARPER LEE
TO MEERA SYAL

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Abstract

Syal's novel *Anita and Me* describes the childhood of Meena, a young member of the Asian diaspora in Britain in the late 1960s. The article demonstrates how this book draws on Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* for inspiration, and shows how a post-colonial reading of Lee's description of the American South provides a way into a similar reading of Syal. The relationship of the two may then be understood as a post-colonial 'writing back'.

Meera Syal's 1996 novel *Anita and Me* is probably the first work by a woman author of the British Asian community to achieve international recognition, and it very quickly became the subject of academic interest.' It tells the story of Meena Kumar, the daughter of a Punjabi household in the village of Tollington in the English Midlands, who like the author is a second-generation member of the immigrant Indian community. Biographically, the first-person narrator mirrors the author, as the echo in the name (Meera/Meena) suggests: Syal was born in 1963 and brought up in the Staffordshire mining village of Essington, just outside Wolverhampton; although there are no dates for the action of the novel, the references to contemporary children's television place the nine-year-old Meena at the turn of the sixties and seventies, and the fictional Tollington could easily be Essington. The theme is childhood, but specifically childhood against the backdrop of racial diversity and cultural hybridity.

Meena is nine at the beginning of the novel, and the plot follows her through two formative school-years in which events are dominated by the boisterous, dangerous, sexually precocious figure of her neighbour Anita Rutter, three years her senior. Much of the colour of the novel comes from the characterisation of the local personalities, and the description of the decaying working-class community in a village

which has lost its mine. With her perfect command of the Black Country dialect, Meena appears at first sight to be fully adapted to this society, though the compromises she has to make to survive at school and in the "yard" — the space enclosed by the square of former miners' title cottages — create conflicts with the value-systems of her parents. Shyam and Daljit Kumar are educated Indians, liberal in religious questions, but nonetheless strict in their views on parenting by comparison with the other families of the yard. Becoming "best friends" with Anita and thus joint-leader of a gang, an equal with Anita's other mates, Sherrie and "Fat" Sally, gives Meena a greatly enhanced status in the yard, but also stretches the tension between her two cultures close to breaking point.

It is the experience of racism which brings this internal conflict to a head. Sam Lowbridge is a biker with a record of petty crime, but Meena has always felt an affinity to him; when he rails against "dar-kies" at the village fete, she feels a sense of betrayal which school-yard name-calling had never provoked in her, and this is sealed when Sam repeats the offence on the day the old primary school is knocked down — a symbol no doubt of the destruction of childhood innocence.² Anita, by contrast, is impressed by Sam's machismo and in consequence the girls' friendship begins to crumble. Meena's growing disaffection with Anita finally erupts when she overhears Anita tell Sherrie not only that she is now Sam's girlfriend but also that she had stood cheering while Sam's gang of bikers beat up an Asian businessman: "And we went Paki bashing, it was boasting!"³ In a mad, almost suicidal moment of fury, Meena mounts Sherrie's pony, though she has not learned to ride, and breaks a leg.

Hospitalised for almost four months, she has time to distance herself from these strained relationships and discover a more positive companionship, almost a romance, with the terminally ill Robert. Thus, Meena returns to her family with a changed view of life, a determination to pass the forthcoming 11-plus exams and an almost complete disinterest in her former friends. However, a final catharsis is required for her to break free, and this comes on the night before the exam, when Anita's sister Tracey appears panic-stricken at Meena's door. Tracey thinks Anita is in danger and wants Meena to go with her to the woods beside the Big House which, when they were younger, they had thought haunted. What they in fact find here is Anita and Sam in a sexual liaison. While Anita and Tracey fight, Meena is able for the first time to speak openly to Sam about what has happened. The events of the evening climax when Tracey falls into the tadpole pond, and her life is saved only by the intervention of the mysterious

owner of the Big House, who turns out to be an Indian, Harinder Singh. (Singh calls himself Harry in English society, and given that Meena's surname is Kumar, there may be an echo here of the *Jewel in the Crown!*)⁴ Interviewed later by the police, Meena is tempted to give false evidence which would have Sam and Anita convicted of attempted murder, but thinks better of it. She has, she realises, already had her triumph.

Anita and Me has been compared vaguely in reviews and press reports to the 1960 classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee.⁵ It is above all that subjective element, the associations conjured up by the tone of Syal's book, which may first have struck these readers as reminiscent of its more familiar predecessor. Both novels present a self-ironic description of small-town childhood, and a rude awakening to the realities of adult conflicts, always against the background of a racism which at first is only barely understood. In both, the tone swings suddenly, after a long build-up, to a scene of nighttime violence, and it is in this sombre climax that the echoes are loudest. If these parallels require a more objective basis, this is provided by a single explicit reference. When Meena calls on Robert at the hospital and finds he has gone for medical tests, she leaves him a letter, which in the event he does not live to read. Enclosed with it is her parting gift to him, a copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which after all was in the late sixties (and still is) a standard text on the English literature curriculum of British schools.⁶ Meena, still only ten, reports finding it "too dense", but knows it is "supposedly a great learning experience", and threatens "I will test you on chapters four, five and six when we meet next year". In this brief tribute to Harper Lee, which at first sight appears to be made simply in passing, Meera Syal alerts the reader to wider structural and thematic possibilities, establishing at the very least that she was familiar with Lee's novel as she was writing, but probably also that she was fully aware of how it had influenced her.

Harper Lee is another female writer fictionalising what could have been her own childhood, but a generation earlier; the author and the first-person narrator were both born in 1926, and the Maycomb of the novel is very probably a fictional representation of the Alabama town of Monroeville, where the author grew up.⁷ However, the narrator is younger than in *Anita and Me*: here the plot follows Scout through a period of a little over two years between her sixth and ninth birthdays. Scout (Jean Louise Finch), her older brother Jem and their friend Dill are growing up in the conservative and racially segregated society of the American South, under the dispensation which pertained from the

abolition of slavery (1866) to the civil rights movement (from 1954). Their carefree childhood is disturbed when their father, Atticus, becomes defence lawyer to Tom Robinson, a black agricultural worker falsely accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. Though Atticus can demonstrate the patent absurdity of the charge, Tom is convicted by a jury afraid to betray white interests. Despite this verdict, however, the Ewells have been exposed as liars, and Mayella's father Bob Ewell swears revenge. Returning from a Hallowe'en festival, Jem and Scout are attacked in the dark and Jem's arm is broken, but they are saved by the reclusive Boo Radley, who kills Ewell and carries the unconscious Jem home. To save Boo from a publicity which he clearly couldn't cope with, all agree that the official story should be: "Bob Ewell fell on his knife".⁸

Structurally, the plots of the two novels are very similar. Both open in the school summer holidays and extend over a period of about two years. In the first year, both Scout and Meena are preoccupied with the tensions of finding their place as children in their respective societies, and although there are some real points of conflict, their endearingly naïve perspectives reflect a childhood which has been relatively comfortable. Scout may not actually believe in "Hot Steams", nor Meena in witches, but they are more aware of these things than of what is going on in adult society.⁹ In this first part of both novels, the main drama revolves around the imaginary threat emanating from a mysterious house, "the old house" belonging to the Radley family and "the Big House" attached to the now defunct Tollington mine.¹⁰ Jem and Scout are fascinated by the myth that Boo Radley is a dangerous psychopath, locked up by his family after an assault with a pair of scissors, but able to come out at night and stalk the neighbourhood. Anita tells Meena how the inhabitants of the Big House come looking for children, to suck their blood. The children run when they have to pass these houses without adult company, but only Scout and Meena have actually seen or heard the recluse. The climax of this first year comes with a daring excursion into the garden of the forbidden house, and an unsuccessful attempt to see anything through the back window." Here the intertextual echoes are particularly strong, and it is interesting that in *To Kill a Mockingbird* this episode falls in chapter six, but with a prelude in chapter four, precisely the section which Meena particularly highlights in her letter to Robert. The illicit intrusion is interrupted in the one case when Old Mr. Radley appears with his gun, in the other when Singh's dog begins to bark. The children flee. However, both Jem and Meena become caught in a fence and in the struggle to escape, Jem leaves his trousers behind, Meena

her mother's diamond pendant; these incriminating trophies are found and returned by Boo and Singh respectively.

In the second year, however, both novels have a shift of focus. Racial tensions bring the concerns of the adult world home to the children in such a way that they look back and laugh at their earlier fears of hot steams and witches. The imaginary antagonist of the earlier phase is now replaced in their consciousness by a real villain, a figure condemned by the community as "trash", but whereas Bob Ewell is consistently bad, Sam Lowbridge seems until the end — if only to Meena — to be redeemable. The night-time climax, which Syal places in a forest, Lee under the "big oak", has a similar feel in the two novels, possibly because of the method of description: Scout as first-person narrator is trapped inside a Hallowe'en costume and is therefore blind and can only record flashes of what she hears and senses, while Meena reports an illusion of seeing things only in "freeze frames", and thus in both tales we are given an almost stroboscopic view of the action. Jem's broken arm is replaced by Tracey's near drowning, though we recall that *Anita and Me* did have a broken limb at an earlier point, Meena's leg broken in the riding accident. The two halves of the story then come together when the recluse who once was the object of childish fears emerges as the hero in the moment of real danger: both Jem and Tracey are carried to safety by the Boo-figure. Both novels end with a crisis of conscience about the truthful reporting of the incident, but then with a sense of well being, as Scout and Meena can finally set this period of their lives behind them and look to the future with a far more adult perspective than they had at the beginning.

Many smaller echoes can also be found, for example in the characterisation of small-town life, or in individual scenes which in themselves may not be of great importance. Both novels have an encounter with a mad dog, with a similar description of its "drunken walk".¹² Both have an elderly neighbour who dies, Mrs Dubose and Mrs Christmas. Both have a run-in with a slow-witted schoolteacher. Both Scout and Meena have an ongoing battle over clothes: the adult females in the family would like to see them in skirts and dresses, but as amiable tomboys they prefer trousers. Both Scout and Meena have a phase of being disappointed in their fathers, until they discover there is more to them than they knew: Scout finds Atticus "feeble", not able to do any of the interesting things other parents can, but then she discovers to her delight that he is "the deadest shot in Maycomb County"; Meena wishes, in very similar terms, that her father had done something exciting to rival the war exploits which Anita claims

for hers, but then Shyam tells of an incident with a bomb in the period leading up to the partition of India, and Meena is thrilled.¹³ In both novels, the boys hold a urinating competition, "to determine relative distances and respective prowess". In this, Scout is "untalented" and feels left out. By contrast, Anita can do it!¹⁴ Each of these motifs is a milestone on the way to adult perceptions of problems.

Character constellations are also parallel. Scout has lost her mother, but the maid Cal is very much a mother-figure to her, and their relationship is often similar to that between Meena and Daljit. Scout's Aunt Alexandra parallels Meena's Nanima (Punjabi: maternal grandmother), both of whom come to stay indefinitely with the express purpose of helping to bring up the children in the family's tradition, but whereas Aunt Alexandra is at first resented, Meena warms to Nanima at once. The town ladies who come to Alexandra's missionary teas are "aunties" in *Anita and Me* terms, aunties and uncles being the courtesy titles for the Asian friends of Meena's parents, and both Scout and Meena must try to "be a lady" when they visit. Scout dislikes her cousin Francis for much the same reason that Meena dislikes her cousins Pinky and Baby: they conform. As a first love, Dill is represented in the later novel by Robert, but Dill's penchant for telling extravagant tales — the adults would say: lies — has been transferred to Meena herself.

However, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has no character who invites meaningful comparison with the ambivalent title figure Anita. Rather, Anita, like Meena, picks up on aspects of the structurally far simpler role of Scout. The fact that Anita ends up with Sam — and that Meena herself is not sure until the final climax that she is not a little in love with Sam — represents a more sophisticated characterisation than in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, where Scout and her friends, for all their childish mischief, are always on the "right" side and could never have anything in common with the Ewells. Meena's mischief is potentially far more destructive than Scout's, with a tradition of lying and pilfering from Daljit's purse, culminating when, under Anita's spell, she steals from Mr Ormerod's shop; Scout specifically draws the boundary at money, while Anita herself breaks every taboo. It would be too simple to say that Anita is a bad influence on Meena, for Meena clearly wants this influence. Rather, Meena projects fantasies and frustrations onto Anita, using her to overcome her own insecurities; and when she finally rejects Anita, this is a growing-up process in which she is turning her back on a part of herself. Without necessarily wanting to pursue a Freudian analysis here, we might suggest that Anita is for Meena a kind of *alter ego*, personifying things which she is working through in

her own life. If we merge the characters of Anita and Meena, the structural parallels between the two books become far closer. Tracey then becomes Meena's sister, whose accident in the night parallels that of Scout's brother. It is as though, in structural terms, Syal has built two characters out of Lee's one, and in doing so has achieved a characterisation with far greater psychological depths.

The influence of *To Kill a Mockingbird* can also be seen in the perspective and narrative technique of *Anita and Me*. The world is seen through the eyes of a young girl as she is growing up, and the strength of both authors is the skill with which they parody their respective juvenile vernaculars.¹⁵ Sometimes we must distinguish this child from the narrator, who is the same girl grown up; that is, on occasion the narrator does bring an adult perspective to bear on the things she is remembering and alludes to insights which she gained only much later. More often, however, this distance is eliminated as the author simply records what Scout or Meena are aware of at the time of the action, so that the reader sees far more than the narrator ostensibly does. For example, Scout's resentment of what she regards as unfair treatment by Cal when reprimanded for impoliteness to a guest is presented entirely from the child's recalcitrant point of view, but the reader nevertheless discerns the appropriateness of Cal's judgement; similarly, when Meena tries to blame her parents for the fact that she "had" to steal money for sweets, the reader sees the parents' point of view, though it has not been expressed.¹⁶ The reader knows much more than the narrative "I", and this is used to humorous effect, as when Scout cannot understand why Dill might not have a father, or Meena wonders why in the war Anita's father only fought against men named Jerry.¹⁷ In both books, other characters make remarks with sexual implications which go right over the child-narrator's head: we might think of Miss Maudie's insinuation that Miss Stephanie is oversexed, which Scout takes as a reference to Maudie's booming voice, or Meena's innocent adoption of Anita's crudities, which get her into serious trouble when repeated in the presence of the aunties.¹⁸ In general, though, the humour in *Anita and Me* is far more raucous than in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, where the emphasis is more on quiet irony.

One further narrative technique common to both books is the use of the flashback. Both authors find it useful to refer to events from earlier stages in the lives of their protagonists. As these do not fit into the two-year time frame, they are placed as reminiscences in the middle of the action. The effect is to create suspense as the reader has to wait for the conclusion of the drama which has been interrupted, and also to create

a multi-layered effect, defying chronology as memory often does. But the reader must be alert, for the boundaries between flashback and narrative "real time" are not clearly marked. When Scout's Uncle Jack arrives with some packages at Christmas, for example, there is a paragraph inserted that tells of a previous encounter with him. Then the narrative continues with: "What's in those packages?" The page layout might give the impression that this query is part of the reminiscence, but the context makes clear that we are back in the main stream of the narrative.¹⁹ This again is a technique which Syal develops much further than Lee, especially in the first three chapters, where the framework narrative represents the action of a single day, while the flashbacks form the bulk of the text and have far more informative content. Thus we see that the interdependence of these works, which has been demonstrated with regard to content, applies also to questions of style.

So, what is Meena's mockingbird? Motif-historical transmissions are always interesting in themselves, but they become most useful at the point when they allow the message or meaning of the later work to be expounded by reference to the earlier ones. While all authors are indebted to their predecessors, those who invite their readers to pursue an intertextual dialogue raise this debt to the status of a hermeneutical crux. In the case of Harper Lee and Meera Syal, if we wish to go beyond shared motifs and literary techniques to draw theoretical benefit from the obvious relationship which their novels have to each other, a post-colonial approach would appear most productive. Both are technically works of post-colonial literature in terms of authorship and setting, and more importantly, both deal with one of the main themes which post-colonial theory was developed to tackle: racism and the violence which it engenders.

A post-colonial reading of *To Kill a Mockingbird* would focus on the history of slavery within the context of the forces of colonialism which emerged under the British Empire. Of course, the early independence of America means that the Empire is not directly present in the novel; this fact gives American literature a unique status within post-colonial discourse. However, to use Max Dorsinville's terminology, colonialism produces a disparity between a dominating and a dominated culture,²⁰ and the effects of cultural domination continue long after the colonial power has withdrawn. America may have cut its ties with the imperial centre at an early stage, but nonetheless, after independence White America remained the colonising power, present only because of its complicity in the imperial project. Dominating and dominated populations continued to characterise the American society

of the 1930s, when the novel is set, and indeed despite the civil rights movement, still did in 1960, when it was published.

It would miss the mark slightly to say that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel "about" cultural domination; its primary theme is childhood and the gradual awakening of the child's awareness of adult fields of conflict. But the specific conflict which sparks this awakening, the failure of the court system to provide justice for a black defendant, is by no means randomly chosen. There have been many published discussions of the social and political implications of this novel, and it is not within the scope of the present essay to do more than rehearse the main themes. The principal issue is obviously segregation. Although the white majority could no longer operate slavery, they could maintain an economic structure which guaranteed their control of black labour. This, together with the belief in the inherent superiority of the white race, meant that there could be no tolerance for black ambitions. A particular threat to segregation was intermarriage, for which the term miscegenation was coined, as this blurred the distinction between the races. This provides the background to Jem's pity for the mixed children, who belong nowhere and can be accepted nowhere.²¹ More importantly, it explains why Tom's trial could never be a fair one. If he is guilty, he has not only raped a woman but also offended against the whole white population by mixing the bloods. On the other hand, if he is innocent, Mayella has made herself guilty of the unthinkable in offering herself to a black man. Rather than admit this second possibility, the citizens of Maycomb County would prefer to convict an innocent man of a capital offence. Thus the defence of white power is placed above either human dignity or the rule of law. Atticus draws from this a solemn warning: "Don't fool yourselves — it's all adding up and one of these days we're going to have to pay the bill for it".²²

A recurrent theme in the novel is the different "kinds of folks", as Scout and Jem try to make sense of their world by analysing and categorising the characters they meet. Ultimately, Jem is able to expound his theory: "There's four kinds of folks in the world. There's the ordinary kind like us and the neighbours, there's the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes."²³ A whole host of cultural prejudices informs Jem's threefold classification of Maycomb's whites, but for our purposes they represent three possible stances in the Robinson case. The Finches are those prepared to stand up against injustice, even when the victim of injustice is black. The Ewells at the other extreme are filled with a hatred which makes them the authors of

injustice, not least because they perceive that in every sense other than in the formality of race, a man like Tom Robinson is their superior. The Cunninghams are the group in the middle, decent but easily led when a crowd becomes a mob. The way people behave in a group is explored at length, and the Nazi rise to power in Europe, which is studied in Scout's schoolroom, echoes mob-rule in Maycomb. What is particularly interesting here is that, although Jem made no subdivision of his category "Negroes", the novel highlights also distinctions in the black community. The Finch's housemaid, Cal, is "better educated than most coloured folks" and culturally she stands between the two communities. The novel draws attention to her bilingualism: she speaks "nigger-talk" (today we might say Ebonics) and white vernacular; but although these are both non-standard varieties of English, there is clearly a hierarchy, for Scout and Jem scold her for using Black English when she knows "better".²⁴

To Kill a Mockingbird is a study in prejudice, and many of its themes are universal. For an Asian British reader, the iniquities committed against Tom and his people must be reminiscent of those perpetrated by the British in India, and the mindless hatred of Bob Ewell would be familiar even in Britain itself. *Anita and Me* likewise lends itself to a post-colonial interpretation.²⁵ It too is a novel about growing up, and here too it is the experience of racism which jolts the young person unceremoniously into the adult world. *Anita and Me* comes at the race issue from the opposite angle, because author and narrator belong to the ethnic minority. The post-colonialist's catchphrase "writing back" might have a specific applicability here, if we imagine that Lee has attempted to explore what she can most positively do with her white identity in an environment of post-colonial disparities, to which Syal has responded with the view from the opposite shore. As a result, the challenge to racism is far more emotional; where it was Scout's sense of fairness which caused her to question injustices which did not directly affect her, Meena feels personally betrayed by the experience of intolerance. In principle, however, both are grappling with the same issue, how two communities can live together justly when the historical constellations which threw them together were imbued with injustice, and how an individual can behave in this situation when the majority fails.

Of course, the racism suffered by Asians in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s was in no way comparable to that faced by blacks in the Alabama of the 1930s. There was no legally enforced discrimination to compare with the "Jim Crow" laws, no segregation, and no ban on intermarriage: in the novel, Singh's wife is French. Educated Asians

like Shyam had career opportunities far beyond those of their working-class neighbours, though they did not enjoy complete parity with whites on the job market. The overt, violent racism of the skinheads, though terrifying, was rejected by the majority of the population, and a family like the Kumars could be well accepted by most of their neighbours.

However, when we read the novel in the context of colonial history, the parallels with the situation described by Harper Lee become much closer, for the indignities suffered by Indians under the British Raj on the Subcontinent itself were every bit as degrading as those experienced by Black Americans after the abolition of slavery. In the case of India, however, the process of domination is more clearly linked to the British Empire; the dominating culture is that of the Britain in which Meena now lives, and her personal conflict derives directly from this history. The colonial background is expounded several times in the novel, most obviously in those passages where the adults talk about their experiences during the Partition. Shyam, for example, was brought up in Lahore, now Pakistan, and had to flee to India when sectarian fighting erupted after the borders were announced, and all the other aunts and uncles have similar horror stories. Nanima can go back further, remembering British soldiers stealing the family's chickens, or arresting her husband for refusing to fight in what she pointedly calls "their army",²⁶ and the contrast between this and the presentation of Indian history in Meena's school, with its focus on the "Black Hole of Calcutta", is palpable. While the school textbooks attempt to put a positive gloss on the imperial project, however, there are those in the white community who are prepared to be critical. When Meena discovers that a neighbour, Mr Turvey (she calls him Mr Topsy), had served in India for ten years, she is astonished to hear him utter almost the exact words which had just flashed through her own head: "We should never have been there. Criminal it was! Ugly".²⁷

The most decisive single element in Meena's complex identity is the fact of her family's migration, and this too is directly related to the colonial situation. It is Daljit who elucidates this. In her student years, shortly after the independence of India, access to universities in India was expensive, not least because of the bribes required by corrupt officials. She and Shyam were able young scholars, but their success was blocked by the fact that they could not afford the education they needed. They wanted better for their children. "That's why we had to leave, we were poor and clever, a bad combination in India".²⁸ The Asians who came to Britain after 1947 were mainly economic migrants, drawn by the prospects of better educational and career

opportunities, and the perception in Britain was frequently that the British were being asked to carry the poor of the "Third World". What was too easily forgotten was that India is a land with vast natural resources which in the normal order of things ought not to be poor. Before the period of European colonisation, the wealth of the Mughal Empire was proverbial. The extreme poverty which characterised India at the end of the period of British rule and in the decades immediately following independence cannot be divorced from the systematic removal of wealth from India to Britain over the previous two centuries. The Partition of 1947, so badly mishandled by the abdicating Raj, also provides an important part of the background; like Shyam, many migrants were already displaced persons before they left India, and had no reason to remain in parts of the Subcontinent which had never been their home. In short, the presence of an Indian diaspora in Britain is, in Daljit's words, a result of the mess the British left in India; in the words of Atticus, we might say, it is part of the bill which had to be paid.

The process of migration had immediate consequences for the imperial centre. After generations of white emigration to the colonies, Britain now found the situation reversed, and although the impact which black and Asian immigrants would have on British life was small in comparison to the impact of exported British culture in the colonies, the rise of multi-cultural Britain was obviously a disconcerting concept for those who wondered where it might lead to. By the early 1960s, the ethnic minorities were large enough to be conspicuous particularly in the cities, and a white reaction was inevitable. This was the era of Enoch Powell, whose threat of "Rivers of Blood" if "Commonwealth immigrants" were not repatriated made the Asian community feel extremely insecure; when Meena overhears the adults discussing Powell's speech, she asks her mother whether this is why they store old clothes in their cases — a child's naïve expression of genuine fears.²⁹ In this speech, which led to his expulsion from the Conservative Party, Powell gave an ostensibly intellectual depth to British racism, and in particular he expounded the myth that immigration is linked to unemployment, an equation which in fact bears no relation to sociological realities but has an obvious appeal to those who are looking for an outlet for their own resentments. Thus, when Sam directs his anger against "darkies" at the fête, several of the respectable church people appear to encourage him. Here perhaps lies the answer to the question why Syal chose to write about the sixties and seventies; race relations in Britain have moved on since then, and there might seem to be more virtue in writing about the current situation. But in this Syal is not

alone. Hanif Kureshi's screenplay for the 1999 film *East is East*, for example, is also set in the late sixties.³⁰ This decade is interesting for British Asian authors precisely because it represented a new situation: this was a melting-pot period when British pluralism was born.

For Meena, however, the challenge of migration is above all a personal one. As a second-generation migrant she has to cope with a confusion of identities and find her own place within them.³¹ Colonial situations always produce an element of biculturalism; the India which the family left was already partly English-speaking. Besides, we might note that, quite apart from the colonial dynamic, the Kumars are in any case a mixed family in that Shyam is Hindu and Daljit Sikh, both lapsed.³² However, being uprooted and transplanted in a foreign environment represents a far greater cultural discontinuity, one which Syal characterises in the prologue as being "deprived of a history";³³ all around her, Meena sees people whose roots are close at hand, but she seems to have no access to her own. I have suggested elsewhere that migrant literature can be subdivided into emigrant literature and immigrant literature, depending on where the main focus lies;³⁴ using this terminology, *Anita and Me* is immigrant literature, for the emphasis is firmly on the country of arrival. Meena will always be far more English than she is Indian; the question is, how far can she succeed in being Indian too?

The language barrier is a major issue for her here. Language politics are a perennial thorny problem for migrant communities, and in the British Asian context have provoked much debate.³⁵ Meena's parents have always spoken English to her, apparently to help both her and their own integration, with the result that she cannot speak Punjabi. In fact, her parents use Punjabi strategically when they wish to keep something from her. In terms of bilingual theory, then, she is entirely orientated towards the majority language, while her minority language acquisition has been neglected. When she sings the traditional songs Shyam has taught her, the aunts laugh, because she sings Punjabi with a Birmingham accent.³⁶ Being bicultural can be enriching — Meena feels "elevated" when she realises that she has "two Christmases"³⁷ — but without bilingualism there can be no true biculturalism; without Punjabi she cannot even speak to Nanima. It is for this reason that Meena cannot at first embrace her hybridity, as for example Pinky and Baby can.³⁸ Later, she does seek to affirm her Indian heritage, and this goes hand-in-hand with the laborious acquiring of new language skills. Syal's account of Meena's experience could be read as a powerful statement of the reasons why migrant families should not speak the majority language at home.

Meena is constantly confronted by the need to behave differently in the yard and in the home. She must be both English and Indian to survive, and this duality is at the core of her struggle for identity. Like the mixed children Jem pitied, she is somewhere in between. At the beginning of the novel one has the feeling that, apart from her colour, she is completely assimilated to the English yard culture, only reluctantly and imperfectly falling into the Indian role when under her parents' gaze. Later it becomes important to her to discover the Indian part of herself, but fundamentally she will always be more foreign in India than in Britain. Given this dichotomy of belonging, it is not surprising that the themes of place and displacement are important in the novel. At first Meena has little awareness of India — when she imagines Indian streets, what she sees in her mind's eye are English streets with cows — but after learning a great deal from Nanima she is, by the end of the story, eager to visit, though not to live there. With this growing awareness of her other country, Meena begins to understand her earlier sense of incompleteness. She had seen herself as "a bad girl, a mixed-up girl, a girl with no name or no place", troubled by a "sense of displacement I had always carried round like a curse".³⁹ To overcome this, she must decide where she belongs, and part of the ultimate solution to her struggle for self-discovery is the realisation that she is strong enough to belong anywhere: "The place in which I belonged was wherever I stood and there was nothing stopping me simply moving forward and claiming each resting place as home".

Meena's position between two cultures, and as she finally realises, standing above and apart from both, allows her to observe both the English and the Indians from a distanced perspective, and she can be poignantly humorous about both. Cultural comparisons frequently provide light relief, especially when they are directed against her parents. She remarks (ironically!) that Indians are unable to use irony without "signposting the joke with a map and compass to the punchline" or quips that "Punjabis and baking don't go together ... not enough angst and sweat in putting a cake in the oven and taking it out half an hour later".⁴⁰ When the aunties take a heartfelt "no" to be a coy "yes" she wonders why talking to them is always like "doing semaphore in a gale".⁴¹ On the other hand, when the neighbours hear her addressing all her parents' friends as "auntie" and are amazed at the size of her family, the joke is against the neighbours, as when the aunties get into full swing with their clichés about the *gores* who treat their dogs as though they were children.⁴² The moments of laughter at the expense of the English may or may not be strong enough to warrant the designation "inverted racism", but they certainly provide

more than simply light relief: a touch of condescension is a common self-defence mechanism among minorities. Syal describes this as "affectionate laughter, but laughter all the same, tinged with something like revenge".⁴³ Meena, being in-between, can poke this kind of fun at both communities, but only in her own mind, only to the reader, for being in-between it is not easy for her to find anyone to laugh with.

It is often difficult to tell when humour based on cultural difference crosses the boundary of acceptability, but the schoolroom witticism which leads Meena into conflict with her teacher obviously went too far. In response to the question why the Black Country is so-named (correct answer: because of the coal industry), a classmate answers: "Because so many darkies live here, Miss?" The experience of racial sideswipes in *Anita and Me* is not all a result of outright hostility. Meena frequently has to contend with pointed remarks of the kind which intend no real offence but nevertheless cause it, and she does not seem overly troubled by some of the schoolyard name-calling, which she mentions as though it were par for the course.⁴⁴ The Kumars are treated with genuine respect by most of the neighbours, and we may assume that some misunderstandings arise from ignorance rather than hostility. In the case of Anita's mother, Deirdre, however, there is a distinctly frosty atmosphere; it may be a harmless thoughtlessness which leads her to call the Indian family Pakistanis, but there can be nothing harmless about naming her daughter's black poodle Nigger.⁴⁵

Meena is used to all this. She always makes a spirited response, never lets anything pass, but she has learned to live with it. She knows that the other non-whites are bullied at school; she herself is not bullied because at the first sign of trouble she wades in fighting, much to Daljit's distress: "Peter James had said my blood was not red like everybody else's, so I cut my finger to show him it was, and then stabbed his leg just to double check his theory".⁴⁶ These things affect her, but she can cope. The development in her thinking in the course of the novel, however, is precipitated by a series of experiences which put xenophobia on a completely new level. The first of these occurs on the way to the Gurduwara, when her mother stalls the car and Meena has to ask the woman behind to reverse a little. The woman mutters: "Bloody stupid wog. Stupid woggy wog. Stupid".⁴⁷ The second is Sam's outburst at the fete, and again on the day the school is knocked down. What makes these experiences different from all previous ones is that they concern people from whom she would not have expected it. The woman in the car is sweet-faced and elderly; Sam is a friend she trusts. These events are underlined when she hears her parents speak of other, more damaging issues, such as discrimination in job

interviews.⁴⁸ Most upsetting for Meena is her discovery of how quickly those she thinks of as friends can turn against her when madness spreads through a group; and here again, a theme of *To Kill a Mockingbird* becomes central in *Anita and Me*. The cycle climaxes in racial violence, as first Usha, one of her aunties, and then the Indian businessman whom she thought of as "the bank manager", are beaten up. After the encounter with the woman in the car, Meena registers her feelings: "hurt, angry, confused, and horribly powerless because this kind of hatred could not be explained".

An interesting variant on the race dynamic is Deirdre's confusion about her own position *vis-ci-vis* Daljit. Daljit is elegant, sophisticated, self-aware and well liked in the local community. Educationally, Daljit and Shyam are far above the level of most of their mining-community neighbours. Indeed, they are far better educated than most British Asians, and we are reminded of the distinction by which Harper Lee places Cal on a different level to most blacks. Deirdre by contrast is looked on with disdain by most of the women of the yard; as a mother she is inadequate, she is coarse and licentious, a "slag". Since the fete, when Meena and Anita had their first disagreement over Sam, the girls have not seen each other. Deirdre suspects Daljit of stopping Meena from seeing Anita, and with good reason: although there has been no such prohibition, Daljit does indeed disapprove of Anita. What Deirdre cannot fathom is how Daljit could possibly feel superior to her: for Deirdre is white.⁴⁹ This is rather like Tom Robinson feeling sorry for Mayella Ewell. Here we have an element which is present in both novels: the assumption of superiority on the part of certain whites is shipwrecked by Tom's decency, by Cal's education, by Daljit's sheer presence.

Racism may also be the deciding factor in two other scenes in the novel. On the first evening, Deirdre is planning to make fish-fingers. Meena is delighted at the chance for once to eat something different from Daljit's dal, for it is almost a local tradition that, when yard children are called for dinner, any friends they happen to be with will be invited in too. However, the expected invitation does not come: "Deirdre looked me up and down as if making a decision, then turned on her heel and tip-tapped into her yard. ... I wandered slowly back through the yard towards my house, wondering what I had done wrong".⁵⁰ Of course, she has done nothing wrong, and we sense that Deirdre's piercing scrutiny was in fact the process of arriving at a racial judgment. Again, when Anita, Sally and Sherrie pair off with three boys they meet at the fairground, the boy Meena christens "spotty Gary" is at first disappointed to be matched with Sally rather

than with the dazzling Anita, but then he spots Meena and his face registers relief: "He had not got the short straw after all, I knew that it was not because I was too young or badly dressed, it was something else, something about me so offputting, so unimaginable, that I made Fat Sally look like the glittering star prize".⁵¹ What is it that could be so unimaginable? In view of our discussion of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, miscegenation is the word which springs to mind. In both of these passages, Meena is simply confused, feeling ugly, knowing there is a problem but unable to grasp what it might be. The reader fills in the gaps and wonders what Meena does not, whether an anti-Asian intolerance is lurking behind the scenes. We have already identified as a feature of Syal's humour that the reader understands things in Meena's report which Meena herself misses; here the same technique is employed without humour to highlight prejudice and discrimination. Of course, we cannot know this for certain. Possibly Deirdre realises she doesn't have enough fish-fingers to be able to invite Meena in. Perhaps Gary simply decides in the arbitrary manner of adolescence that Sally is more attractive to him than Meena, for whatever reason. But precisely this is the insidious nature of racism, that it is often subliminal, and this can be far more damaging to the victim's self-esteem than outright hostility. On the one hand, when prejudice is present it is impossible to pin it down and achieve clarity, while on the other hand this uncertainty may cause the victim to see discrimination even where it is not in fact present, as indeed happens later in the novel when Meena makes a false accusation because she is expecting racial hostility.⁵² Throughout the early parts of the novel we sense that Meena is disturbed by something which she cannot herself put her finger on. It is only when she has confronted the colour question head-on that she appears to find her own equilibrium. This suggests that, even at the beginning of the novel, racism was a bigger problem to her than she knew.

It is in the essence of racism to deny individuality, to see only the faceless mass, which is easy to hate. Most people in Britain in the sixties and early seventies had had little personal contact with ethnic minorities. Prejudice often has more to do with group identity and second-hand resentments than with actual experience. It follows that prejudice often cannot be sustained when it is challenged by a positive contact with an individual member of the ethnic community which it targets. In this case, either the prejudice must be reassessed, or a fault-line forms in the thinking of those who hold it; one dislikes foreigners, but makes exceptions for those one knows. A repeated theme in *Anita and Me* is the sense on the part of white neighbours that the Kumars

are not "real" Indians. One of the yard mothers, Sandy, says warmly to Daljit: "You're so lovely. You know, I never think of you as, you know, foreign. You're just like one of us".⁵³ This is meant, and received, as a compliment, yet implicit is the assumption that to be foreign is not to be likeable, that the Kumars are acceptable only because they do not conform to the stereotype, a stereotype which remains valid in principle.

This disparity in attitude is most obvious in Meena's relationship to Sam. Sam is genuinely fond of Meena. At the fair ground, early in the novel, he helps her to win a prize at the shooting stall, and she adores him for this kindness; that the target they hit is a stereotyped "grinning black face with a bone in its nose" might be seen as presaging the trouble ahead,⁵⁴ but at this point she sees him as a kindred spirit, misunderstood by the disapproving neighbourhood. At the fair he calls her "littl'un" but clearly he does not view her as a child: to him, she is "the best wench in Tollington",⁵⁵ and the sexually suggestive notes which he leaves for her when she returns from hospital are a clumsy, misguided, but apparently well-intentioned attempt to make things up to her. Yet this is the same youth who can chant at a public meeting: "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour!"⁵⁶ This dichotomy between Sam's awareness of the individual and his perception of the group receives its most poignant expression in Meena's last conversation with him, in the dark forest moments before Tracey's accident.

"Those things you said at the spring fete, what were you trying to do?" I tasted grit, maybe I had ground my molars into dust.

Sam shrugged and dragged his heel along a muddy edge. 'I wanted to make people listen,' he said finally.

'You wanted to hurt people, you mean!' I yelled at him. 'How could you say it, in front of me? My dad? To anyone? How can you believe that shit?'

Sam grabbed me by the wrists and sucked in air and held it. 'When I said them,' he rasped, 'I never meant you, Meena! It was the others, not yow!'

I put my face right up to his; I could smell the smoke on his breath. 'You mean the others like the Bank Manager?'

Sam looked confused.

'The man from the building site. The Indian man. I know you did it. I am the others, Sam. You did mean me.'⁵⁷

In this exchange, we sense that both are telling the truth. Sam really does not mean Meena, for in his mind he has put her in a different category, as though his affection for her places her in his own gang and thus makes her immune to the fate of the "others". But Meena knows that the implications of his invective must have consequences for her

whether he intends it or not. She knows, for example, that she is involved in the fate of Auntie Usha, and also of the "bank manager" though she does not know him; that she is rooted in the Asian community, even if Sam can have no awareness of these constellations. She knows that in expressing racial hatred Sam is siding with others who have no reason to make an exception for her. And she knows that if she were to accept the status of exception she would be betraying her own identity. Sam cannot love her in particular if he hates Asians in general.

The mockingbird motif of Harper Lee's title draws on a piece of Southern folk-wisdom, that there is an almost sacred duty to protect this one particular species. When Atticus gives Jem his first air rifle, he warns him: "Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."⁵⁸ Miss Maudie then explains that mockingbirds do no harm to gardens or crops, but the beauty of their song is a gift, and it would be a sin to kill a creature which lives only to spread joy in the world. This notion becomes a leitmotif throughout the book, reappearing whenever brute force threatens a helpless victim. On the night of Tom Robinson's trial, Scout's memory of the silence of the mockingbirds on a February morning is an omen that the jury is about to bring an unfavourable verdict,⁵⁹ and a solitary "mock" singing its heart out as Jem and Scout leave for the Hallowe'en celebrations represents the innocence which they are to lose in the ensuing violent encounter with Bob Ewell.⁶⁰ Twice in the novel, the mockingbird is employed explicitly as a symbol of the vulnerable, who may so easily be abused unless decency forbids. In his editorial in *The Maycomb Tribune*, Mr Underwood likens Tom's death to "the senseless slaughter of songbirds by hunters and children",⁶¹ explaining in words reminiscent of those of Atticus that it is "a sin to kill cripples". Atticus' own furious condemnation of white "trash" who would take advantage of the social weakness of "negroes" strikes a very similar tone, though without the ornithological metaphor. It returns, however, in the final pages of the book, where Scout explains to Atticus that exposing the reclusive Boo Radley to public attention would be "sort of like shootin' a mocking-bird". The major political theme of the book is *Zivilcourage*, the strength of personality required to defend the disempowered from the danger posed not only by the Ewells of this world, the unambiguous personifications of racial hatred, but even more so by the Cunninghams, the decent people who seem to lose their conscience when a rabble is aroused. The mockingbird stands both for the oppressed creature, be it Torn or Boo, and for the spark of purity

which is extinguished in the hearts of the children as they witness the sin of oppression.

If we are to look for a mockingbird in *Anita and Me*, we may certainly find it in the victims, Auntie Usha and the "bank manager", for the resort to racial violence breaks all standards of decency. But these characters do not take centre stage in the novel. The truly precious thing which is endangered in this tale of self-discovery is Meena's construction of herself. Writing from the perspective of liberal whites, Lee is ultimately on a quest for integrity, and for Scout, integrity means the courage to stand firm against the failures of her own community. "Writing back", Syal's quest is also for integrity, but for a different aspect of integrity, namely the courage to carve out one's own identity and live by it. Common to both is a loss of innocence which shakes the protagonist out of the comfortable, protected world of childhood, throwing the world into disarray and forcing upon her the quest for a new self-understanding. Scout's disillusionment with the world begins with the recognition that what she sees in the society around her "makes you sick"; but in this she is and will always be a helpless observer. For Meena, being directly affected, disillusionment is even more painful, propelled by a sense of broken trust: "In that one moment at the fete when Sam had opened his mouth and let the cider and his single brain cell do the talking, he had taken away my innocence. There was nothing in the world I could do to him that would have the same impact, that would affect him so deeply and for so long."⁶² Meena has learned how quickly friends become tormentors and she has seen this mob instinct in Sam. Her wide-eyed view of the world has gone.

If the courage of one's convictions was the final message of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a novel written from the perspective of the empowered, blame and responsibility are key words in this novel of the disempowered. Sam and Anita are trapped, and in the last analysis, they are pathetic figures. Sam says as much in the forest, predicting that Meena will move on, though he himself never will. In playing the race card, Sam is hitting out against his own frustrations. Following his example, Meena too wishes to hit out and to blame. Then circumstance places in her lap a rare opportunity for real revenge. If she plays her cards well, she can have Sam and Anita both convicted of a serious crime. Not only will they have a stiff penalty to contend with, more importantly they will in their turn be hurt by the sense of betrayal. It seems she can after all do something which will affect Sam "so deeply and for so long". But she does not lie to the police: that would be stooping to their level. Instead she rises sovereign above them. And it seems to be

in this moment of choice that Meena finally breaks free of the hurts which have tormented her. And in the end, she is content. She will not "mourn too much the changing landscape"⁶³ for she has learned that she is strong enough to survive - in Tollington, or wherever she chooses.

Notes

1. Meera Syal, *Anita and Me*, Flamingo (London) 1996. Television directed by Metin Hitseyin 2002. Literature: Rocio G. Davis, "India in Britain: Myths of Childhood in Meera Syal's *Anita and Me*", in: Fernando Galvin & Mercedes Bengoechea (ed.), *On Writing (and) Race in Contemporary Britain*, Universidad de Alcalá 1999, 139-46; Berthold Schoene-Harwood, "Beyond (T)Race: Bildung and Proprioception in Meera Syal's *Anita and Me*", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 34 (1999) 159-168.

2. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 193.

3. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 277.

4. Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown* (part 1 of the *Raj Quartet*), 1966; BBC television with screenplay by Ken Taylor, 1982.

5. Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Heinemann 1960; here cited from the New Windmill edition, Heinemann (London) 1966. The journalistic references to the relationship between the two novels include the following internet publications: Heena J Devina, "Meera Syal's - *Anita and Me*" (book review) at <http://www.indianwomenonline.com/womenhome/leisure/bookpage/anita/bottom.asp> (undated), and Anton Bitel "Anita and Me" (film review) at <http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/reviews/film/AnitaAndMe.htm>, dated 2 December 2002, both consulted 30 December 2002.

6. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 296.

7. The only date given to any part of the action of *To Kill a Mockingbird* fixes Tom Robinson's trial in 1935, at which point Scout is "almost nine".

8. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 279.

9. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 42; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 100.

10. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 15; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 13.

11. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 591; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 126ff.

12. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 98; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 24.

13. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 95, 104; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 66, 76.

14. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 56; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 139f.

15. Davis, "India in Britain" 140f, deals with questions of point of view in *Anita and Me*.

16. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 301; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 21.

17. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 14; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 17.

18. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 51; Syal, *Anita and Me*, 105, 115.

19. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 84.

20. Max Dorsinville, *Caliban without Prospero*, Press Porcepic (Erin, Ontario) 1974.

21. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 167.

22. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 227.

23. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 232.

24. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 131.

25. This has also been addressed by Schoene-Harwood, "Beyond (T)race", but with the focus on the novel as a *Bildungsroman*. I disagree with Schoene-Harwood's view

that Meena's quest for hybridity is doomed to failure; her attempt to embrace the Indian part of her identity towards the end of the novel is not a false start. I also doubt that the accusative in the title of the novel (if - me - really is an accusative here, rather than an emphatic pronoun) signifies the objectification of Meena - for "Anita" must be in the same grammatical case. The novel is called *Anita and Me* quite simply because *Anita and I* would be the wrong register for the vernacular of the "yard". Despite the knocks she has to take, Meena is too strong to be a victim; she will always live life on her own terms.

26. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 209f; my italics.

27. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 222.

28. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 212.

29. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 267. Powell's speech in Birmingham on 20 April 1968 was caricatured in the press with the tag "Rivers of Blood". His actual words were: "Like the Roman [Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.86], I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood."

30. The film *East is East* (Miramax, 1999) was directed by Damien O'Donnell.

31. On the specific problems of identity and biculturalism in Meena's situation, see Alan G. James, *Sikh Children in Britain*, OUP (London) 1974, especially chapter 7. Although rather dated and methodologically superficial, James's book has the merit of relating precisely to the British Sikh situation in the late sixties and early seventies.

32. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 76, 98.

33. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 10.

34. Graeme Dunphy, "Migrant, Emigrant, Immigrant: Recent Developments in Turkish-Dutch Literature", *Neophilologus* 85 (2001) 1-23.

35. See James, *Sikh Children*, chapter 6; Parminder Bhachu, *Parental Education Strategies. The Case of Punjabi Sikhs in Britain*, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick (Coventry) 1985; Rachel Warner, *Bangladesh is my Motherland: A Case Study of Bengali and English Language Development and Use among a Group of Bengali Pupils in Britain*, Minority Rights Group (London) 1992; Michael Marland, *Multilingual Britain: The Educational Challenge*, Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (London) 1987; Gurbachan Singh, *Language, Race and Education*, Jaysons (Birmingham), 1988. Most recently, debate was reignited in September 2002 by an essay contributed by the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, to the volume: Phoebe Griffith (ed.) *Reclaiming Britishness: Living Together after 11 September and the Rise of the Right*, Foreign Policy Centre (London) 2002, in which he suggested Asian families should speak more English at home to aid the process of integration.

36. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 114.

37. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 99.

38. The concept of hybridity was pioneered in post-colonial discourse mainly by Homi Bhabha, for example in: *The Location of Culture*, Routledge (London) 1994. Bhabha uses the term primarily for the ambivalent but inevitable blending of cultures which results from colonial contacts, which characterises literature when, for example, an Indian author adapts elements of English literary traditions; this would apply equally to a diaspora author such as Syal. However, we can also speak of a personal hybridity especially in migrant situations. Despite some reservations, hybridity is normally seen as a positive phenomenon.

39. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 303.

40. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 58, 62.

41. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 114.

42. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 29, 33. "Gore" means "white".

43. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 34.

44. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 97.

45. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 215, 90.

46. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 118.

47. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 97.

48. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 165.

49. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 215.

50. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 55.

51. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 105.

52. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 225.

53. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 29.

54. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 119f.

55. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 314.

56. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 273.

57. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 313f.

58. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 96.

59. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 216.

60. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 261.

61. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 247.

62. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 227.

63. Syal, *Anita and Me*, 303.