



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Echahid Hamma Lakhdar University, Eloued
Faculty of Arts and Languages
Department of Arts and English Language



The Concept of Britishness in Contemporary British Literature " a Case Study of " The Buddha of Suburbia " by Hanif Kureishi.

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Submitted By:

LIFA Sara.

AYACHI AMOR Nesrine

Supervisor:

Mr. YUCEF Kouider

Board of Examiners

Chairman/President : Mr. Mohammed Abid Chouchani University, Eloued

Supervisor: Mr. Youcef Kouider University, Eloued

Examiner: Mr. Nacer Dida University, Eloued

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Dedication

We dedicate this work to our dearest parents who are the reason behind our success; we could never deny their love, encouragement and prayers. They provide us with strength and hope all the time.

To all our teachers who we never deny their seeds that made us reach our goals.

To all our beloved families especially our lovely brothers and sisters who are always ready for support in every way they have provided it.

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Abstract

The present study attempts to shed light on the concept of Britishness in Hanif Kureishi's novel " *The Buddha of Suburbia*" (1990). In multicultural Britain, immigrants are obliged to look for a certain identity since they are fluctuated between their ethnic background and their failure to assimilate the British culture. Thus, this study aims for analyzing the immigrants non-belonging issue and identity crisis in Britain during the late twentieth century, and their attempt to ascend their social status. Hence, in this research work, this thematic study, based on the theories of Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall, is conducted to explore how does Hanif Kureishi ,through his novel , portray the concept of *Britishness*. In fact, the novel is written to reveal that the British identity does not only imply the white citizens, but rather it involves the other regardless identity, race or religion. Therefore, the new concept of Britishness is represented in *The Hybrid British Citizen*.

Key-words: Britishness , contemporary British literature, hybridity ,identity , multiculturalism, race.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

In the late twentieth century, the texture of the British society has extremely overlapped by so many people with different ethnicities, cultures, identities, religions and languages. The British society becomes very **multicultural** to involve a mixture of the first and second generation immigrants and other English minorities. This multiculturalism is due to the great wave of immigration from different parts of the world into Britain and mainly from the East. After this wave of immigration, racism is widely spread in the British society at that time. Thus, those immigrants struggle a lot to find out their identities simultaneously giving birth to the new notion of **being British**, in another word **redefining the concept of Britishness**.

Contemporary British literature, during this period, helps the immigrant writers construct their identities. As a result, many immigrant writers employ many themes and techniques in their literary works so as to prove their existence. Among them, **Salman Rushdie's** *Midnight's Children* (1981), **Zadie Smith's** *White Teeth* (1996) and **Sam Selvon's** *Lonely Londoners* (1956). We can have a clear and an accurate idea about this ethnic and cultural variety of the contemporary British literature if we just have a quick review at the British Council's Literature Internet site to find not only writers but also painters, film makers or musicians from various ethnic backgrounds.

In this sense, Hanif Kureishi enters the literary scene as one of the great immigrant writers who adopts the theme of "**Britishness**" (*what means to be British*) in contemporary Britain. Through his works, Kureishi describes the situations of immigrants in multicultural Britain. On the top of that, Hanif Kureishi

's novel " The Buddha of Suburbia "is considered as one of the great texts to shed light on the experiences of the first and second generation immigrants who are **in search for their identities**. In this regard, The Buddha of Suburbia is precisely focusing on the protagonist, Karim Amir, a British Indian teenager who struggles with his hybrid identity to find out who he really is.

Furthermore, Kureishi casts the light on the living conditions of the immigrants in 1970s in a multicultural Britain. He attempts to illustrate the inner conflicts that most characters suffer from to construct their identities . Hence, the practices of **racism** and discrimination that they face during their lives .Moreover, the problem of immigrants in The Buddha of Suburbia (1990) presents the writer's experience in the society from which most of characters are taken .

We select this topic "The Concept of Britishness in Contemporary British Literature " a case study of " The Buddha of Suburbia " by Hanif Kureishi , specifically , due to many reasons. First of all, as students specialized in literature, we are motivated to discover the new insights in contemporary British literature. Secondly, the striking success that "The Buddha of Suburbia " has achieved in few years , which enables Kureishi win the Whitbread First Novel Award in 1990 , has attracted us to choose it as a case study.

The objective of this study is to show the struggle of the immigrants to find out their identities in contemporary Britain and explore a new definition for the concept of Britishness .

Therefore, it is the aim of this dissertation to investigate how Kureishi tackles the serious issue of the concept of Britishness through his main character, Karim, as a dangling man in the British society. It also aims to analyze the selected work by describing Karim's journey to identify his identity and belonging.

The present study intends to answer the following questions:

- From what perspective does the novel portray the concept of Britishness?
- How does the novel reveal a new notion for the concept of Britishness?

This thematic study is based on the analysis of actions, thoughts and behaviors of the major characters in *The Buddha of Suburbia* to express the vision towards the new way of being British. Hence, the present research work adopts the theory of Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall since it may be adequate and appropriate for the subject under study.

This dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter on its turn is divided into two sections; the first one gives a glance at contemporary Britain as well as the theme of multiculturalism in addition to a general view about contemporary British literature focusing on the novel , its techniques and styles. Hence, it endows with the most prominent British and immigrant writers at that period and their major works. In addition to providing a detailed biography about Hanif Kueishi and a view on his successful novel "*The Buddha of Suburbia*". Besides , the second section of the chapter intends to define the concept of Britishness by giving a slight comparison between Britishness and Englishness. However, the second chapter is the practical one ; it starts with the literary analysis of *The Buddha of Suburbia* beginning with an idea about the plot accompanied with an analysis for its main characters, setting and themes. Finally, this chapter shows how the main character Karim portrays the new sort of the British man formed out of the hybrid identity.

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Chapter One

1. The Concept of Britishness in Contemporary British

Literature

Introduction

During the twentieth century, there is an urgent need to redefine the concept of Britishness. Contemporary British literature has witnessed a great literary debate against the traditional definition of the concept. In addition, contemporary British writers play their roles in form of fiction, drama, poetryetc. In this sense, contemporary British writers give the readers vivid insights about their understanding of the concept.

This chapter attempts to draw a clear line to give an overview about contemporary British literature in the contemporary multicultural Britain. Besides, the life and works of Hanif Kureishi as a contemporary writer residing in England is discussed with a stress on his major works which touch upon the theme of Britishness. Among his works, we spot light on the target novel to have an idea about its context.

This first part of the work is also concerned with the idea of Britishness in a great detail as approached from the perspective of different scholars and authors. In addition, the difference between Englishness and Britishness as well as basic concepts essential for the correct understanding of Britishness are deliberated. These terms are the concept of identity and British citizenship. Finally, a brief illustration about the theories of identity by Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall which are adopted through this work is also mentioned.

Section One:

A General Overview about Contemporary British Literature

1.1.1 Contemporary Britain

Since 1950s, many aspects of the British society have changed dramatically, including structure of society and life styles and as a result to these changes, the second half of the twentieth century, is considered as a period of prosperity in Britain (Shevchenko 201). Britain becomes less conservative witnessing a developing diversity in society, religion and ethnicity. According to Shevchenko (201), here are some of these prominent changes:

❖ **The appearance of the countercultural movement in 1960's:** It is a subculture whose values and norms were different from the mainstream culture: hippie (the Beatles). Its leaders reject to follow the social codes of the older generations, as an example: The mini-skirt for women and long hair for men.

❖ **The mass-immigration from colonies settles after World War Two:** It has also greatly changed the British society.

❖ **Different economic problems like inflation and unemployment have made the British social problems more severe.**

❖ **The striking success of the conservative party in 1979:** This party is by the leadership of **Margaret Thatcher (Iron lady)**, Britain's first Prime Minister. It comes against the trade union and the Soviet Union. Her government helps revive the economy of the country and strengths its foreign policy.

Thus, at the beginning of the third millennium and by witnessing various events, Britain becomes a multicultural nation (Shevchenko 202).

1.1.2 Multiculturalism in Britain

Before we elaborate on the notion of multiculturalism, it seems better to determine the concept of culture as multiculturalism refers to the different cultures that meet, co-exist and influence each other. Edward Taylor clearly defines the notion of culture, he argues that " Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society "(1).

Contemporary Britain often refers to as a multicultural nation that consists of a number of cultures including ethnic minorities living side by side, different faiths and different identities. Thus, multicultural Britain inevitably ties to post-war mass immigration from certain parts of the former British Empire, an empire that went through a process of decolonisation in the post-war period (Mustad & Langeland 1).

The largest groups of immigrants are Indians and Pakistanis. They have settled in cities where they could find manual work, therefore places like Oldham, London, Manchester, Luton, Birmingham and Bradford. For instance, today the city of London alone boasts 300 languages and 50 non- indigenous communities with population of over 10.000 with virtually every race, nation, and culture and world region represented (Mustad & Langeland 4).

Multiculturalism in Britain indicates a plurality in cultures in addition to a variety of identities since the immigrants of the second and third generations of first comers become a part of the British society and claim their right to be British. Because of these different identities and the increasing number of mixed marriages, consequently , Britain has embraced multiculturalism. However, during the last few years, the term multiculturalism in Britain is sought to investigate the perspective to what extent this pluralistic society is a threat to the identity of Britishness (Mustad & Langeland 7).

1.1.3 Contemporary British Literature

One of the influencing aspects that has been greatly changed in Britain since 1950s is literature. Literary life is highly developed as well as a variety of genres and styles that have appeared in fiction, poetry and drama with a wide range of themes. Post-modern literary works include, as we have mentioned before, various themes that can be classified according to the issues tackled as follows:

A) Themes concerning global problems: War, peace, the environmental protection, the relations between mankind and universe.

B) Central social themes: Duties and obligations of an individual, human nature, power and money ... (Shevchenko203).

Contemporary literature does not aim to reproduce ‘reality’ but rather to reflect on the relation between reality, fiction and history, often highlighting the ways in which realism and modernism have implicitly represented.

Shevchenko also expresses that the term **postmodernism** is used to represent a number of trends in arts, philosophy, religion, technology, literature and many other areas that come after modernism movement. In general, the postmodern view is cool, ironic and tolerant of the fragmentation of contemporary existence. It tends to concentrate on surfaces rather than depths, to blur the distinctions between high and low culture (207). According to Alegre (9-12), four main trends which help the evolution of post-war English literature:

1- The book market in Britain:

This market of literature is animated by both literary debates and by advertising of authors and books through media, also by television and film adaptations.

2- The relationship between literature and universities:

Universities play a great role in the evolution of contemporary British literature. They produce the art of literary theory and literary criticism by which literature is influenced as well as many contemporary writers and editors become university lecturers.

3- Adaptations of literary works for television and the cinema:

Many novelists and playwrights try to combine their literary works with writing screenplays through television or film adaptations, such that of Jane Austin's Emma.

4- The minorities in English literature: Women and post- colonial writers:

Feminism also has played a big role in literary criticism since it has forced post-war female writers to write about different female issues at that period. Another factor that participates in the progression of post-war English literature is that those writers, from the British ex-colonies and from other nationalities, who use English in their writings to express the experience of colonization.

1.1.3.1 The Contemporary British Novel

The British novel is considered the leading genre among a variety of literary genres and forms in the second half of the twentieth century .It is developed in many directions covering a wide range of forms, characters and themes. Contemporary English novels do not only concentrate on contemporary culture, but they attempt to provide a comprehensive, highly critical and often pessimistic portrait of the realities and the fantasies that shape the individuals world in the late twentieth century (Shevchenko 203).

Different devices are used in postmodern literary novel such as Parody, Irony, Distortions of narrative, Discontinuity and Blurring of genres , Fragmentation, Paradox, Questionable narrators, Contradiction, Permutation, Randomness and Excess (Shevchenko 207 ; Malcom 18).

➤ Influential Contemporary Novelists

The latter half of the twentieth century is very rich in terms of the number of novelists and their texts. **Anthony Burgess** is one of the best known English literary figures. A Clockwork Orange (1962) is his best known novel. **John Fowles** is another contemporary author. He has gained an international reputation with his books that are translated into numerous languages and many of them are adapted as films. The Collector (1963) and The Magus (1965) are among his best works. In addition to the French **Albert Camus**, Nobel Prize winner. *Albert* is considered as an author, journalist, and philosopher. He is known with his essay "The Rebel". Finishing with **Anthony Powell** and his A Dance to the Music of Time (Shevchenko 203-208).

➤ The Contemporary British Movements Novels

Different kinds of novels affected by movements in contemporary Britain include:

- **Angry Young Men Movement Novels**

A fashionable movement appeared in **1950s** called **Angry Young Men**, a term applied by journalists to the authors and protagonists of some contemporary novels and plays to indicate that their works tell stories of young characters who were very angry with everything and everyone since no one is interested in their opinions (Shevchenko 203). Among these works that express angry attitudes, we can mention **Kingsley Amis's** campus novel Lucky Jim (1954), and **John Braine's** novel of social ambition, Room at the Top (1957).

- **Feminism Movement Novels**

Shevchenko also states that in **1970s**, **feminism** has gained its prominence, thus, a new generation of women writers enjoy the freedom to express themselves discussing

different feminist issues (207). The most famous female contemporary novelists are **Margaret Drabble** and her sister, **A. S. Byatt (born 1936)**. **Drabble** has explored the problems of contemporary educated women in such novels as; The Realms of Gold (1975) and The Gates of Ivory (1991) (Shevchenko 207-211) .

- **South Asian Immigrants Novels**

In the context of the partition of British India into India , Pakistan and Bangladesh and the religious conflicts between Hindus , Muslims and Sikhs , many people have left India , Pakistan and Bangladesh and emigrated to the UK. Thus, these immigrants have the right to live and work in the UK without formal restrictions, that is, without the right of British citizenship. So, they live with continuously limited rights (Lente 47-48). In the **1950s – 1960s**, South Asian immigrants have the right only to work in the coal, steel and textile industry where British workers are missing. As a result, the Indian subcontinent immigrants are not considered as equal as citizens although they carry the British passports and the British attitude has often been described as racist as Avtar Brah sums it up pertinently in this passage :

In the main these were unskilled jobs involving unsociable hours of work, poor working conditions and low wages. Hence, Asian workers came to occupy some of the lowest rungs of the British employment hierarchy. Additionally, as ex-colonial subjects, they belonged to a group whose country is once ruled by Britain. From the beginning, therefore, the encounter between Asians and the white population is circumscribed by colonial precedents (21).

Antipathy and **mistrust** have not only directed against South Asians, but also against other groups, such as **Caribbean, Polish** and **Chinese immigrants**. In addition to ‘individual racism’, institutional racism made the immigrants (and later their children’s) lives difficult (Lente 49-52).

Since the 1960s, many things have improved. In spite of the fact that racism still exists in many forms and shapes, there are attempts to fight it on various levels, raise the

people's awareness and to prevent it. One of the effective ways that has been used to explore different perspectives and the backgrounds of racism is **literature**. Many literary texts pick up these unequal relations and the racism towards immigrants (Lente 50-54) .

- **Best Known Immigrant Contemporary Novelists**

- ✓ **Hanif Kureishi** (1954), his first novel is *The Buddha of Suburbia* in (1990), and *The Black Album* (1995) and *Intimacy* (1998).
- ✓ **Sir Salman Rushdie** has achieved fame with *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *The Satanic Verses*(1989).
- ✓ **Kazuo Ishiguro** (1954) has *Remains of the Day* and *Never Let Me Go* *Cathy*.
- ✓ **Doris Lessing** from Southern Rhodesia (now *Zimbabwe*) her first novel is *The Grass is Singing* (1950)after immigrating to England (Alegre 19; Butler 4).
- ✓ Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*(1956).
- ✓ **Sam Selvon's** *Lonely Londoners* (1956) (Lente 54).

1.1.4 Hanif Kureishi

Before we tackle the theme of Britishness in contemporary British novel, it is necessary to represent *The Buddha of Suburbia*'s author , Hanif Kureishi.

“A writer who has always been interested in challenging orthodoxies”. (Brownrigg) .

This is the way that Sylvia Brownrigg describes her interviewee Hanif Kureishi without any rejecting. Kureishi is also included among the top British writers since 1994 as presented in *The Times* .Hanif Kureishi is a contemporary novelist, playwright and film maker of contemporary multicultural Britain. His works reflect the speed and fundamental socio- cultural changes that shape Britain in the last three-four decades (Kučera 6) .

Hanif Kureishi was born of a mixed parentage in the post war period .Kureishi was born in December 5th, 1954 in Bromley, South London, to a Pakistani father

"Rafiushan Kureishi (Shanoo) " and an English mother " Audrey Buss ".After the Partition of British India in 1947, Rafiushan and most of his wealthy Madras family moved to Pakistan. In 1950, Rafiushan came to the UK to study law but because of economic traits, the father worked at the Pakistani embassy where he got the chance to meet his wife-to-be, Buss. Kureishi's father, Rafiushan had desires to be a writer but they were depressed (Kučera 6) .

Kureishi's family settled in Bromley where Kureishi was born. In a published interview, Kureishi talks about his family, he states that:

My [paternal] grandfather, an army doctor, is a colonel in the Indian army. Big family. Servants. Tennis court. Cricket. Everything. My father went to the Cathedral School that Salman Rushdie went to. Later, in Pakistan, my family was close to the Bhuttos. My uncle Omar is a newspaper columnist and the manager of the Pakistan cricket team.... My grandfather, the colonel, is terrifying. A hard-living, hard-drinking gambler ("*Rainbow Sign* ").

The Rainbow Signs essay in which Kureishi talks about his ancestors and how his family moved to England, where he was born, and the xenophobia he felt when he is an adolescent. He opens the essay, by reminding of his Indian/ Pakistani origin, in the following words:

I was born in London, of an English mother and Pakistani father. My father, who lives in London, came to England from Bombay in 1947 to be educated by the old colonial power. He married here and never went back to India. The rest of his larger family, his brothers, their wives, his sisters, moved from Bombay to Karachi, in Pakistan, after partition. (Kureishi 3-34).

➤ His Studies

Hanif Kureishi attended Bromley Technical High School and studied for A-levels at Bromley College of Technology. At Bromley College, he was elected as Student Union President (1972) . Most characters of his semi-autobiographical novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* are inspired from this period. After that, Kureishi spent a year studying

philosophy at Lancaster University before abandoning. Later he attended King's College London and took a degree in philosophy (Kučera 6) .

➤ **Some of His Famous Works**

Kureishi started his career in the 1970s under the pseudonyms Antonia French and Karim. He got the chance to write plays for the Hampstead Theatre, Soho Poly and by the age of 18, Kureishi joined the Royal Court. These are examples of his major works:

2015 *Love + Hate: Stories and Essays* Faber & Faber

2008 *Something to Tell You*. London: Faber and Faber.

1996 *My Beautiful Launderette and other writings*. London: Faber and Faber.

1990 *The Buddha of Suburbia*. London: Faber and Faber.

1995 *The Black Album*. London: Faber and Faber.

1998 *Intimacy*. London: Faber and Faber.

➤ **Views About His Works**

Through a critical reading of Kureishi's works, one can easily note the effect of his own experience in depicting the racial and cultural clashes of the middle class British society. This experience, as stated by Surbhi Sharma who has published *Hanif Kureishi Biography*, enables him to enrich his knowledge of the social structures of multicultural London .The racial issues, multiculturalism, sexuality and sexual desires, social classes in Britain and struggles between them and redefining what does it mean to be British are among the main topics that *Kureishi's* works frequently treat (Kučera 6) .

Although his honesty, *Kureishi* has been accused for his severe delineation of the British society and human nature. Nahem Yousaf in his *Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of*

Suburbia argues that Kureishi has asserted that he is not presenting a certain ethnical, racial or religious group but a small part which is reasonably chosen (Kučera 6).

On the other hand, Morten Jacob Sander Andersen et al., writes in a study called *The Buddha of Suburbia: Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Society* that:

indicates his interest in exploring different conceptions of Britishness, class, racial and sexual relations, desire, familial dynamics and in challenging traditional notions of these themes. His later works also deal with the same topics; such as *The Black Album* (1995), which is about the Muslim community in 1980's Britain, *Midnight All Day* (1999), which handles human relationships and sexual desire (6).

Kureishi in his interviews does not hide the fact that he likes to challenge the traditional and conservative perception of these issues (class, racial and sexual relations, desire...) which makes him exposed to severe objections despite of the striking success that most of his works gain, and often being accused of creating negative stereotypes (Kučera 6).

Hanif Kureishi, through his works, attempts at portraying his attitude of England and British multicultural society in the second half of the twentieth century.

Nahem Yousaf also reveals that "Kureishi's work remains controversial, not solely as a result of its sexual content but as a result of its clearly anti-Thatcherite stance" (Kučera 6).

1.1.5 The Buddha of Suburbia

"This is exactly the novel one hoped Hanif Kureishi would write: utterly irreverent and wildly improper, but also genuinely touching and truthfull. And very funny indeed."
(Salman Rushdie)

For the better understanding of this research, it is necessary to have a wide idea about the context of the novel.

➤ The Buddha of Suburbia's Context

"The chickens are coming home to die. It's either us or the rise of the Right"
(Kureishi. 258).

As large number of people moved from parts such as Caribbean, South East Asia, Africa and other parts of the world and settled in Britain's urban areas. This influx of immigrants has profoundly changed the face of the British society and culture. However; on the political side, this change is explicitly refused.

The novel takes place in 1970, **Thatcherism** era, the name is due to the British Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher**, who claims that the British race should be unalloyed and the concept of Britishness only includes people with pure British origin. That is, excluding the immigrants, though they were born in Britain, lived in it for a long time absorbing the British culture and values. The fact that Kureishi, through *The Buddha of Suburbia*, objects both from the perspective of the migrants as Haroon and Anwar or the English as Karim and Jamila (Sezer1).

➤ Critical Review of the Novel

The Buddha is kind of autobiographical but it is revved up autobiography [...]. The relation between autobiography and your writing is a complicated one (...) It came out of my experiences in that sense, but it's not one-on-one thing where something happens and you go and write it down. It's not like that (...) You mix all that stuff up together and then you get a good chapter (qtd. Nahem 72).

These are Kureishi's words, quoted by Nahem Yousaf in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* Reader's Guide, pointing that *The Buddha of Suburbia* is such a fictive novel. Hanif Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* is published in 1990 and gained him the Whitbread Prize, after the success of his screenplays for *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985). *The Buddha of Suburbia* could not have a single category that one can put in. Thus, it is thought to be regarded as a semi-autobiographical novel and reading it, with information about Hanif Kureishi in the mind, obvious comparisons can be done. As Kureishi's father arrived in England following the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 like Karim's father who came

from a wealthy family and married an English woman from the lower middle class, worked as a civil servant. Also Kureishi's ambition to become a writer is never realized, though he enthused his son to do so. When Kureishi realized that he wanted to be a playwright himself, he left the suburbs of London at a young age and moved to the city like Karim . He worked in the theatre in various positions so as to establish himself as a playwright, until he became a novelist (Foss).

On the other hand, as all Kureishi's works *The Buddha* depicts what is happening in Britain in 1970 , the novel is said also to be as English social realist novel, historical novel, the picaresque and /or the Bildungsroman as Kureishi himself says:

Writing would be a message to the world outside my family, and outside the suburbs. I would inform people what is going on, what life in the new Britain – a Britain unknowingly transforming itself for ever – is like for us..... writing as an attempted solution to various internal and external conflicts (Kureishi 137).

In her article "**An Introduction to *The Buddha of Suburbia***" that Published in May 25th 2016 ,**Rachel Foss** sees *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a coming-of-age novel with a distinctly late 20th-century spin. In her close reading of Kureishi's work, she shows how he identifies new ways of being British, through his characters' explorations of ethnic identity, class and sexuality in 1970s multicultural Britain. She describes it and says that:

Buddha is a coming-of-age novel with a postmodern spin, which dramatizes constructions of gender, class, sexuality and, above all, race through a portrayal of post-war multi-cultural Britain. The experience of the first and second generation Asian British community is a new subject in contemporary fiction at the time and Kureishi paved the way for a generation of writers who came after him, including Zadie Smith and Monica Ali among others (Foss).

Section Two:

The Concept of Britishness

1.2 The Concept of Britishness

Britishness as a term is usually confused with the term *Englishness*. Even though most of the time the two terms have been used interchangeably. For the correct understanding of this work, it is necessary to make a clear cut between the two terms and it is also essential to consider "that Britishness is in fact a hypernym of Englishness. In other word, people who are considering themselves as British does not automatically have to be English " (Gwynfor Evans).

1.2.1 Britishness Vs Englishness

The debate about the confusion between the two terms has been a major interest of Krishan Kumar, Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Virginia who is concerned with the problem of Britishness versus Englishness in his work *The Making of English National Identity* (2003). Kumar clarifies that both the English people as well as external people use the terms interchangeably" use the term English when they actually mean British" (2) . Kumar also points that English national identity is not a definite notion but rather it is associated with the imperialism view, as the English would consider themselves as superior as empire-builders (2) . On the other hand, Christopher Bryant points out that "For the English, Britishness came to subsume Englishness, so that the two were often indistinguishable; for the Scots, the Welsh and later the Irish, Britishness is more of an overlay" (Bryant 394 – 412).

British society is, in term of its nation, very miscellaneous and multicultural. Thus, its multinational state is the first issue that has made it a major and traditional

interest in politicians speeches. Philip Lynch a politician in the conservative party, stresses the fact that it is necessary to sustain equilibrium between the founding nations. Multinationalism is one of the issues that makes it impossible for the British society to be unified in terms of the political belonging and nationhood. So, people in Britain are British in terms of their political belonging but Welsh/Irish/Scottish/English in a sense of their nationality. For Crick, Britishness is essentially a political and legal construct. Englishness, Scottishness and Welshness are what people actually feel (Bradley 26).

On the other hand, the issue of immigrants and their flexibility to life in Great Britain and how they are considering themselves as British since they are born in Britain and live in it till the end , also affects Britishness .Through a research conducted by Kabir who interviewed British Muslims to investigate their (national) identity with the concept of being British ,it is concluded that immigrants consider themselves being British since they are born in Britain and they live in it till the end :

The respondents associate Britishness with multiculturalism, freedom, having Britain as a birthplace or simply thinking differently from their parents. One of these respondents Badrul, a British-born male student of Bangladeshi background, says: "I'm from Bangladesh and I'm British. I feel like it's my country because I was born here [.....]. I've been living here all my life, and I've got friends that are white as well (Kabir 99).

In his research paper "The Theme of Englishness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* and Barnes, Julian *England, England*" , **Zuzana Al Tajjarová** debates the concept of Englishness versus Britishness and concludes that :

The United Kingdom is a multicultural state which is fact that needs to be considered by politicians, sociologists and, of course, by common people. The country has to deal with two levels of the multiculturalism. Firstly it is the issue of nationhood, referring to Scottish, Irish, Welsh or English nation. Here it is very important to identify the proper borderline between the autonomy and the dependence on the central power and, at the same time, to maintain the cultural, historical and traditional features. Secondly, it is the issue of immigrants and their adaptability to life in Great Britain, and of course, the prevention of racism or discrimination which is likely to arise in a multicultural society. The difference between Englishness (also Welshness, Irishness and Scottishness) and Britishness

is obvious and understandable as the British Empire is created later than each of its constituents. This is the reason British citizens tend to identify themselves with one of the nationalities within it. The citizenship is connoted with Britishness whereas nationality with Englishness, Irishness, Scottishness or Welshness (Al Tajjarová 4-5).

1.2.2 Britishness Definition

The concept of Britishness has been argued by scholars that it is both a controversial and a problematic concept. Britishness is defined in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus as "The quality of being British or of having characteristics regarded as typically British".

Britishness is to have certain characteristics or claimed merits that distinguish the British people and others depending on their unity and identity and the expressions of British culture-such as habits, behaviors, or symbols that have been shared, acquainted or iconic qualities readily recognizable with the United Kingdom. **Britishness** can also be defined with either contrasting or in accumulating to feel as Scottish, Welsh, English or Northern Irish ("*Britishness*"1).

➤ Views about Britishness

The concept of **Britishness** is interpreted in various ways by different scholars, historians, artists and writers while they are responding to the question of "what does it mean to be British?" In interviews by Hannah, Pooletal entitled 'Defining the nation' - Quotes on Britishness that The Guardian published on 20th January 1999.

- **David Cannadine, a British author and historian, states that :**

Britishness is a complicated and enormous thing - what different people see as meaning different things. It can mean one island, a group of islands off the coast of Europe, or it can mean the British Empire - at times it means all those things. Politicians, and the rest of us, define it in different ways at different times (1).

- **Tracey Emin, an artist**, claims that "It's a good time to be British, especially for an artist. I wouldn't say I'm proud to be British, stylish people laughing" (2).

- **Michael Ignatieff**, a writer and broadcaster interested in issues including nationalism comments that:

If Britishness is about anything it is not about places or people, it is about institutions. Britishness is parliamentary democracy, rule of law, fairness and decency. It is the institutions that deliver this. It is not black, it is not white, it is not the shires, it is not London, it is not brassy and it is not old-fashioned (1).

- The Welsh nationalist politician, lawyer and author **Dr Gwynfor Evans** claims that:
"Britishness is a political synonym for Englishness which extends English culture over the Scots, Welsh and the Irish"

- Among others, **Rebecca Langlands** debates **Britishness**, she highlights that **Britishness** should be seen as a kind of "added value" to the cultural identities of the various nations on the territory of the British state (53-69).

- **Hanif Kureishi** himself states in *My Beautiful Laundrette* that:

It is the British, the white British, who have to learn that being British isn't what it is. Now it is a more complex thing, involving new elements. So there must be a fresh way of seeing Britain and the choices it faces: and a new way of being British after all this time (527-58).

➤ **Origin of the Term**

Britishness as a term is firstly used to refer to Britons collectively as early as 1682. However, it was introduced into the political and the academic field in the last half of the 20th century (Piégay1). **Linda Colley** a historian, states that the concept of Britishness basically appeared in the 18th century and is promoted by the common religion of Protestantism, which is used as a propaganda weapon to encourage the English, the Scots and the Welsh to unite around a common flag – and against Catholic enemies, in particular France and Spain (Schuch 53). She also declares that it was after the Acts of Union 1707

with the construction of the Kingdom of Great Britain where the ethnic groups of Great Britain started to think of themselves as simultaneously British but also Scottish, English, and/or Welsh when England, Scotland and Wales united in 1707 and set up common features like the constitutional monarchy, parliament or church. **Britishness** started to gain popularity in the 19th century because of Britain's imperial position in the world. Everyone associated Britain with monarchy, the Queen or its power in the world (Schuch 53).

1.2.3 Not Easy Being British

Richard Eyre, in his article entitled *What is Britishness?* Richard Eyre scrutinizes his cultural DNA for clues. That published in *The Guardian* (2004) states that it is not an easy job to define British Identity and declares that "Being British is a variable ideology". Modood Tariq shares the same view in his book *Not easy being British: Color, culture and citizenship* by which he argues that:

It is not easy to identify the values, processes, and customs which are distinctively British; not easy, having identified them, to be in all aspects proud, grateful, and loyal; ...not easy to establish and protect public policies and laws which recognize and rejoice that there are many different ways of being British, with sources of strength in different continents, religions, histories, languages (Modood, xi).

Shi Young discusses the above quote (Modood's words) and says that this notion of hardness to be British can be resistant to Charles Moore's article in the *Spectator* in October 1991, in which he claims for an explicit racist immigration plan (107).

➤ **British Citizenship (Who is considered British?)**

Citizenship has always been seen as a major component of the national identity. Paul Whiteley describes citizenship as "a set of norms, values and practices which binds society together, makes democratic society unified, makes democratic government possible and helps individuals to solve collective action problems" (

173). This can be interpreted from different perspectives. For instance, in terms of legislation, it has its allocation, it is associated with certain values, rights and responsibilities to be considered as British or have British citizenship.

Bradley shows that:

While all previous legislation held onto the category of Citizen of the UK and Commonwealth (CUKC) and to the notion of subject hood, the 1981 Act abolished the former and largely abolished the latter. A new category, UK citizen, is established and specified a more standard form of citizenship. Essentially, a child born in the UK would be granted British citizenship if either its mother or its father is a British citizen or settled in the UK, and naturalization for residents without kinship linkages is made relatively easy(2).

1.2.4 The Concept of Identity

The term "Identity" is very fundamental concept in the understanding of the theme of Britishness which is our interest in this thesis. Zuzana Al Tajjarová, in her research paper *"Englishness in Selected Novels of Contemporary Immigrant Writers in Great Britain"*, discusses and explains the term "identity" and its current understanding. She reveals that the term "identity" firstly is introduced by a German-American psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson and his theory of psychosocial development (Cherry).

Encouraged by Sigmund Freud's psychosexual development, Erikson, develops a theory of psychosocial development and devises the terms *"ego identity"* and *"identity crisis"*. According to Erikson *"our ego identity"* always changes due to the new experiences and information we acquire in our daily interactions with others. Since we are experiencing, we are passing certain challenges that can help or burden the development of our identity. Thus, our sense of personal identity is shaped by our experiences and interactions with others, and it is this identity; that helps guide our integrated and cohesive sense of self, guides our actions, beliefs, and behaviors as we develop (Al Tajjarová 10).

Anthony David Stephen Smith: (September 23rd, 1939 –July 19th, 2016) is Professor Emeritus of Nationalism and Ethnicity at the London School of Economics .He is considered as one of the founders of the *interdisciplinary field* of nationalism studies suggests that our individual self is composed of five elements, namely gender, territory, social class, religion and ***ethnic identity*** (Al Tajjarová 10).

In his research paper "*What Is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)?*" **James D. Fearon**, a Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, makes an attempt to analyze the word *identity* in its current usage in everyday language and social science discourse. Fearon emphasizes that the meaning of the term originated from Erikson's theory of psychosocial development from the 1950s. Though, during the late 1980s and 1990s, as a consequence to the multiculturalism, the use of the term is developed to have a different meaning in certain fields as history, anthropology and most of all humanities. Absolutely, the term started to be overused heavily in discourses on the topics such as race, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other social categories. Fearon recapitulates his findings concluding that "identity" has a meaning either a **social category**, defined by belonging rules and apparently characteristic, aspects or expected behaviors, or a **socially unique feature** that a person takes a special self-satisfaction in society or views as constant but socially consequential (Fearon 36).

1.3 Identity Theory (Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall)

The term **identity** does not have a clearly and unified definition. On the other hand, Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall's definitions of identity have not differed much from the classical definition of identity, yet, their definitions are heavily contextualized to the postcolonial period.

Homi Bhabha, in his established theory, argues that the racial identities and racial conflicts observed today are the product of the colonial era. Hall also distinguishes the concept of identity to be fundamentally defined by historical and cultural archetypes that have been passed on from one generation to the next. Bhabha also creates a new concept within the demesne of identity which is the notion of “**hybridity**”. Bhabha argues that hybridity overthrows the experiences of colonial power and ruling cultures. The possibility of cultural 'hybridity' is hereby expected to lack a basis for imposed hierarchy. This gap in identity forms the basis for Bhabha's further assertion that identity can also be perceived as a product of two ethnicities; "the inbetweenness".

Like his colleague Bhabha, Hall believes that identity is still an **ongoing process**, consequently its construction cannot be easily recognized. Stuart Hall's (1989) concept of “**new ethnicities**” helps us understand how a certain innocent and simplified notion is challenged and the multiplicity of subjectivities is introduced (110-121). Hall also sees identity as “it is a matter of becoming rather than being” (225).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter is set out to explore the concept of Britishness as an issue adopted in most of the contemporary British literary works during post-war period of the multiethnic and multicultural Britain .In addition, it discusses the pillars and the values of the British identity and citizenship as presented by the two scholars Homi Bahabha and Stuart Hall. Moreover, it introduces a detailed biography of the immigrant author Hanif Kureishi. Kureishi is chosen for this work since he is considered as an excellent example to portray ,through his works , how Britishness is newly defined from an immigrant , multifaceted , English with Pakistani background writer. His first novel "the Buddha of Suburbia", which we have seen its context previously, will be analyzed in the next chapter of this work.

Chapter Two

The Concept of Britishness in The Buddha of Suburbia

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Chapter Two

2. The Concept of Britishness in *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Introduction

Having dealt with an overview about contemporary British literature focusing on the contemporary novels in addition to presenting a clear explanation of the theme of Britishness, we now turn our attention to the concept of Britishness as illustrated in the British novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*. This chapter focuses on the protagonist's personal journey to identify his identity since he is one of the second generation immigrants brought up to live in a multicultural society. Karim as a protagonist depicts himself as “an Englishman, born and bred, almost” (Kureishi3).

Furthermore, the chapter starts with an analysis for the novel, its plot, characters and setting. Moreover, we uncover the different themes that seem to be of great importance in the novel. Besides, we pay a special attention to how Karim performs his ethnic and cultural identities as he is struggling within himself to find out a definite identity. This analysis is finally going to lead us to a new definition for the concept of Britishness in contemporary British literature.

2.1 Analysis of the Novel

In order to explore the notion of Britishness in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, we intend to analyze the novel in terms of its plot, characters, setting and its major themes.

2.1.1 Overview of the Plot

The Buddha of Suburbia consists of subplots that are presented through its protagonist Karim Amir's point of view. It tells the story of Karim, 17 years teenage with a hybrid identity, who passes a long journey to find for himself a place in the post-colonial Britain in London in the 1970s. The novel is divided into two parts.

In the first part of the novel, Kureishi presents Karim's family, neighbors and friends and how they struggle to survive as immigrants from British ex-colony (India). The main event in this part is when his father Haroon becomes a Buddhist Guide, the point that makes him fascinated with Mrs Eva Kay. This part ends with Haroon's divorce with Karim's mother ,Margeret, and engages with Mrs Kay. Haroon, Karim, Eva Kay and her son Charlie who is blooming as a rock star, and gets a new life and experiences in London (*Taylor*).

In the second part, Karim moves on his journey, meets new people from different backgrounds and struggles to find himself and his own road to fame that begins when he takes the theatre opportunity that Eva offers. Eva's friend Jeremy Shadwell casts him as Mowgli in a play that is adapting Rudyard's Kipling's *The Jungle Book* to the stage. Karim especially enjoys getting to know Terry, a Trotskyite, who becomes dismayed when the famous director Matthew Pyke chooses Karim over him for a new production. After that, Pyke invites Karim to perform the show in New York. Once there, Karim seeks out Charlie, who has moved to America to be "two English boys in America, the land where music came

from, with Mick Jagger, John Lennon and Johnny Rotten living around the corner” (Kureishi 249). Then, Karim returns back to London to find it a changed city, politically and aesthetical “I walked around Central London and saw that the town is being ripped apart; the rotten is being replaced by the new, and the new is ugly. The gift of creating beauty had been lost somewhere. The ugliness is in the people, too. Londoners seemed to hate each other” (Kureishi 258). Karim, then, finds a job in a television soap opera (*Taylor*).

The novel ends on the day Thatcher is elected the new Prime Minister. Karim invites his father, Haroon, and Eva, his brother, Allie, Allie’s new girlfriend, and his friends Changez and to the most expensive restaurant he knows in Soho. (Is too busy with politics and the baby to join them (*Taylor*).

2.1.2 Characters and Setting of the Novel

➤ Characters of the Novel

In her work *"A New Way of Being British: Englishness and the 'other' question in Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Suburbia"*, Margarida Esteves Pereira debates the novel and says that all the characters in The Buddha of Suburbia contribute to display a wide-ranging picture of the British society.

Karim Amir is called an auto digenetic narrative, a term advocated by Gérard Genette, as the story is presented through the point view of its protagonist , at the same time its narrator, who recounts his own experiences (Margarida 5-6).

The Amir family as a whole seems that they have easily adapted to the country they live in, despite the ingrained Ethnic prejudice on the part of many of the white English people that are shown in the novel (Margarida 5-6).

On the other hand, the family of Anwar seems to act as a counterpoint to the liberal Amir family, by acting out all the common stereotypes associated to the South-Asian

Muslim families; as it is mentioned by Susie Thomas, they seem to 'conform to the stereotype of authoritarian patriarch, the unhappy arranged marriage and the submissive woman'. Until now, this idea is clearly disrupted, for example, by the actions of Jamila, who, though having gone through her arranged marriage, she is very far from any idea of a controllable girl; indeed, her actions are instructive of a very radical disruption of submissiveness and tradition .

In the table that follows you will find the most important characters in the novel:

Table 1: The Main Characters of the Novel

Karim's Family	Haroon (father); Margaret (mother); Amar (brother); Jean (Margaret's sister) and Ted (Jean's husband)
Karim's South Asian close friends	Anwar (Haroon's close friend); Jeeta (Anwar's wife); (their daughter); Changez (Jamila's arranged husband).
Middle class friends and Theatre People	Eva (Haroon's lover and later wife); Charlie (Eva's son; pop singer with whom Amir is in love); Eleanor (theatre actress); Helen (school student; Amir's girlfriend for a while); Pyke (theatre director); Terry (actor).

➤ Setting of the Novel

I was looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action and sexual interest I could find, because things were slow and heavy, in our family, I don't know why. Quite frankly, it is all getting me down and I was (Kureishi3).

Kureishi's first novel The Buddha of Suburbia (1990) is structured in two different places, in South London 'In the Suburbs' and 'In the City'. At the

beginning of the novel, Karim portrays the suburbs where he brought up, as dull and stifling; their inhabitants as narrow-minded, shallow and overly concerned with appearance and talks about his life in the suburb in the above quote and expresses his boredom to his life in the suburb and explains how he lacks any kind of interest or adventure. However; the city, either London or New York, is described as a place filled with opportunity where everything can happen and dreams come true. Karim regards London completely opposite to the suburbs:

In bed before I went to sleep I fantasized about London and what I'd do there when the city belonged to me. (...) There were kids dressed in velvet cloaks who lived free lives; there were thousands of black people everywhere, so I wouldn't feel exposed; (...) there were parties where girls and boys; there were all the drugs you could use (Kureishi 121).

In London, Karim receives his new 'education' in the theatre world, also it is the place where he finds love. By distancing himself physically from London, he isolates himself from the stereotypes which life in Britain forces upon him. This detachment from home gives him space to discover new aspects of himself.

2.1.3 Themes of the Novel

The Buddha of Suburbia is a rich texture of mixed messages, mostly, Kureishi wants to give an idea about the people of today's multicultural British society who suffer from identity crisis, hybridity, racial discrimination and how they survive with these difficulties. Actually they try to manage and adjust themselves to exist in their respective societies.

➤ Identity Crisis

The theme of identity crisis is severely depicted in every character throughout The Buddha of Suburbia. Haroon, for instance, although his religion is Islam, he turns back to Eastern spirituality, Buddhism, but he does not whole heartedly belong to any spiritual form. He pretends to belong to those religious schools by only mimicking their

practices. Haroon hardly tries to imitate other's culture and behaviors to be accepted in the white's society but he never succeed. Thus, he creates or adopts a new identity to fit in. Haroon's status returns us back to the insights regarding identity status by Bhabha and Hall. Particularly, Bhabha explains that identity should not be perceived from only one angle, but from the dual characteristics that give birth to a specific identity which he cannot be described by either his Indian culture or his British association. Karim also passes a long journey to discover that identity is not a fixed phenomenon but it changes and develops throughout life (Hall's view about identity) and only when one accepts his life, others will **accept him** (Sezer 6).

➤ **Hybridity**

Hybridity is also one of the main themes tackled in the novel. Bhabha(the founder of the the concept) argues that hybridity (as we have seen previously) occurs as in any situation in which two or more cultures interrelate and combine in a cosmopolitan space without favoring any parts but incorporating elements from the both. In the novel, most of the characters, first or second generation. Karim, Haroon, Jamila, Changez represent the situation of people with a hybrid identity in Britain today .This hybridity makes them struggle to exist in a foreign culture. Karim, as a male character, is the best example to show the notion of hybridity. Karim is a mixed race and cannot exclusively be an ordinary Indian and also he is not accepted as white. His mother recaps this idea when she says: "But you're not an Indian, you've never been to India...What about me? ... who gave birth to you? You're Englishman, I'm glad to say" (Kureishi 232).

Karim's hybrid notion comes clearly when he is chosen in Shadwell's cast for *The Jungle Book* to perform *Mowgly* (moving between two worlds). Although, at the

beginning, Karim feels so excited about his new role and works really hard to prove himself, he, at the end, realizes that he is neither considered as an experienced British nor as an ordinary Indian. On the other hand, Jamila, she is recognized as the strong female hybrid character in the novel, but her hybridity somehow appears differently since she quickly breaks the chains and goes beyond the borders with the help of the education she changes her own path (Basak 24 -27).

➤ **Racism**

“callous and bereft of grace”(Kureishi 228).

The above quote is Eva's (the white British) description of her own country. Racism is one of main messages that Kureishi wants to deliver throughout his artistic work *The Buddha of Suburbia* .Major Indian characters, either from first or second immigrant generations, suffer from the racial tensions surrounding their population in London and its suburbs and live under the threat of violence. This threat becomes a part of their everyday lives and affects their actions unconsciously. There are plenty of instances in the novel when the white British call immigrants by names and acts to show that the immigrants are inferior from them .One example is from one of Haroon’s first yoga sessions with his future wife Eva Key, There are ,for instance; two men who have the following repartee once they realize their usual ‘piss-up’ has been replaced by a yoga session:

‘Why has Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren’t we going to get pissed?’

‘He’s going to give us a demonstration of the mystic arts!’

‘And has he got his camel parked outside?’

‘No, he came on a magic carpet.’

‘Cyril Lord or Debenhams?’ (Kureishi 12).

Haroon himself is aware of this and when he is talking to his friend Anwar, he argues that “the whites will never promote us. Not an Indian while there is a white man

left on the earth” (Kureishi 27). On his way to work, Haroon sometimes had to take “a different route for fear of having stoned and ice-pops full of piss lobbed at him by schoolboys from the secondary modern” (Kureishi 28). Besides Haroon, Karim portrays how his friend Jamila lives this threat when he says that she “kept buckets of water around her bed in case the shop is firebombed in the night” (Kureishi 56).

Although Karim is not immigrant, he also encounters racism from a variety of sources. As an example when he visits his school friend Hellen, at the door Hairy Back, Hellen's father, called him Blackie and asked him to leave her “If you put one of your black ‘and near my daughter I’ll smash it with a ‘ammer! With a ‘ammer!’ (Kureishi 40).

Kureishi uses this name “Hairy Back” for Hellen's father to refer to the Conservative Member of Parliament, Enoch Powell who made his famous anti-immigrant speech “Rivers of Blood” in 1968 depicting Britain as swamped with uncontrollable waves of immigrants which were throwing the country into impending doom (Bentley 17).

Moreover, in the novel, the names are indicators of racial threat that these ethnic minorities like, Karim's brother Amar called himself “Allie”, reads English fashion magazines and pays attention to his appearance in order to avoid discrimination (Kureishi 19). On the other hand, Haroon Amir is called by Ted and Jean as “Harry”, as Aunt Jean tries to impose English identity upon the Amir family. Besides, Margaret does the same by saying to her boy Karim: “*You’re an Englishman, I’m glad to say*” (Kalpakli 84). Karim comments on the migrants situation saying that they see them nothing but “wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it” (Kureishi 53).

2.2 The Concept of Britishness in *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Since we have seen a wide overview about *The Buddha of Suburbia* focusing mainly on the major themes of the novel, our concern in the rest of the chapter, is to discover how the concept of Britishness is portrayed in the novel, mainly, through the main character Karim Amir in addition to the others (Haroon representing the first immigrant generation and Eva representing the English minorities).

2.2.1 "Karim " *The Buddha of Suburbia's* Protagonist

Ellingsen states that Karim Amir is the protagonist of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and all the situations and characters of the story are presented from Karim's perspective (43). Karim Amir is, a hybrid teenager, more concerned with sex, music and clothes than with his genetic ethnicity. He lives in the suburbs of London, from a lower middle class family, with his Indian immigrant father Haroon and his English mother Margaret (Kučerová 48).

➤ Karim's Identity Crisis

In the opening paragraph of the novel Karim states:

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it) (Kureishi 3).

Cleven declares that in this first statement, Karim tries to determine his own identity; "I am an Englishman born and bred". Thus, it affirms the fact that Karim predominantly considers himself as English, but the customs of his origin do not allow him determine his personal and cultural identity very well. This claim as being an Englishman , however, is considered complicated by the word "almost" because of his mixed race background, him "having emerged from two old histories", makes the truthfulness of considering himself genuinely English more complicated .Thus , Karim does not know

who he is, who he wants to be, or what he wants to achieve in his life. He is describing his personality with negative terms “me, always the voyeur”, “I was the nosiest person I'd ever met”, and “I'm probably not compassionate or anything, I bet I'm a real bastard inside and don't care for anyone . . .” (18-19).

Karim feels restless and his life is filled with struggle and he is always experiencing difficulties with identifying his own identity because he is torn between his own Indian heritage and the desire to belong to the English society and be more English like (Kučerová 48). This strong and severe identity crisis makes him struggling within himself. However; for Karim, belonging to his own cultural roots is a strong conflict because he cannot really associate himself with his father's cultural background, although he still feels connected to it in some way, as it is mentioned by Andersen and others in their research The Buddha of Suburbia: Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Society (86-87) that is supported by Kureishi's words :

(...) but I did feel, looking at these strange creatures now- the Indians- that in some way these were my people, and that I'd spent my life denying or avoiding that fact. I felt ashamed and incomplete at the same time (...)(Kureishi 270).

Another example, as Cleven (20) mentions, which shows that Karim inclines towards his English roots and distances himself from his Indian heritage, is the scene where Changez and Karim go to a football game. Karim calls Changez “a Paki”, that is, Karim makes no accurate distinction between India and Pakistan. Likewise, in the stadium, Karim forces Changez to cover his face “in case the lads saw he was a Paki and imagined [Karim] was one too” (Kureishi 98).

➤ **Karim's Attitude Towards His Cultural Background**

Considering himself as an Englishman, because he was brought up to Britain, Karim speaks English and behaves like the British. Moreover, he does not know the language of the Indians, and he does not follow the religion of his father. The only cultural elements which connect him with the Indian culture are his preferences for spicy food and yoga.

He rather belongs to the British cultural heritage by which he was affected since he was a young boy. However, it is inevitable clear that karim has the impact of the Indian roots which influence him through his everyday interaction with his father, Jamila, and her family (Ellingsen 45).

Ellingsen (45) also expresses that Hanif Kureishi portrays Karim as a person who is tending to change his complicated identity several times due to his social impact and under specific conditions. He also mentions that the process of his search for identity and its changing is reasonable .As **Hashmi** explains; and **Stuart Hall** also affirms , " identity is a phenomenon which develops under the impact of different factors and with reference to the person's age " (33) , in this sense , if Karim ,in the first part of the novel, is portrayed as a person who is in search of and ready for experiments, he is , in the last pages , depicted on as a person who has learnt deep feelings, not only experiments of various kinds, and he supposes, "perhaps in the future I would live more deeply " (Kureishi 284).

➤ **Karim's Position in His Society and the Issue of Racism**

When grown up, Karim realizes the social shift from his ordinary life in the suburbs by moving to London because he sees a lot of opportunities there, but then he realizes himself with his dream to become an actor and he travels to New York.

Karim tries to make a lot of personal relations and social activities; this helps him feel more comfortable when interacting with people of different cultures and social classes. This flexibility in his identity helps him establish many opportunities for the social shift. But still, Karim suffers from his **hybrid identity** because of his contradictory feeling as he wants to be one of the English stars and live like them but not that of the ordinary Indian immigrant; that is he lives "betweenness" as **Bhabha** argues (Ellingsen 48).

Karim is perceived in any society as the Indian because of the obvious differences in his appearance, and he experiences the first signs of racism and discrimination at an earlier age, in different places he attends and particularly in school. Consequently, he "was sick too of being affectionately called Shitface and Curryface, and of coming home covered in spit and snot and chalk and wood shavings," and moreover, Karim was happy "to get home from school without serious injury", as it is narrated in the novel (Kureishi 63). Therefore, the conflict about Karim's belonging arises with the fact that he feels himself to be an Englishman, but at times he has to face the fact that he is also Indian. As a result, Karim witnesses all kinds of prejudice and stereotypes in the world of acting.

As a whole, Karim experiences all the stages of prejudice and discrimination while studying at school and then when working as an actor (Ellingsen 49).

2.2.2 " Karim " A New Way of Being British

Since Karim is a half Indian and a half English and he is considering himself as an Englishman, he is suffering from an identity crisis. So, to clarify this confusion about his identity , it is better to answer this question as Ellingsen proposes, “ Is it possible to state that Karim belongs to the culture of his father Haroon? The answer for this question is negative because Karim does not strictly consider himself as an Indian. He is rather the ‘unusual’ Englishman, but not the Indian”(53). From this perspective, we can conclude that Karim is of a " complicated hybrid identity" and he is trying to find a certain identity by his attempts to imitate and follow the British cultural society in different personal and cultural aspects. Thus, he is attempting, by a way or another, to confirm that he is a new generation of British people resulting from a mixed race and from a different identity unlike the English one,with special physical appearance characteristics different from those of the white British man .

As a result, various aspects that Karim adopts to affirm his true belonging to the British mainstream despite of his uncertain identity and also help him in the constitution of his identity are *culture, class, religion and sexual orientation*.

First of all, Karim follows nearly all the aspects that characterize the British culture in the 1970s. As an example, he is extremely following the new trends in fashion and music styles, anxious to stay behind on his peers: “The pub is full of kids dressed like me” (Kureishi 8) and “I had to study *the Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express* to keep up” (Kureishi 8).Furthermore, he is initially influenced by his high-school crush Charlie: “I ...tattooed his words on to my brain. Levi's, with an open-necked shirt... I would never go out in anything else for the rest of my life” (Kureishi 16-17). His clothing style changes throughout the novel, in accordance with the changes in English society: from his “flower-patterned see-through shirt, blue suede boots with Cuban heels” (Kureishi 6). And drinking

tea and cycling (Kureishi 62). Because he is grown up in the 1970s, Karim constructs his cultural identity according to British youth trends (Cleven22-23).

Secondly, as Cleven (23) asserts, Karim and the other characters of the novel are greatly attempting to improve their position in society. For instance, Karim is aware of his parents social class - they belong to the lower middle class- , but he tries by any way to ascend his social degree so as to change his social status and have more chances to be integrated in the British society. The language of his father is unfamiliar for him as well, he even decides to lose his accent for the sake of his social rise (Kureishi 174): “At that moment I resolved to lose my accent: whatever it was, it would go. I would speak like her . . . I'd left my world; I had to, to get on” (Kureishi178).

Thirdly, Karim completely excludes religion from the construction of his identity as he has no definite religion and he cannot say that he is a Muslim: “I thought I was one of the first people in history to find all religion childish and inexplicable”(Kureishi 212).

Finally, the issue of sexuality is also important for determining the personality as a whole with all its desires. Karim’s sexual identity is as hybrid and confusing as his ethnic background. This is because he does not have exact visions of his sexual orientation, he is neither heterosexual, nor homosexual, that is he has sexual relations with both sexes and nurtures romantic feelings for Charlie because the trend in the British society at that period is the homosexuality. Consequently, all the previous aspects make up Karim's hybrid identity more complex and unstable (Ellingsen 51-52 ; Cleven 23).

To conclude, it is obvious that Karim's identity is a mixed deviation of the British and Indian traditions with reference to the fact that the British customs and traditions are close to Karim because he is brought up to the British society, surrounded by them and his background of the Indian culture is limited. So, Karim, with his belief of "otherness" in the British society, he asserts his Englishness, to explore at the end a new sort of a British man.

This reveals a new vision for the concept of Britishness in contemporary Britain . This new definition of Britishness is represented in " the citizen who lives in Britain with a hybrid identity whatever are his physical characteristics , thoughts , behaviors or actions.

2.2.3 Britishness From The Other Characters ' Perspective

According to Sezer, the first generation immigrants or the English minorities have their valuable contributions to the redefinition of the concept of Britishness. Haroon, Anwar or Eva are all struggling to be accepted as typical British citizens changing the idea that they are just strange creatures came to challenge the secure and homogenous British society.(3).Accordingly, Haroon never accepts to show his inferiority to the British society , especially the South suburban as his wife Margaret indicates in these words " they are higher than the Churchills" (Kureishi 24). Haroon came to England with the belief that the English is a superior sacred race. This image is crashed to see the British as ordinary citizens as Karim shows in this passage:

Dad was amazed and heartened by the sight of the British in England, though. He'd never seen the English in poverty, as roadsweepers, dustmen, shopkeepers and barmen. He'd never seen an Englishman stuffing bread into his mouth with his fingers, and no one had told him the English didn't wash regularly because the water was so cold – if they had water at all. And when Dad tried to discuss Byron in local pubs no one warned him that not every Englishman could read or they didn't necessarily want tutoring by an Indian on the poetry of a pervert and a madman (Kureishi24-25).

Haroon is a challenge to Thatcherite understanding of Britishness. He incorporates **a hybrid identity** as "the brown skinned Englishman" with his job as a civil servant who travels from the suburbs into London with typical English middle class expectations. On the one hand, he likes Kebabs which shows his fidelity to Indian dietary habits and "he love[s] it when people [come] and [go], the house full of talk and activity, as it would [be] in Bombay" (Kureishi 47). On the other hand, as if he were not Asian,

Haroon advises his son to keep away from Asian girls since they bring a lot of trouble. Having one of the typical English jobs, every morning he reads the Daily Mirror before joining the other travelers on the train to the city. With his outlook, Haroon is more English than he is Indian; but with his dietary preferences, interest in yoga and tendency to imitate the British, he never eradicates his Indian roots totally. When Haroon starts his Buddhist practices, he prepares the ground for the British to reconfigure their own identities showing them that identity is nothing but performance (Sezer 5).

Unlike Haroon, Eva his future wife, is brought up as an Englishwoman who knows everything about all aspects of life in British society. Eva is not satisfied with her position but she wants to reach a high class in the British society , that is why she always looks for any new , in this case Haroon ; Indian culture , that helps her achieve her goals. Eva is represented through Karim`s eyes, “Eva Kay is forward; she is brazen; she is wicked” (Kureishi8) , “she had a new interest; she is launching a huge campaign. Eva is planning her assault on London”(150). Eva is always active and decisive in her thoughts and actions, and she knows what factors can help her to realize her plans (Ellingsen39).

Thus, Eva represents the others (English minorities) who look for changing the British society as a result to the new circumstances. This model helps in shaping a new British person and consequently what it means to be British in contemporary Britain not only from the immigrant perspective but also from non- immigrants perspective (English minorities) (Ellingsen39).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter presents a thematic analysis of Hanif Kureishi's novel "*The Buddha of Suburbia*" (1990) in which the process of the main character's struggle to construct his identity, through living different life experiences, is taken into consideration from the beginning to the end. Moreover, the literary analysis is also carried out in order to identify the novel's plot, characters, setting and the central themes that it explores.

Thus, our overall analysis reveals that identity crisis is prevalent in all the characters due to the cultural hybridity. It also tells that Karim's hybrid and unstable identity construction is extremely complex, since he finds himself between "two great cultural assemblages" (Gilroy 439), that is, between English and Indian ethnicity and culture (Cleven 65).

All in all, in *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Hanif Kureishi highlights the identity conflict and the problem of belonging of first and second generation immigrants in the 1970s of contemporary Britain, and it shows the new notion of Britishness and what is to be British despite of having a different identity.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The theoretical frame of this work deals with a general overview on contemporary British literature concentrating particularly on contemporary novels. Besides, it explores the possibility of being British through one of the great literary works "*The Buddha of Suburbia*"(1990) in addition to presenting a biography of its immigrant author Hanif Kureishi. Furthermore, it includes a sufficient clarification for the theme of Britishness and tackles one of its major pillars; the concept of identity.

As already revealed in the first chapter, the British identity is a fixed set of values that have to be shared by persons residing Britain . Also, the chapter provides that Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha argue that the formation of identity does not follow a particular pattern since it is an ongoing process. They also clarify that identity is about becoming rather than being. In this sense, in his novel "*The Buddha of Suburbia* ", Hanif Kureishi describes the situations and the different experiences of first and second generation immigrants in the 1970s of multicultural Britain as they try to prove their existence. In this matter, Hanif Kureishi deems that the immigrant people must have a definite identity to be British as equal as the white people in Britain.

The present study aims to explore the theme of Britishness while searching for a certain identity and belonging to a particular society in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. More specifically, it explores how the main character Karim struggles to find out a fixed or a stable identity that he can successfully live with. Thus, by the end of the novel, Karim realizes that his own identity is different from his father's Indian identity. Moreover, he understands that he also differs greatly from the Englishman and that the features of his life are based on "the otherness".

Moreover, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi portrays the concept of Britishness from the perspective of the protagonist Karim and from other characters' perspective as well. On the one hand, Karim has an unstable and ever-changing identity and he finds himself, by the end of the novel, as a stranger, either to his far Indian society or to his lived English society to remain with a hybrid complex identity. Through Karim, Kureishi wants to sort out a new kind of accepted British man who lives in between or, in another word, Kureishi paves the way to a new generation of people who prove themselves with a new perception as the hybrid British citizens are fully aware of their situation in the British society. On the other hand, Kureishi sends a very substantial message that reflects another sense of belonging and identity construction through Karim's father; Haroon. Haroon's failure to imitate the English society and achieve his proximal detachment from his Indian roots, makes him create and impose his own successful identity that is based on his understanding that identity is nothing but performance.

Overall, both cases of Karim and his father Haroon support the work that the contemporary concept of Britishness is not only depending on having an English identity and a pure white skin, but rather it includes others regardless their personal and cultural identities. From this point, this study reveals a new vision for the concept of Britishness in contemporary Britain. This new definition is represented in "the citizen" who lives in Britain with a hybrid identity whatever are his physical characteristics, thoughts, behaviors, actions or traditions.

Contemporary British society's situation affects the literary production of the immigrant writers. Therefore, contemporary British literature is like a mirror that reflects the immigrants suffering with their hybrid identities in a multicultural society. Hanif Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) depicts how the concept of Britishness is redefined through having a hybrid British identity.

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Abstract (Arabic)

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على مفهوم البريطانية في رواية حنيف قريشي "بوذا الضواحي" : The Buddha of Suburbia ، وبما أن ظاهرة الهجرة قد غيرت من بنية المجتمع البريطاني و صنعت منه مجتمعا متعدد الحضارات و الأعراق و الديانات ،فقد أدى ذلك بالمهاجرين في بريطانيا إلى البحث عن هوية محددة لأنهم مذبذبين بين خلفيتهم العرقية و فشلهم في تقليد الثقافة البريطانية. ولهذا اهتم الأدب البريطاني المعاصر بالبحث في النزعة البريطانية كما سعى إلى وضع مصطلح جديد يحدد ماهيتها. تهدف هذه الدراسة من جهة أخرى إلى تحليل مختلف أشكال اللانتماء و أزمة الهوية التي عانى منها المهاجرون خلال أواخر القرن العشرين في بريطانيا و محاولتهم للارتقاء بحالتهم الاجتماعية. وفي هذه الدراسة، أردنا الوقوف على تصور حنيف قريشي من خلال روايته لمفهوم البريطانية و تعريفه لها. في حقيقة الأمر لا تقتصر الهوية البريطانية من خلال ما تضمنته رواية حنيف قريشي على المواطنين ذوي البشرة البيضاء، و إنما على الآخر بغض النظر عن هويته ،عرقه أو حتى ديانته. لتتوصل في الأخير إلى أن حنيف قريشي انتهى إلى مفهوم معاصر لمصطلح البريطانية يتمثل في " المواطن البريطاني الهجين".

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب البريطاني المعاصر، العرق ، مجتمع متعدد الحضارات، النزعة البريطانية ، الهجين ، الهوية.