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Negotiating faith on the Coventry Road: British-Muslim youth identities in the ‘third space’.

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Negotiating faith on the Coventry Road: British-Muslim youth identities in the ‘third space’.

This article, which arises from three years of ethnographic fieldwork, explores the negotiation of faith, place and social identity amongst British-Muslim youth in one inner-city community in Birmingham, UK. Narratives drawn from fieldwork are brought into a critical dialogue with theoretical discourse about the nature of culture, the built urban environment, youth identities and contextualized religious discourse within the British-Muslim community. The article suggests that a **dynamic definition of culture as an open and ongoing process of meaning making and the utilisation of ‘third space’ thinking are needed to adequately explore the multifaceted contextual religious discourse of British-Muslim youth.** The article seeks to answer a key question: How do urban British-Muslim youth negotiate faith and meaning in a society that increasingly questions their presence and what might their experience have to teach wider society about the impact that contemporary urbanism has on the articulation of personal, political and religious identity?

Keywords: urban space; Muslim youth; third space; contextual religious discourse

Introduction

Just over five years after the London bombings of July 2005 the implications of the attack continue to reverberate in the British psyche. How do urban British-Muslim youth negotiate faith and meaning in a society that increasingly questions their presence? What might their experience have to teach wider society about the impact that contemporary urbanism has on the articulation of personal, political and religious identity? This paper, which arises from my own work as a community minister within the Methodist Church from 2005-2009 building grassroots relationships between Muslim and Christian youth in Small Heath, Birmingham (U.K) represents an attempt to find answers to these two intertwined questions. Since 9/11 and 7/7 enclosed ethnocentric conceptions of culture have been re-asserted within the public imagination and UK government social policy (Hopkins, 2009, 27-39 and Allen, 2010), echoing the primordial conception of culture which shaped the early generations of Euro-American anthropology (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952 and Hearn, 2006). My own experience along the Coventry Road leads me to articulate a dramatically different perspective as the foundation upon which this article is built. In this paper I will present culture as a shared and fluid framework of values, ideas,

language and action, the existential ‘webs of significance’ through which people negotiate personal and communal meaning (Geertz, 1973, 5). This perspective allows me, like Robert Beckford (2004, 53) to see, ‘...culture [as]... something we create...’, or, as Paul Gilroy (1993, 61) notes, ‘...a radically unfinished social process of self-definition and transformation.’ It is this open-ended perspective that characterizes the urban ‘third space’ within which British-Muslim youth along the Coventry Road explore discourses of meaning (Bhabha, 1994 and Baker, 2009).

My immersion as participant observer in the public realm of the Coventry Road from 2006-2009 took two of the forms identified by Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995, 104) and Kathleen and Billie Dewalt (2002, 24): ‘participant as observer’ and ‘observer as participant’. The stories of ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ do not directly correspond with the detailed experience of any single young adult but to the three lines of existential travel amongst the British-Muslim youth I got to know in Small Heath in the years following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the terrorist attacks on London in 2005. Their indicative stories arise from extended passive participant observation in Small Heath Park and leisure centre, unstructured conversations along the Coventry Road and in two local Mosques (one Salafi influenced and the other Sufi influenced) and active participant observation alongside Muslim youth within the grassroots social justice campaigns of the broad based community organizing organisation Birmingham Citizens for a ‘living wage’, the regularisation of the status of asylum seekers and the democratisation of the process of electing a mayor in the city of Birmingham from 2006-2009. As a result of my methodological and ethical approach I have chosen not to report specific conversations. Instead I will attempt to show, as Martin Mcquillan (2000, 9) observes that, ‘The episteme of narrative has a wider relevance outside of its own context.’ The

narrative vignettes that follow, whilst arising from my engagement with Muslim youth in Small Heath, are indicative. They point to three of the contrasting possible futures for British-Muslim youth in search of affirming liberative identities in the third space of the twenty-first century British city.

The stories of ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’

Aysha was born and brought up in Small Heath after her grandparents migrated from Pakistan in the early 1960s. Life for ‘Aysha’ has always been fluid and diverse. She attended the local Roman Catholic Primary School where she became friends with children whose families traced their roots to West Africa, the Caribbean, Ireland and Eastern Europe. ‘Aysha’s family have always been involved in their local Mosque, which is a Sufi influenced worshipping community. Not long after moving to the local Roman Catholic High School in September 2000 ‘Aysha’ discovered the writings of Martin Luther King whose emphasis on partnership, non-violence and social justice resonated with her own understanding of Islam and the openness she encountered at Ghamkol Sharif Mosque.¹ During 2005 ‘Aysha’ was invited to a meeting of a group called ‘Young Citizens’. At the meeting, which was organised by the Citizen Organising Foundation, she met other young Muslims who were keen to relate their faith to campaigns for social justice in Birmingham.² ‘Aysha’ had found a home where the diversity she had always known and the Muslim faith that was precious to her was brought into a practical dialogue with the daily struggles that the people of Small Heath faced. ‘Aysha’s place-faith negotiation revolves around an anti-

¹ Web Site <http://www.ghamkolsharifmasjid.co.uk>, accessed 20 June 2010.

² Web Site <http://www.cof.org.uk> accessed 20 June 2010. The Citizen Organising Foundation (founded in 1989) draws on the principles of community organising first articulated in Chicago by Saul Alinsky during the late 1930s. In 2009 the Citizen Organising Foundation changed its name to Citizens UK.

essentialist spirituality of ‘bridging’ social capital (Putnam, 2000 and Field, 2003) and exemplifies the reformed ‘Western Islam’ articulated by Tariq Ramadan (2004).

‘Abdullah’ was also born in Small Heath although his story is strikingly different from ‘Aysha’s’. Born ‘Joel’ to Baptist parents, Sunday’s meant Church and Sunday School. However from about the age of 14 ‘Joel’ began to feel unsettled at Church. As a Black teenager he couldn’t relate to the images of suburban White teenagers in Sunday School resource packs. Furthermore, ‘Joel’ became increasingly uneasy with what he saw as a lax attitude to morality at Church. It was at Small Heath High School, when ‘Joel’ was 15 that his Muslim friends began to talk to him about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. ‘Joel’ wanted to learn more about the faith of his idealistic friends and one Friday he skipped school to attend ‘*Jummah*’ (Friday prayers) at the local *Salafi* influenced Mosque. What he heard in the Imam’s sermon of a consistent link between faith and morality eventually led to ‘Joel’s conversion to Islam. ‘Joel’ became ‘Abdullah’, a young Birmingham born Muslim who consciously left the faith of his parents as a way of making sense of the alienation he felt from what he saw as ‘half-hearted’ Christian faith within a secular city (Zebiri, 2008). Whilst, as Brice (2010) notes, as a result of his conversion, ‘Abdullah’ (as a Black-British convert) is part of a minority within a minority³ the solidarity he found at Green Lane Mosque offered him the tools to interpret life along the Coventry Road and a sense of self that could not be undermined by the unemployment that greeted him when he left school or the anguish of his devout Christian parents.⁴ If ‘Aysha’s story exemplifies ‘bridging’ social capital then the story of ‘Abdullah’ illustrates the potential of ‘bonding’ social capital (Putnam, 2000 and Field, 2003) to act as a source of existential security in excluded urban communities.

³ Kevin Brice (2010) points to an estimated 5,200 converts to Islam in 2010. Brice further notes that only an estimated 3% of converts were of African-Caribbean descent (2010, 9).

⁴ Details about Green Lane Mosque can be found at <http://www.greenlanemasjid.org>.

‘Moh’s Somalian parents arrived in Small Heath as asylum seekers when he was about ten years old. Here they found a small Somalian community that was triply marginalised: mostly asylum seekers, they had no legal right to work; excluded from the White and Black communities as a result of their Muslim faith and marginalised within the local Muslim community where most Mosques implicitly catered for people of Pakistani/Bangladeshi heritage. In his early teens ‘Moh’ became interested in the dynamic identity offered by the urban hip-hop culture to which many of his friends at Parkview High School introduced him (Rose, 1994). It was through his cross-cultural friendship group and glocal hip-hop that ‘Moh’ began to fashion his own faith identity as a young excluded Somalian Muslim in a majority Pakistani-British community. For him the Black Nationalist rap of Public Enemy, the urban dance music of the Asian Dub Foundation and the British-Muslim rap of Mecca2Medina and Poetic Pilgrimage articulated his own sense of wrestling with the complexities of displacement and belonging.⁵ Bryan S Turner (1994, 91ff) argues that recent advances in technology have made it possible for Islam to be re-fashioned through the vehicle of mass culture as a global faith that engaged with the glocal realities of a globalised world. Turner’s analysis shines a light on the challenge that postmodernity poses to modernist religion and the potential of technology driven mass culture to serve as a tool of culturally relevant and glocal mission. ‘Moh’s ‘hybrid’ spiritual identity is made possible through the advances in referred to by Turner and the vehicle of trans-local hip-hop which, as Tricia Rose notes (1994, 21) is not confined by ethnicity or geography because, ‘Situated at the crossroads of lack and desire, Hip-Hop emerges from the de-industrialization meltdown where social alienation, prophetic imagination and yearning intersect.’ ‘Moh’s’ story is a parable of

⁵ Web sites <http://www.publicenemy.com>, <http://www.Mecca2medina.net>, <http://www.myspace.com/poeticpilgrimage> and <http://www.asiandubfoundation.com/> accessed 23 March 2010.

diaspora, which revolves around his sense of displacement and his family's rejection by other Muslims in Small Heath (Brazier and Mannur, 2003). His 'post-religious' Muslim identity is rooted in his experience of life on the Coventry Road but is also deeply informed by the hybrid 'third space' spirituality he has found as he has begun to record his own rap music (Beaudoin, 1998 and Lynch, 2005).

The stories of 'Aysha', 'Abdullah' and 'Moh' arise from their experience negotiating faith and place along the Coventry Road. However the narratives they exemplify are not confined to them or even to Small Heath. Rather, in a glocal and interwoven urban society they resonate with British-Muslim youth in other contexts and, in the fluid 'third space' of the city, with urban youth whose cultural, ethnic and religious identities may spring from different roots but whose search for meaning leads them down a similar route of self-exploration. Their stories inform three key questions within youth studies. First, are youth a barometer of the 'health' of wider society (Heath et. al., 2009) or, as Angela McRobbie (1994, 156) suggests '...a major point of symbolic investment for society as a whole...'? Second, can the process of faith-place negotiation in which 'Aysha', 'Abdullah' and 'Moh' are engaged be viewed as a linear transition from the dependency of childhood to the independence of adulthood? Bob Coles (2000, 9-10) suggests that this approach over-simplifies youth transition, unreasonably presents it in linear rather than cyclical terms and excludes young people who do not experience the form of stability that it implicitly assumes. Third, do the challenges posed by the existential search of Muslim youth in Small Heath affirm the implicit suggestion within government social policy and certain tabloid newspapers that youth are 'a problem to be solved'? 'Aysha', 'Moh' and 'Abdullah' are among the implied subjects of UK government legislation in relation to 'anti-social behaviour' and rhetoric about 'apathetic youth' on the one hand and, as

young British-Muslims, ‘radicalised youth’ on the other as Spalek (2007) notes.⁶ However, their existential search is not adequately summarised by this broad youth-studies debate. In my own work I have encountered three further influences on their faith-place negotiation. First, debates in Britain about citizenship and the place of faith in the public sphere have shaped ‘Aysha’s’ search for religious meaning (Clark, 2000; Seddon et.al. 2003; Edwards, 2009 and Dinham et. al., 2009). Second ‘Moh’s’ existential journey has been influenced by the increasingly normative cultural hybridity of the urban ‘third space’ and the glocal character of rap music. Third, ‘Abdullah’s’ self-image has been shaped by an alienation from British society that has been fed by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ‘war on terror’ (Abbas, 2005 and Zebiri, 2008) and the 2008 adoption of the ‘Preventing Violent Extremism’ strategy by the British government, which has largely been targeted in majority Muslim communities like Small Heath in relation to the possible ‘radicalisation’ of Muslim youth in the UK.⁷

A further aspect of the journeys upon which ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ are embarked is found in broader debates about the experience of Muslim youth in the UK. An understanding of the ongoing importance of Islam within their negotiation of faith and place distinguishes the experience of British-Muslim youth from that of many other young Britons for whom a formalised religious framework is, arguably more a question of ethnic identification than spiritual nourishment (Day, 2009).

⁶ The British Parliament passed the ‘Anti Social Behaviour Order’ Act in January 2004 giving police and local councils’ authority to impose an Anti Social Behaviour Order on individuals to restrict low level harassment in local neighbourhoods, supplementing the 1999 introduction of the ‘ASBO’. From 1999-2008 a total of 7,300 Anti Social Behaviour Orders were issued.

⁷ Web site <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/sep/08/prevent-strategy-rightwing-racism> accessed 31 March 2010. The Guardian newspaper reported on the attempt to broaden the ‘Prevent’ strategy to encompass right wing political groupings such as the British National party and the English Defence League. Web site <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/mar/30/prevent-islam-muslim-communities> reports the criticism in March 2010 the ‘Prevent’ strategy by members of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee at the House of Commons who suggested that it has stigmatised the British Muslim community.

Andrew Rippin (2005) suggests that secularising modernity had a de-stabilising effect on the articulation of Muslim identities. As a further shift is made towards a more fluid postmodern world the ground moves again, especially for Muslim youth who negotiate meaning in an increasingly liquid which questions their right to belong (Bauman, 2000). Two related factors within this debate have become evident in my work along the Coventry Road.

First, Lewis (2007) and Zebiri (2008, 25-27) argue that religious identity, rather than ethnicity, has become the primary marker of identity amongst increasing numbers of British-Muslim youth in the twenty-first century. Zebiri (2008, 25-27) suggests that the conscious adoption of religious identities has become an increasingly important counterpoint to secularism for young British-Muslims. 2004 Office for National Statistics figures indicate that 32.80% of Muslims in Small Heath defined their ethnicity as Pakistani and 8.60% as Bangladeshi, although accurate figures of people of Somalian heritage are difficult to substantiate as the National Census does not include this as a specific category.⁸ From my own work alongside Muslim youth along the Coventry Road it became clear that certain shops, restaurants, community projects and Mosques implicitly cater for people on the basis of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Somalian ethnicity and appear to exclude people on the same basis. 'Moh's family were marginalised not because they were Muslim but because they were Somalian. Furthermore my own work along the Coventry Road suggests that ethnicity remains a factor in the existential journeys of British-Muslim youth in relation to the street level activism of the far-right B.N.P where physical appearance, dress and a perceived 'Asian identity' rather than religion were noted by youth as the reasons for physical and verbal attacks. In spite of this, as the indicative stories of

⁸ Web Site <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do> accessed 18 February 2011

‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ imply, my own work in the community revealed a picture of a generation for whom ethnicity was no longer fixed and unchanging, nor did it remain the controlling factor in their negotiation of faith and place. Paul Bagguley and Yasmin Hussain (2005, 216) note that, ‘Ethnic identities remain ambivalent...many second-generation individuals identify with being ‘British’ as well as being ‘Pakistani’ or ‘Muslim...’. In a similar vein Jonathan Birt (2009, 216) argues that such identities should be seen as ‘...creative, emerging through the fusion and cross-cutting of multiple identities...’, a view amplified by Ikhlāq Din’s (2006, 71ff) work alongside Muslim youth of Pakistani heritage in Bradford. Whilst recognising the complex and changing influence of ethnicity on the self image of British-Muslim youth my own experience leads me to suggest that for ‘third space’ Muslim youth in Small Heath religion rather than ethnicity has become a controlling actor in the search for an affirming identity in a post 9/11 and 7/7 world.

Second, the practice of cultural crossings amongst Muslim youth has become normative as the story of ‘Moh’ reveals, confirming Peter Hopkins (2009, 27ff) critique of binary approaches to identity which continue to frame British-Muslims as a cultural ‘other’. Such cultural crossings exemplify the dynamic dialogue between the differing existential possibilities that arise within ‘third space’ of contemporary urbanism, as the emergence of British-Muslim hip-hop and the soul/hip-hop fusion *nasheeds* of artists such as Native Deen demonstrates.⁹ Chris Baker (2009, 16) describes the ‘third space’ as, ‘the space produced by the collapse of the previously defining narratives of modernity based on colonialism, class and patriarchy.’ This is

⁹ *Nasheeds* are devotional Islamic songs that are often sung unaccompanied, avoiding accusations of breaking prohibitions on the use of musical instruments, other than the drum. However popular contemporary artists such as Native Deen in the USA use a range of percussion based instruments in their music. It is important to note however that perception that musical instruments are prohibited is universally accepted within the Muslim diaspora is false as Suad Abdul Khabeer (2007, 128-131) notes in ‘*Rep that Islam: The Rhyme and Reason of American Islamic Hip-Hop*’ (The Muslim World, volume 97, January 2007, pp128-141).

an in-between location characterized by multiple possibilities rather than apparently fixed binary identities. ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ in their different ways negotiate faith in this fluid urban world. For ‘Aysha’ the ‘third space’ is evidenced through her engagement with people from other faith communities, trades unions and community projects in the broad based and intra-faith community organising of Birmingham Citizens. ‘Abdullah’s’ movement between identities, names and faiths was an act of individual agency and boundary hopping only made possible in a fluid context where the purchase of binary identification was not total. For ‘Moh’ it is the fluid ‘hybridity’ of normative multiculturalism and the glocal character of rap music that characterizes ‘third space’ movement.

The stories of ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ invite an engagement with Castells (1997) exploration of identity in contemporary urban societies. Castells refers to ‘legitimising’ identities which underwrite prevailing socio-cultural and political norms. Second, there are ‘defensive’ identities, ‘...collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression...usually on the basis of identities that were clearly defined by history, geography or biology.’ (Castells, 1997, 9) Third, Castells speaks of ‘project’ identities which translate defensive resistance into broad-based critiques that re-define existing communal relationships for the express purpose of far reaching social change. ‘Abdullah’s’ story exemplifies the ‘resistance’ identities to which Castells points, although his act of resistance is not premised on the primary identities to which Castells points but on a new found religious identity. ‘Aysha’s’ involvement in community organising, exemplifies Castells’ ‘project’ identity template. ‘Moh’, however, does not fit into Castells neat typology, living, as he does, with the ‘third space’ fluidity of normative diversity. His is a story of resistance, not against secular

Britain but against ethnocentric religio-cultural identities and the articulation of a new dialogical identity.

Living Along the Coventry Road: The Importance of Place and Space

The Coventry Road winds its way through the heart of one of the most multiply deprived local government wards in the UK but the social space which shapes the faith-place negotiation of British-Muslim youth is fluid, not static and multifaceted, not one dimensional. Five key geo-political factors shape the negotiation of faith and identity amongst Muslim youth.

Figure 1: Picturing Small Heath (placed here)

First, Small Heath is a de-industrialised community where employment is largely found in the devalorised public and service sector jobs.¹⁰ In Small Heath the implied link within some youth transition studies between paid employment and personal meaning clashes with the local reality of low pay and unemployment. This is a ‘fourth world’ community (Castells, 1996, 164ff) that remains untouched by urban regeneration and gentrification.¹¹ Second, Small Heath is a defensive community marked by persistent ‘camp mentality’ (Gilroy, 2004). Until recent years a White working class community with a sizeable Black-British minority, Small Heath is now

¹⁰ Web Site, <http://www.birminghameconomy.org.uk> accessed 8 December 2009. In June 2009 the unemployment rate in the Nechells local government ward which includes Small Heath was 24.7%, the second highest in the city of Birmingham. Web Site, <http://www.birminghameconomy.org.uk> accessed 8 December 2009.

¹¹ Web Site, <http://www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk>, accessed 6 December 2009. The 2007 Neighbourhood Statistics for B10 0QH super output area ranks the Coventry Road as the 86th most ‘multiply deprived of 32,482 neighbourhoods in England. 83% of the population are amongst the 5% most deprived in England.

a majority working class Muslim community.¹² Bordered physically by major roads and railways, the neighbourhood is also partially bound by a cultural and religious ‘camp mentality’ that resources ‘bonding social capital’ whilst excluding people from other cultural/religious ‘camps’. Move a mile south and it is the ‘camp mentality’ fostered by the raciological identity politics of the British National Party that bolsters defensive White identities.¹³ In Small Heath it is the wearing of the *niqab* (veil) and the cultural conservatism of *Salafi* Islam that define a safe but enclosed Muslim ‘camp’. Third, Small Heath is a ‘third space’ community (hooks, 1990; Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996 and Baker, 2009). Life for most of the young British-Muslims alongside whom I have worked is not seen in terms of fixed definitions but as the delicate negotiation of blurred and provisional ‘third space’ identities. This negotiation is carried out against a backdrop of exclusionary debates about ‘Britishness’ and belonging in relation to the British-Muslim community which characterized the tenure of the ‘New Labour’ government from 9/11 and 7/7 and the critique of multiculturalism forwarded by the new Conservative British Prime Minister, David Cameron at the beginning of 2011 (Cantle et al, 2001; Modood, 2006 and Suleiman et al, 2009).¹⁴ Fourth, Small Heath is a disconnected community located at the heart of a city that is increasingly divided into communities that are either included in or excluded from the vision described in Birmingham City Council’s 2008 ‘Big City

¹² Web Site, <http://www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk>, accessed 6 December 2009. The 2001 National Census noted that in the ‘super output area’ 41% of people questioned described themselves as Muslim, 38.9% as Christian, 1.5% as Sikh, 1.1% as Hindu and 9.5% as ‘no religion’. In November 2004 25% of people described themselves as ‘White’, 66% as ‘Asian’, and 2.7% as ‘Black’.

¹³ Web site <http://www.bnp.org.uk> accessed 22 July 2010. For a commentary on the BNP see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/bnp> (the online ‘Guardian’ newspaper) accessed 22 July 2010.

¹⁴ During 2004 Trevor Phillips (*The Times*, London: 4 April 2004) the Director of the Commission for Racial Equality, stimulated debate about multiculturalism in Britain. In 2008 the New Labour government instituted a ‘points based’ immigration system for non-European Union nationals. In 2009 Prime Minister Gordon Brown spoke of the need to safeguard ‘British jobs for British workers’, Web site, accessed 9 April 2009, <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/managingmigration>. In February 2011 UK Prime Minister David Cameron spoke of the need to assert a more forthright assimilationist approach to multi-ethnic communities instead what he saw as the failure of proactive or ‘state’ multiculturalism.. Web site <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994> accessed 16 February 2011.

Plan'.¹⁵ However populist depictions of Small Heath as the 'ghetto' are misleading. Small Heath cannot reasonably be compared with the clearly defined ghettos of some cities in the USA (Wilson, 1987 and 1996 and Marcuse and van Kempen, 2000). The community does exemplify excluded urban space but the fixity of 'ghetto language' and the assumption that communities are involuntarily and irreversibly 'set apart' does not reflect the dynamic fluidity of Small Heath. A language of 'disconnection' (Barham, 2004) better exemplifies the city within which Muslim youth negotiate religious meaning where gang-lines, postcodes and major roads cut urban space into neighbouring 'mini-worlds' that often fail to connect.

Tim Gorringer (2002, 1) suggests that, 'To be human is to be placed...to live in this council house, semi-detached, tower block, farmhouse, mansion...These facts...form the fabric of our everyday lives, structuring our memories, determining our attitudes.' As Gorringer implies the faith-place negotiation of Muslim youth in Small Heath is rooted in the spatial specifics of the Coventry Road identified above. It is important therefore to understand how the built environment feeds into the existential questioning of 'Aysha', 'Abdullah' and 'Moh'.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Edward Soja (2000) suggest that space is a dynamic social construction, pregnant with meaning. Soja (2000, 10), like Lefebvre (1991, 38-46) before him, suggests that city-space represents the dialectical interrelation between three socio-spatial configurations. A perceived 'first space' is found in what Soja calls '...materialized spatial practices that work together to produce and reproduce...specific patternings of urbanism as a way of life.' Within a 'second space' the city is, '...conceptualized in imagery, reflexive thought and symbolic representation, a *conceived* space of the imagination...' (2000, 11). It is in

¹⁵ Web Site <http://www.bigcityplan.org.uk> accessed 8 December 2009. This regeneration plan focuses specifically on the city centre and adjacent neighbourhoods.

what Soja (2000, 11) refers to as ‘...lived space’ that a ‘third space’ emerges, ‘...a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency.’ Alongside conceived spatial practice and the perceived representation of space Lefebvre (1991, 42) highlights the central existential significance of ‘representational spaces’ wherein people negotiate with, affirm or subvert hegemonic conceived and perceived space. In a sharp phrase he summarises the hermeneutical significance of such dynamic space, ‘Representational space is alive. It speaks.’

Influenced by the work of Lefebvre, Kim Knott (2005, 9) explores the spatial character of religion, suggesting that it helps to define, produce and reproduce social space through its combination of the ‘...real and imagined, physical and social.’ Knott (2005, 11) speaks of the possibility of transforming the character of social space, even if only temporarily, into a space of representation and existential force, referring to the way in which demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq during 2003 ‘...transformed the streets down which they passed.’ She suggests that the existential capacity of religion remains rootless unless it is moored in physical space, ‘Without and arena of struggle, a space to produce and shape, ideas and beliefs, principles and values remain ephemeral and ungrounded.’ (2005, 11) The ‘arena of struggle’ and the spaces of representation along the Coventry Road arise within an emergent ‘third space’ located in the blurred space between the fixed religious and ethnic identities of modernity and are largely decentred and unregulated as I will indicate below

Drawing on Lefebvre, Soja and Knott I suggest that the complex character of the constructed social space exemplified by the Coventry Road frames but does not determine the existential negotiations of British-Muslim youth, whose agency remains vibrant and undimmed. In the context of this paper the central question therefore

becomes, ‘Where are the spaces of representation to which Lefebvre refers and how do Muslim youth in Small Heath utilise the empowering potential of the ‘third space’ described by Soja?

Negotiating Faith in a Hybrid ‘Third Space’

British-Muslim youth in Small Heath negotiate faith and identity against the backdrop of increasingly hybrid constructed social space. Avtar Brah and Annie Coombes (2000) recognize that contemporary debates about so-called hybrid human identity find their roots in eighteenth century botanical studies of the grafting of one plant onto another to create a new and hybrid plant. Such thinking fuelled the nineteenth century ‘raciological’ categorization of human communities into segregated hierarchies of value and colonial attempts to avoid the so called ‘mixing of the races’ (Baker, 2009, 14 and Brah and Coombes, 2000, 3). It is this narrative of cultural separatism and raciological essentialism that the British National Party and the more recently established English Defence League deploy to critique the growth of dual and hybrid identities in urban Britain.

For Stuart Hall (2003, 244) the culturally hybrid society is marked by intimacy, not isolation; fusion not so-called purity. Whilst, as Pnina Werbner (1997, 1) and Gilroy (2004, 144ff) recognize, so-called cultural hybridity has become an unremarkable descriptor of contemporary urban life it continues to be ‘...powerfully interruptive... [*because of*]...the transgressive power of symbolic hybrids to subvert categorical oppositions...’ (Werbner, 1997, 1). Such so-called hybrid identities disrupt ethnic essentialism because they subvert what Jonathan Friedman (1997, 83) calls the ‘metaphor of purity’, representing what Gilroy (1993, 2) refers to as a ‘litany of impurity’.

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) analysis of the heteroglossial dialogue inherent in language Werbner (1997, 4-5) uses two of Bakhtin's formulations in relation to cultural identities: '...unconscious 'organic' hybridity' and '...conscious intentional hybridity'. The organic unconscious hybrid appropriates ideas, language, music and clothing unreflectively providing, according to Werbner (1997, 5), '...the historical foundation on which aesthetic hybrids build to shock, change, challenge, revitalize...through deliberate, intended fusions of unlike social languages and images.' It is, Werbner, like Nira Yuval-Davis (1999, 94-98), argues, such conscious hybridity (such as that exemplified by 'Moh') that has the potential to resource a new and 'transversal' politics which, not unlike the 'cultural politics of difference' advocated by Iris Marion Young (1990) and Cornel West (1999), holds difference and equality in a dialogical relationship. As Werbner (1997, 8) writes, 'Transversal politics organise and give shape to heteroglossia, without denying or eliminating it.'

The character, potential and challenge of such so-called hybrid identities usefully inform the faith-place negotiation and the blurring of ethnic and religious essentialism amongst Muslim youth in the 'third space' of the Coventry Road. Writing just six years before the end of the twentieth century Homi Bhabha (1994, 1) suggested that, '...we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity' According to Bhabha (1994, 7 and 36) this transitional moment demands an '...insurgent act of cultural translation...' between past and present and between the fact of cultural diversity and the experiential enunciation of lived cultural difference. The 'third space' within which this cultural translation takes place is, therefore, the site of the active negotiation of meaning, or, to use Bhabha's (1994, 37) own words the, '...ambivalent space of enunciation.'

It is against the contested backdrop of resurgent monoculturalism, normative socio-cultural hybridity and ‘third space’ fluidity (in the space produced by the collapse of fixed and forever identities), as well as prescriptive narratives about youth ‘apathy’, ‘anti-social behaviour’ and ‘radicalisation’, that ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ negotiate the relationship between faith and place on the streets of Small Heath. However their existential journeys cannot be divorced from their appropriation of key public spaces along the Coventry Road. Conceived and perceived spaces become complex, fluid and subversive spaces of representation; the ‘ambivalent space[s] of enunciation’ to which Bhabha refers. Gill Valentine (2001, 5) speaks of the way in which ‘the street’ has historically been a site of cultural insurgency for those on the margins and in his seminal reflection on urban space Lefebvre (1991, 59) argued that it, ‘...serves as a tool of thought and action...’ In a similar vein I suggest that this mile long road in Birmingham is not a stretch of inconsequential tarmac, but a concrete narrative that reflects planning decisions, ideologies and class relations. What role do its public spaces perform in the ‘third space’ faith-place negotiations of Muslim youth and where are the spaces of representation in the community through which it runs?

Spaces of Representation in Small Heath

As I have worked in Small Heath I have discovered three examples of the spaces of representation to which Lefebvre (1991) refers. These are the ‘third spaces’ of lived urban life where perceived and conceived social space is re-negotiated and subverted. Along the Coventry Road there are perceived ‘Spaces of Consumption’ which have been re-appropriated by Muslim youth as ‘third space’ spaces of representation. ‘Aysha’ has used the Afiz Saree Centre (an implicitly gendered ‘safe

space' where young Muslim women gather) as a 'third space' site of reflection on and subversion of received understandings of identity. Small Heath Leisure Centre became a 'third space' forum for 'Abdullah' as he wrestled with a previous religious identity which no longer expressed his own faith and a transgressive 'space of representation' within which he could articulate an emergent new Muslim identity. Second, I have encountered 'Defensive Spaces' such as the 'Islamic Vision' book shop on the Coventry Road which provided a safe unregulated 'space of enunciation' and individualised 'third space' existential reflection for 'Abdullah' in the face of the pressures of family, Church, Mosque, alienating narratives of 'Britishness' and confusing cultural hybridity. Alongside her engagement in the dialogical inter-faith community organising of Young Citizens 'Aysha' was able to explore her increasing engagement with people from other faiths and the challenges it posed for her own faith and view of the *Qur'an* in the security of an informal women's study circle which met in the home of one of her friends. My own experience in Small Heath confirms Sardar's (2009, 15-16) suggestion that whilst such spaces are often perceived negatively as self-segregation they can also be seen as '...hopeful space[s]' replete with opportunities for empowering reflexivity. Third, there are what Richard Phillips (2009, 7) calls '...spaces of connection' along the Coventry Road. These 'Dialogical Spaces' are indicative of the 'third space' faith-place negotiation of Muslim youth in Small Heath; places where cultural hybridity subverts fixed binary identities and where the diversity of the community can be explored without difference being denied. It was in Small Heath Park, for example, that 'Moh' first talked about rap music with Black and White school friends and discovered its capacity to transform and affirm his own existential journeying as a 'third space' child of diaspora. It was in the Young Citizens campaign for a 'living wage' at a local bed

factory that ‘Aysha’ began to reflect on the ‘social gospel’ that she had heard of at her Roman Catholic High School and its resonance with the obligation laid on all Muslims to work for social justice within the foundational pillar of *Zakat* (Ramadan, 2004, 88-89 and 192-194) and the related ethical principle of *Khidmah* (service).¹⁶ In Small Heath such dialogical spaces enable the kinds of ‘third space’ cultural crossings that resource the dynamic search for meaning amongst the Muslim youth along the Coventry Road. These are the spaces of self-representation to which (Sardar, 2009, 23ff) refers.

‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ are lived representations of theoretical debates about representation, hybridity and the ‘third space’. Each illustrates the instability of the cultural translation of previously bounded identities disrupting, as they do, ethnic and religious essentialisms and challenging notions of ‘cultural purity’. In their different ways ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ embody the characteristics of the transversal politics described by Werbner and Yuval-Davis. ‘Moh’s discovery of a ‘post-Islamic’ spiritual identity through his engagement with translocal rap music and hip-hop culture exemplifies the conscious organic hybridity referred to by Werbner. In differing ways Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ express the transgression of supposed cultural purity which Werbner suggests characterizes conscious hybridity. However what has become clear as I have worked along the Coventry Road is that none of the Muslim youth whom I have got to know see their negotiation of faith and place as an act of fusion. Rather, theirs is an act of dynamic enunciation; a ‘third space’ negotiation of difference. Is it possible that the Muslim articulation of the *umma* can cast light on the journey of self identification upon which they are embarked? It is to this key question that I now turn.

¹⁶ ‘Zakat’ is one of the ‘Five Pillars’ of Muslim life and refers to the obligation laid on all Muslims to give approximately 2.5% of their income to those who are socially excluded, locally or internationally.

Urban Space and a Glocal *Umma*

The stories of ‘Aysha’, ‘Moh’ and ‘Abdullah’ exemplify defensive, inclusive and hybrid negotiations of the relationship between place and religious identity that are framed, but not determined by the nature of social space in Small Heath. Each reveals a dramatically different understanding of the socio-spatial *Qur’anic* principle of the *umma*: the idealised glocal Muslim community that places the localised negotiation of faith in a global framework (The *Qur’an Sura* 2.143, Ramadan, 2004, 86ff and Sardar, 2009, 22). The foundational Muslim statement of faith, the *shahada*, speaks of the unity of God and the primary importance of the Prophethood of Muhammad. Whilst, as a doctrinal template the *shahada* can be said to represent a full summary of Muslim belief, I want to affirm Ramadan’s suggestion that the *umma* represents implicit socio-spatial outworking of the doctrinal principles it enunciates. It affirms the unity of all Muslims and exerts a glocal ethical principle that arises from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad in the *Hadith*, ‘The *umma* is one body; if anyone of its members is sick, the whole body experiences the fever and the affliction...’ (Ramadan, 2004, 90).

In the ‘third space’ of the Coventry Road it is important to ask if the *umma* is inherently inward looking, premised on a form of religious or even ethnic essentialism. Ramadan (2004, 91 and 90) argues strongly that unless engagement within the *umma* is characterized by the ‘...standing on the side of justice and human dignity in all circumstances, in relation to Muslims and non-Muslims alike...’ it is reduced to, ‘...a blood bond or tribal attachment in total opposition to the universal message of Islam.’ For Ramadan (2009, 186-187) the principled glocalism of the *umma* challenges all forms of xenophobia and essentialism, ‘From the outset...the universality of Islamic principles never meant standardizing cultures but... respecting

the valuable variety of human and social experience.’ How might such a perspective fit within the ‘third space’ experienced by ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’?

Peter Mandaville (2001, 59 and 85) speaks of the *umma* as a diasporic and discursive space that is more fluid than Ramadan (2004 and 2009) implies and just as influenced by the dynamics of migration, travel and settlement as it is by theological principles. Hence, Mandaville (2001, 87) writes, ‘When a theory travels it splits, multiplies and reproduces...then there will be multiple and often competing discourses on the nature of the ‘true’ idea.’ With this in mind, in an era of multifaceted globalisation I have encountered a range of such discourses, each reasserting but re-interpreting the primacy of the *umma* amongst marginalised Muslim youth in Small Heath. Such Coventry Road *umma*’s are fluid and multi-dimensional ‘third space’ responses to normative multiculturalism and to excluding narratives of citizenship in a post 9/11 British context. However, speaking about her research amongst Muslims in Manchester just after 9/11 Werbner (2002) highlighted a renewed uncertainty about a multicultural *umma* in the UK because of a resurgent assertion of the Muslim community as culturally ‘other’.¹⁷ Werbner’s reflections arose against the backdrop of violent unrest in majority Muslim communities in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley during 2001, language by David Blunkett, the then Home Secretary, about unspecified British cultural norms and the resultant community cohesion policy agenda stimulated by the Cattle Report.¹⁸ Almost a decade later in the face of the London bombings on 7/7, the Iraq war, renewed fighting in Afghanistan and the emergence of the hard-right English Defence League during 2009 the tensions around space, faith, belonging and *umma* have arguably

¹⁷ Web site, <http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/werbner.htm>, Pnina Werbner, ‘The Predicament of Diaspora and Millennial Islam Reflections in the Aftermath of September 11’, Public Lecture Given at the University of California, Irvine, in February 2002. A version of the paper also appeared in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 14/12/01, pp 31-32, accessed 6 January 2011.

¹⁸ Web site http://bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1699847.stm accessed 6 January 2011.

become more entrenched. In Small Heath I have encountered defensive visions of the *umma*, embraced by ‘Abdullah’, that are shaped by *Salafi* Islam, inclusive understandings of the *umma*, adopted by ‘Aysha’, that are shaped by the activism of community organizing and hybrid depictions of a ‘post-Islamic’ *umma*, such as that articulated by ‘Moh’, expressed through cross-cultural rap music: all contextual reflections on the nature of faith and identity in this defensive yet ‘third space’ fourth-world community. How do these varying visions of the *umma* feed into the ways in which British-Muslim youth along the Coventry Road negotiate the relationship between place, faith and identity?.

Negotiating Faith: Patterns of Earthed Discourse

Contextual theology is a model of theological reflection that emerged in the global ‘South’ and marginalised urban communities in the global ‘North’ during the 1960s. Linear models of classical Christian theology, which seek to apply the universal truths drawn from tradition or scripture to modern life, are interrogated on the basis of contemporary political, cultural and economic life. As Robert Schreiter (1985, 17) suggests contextual theologies depict, ‘...the community as an author of local theology...’ My own work in Small Heath has uncovered alienation amongst Muslim youth from the de-contextualized translation of dominant understandings of Islam into the urban ‘third space’ of inner-city Birmingham. Are they becoming the ‘local’ theologians to which Schreiter points? The inductive emphasis within contextual theology does not find a clear echo in Islam, with the partial exception of Farid Esack (1997 + 1999) in South Africa and more recently Hamid Dabashi (2008) in the USA. However I would suggest that the contextual negotiation of faith, place and identity amongst British-Muslim youth in Small Heath can be aligned with three diverse

models of contemporary Muslim religious and sociological analysis that resemble the contours of contextual theology identified above.

First, there is an increasing body of work by contemporary Muslim intellectuals, either in the field of Islamic studies or geography and sociology. Figures like Tariq Ramadan (2004 + 2009) in a European context and Mahmoud Ayoub (2007) in the USA utilise an adaptation approach to engage orthodox Islam in critical dialogue with late/postmodern European and North American life. Both figures, I would suggest, can be seen as the public intellectuals of whom Edward Said and Cornel West speak whose purpose, as Said (1994, 13) notes, is to, ‘advance human freedom.’ In the field of sociology figures like Tahir Abbas (2005) and Tariq Modood (2006, 2007 + 2008) explore the dynamic search for an affirming and culturally relevant British-Muslim identity and a progressive multiculturalism in the face of an increasingly ‘racialized’ post 7/7 British political agenda characterized by homogenizing community cohesion narratives (Cantle et al, 2006). For both Abbas and Modood the multifaceted British-Muslim experience provides frames their analyses of multiculturalism, identity and citizenship which implicitly prioritise the experience of marginalized Muslim communities and potential strategies for proactive and inclusive civic activism amongst the British-Muslim community.

Second, in a UK context, the last decade has witnessed the launch of a range of independent para-Muslim networks that seek to engage with the existential search of young British-Muslims. The internet based network ‘Radical Middleway’ for example, which was established in 2005, has sought to forge an inclusive model of orthodox Islam that adapts traditional Muslim teaching to a twenty-first century UK context.¹⁹ In a similar manner the journalist Fareena Alam, former editor of the

¹⁹ Web site <http://www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk> accessed 27 July 2010.

popular magazine *Q News* until its closure in 2006, argued the case for a dialogical British Islam. Such initiatives have successfully engaged a young professional British-Muslim audience in their exploration of a contextualized Islam.²⁰ However, it has become clear from my own fieldwork that such initiatives are largely viewed as projects which arise from and relate to professional middle-class Muslim perspectives and interests and not the concerns of socially excluded Muslim youth in fourth world inner city neighbourhoods like Small Heath. Furthermore, such approaches are viewed with suspicion as implicit allies of the UK government's community cohesion agenda and its 'Preventing Violent Extremism' strategy.²¹

Third, the emergence of British-Muslim rap music and hip-hop culture over the last ten years, the growth of community radio stations and Islamic bookshops and study circles have begun to articulate an alternative 'bottom-up' mode of decentred and individualised inner-city British-Muslim discourse that engages in a more credible way with the existential questions of Muslim youth like 'Moh', 'Aysha' and 'Abdullah' (Sharma et.al, 1996 and Khabeer, 2007). British-Muslim graffiti artists, most notably the Birmingham based Mohammed 'Aerosol' Ali and bands like 'Mecca2medina' and 'Poetic Pilgrimage' have begun to hint at a new contextualized urban British-Islam and established multi-faith bands such as 'Asian Dub Foundation' have engaged with the multifaceted experience of a broader urban British-Asian community since the middle of the 1990s.²²

²⁰ Web site <http://www.q-news.co.uk> accessed 27 July 2010.

²¹ Web site www.preventingviolentextremism.org, accessed 27 July 2010.

²² Web sites <http://www.aerosolarabic.com>, accessed 2 August 2010; <http://www.mecca2medina.net>, accessed 27 July 2010, <http://www.myspace.com/poeticpilgrimage> accessed 27 July 2010 and <http://www.asiandubfoundation.com> accessed 28 July 2010.

The graffiti art of Mohammed ‘Aerosol’ Ali marks a number of walls on side streets branching off the Coventry Road.²³ On bear brick Ali depicts global political struggles for liberation in Gaza and combines quotations from the *Qur’an* with Arabic calligraphy and street art style, offering a visual illustration of ‘third space’ religious discourse. The sides of shops and shared public space in Small Heath have become a canvas for contextualized British-Muslim theological reflection which is not controlled by an institutional community cohesion agenda on the one hand or formalised Muslim authority on the other. Ali (2010) suggests that his murals are an attempt to challenge notions of a ‘clash of civilisations’. Ali writes of the importance of dialogical urban spiritualities, ‘For the average Joe or Jane who travels to work...and for local residents who walk past a particular mural every day, I want the walls that carry my messages to come alive and remind people of these shared principles.’²⁴ A second example of decentred urban Muslim theological reflection which I encountered as I worked along the Coventry Road is that found in the community radio station ‘Unity FM’ which emerged out of the former ‘Radio Ramadan’ in 2006 and broadcasts a range of devotional and discussion based programmes exclusively to inner-city local government wards in Birmingham.²⁵ A third forum of such individualised reflection amongst the Muslim youth in Small Heath is found in the Islamic bookshops along the Coventry Road, such as the Islamic Presentation Centre International’s ‘Islamic Vision’, which has its roots in the ministry of the South African religious teacher Ahmed Deedat.²⁶ Unlike the rap music

²³ See web site, <http://www.aerosolarabic.com>, a B.B.C 1 television interview article at http://www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham/content/articles/2006/08/21/blast06_mohammed_ali_followup_feature.shtml and a B.B.C. 2 television interview on the current affairs programme ‘Newsnight’ in April 2009 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/8012054.stm>, all accessed 30 December 2010.

²⁴ See <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=28764&lan=en&sid=1&sp=0&isNew=1>, accessed 29 December 2010.

²⁵ See <http://www.unityfm.net> accessed 30 December 2010.

²⁶ See <http://www.ipci.org.uk/index2.htm> accessed 30 December 2010.

of artists like Poetic Pilgrimage, the graffiti art of Mohammed ‘Aerosol’ Ali and the wide-ranging programming of ‘Unity FM’ the books, D.V.D’s and C.D’s stocked by such bookshops provide resources that arise exclusively from an enclosed Islamic perspective that did not engage with the ‘third space’ realities of many of Muslim youth I got to know between 2006-2009. In spite of this the bookshop provides an affirming ‘walk-in’ space for alienated urban youth like ‘Abdullah’ resourcing his own individualised exploration of Islam and bolstering his sense of worth as a Black-British Muslim convert through the bonding social capital that such a context fosters.

The varied existential journeys upon which ‘Aysha’, ‘Moh’ and ‘Abdullah’ are embarked subvert the false binary simplicity of fixed ‘either-or’ identities. Their stories affirm Hopkins (2009, 27ff) critique of ‘closed’ depictions of British-Muslim communities and my own understanding of ‘third space’ culture as a dynamic and provisional process of meaning-making. All three are engaged in patterns of contextual theological reflection, exemplifying the multifaceted religious discourse that arises from the complex built environment of the Coventry Road and the dynamic relationship between place, global influence, context-specific youth transitions and contrasting experiences of the urban environment. My own experience along the Coventry Road confirms Grace Davie’s (2002) and Peter Berger’s (1999) questioning of classical articulations of the ‘secularisation thesis’. For the young British-Muslims I have known in the ‘third space’ of Small Heath religious faith is not an expression of irrationality or the ‘sigh of an oppressed creature’ but a springboard for contextual existential questioning. As I have got to know Muslim youth in this neighbourhood the central significance of religious faith as a source of affirming identity, empowerment, subjectivity and civic activism has become apparent. This process of self actualisation is informed by the multifaceted character of life on the Coventry

Road, normative patterns of so-called cultural hybridity, the blurred world of the ‘third space’ and the wider trans-local social processes which frame but do not determine life in this dynamic community.

Conclusion

The street is a critically important site of self definition for young British-Muslims, arguably more important than family, school or Mosque. Whilst Small Heath is one of the most ‘multiply deprived’ ‘fourth world’ neighbourhoods in England and Wales the stories of ‘Aysha’, ‘Moh’ and ‘Abdullah’ reveal it to be a dynamic socially constructed space replete with multiple possibilities. As the stories of ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ illustrate, the pattern of faith-place negotiations amongst British-Muslim youth is varied and dynamic. The same social space acts as the site for diverse models of faith identity that intersect with wider socio-economic and cultural debates, critiquing homogenising depictions of Muslim youth as either politically apathetic or increasingly radicalised. As I have shown in this paper religion remains a key marker of personal and social identity for urban British-Muslim youth even though many of the young people whom I have got to know do not ‘belong’ in the same way as their parents or grandparents. The Coventry Road snakes its way through a neighbourhood that has not witnessed the regeneration or gentrification experienced in some other inner-city communities and whilst this economic backdrop influences the faith-place negotiation of Muslim youth it is not a determining factor on their existential journey. ‘Aysha’, ‘Abdullah’ and ‘Moh’ experience the interpret the ‘third space’ of the Coventry Road in different ways but all three remain the active and empowered agents of their own search for meaning, value, identity and truth. A constructive engagement with their stories can resource a far deeper and more

constructive understanding of the existential journeying of Muslim youth and a more nuanced insight into the possible future of the British-Muslim community than currently exists.

(7,517 words excluding title, abstract and bibliography)

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