CROSSING THE DIVIDING BOUNDARY OF SKIN-COLOUR: HYBRIDITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE IN HANIF KUREISHI'S "THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA"[1]

Abstract: *This paper examines Hanif Kureishi's attempts to find new strategies of resistance in* "The Buddha of Suburbia" *to cross the boundary of the "separateness, conflict and division" caused by the skin colour and eventually create a new space or a new kind of consciousness and relationship, which may allow those individuals imprisoned within categorical identity to express themselves without restriction in life and create room for an active free dialogue by promising the emergence of a third culture in the contemporary period. In doing so, the paper comprises two parts. The first part examines racial prejudices and superiority complex of the white people and culture in Britain, which have always viewed the non-white not only as the other but also as inferior or subordinated in life. The second part focuses upon Kureishi's new strategy, in which he artistically strives to go beyond the borderline of the skin-colour and then create a hole, a new space, a third way or a sense of "hybridity" through the representation of his fictional character Karim Amir in* "The Buddha of Suburbia".

Keywords: *skin-colour, hybridity and identity.*

The period after the World War II has witnessed a new world order with a lot of radical upheavals, political and cultural shifts and developments, obviously challenging and altering the pre-war politics, cultures, and perceptions of identity in the colonized and colonizing countries, particularly in Britain (Morrison, 2003; Acheson and Ross, 2005; Rennison, 2005; English, 2006 and Bentley, 2008). The colonized countries such as India gained their sovereignty and independence, and Britain, which used to control one third of the entire world as an imperial power, lost its key places, together with its international importance and prestige, yet the contact between Britain and former colonized nations has continued in different ways. As Nick Bentley argues:

> Britain has continued to maintain links with many of the former colonies through the establishment of the Commonwealth, which is an association of many of the countries that used to be ruled by Britain. This continued association has also affected the pattern of migration and has been a significant feature of Britain's population demographic in the years following the Second World War. From the 1950s onwards Britain has developed into a multicultural nation as groups of people moved from parts of the Caribbean, South East Asia and Africa (as well as other parts of the world) and settled in Britain, often in communities that gathered together in Britain's urban areas (Bentley, 2008: 17).

The settlement of immigrants and diasporas in a new environment, which, as Robert J. C. Young argues, has profoundly shattered indigenous English culture and "the Englishness of the past" with its "fixity, certainty, centeredness, homogeneity" as being "something unproblematically identical with itself" (1995: 2), yet it "has not always been a smooth process", since immigrants and diasporas have faced resistance from the local indigenous population and culture, and "the successive governments", as Bentley points out, have employed the rhetoric of "race card" or Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" "to create unnecessary fear amongst the established British population with images of being invaded and swamped by immigrants" (2008: 17). Hence the "race card" or skin-colour has become the source of many conflicts between local population and ethnic communities in the inner city areas such as Brixton, Chapeltown, Toxteth,

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and Moss Side in the early 1980s; Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the early days of 2000 were the areas where the racial tension between local population and immigrants reached its peak. Of course, the reason behind violence is not only racial issue, but there are also other hidden complex factors which trigger such tensions and violence – the factors related closely to the legacy of old colonialism, social and cultural resentment, economical and political deprivation, suppression of the immigrants by the local authority as well as by the attempts of the immigrants to retain their unique identity and culture without being assimilated within the dominant British culture. This complex internal structure of contemporary British society has obviously resulted in many extreme ethnic problems and identity crisis particularly among immigrant people and their children in contemporary Britain as Richard Bradford writes: "It would seem that within these islands the permutations upon identity, separateness, conflict and division are almost without limit" (2007: 160).

This paper examines Hanif Kureishi's attempts to find new strategies of resistance in *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) to cross the boundary of the "separateness, conflict and division" caused by the skin-colour and eventually create a new space or a new kind of consciousness and relationship, which may allow those individuals imprisoned within categorical identity to express themselves without any restriction in life and create room for an active free dialogue by promising the emergence of a third culture in the contemporary period. In doing so, the paper comprises two parts. The first part examines racial prejudices and superiority complex of the white people and culture in Britain, which have always viewed the non-white not only as the other but also as inferior or subordinated in life. As Kureishi represents in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, these aspects are obviously internalized in the relationship between the white people and immigrants, giving rise to a sense of anger, reaction and crisis of identity in the psyche of immigrants, since the national local society and culture are reluctant to acknowledge the presence of immigrant people as their part, and they also see them with their skin-colour as unequal with themselves, so that the white people strive to get pleasure from their sense of superiority which has been strengthened with the Enlightenment ideology of the western white civilization since the mid-nineteenth century, whereas the immigrant people or non-white people suffer from the sense of inferiority culture and identity as being considered uncivilized, uneducated, and dirty (Smedley, 1998: 690-702). As Kureishi represents in *The Buddha of Suburbia* through the lives of both the white people and the former colonized, now immigrant brown-skinned people in their close but apart relationships, the legacy of the relationship of superior and inferior still forms the axis and basis of overall perception and debates in the novel as being linked not only to a sense of identity crisis in the psyche of the non-white immigrant people but also to difference of cultural domain, in which each side, the white and non-white, strives to exercise their right and power, yet the non-white constantly faces inequity, prejudice and humiliation within the dominant white British culture as it obviously stems from the colonial perception and legacy which the white man cannot easily divest himself of, yet he tries to exercise in different ways in the novel.

The second part of the paper focuses upon Kureishi's new strategy, in which he artistically endeavours to go beyond the borderline of the skin-colour mentioned above and then create a hole, a new space, a third way or a sense of "hybridity" through the representation of his fictional character Karim Amir, the son of an immigrant Indian father and an English mother in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Karim is represented as flexible and indifferent to both his father's Indian background and his mother's English backdrop, which, he comes to realize, try to attach him to one side only and categorize

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him in accord with the characteristics they get from their own background – Indian and English; yet he thinks that his attachment to either of these cultural and traditional conditions will limit his view of life, identity, future expectation and "alternative life-styles" (Kureishi, 1990: 71).[1] By means of this approach to life, Kureishi endows Karim with energy and power to shun prejudices, categorization, the sense of the otherness, and racial discrimination imposed by the dominant white British society and culture against the immigrants from Africa, India, Pakistan and Caribbean. Simply, Karim strives in different ways not only to shatter the boundaries of what Peter Childs and Roger Fowler terms "static and essentialist notions of identity of race and nation promoted by colonial discourses" (2006: 112) but also to create a space for himself within these "static and essentialist notions of identity of race and nation" where he intends to be neither one thing nor the other but have a different identity, consciousness and ideal without attaching to any limiting view of life. This approach explicitly not only undermines the basis of the fixed notion of "identity of race and nation" and locates it in a position of ambivalence and uncertainty, but also avails Karim of the chance to play various roles without being restricted to the categorizing dichotomy of indigenous British society and culture. For example, Karim could easily communicate with the young British; they play and listen to music together. As part of the youth culture which has developed since the 1960s, both immigrant and local young people deny their cataloguing backgrounds but long for creating an alternative way of life, in which they could form the distinctive space and culture to express themselves freely without being exposed to the limitation of racism, traditional world view and customs. As to these various roles, moreover, Karim also finds a space for himself in theatre and proves his ability the same as the white actors in acting. Through his representation of Karim in theatre in a white dominated milieu, Kureishi deconstructs and destabilizes not only the categorically fixed identity linked to the skin-colour, together with the legacy of the colonial politics and culture based on the dichotomy of "we" and "other", but he also deconstructs space and art dominated by the white British society and culture. That is, he hybridizes British society and culture and makes them flexible, permeable, negotiable and accessible for coloured immigrant people.

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the binary positioning of the identity as "we" and "other", racism and nationalism, are seen on many occasions in the relationships between the white people and the non-white immigrants, creating anger, hatred, and humiliation particularly in the psyche of non-white people. As soon as the novel opens, for example, Haroon, an Indian immigrant and Karim's father, is "practising for the yoga Olympics" to introduce mysticism and spiritual healing in the materialistic age (Kureishi, 1990: 4). Like Kureishi's own father, he is from a well-off Bombay Muslim family and came to England, together with his close friend Anwar, in the 1950s for education with the intention to "return to India a qualified and polished English gentleman lawyer and accomplished ballroom dancer" (24), yet he does not go back to India but stays in England by marrying a white working-class English woman Margaret. With two children, he has a family and secure job in England, yet he is exceedingly bored and often finds his life dull in the London suburb, so that he turns his attention to Oriental philosophy and meditation for wishing nothing but for releasing himself from the monotony of life: "In the suburbs people rarely dreamed of striking out for happiness. It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the reward of the dullness" (8). One night Haroon and Karim go to Eva Kay's home (Eva is Haroon's

[1] Further references to this edition will appear in the text.

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secret lover) for "a demonstration of the mystic arts" of the orient to a group of English people who, like Haroon, seek relaxation from the boredom of life, and one of the men in group "said in a loudly whisper to his friend, "why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?...And has he got his camel parked outside?" (12). In the statement of the English man, there seem to be two important aspects as to segregation. First, the English man seems unhappy with the presence of Haroon, and thus gets a little bit angry with Eva who has invited him to the demonstration. Secondly, two Keywords of the English man, "brown Indian" and "camel", are of vital importance as means, in which Haroon is immediately differentiated, categorized and constructed as the other. First, "camel" is overtly and culturally attributed to the orient as a distinguishing aspect and perception for the west, while the colour, "brown", is closely associated with the non-white in general and the post-war immigrant people in particular in England. The colour, "brown", becomes a means of racial segregation and opposition, leading to a fixed description of individuals as per their skin-colour as obviously also seen in Karim's brother's case, too. His brother, Amar, "called himself Allie to avoid racial trouble" in the street, and then he becomes able to create a space of movement for himself as the other within the indigenous local culture (19). Whatever Haroon and Amar do has no meaning and importance, since their identities and differences are already determined as the other by the local British society and culture.

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the sense of the otherness is, in fact, ingrained in the consciousness of the immigrant people, causing them not only to see themselves at distance from the white people, but they also do not consider themselves part of the local British culture. They often feel that they are different, inferior and alien in the space where they live; they feel worried and disturbed in their lives. In their conversation, for instance, Anwar accuses Haroon of being lazy and thus earning less for his family, yet Haroon, being a little bit angry and disappointed in life, says that "the Whites will never promote us... Not an Indian while there is a white man on the earth. You don't have to deal with them – they still think they have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together" (27). The quotation suggests two important views as to the relationship between the "brown" people and the white ones. Whether nor not it is true that Haroon has an assumption as colonized that the white people will prevent in any case the "brown" people from promoting to the equal position with them, since what is important is that the non-white people have a deep-seated internalized conviction that the white people consider themselves superior to them and see society and culture as their own property; the white people may think or may be afraid that the non-white people will take their place, so that the skin-colour becomes an excuse to control and keep the non-whites at a distance. Secondly, in Haroon's view, the colonial complex and the view of imperial superiority may still haunt the views of the white people, and they tend to act in such a way to show up their sense of superiority and authority over the non-whites in their indigenous space. This sense of superiority, together with imperialistic and colonialist attitudes, makes the whites angry once they come across the non-whites in the space which they think pertains to them; they insult them ruthlessly. In one occasion, for example, Karim visits the white girl Helen whom he meets in one of his father's "mystic" shows at Eva's home. When he calls Helen out, he finds her father, Hairy Back, standing at the door with his dog:

> "You can't see my daughter again," said Hairy Back, "She doesn't go out with the boys. Or with wogs."
> "Oh well."
> "Got it?"

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> "Yeah," I said sullenly
> "We don't want you the blackies coming to the house."
> "Have there been many?"
> "Many what, you little coon?"
> "Blackies."
> "Where?"
> "Coming to the house."
> "We don't like it," Hairy Back said. "However many niggers there are, we don't like it. We are with Enoch. If you put one your black hands near my daughter I will smash it with an "'ammer!'" (40).

It is understandable that Hairy Back may wish to protect his daughter or he may not allow any relationship between his daughter and boys, yet the way he speaks to Karim is full of insults and humiliation as if he saw a devil or monster at his home. What is more, by means of Karim's skin colour, Hairy Back obviously categorizes and belittles the non-white people in a nasty way. The words, "wogs", "coon" and "niggers", are the words of slang and defamation employed for the non-whites. Their use is extremely offensive for anyone whose skin is not white. These words are mostly used as disparaging ones for a person of colour, especially a person coming from Africa or Asia. Hair Back not only threatens Karim but also shows his dislike of the people like Karim. Not only does his anger apparently indicate a huge distance and space between himself and the ones who do not have the same colour as his colour, but Hairy Back's attitude also makes Karim very angry, and causes him to internalize it in the Freudian sense, so that whenever he sees Helen or whenever he comes across Hairy Back, he recalls what Hairy Back has told him; he remembers Hairy Back's loathing, insult and humiliation of the non-whites, and his anger and hatred are dislocated, which obviously disturbs his psyche and personality in Britain which Jamila, Anwar's daughter and Karim's close friend, calls "racist" (108; see also 101). Hairy Back's discourse, as Edward Said points out in *Orientalism* (1978), operates as an instrument of power or colonialism, a system of statement, in which the imperial and colonial legacy and discourse find meaning and value, and thus Hairy Back simply tries to re-produce this meaning and value to put himself at a different or higher position than Karim. Hence his words have important and deep meanings behind, because those people who were colonized or enslaved before now occupy the same space with the colonizing people. This perception apparently shatters the basis of the superiority complex of the white culture and civilization.

It may be because of this deep meaning that Karim visibly internalizes this racist attitude. For instance, he has also been influenced by racism at British Schools: "I was sick too of being affectionately called Shitface and Curryface, and of coming home covered in shit and snot and chalk and woodshavings" (63). Once he connects the words, "Shitface and Curryface", together with the words of Hairy Back related to racial prejudices and humiliation, Karim seeks chance to take revenge. For example, Karim uses Hairy Back's car to take his Indian friends from the airport, which becomes an opportunity for him to show his anger in a different way:

> Helen and I got in front. This was a delicious moment of revenge for me, because the Rover belonged to Helen's dad, Hairy Back. Had he known that four Pakis were resting their dark arses on his deep leather seats to be driven by his daughter, who had only recently been fucked by one of them, he wouldn't have been a contented man (p. 78).

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This quotation is humorous in its tone, yet the word, "Pakis", is not an empty word in meaning for Karim; he utters this word in a sarcastic way, because this word as a racist imaginary one positions him at once in an oppositional situation beside the white men. As to these quotations above, Nick Bentley argues that "this passage [above], although having an element of humour, symbolically represents a form of racial humiliation meted out to an outsider by a representative of the dominant culture" (2008: 163).

Moreover, even further we could see the ingrained anger, crisis and confusion in the view of immigrant people towards the white ones, which actually derives from the deposited disturbed feeling in their consciousness caused by colonialism and imperial ideology, and this anger and crisis deepens every day though both sides live now in the same space: simply, both sides are unable to divest themselves easily of the inferiority and superiority complex. For example, Helen and Karim are sitting together with his relatives just after the arrival of Changez, Jamila's future husband from India. After a while, Helen wants to leave them, since she seems disturbed and irritated by the atmosphere there. Once Karim asks her why she wants to leave, she tells that "one of Anwar's relatives was behaving weirdly towards me. Apparently whenever she'd gone close to this man, he'd shooed her away, recoiling from her and muttering, 'pork, pork, VD, VD, white woman, white woman'" (Kureishi, 1990: 84-5). This time Helen is insulted by the Asian immigrants the same as Karim by a white man. For the immigrant people, the tension and conflict between both sides are rooted in the long history of colonialism, in which the colonizing white powers applied their imperial ideology and suppressed the colonized ones at the axis of inferior and superior, which is now profoundly displaced in such a way; for the white people, being together with these uncivilized, "Shitface and Curryface" people profoundly crumbles their sense of superiority and authority, since these "Shitface and Curryface" people reside in the same space together with the white men and endeavour to come to the same position in the social status. Indeed, this dichotomy noticeably defines the identity and perceptions of both sides and their perceptions in life.

Such kind of anger could also be seen in the security-related issue in the space shared together by the immigrant and white people. The immigrant people feel themselves insecure and vulnerable due to the prejudices and attacks conducted by the nationalist white people in London. For example, Anwar's daughter Jamila as a female learns karate and judo to defend herself, her parents and their shop against the attacks of "neo-fascist [white] groups" (56). These groups use various means to carry out their racial campaign against the immigrant and black people in the streets of London. They have their "pubs", "clubs" and "shops", together with their own "newspaper and pamphlets, which they sell out in the street on Saturdays. Moreover, they also "operate outside schools and colleges and football grounds"; they "parade through the streets, protected by the police" (56). The Asian people in general and Anwar and his family in particular are "pervaded by fear of violence": "It was something they [Anwar, his wife Jeeta and Jamila] thought about every day. Jeeta kept buckets of water around her bed in case the shop was fire-bombed in the night. Many of Jamila's attitudes were inspired by the possibility that a white group might kill one of us one day" (56; see also 171). Anwar, his wife and daughter are psychologically intimidated, and their identities are dislocated and shattered by the attitude to which they are exposed; they lose their sense of belongingness to the place where they live and earn their living; particularly Anwar is not only very fragmented, devastated and disillusioned, but he also feels alien in Britain, and thus "he is roaming the streets every day with his sticks", shouting at these white

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boys, "'beat me, white boy, if you want to!'...He wants to go home now: 'I've had enough of this damn place'" (171-2).

"This damn place" becomes even worse after the death of Anwar, since the number of the attacks and intimidation against immigrant and black people constantly increase every day. The immigrant Asian and black people do not feel safe and happy in London. For example, the Nationalist Front, a white racist group, terrorizes the London streets and assaults the non-white people. The group considers the non-whites the other and calls them "Paki" or "Negro", and these words are obviously used to taunt immigrant Asian and black people. The group also calls Changez a Paki, attacks and wounds him seriously in his stomach with a razor blade though he likes English people much and find them "polite and considerate", and in his view, "they were gentlemen. Especially the women. They don't try to do you down all the time like the Indians do" (223). What is also equally important is that he, unlike his father-in-law, feels "at home here it reminds me of Calcutta" (224). But Changez is seriously attacked despite his good intention and views about British people:

> It was a typical South London Winter evening – silent, dark, cold, foggy, damp – this gang jumped out on Changez and called him a Paki, not realising he was Indian. They planted their feet all over him and started to carve the initials of the National Front into his stomach with a razor blade. They fled because Changez let off the siren of his Muslim warrior's call, which could be heard in Buenos Aires (224).

The quotation seems amusing and exaggerated as for Changez's utterance and behaviour, and the text has a comic tone as well. In terms of these aspects, perhaps Jago Morrison argues that Kureishi's treatment of racism is not so serious that "the racists themselves are allowed disappear back into the shadows of Kureishi's text. The charge Kureishi risks here is clearly that his text is effectively sugar-coating race hatred with humour" (2003: 184). In my view, however, Kureishi's text is closely interwoven with the racial concern which could be seen from the beginning of *The Buddha of Suburbia* to the end. He does not deal with racism in an unserious way, but having taken Morrison's argument into consideration, it could be said that Kureishi, unlike many post-colonists and critics, tackles the issue under discussion in a different way: humorous and comic, beneath which lies something serious. For example, the National Front group disseminates fear in the places where Asians live; they harass Asians and threaten to destroy their shops. "Local people were scared", and Asian and black people also want to march and have their voices heard against racism (Kureishi, 1990: 225). As seen above, this kind of racism obviously marginalizes both sides and augments their anger as long as such racial attitudes continue. Even Karim, though flexible and liberal in many ways concerning the relationship between immigrant and white people, also gets very annoyed once he learns the attack on Changez and his injury, so that he also wants to join the anti-racist march to condemn racial attitudes against the non-white people in the working class and lower-middle class environment of the London suburban.

It is not only in the relationship with one another in the London suburban areas where Asian people face racial segregation but also in the artistic and intellectual activities of the liberal middle and upper-middle class milieu that the non-white people cannot get away from imperialistic prejudices, racial abuse and humiliation when they attempt to create a space not only to express themselves fully in these areas of life but also to achieve the same status the same as a white man; they are overtly and covertly exposed to such belittling attitudes as the other in the upper class environment of British society. For example, Eva, the lover of Karim's father, wants to help Karim for a "big

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moment" and help him make a new start in his life through theatre (136-7), so that she introduces him to Shadwell, the director of a small theatre in the North London. Shadwell wants Karim to take role in one of the performances on at his theatre and act the character of "Mowgli", a character in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894-95) who is lost in a tropical forest as a small boy and is cared for and taught by the animals in the jungle. Shadwell prefers Karim for this characterization not because of his ability and talent but because of his brown-skin as he says to him: "'In fact, you are Mowgli. You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry...'" (142). During the performance, he is supposed to "wear a loin-cloth and brown make-up, so that I resembled a turd in a bikini-bottom", and he will be covered "from toe to head in the brown muck..." (146). Moreover, he is also required to speak in the "Indian accent" (147). Shadwell is obviously racists in two ways, and is still under the influence of this so-called arrogant superiority complex implicitly hidden in his discourse. Before the performance begins, Shadwell and Karim talk to each other, and Shadwell recommends Karim to go back and see India. Suddenly, he starts laughing and says:

> "What a breed of people to two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to". If the pioneers form the East India Company could see you. What puzzlement there'd be. Everyone looks at you, I am sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear now from him. And you're from Orpington."
>
> "Yeah"
>
> "Oh God, what a strange world. The immigrant is the Everyman of the twentieth century. Yes?...That must be complicated for you to accept – belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism. Do you find difficult? Please tell me."
>
> He looked at me.
>
> "I don't know," I said defensively. "Let's talk about acting."
>
> "Don't you know?" he persisted. Don't you really?"
>
> I couldn't answer his questions. I could barely speak at all; the muscles in my face seemed to have gone rigid. I was shaking with embarrassment that he could talk to me in this way at all; as if he knew me, as if he had the right to question me (141-2).

Shadwell obviously teases Karim with his sarcastic discourse and questions by striving to get Karim's justification about his view of racism. He finds the world strange due to the position of the immigrant as "the Everyman of the twentieth century" which he hardly accepts. Secondly, even though he is used to be "authentic" (147), the role Karim acts actually fixes him into an Indian identity, and he "is forced to play a cultural stereotype in his portrayal of Mowgli, which involves a series of cultural ironies by which he is "backed up" (because his skin is not quite dark enough) and forced to deliver his lines with a mock-Indian accent" (Bentley, 2008: 163-4). For example, the insistence on one-type of costume and make-up not only categorizes Karim into a fixed identity but also noticeably disturbs and causes him to think of the issue as "a political matter" as well as imperialistic and white supremacy. On one occasion, Karim and Terry, another actor in Shadwell's production, speak to each other concerning the attitudes of Shadwell. Terry supports the socialistic views of Leon Trotsky, a Bolshevik revolutionary and Marxist theorist, and "as an active Trotskyite he encouraged me to speak of the prejudice and abuse I'd faced being the son of an Indian. In the evenings we talked of inequality, imperialism, white supremacy..." (Kureishi, 1990: 147-8). As seen here, the feeling of "inequality, imperialism, white supremacy" is always displaced in the consciousness of the non-white, and it comes into existence in different ways.

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It is not only Terry and Karim but also Jamila who could sense the "inequality", "imperialism" and "white supremacy" in the way Karim is forced to act when she watches the first preview of his role related to *The Jungle Book*. She intensely reacts and opposes the play, considering it "completely neo-fascist", and she tells Karim:

> "You looked wonderful...so innocent and young, showing off your pretty body, so thin and perfectly formed. But no doubt about it, the play is completely neo-fascist... And it was disgusting, the accent and the shit you had smeared over you. You were just pandering to prejudices"... "And clichés about Indians. And the accent-my God, how could you do it? I expect you're ashamed, aren't you?" (157).

Shadwell intends to make fun of Indians, and camouflages his view of racism and superiority through Karim's act and theatrical performance. Even Matthew Pyke, another director, forces Karim later on to play an Indian character, and Karim plays Changez.

It is not only Karim but also Tracy, another black girl in Matthew Pyke's theatre, who is also subjected to the racial prejudices, humiliation and abuse in the space which the white people consider their own. The space where both the black and white people live is actually predominantly the space of the white people, and the back people wish to see themselves as part of this space and culture, yet the white people directly or indirectly create problem for the black people, humiliate and force them to act in a way, in which they feel inferior and segregated. Tracey is a respectable and honest girl, yet she is hesitant and "bothered" by the white prejudices and abuse in her life: "she worried about what it meant to be a black woman. She seemed shy and ill at ease in the world, doing her best to disappear from a room without actually walking out" (179). As seen in the quotation, as long as Tracey is among the people who have the same colour as her, she does not feel internal conflicts and experience her being through the other selves. Why Tracey is agitated as the black woman is not clear, yet she seems to have internalized what she has faced, so that her identity is fragmented and decentred; she is "shy" and unhappy and thus unable to express herself overtly and freely in the white dominated space. It is apparently observed in her attitudes when Tracey attends "a party with only black people present, she was completely different – extrovert, passionate, and dancing wildly" (180). In this quotation, there seems to be a close connection between the identity and space, since particularly space is of vital importance for expressing one's self freely, but the space constructed by the white people restrains the non-white people and invests in them a sense of inferiority and uneasiness as well as a sense of alienation and anger. Not only does this view visibly shatter the sense of stability and safety in the consciousness of the black or brown people, but it also gives them a sense that they are alien and unaccepted, and their presence in the white dominated space is unwanted, even though they live together with the white people; they do not have a sense of belongingness to the space in which they live, because the immigrant people feel that they are confined to and imprisoned by "the white truth" and the white definition, in which they have no say (180). Simply, there are both physical distance and psychological barrier between the white and the non-white.

Moreover, this distance and barrier is also seen in the lives of Eleanor's ex-lover Gene, who is "a young West Indian actor" but becomes the victim of the sense of the white supremacy and of the white racism in London (200-1). He is a "very talented and sensitive" black actor, who used to work with Matthew Pyke as well. Matthew Pyke considers Gene "the best mime he ever met", yet Gene "never got the work he

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deserved" though he is better than a lot of his white colleagues (201). Like the black people in Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1948) or like the black people in the 1960s America, Gene is fixed and subjected to discrimination in the white space as described by Eleanor:

> The police were always picking him up and giving him a going over. Taxis drove straight past him. People said there were no free tables in empty restraints...[He] emptied bed-pans in hospital soaps, killed himself because every day, by a look, a remark, an attitude, the English told him they hated him; they never let him forget they thought him a nigger, a slave, a lower being. And we pursued English roses as we pursued England; by possessing these prizes, this kindness and beauty, we stared defiantly into the eye of Hairy Back, into the eye of the Great Fucking Dane. We became part of England and yet proudly stood outside it (201, 227).

For the dominant and imperial people, the people, like Gene in the quotation, are always fixed and categorized as "nigger", "slave" and "lower being", so that they are unable to be an accepted part of the white British culture. From the western point of view, they do not deserve to be respected members of the superior civilized British society and culture, and what is important is that the sense of "a nigger, a slave, a lower being" constructs a view of identity of immigrant and black people, in which they always not only feel a sense of inferiority by staring constantly "into the eye of Hairy Back, into the eye of the Great Fucking Dane" but also feel themselves "outside" the culture which belittle and insults them all the time; "bitterness" and "resentment", which are generated afresh every day, permeate their views and conscious as being internalized day by day in view of the continuous attack and humiliation (227). Eleanor, though white and westerner, has been still under the influence of what happened to Gene, and she considers it a "kind of apartheid" as it was applied in Africa and many other countries during the first half of the twentieth century (238). The only thing Gene wanted was to be a man among the other men and prove his talent, and nothing else, yet he is always identified and segregated in England because of his skin-colour the same as the other black people in America and Africa.

As Kureishi represents Tracey and Gene, they feel a sense of their inferiority or non-existence not only through the space but also through the other – the white. They are strictly defined and positioned in accord with the space and their difference with the white men: that is, it is not Tracey and Gene who make a meaning for themselves, but it is the meaning that was already there, pre-existing, waiting for them in the white space and culture, because the white want the worlds and space to serve their world view; he wants them for himself alone. The white man finds himself the predestined master of this world; he enslaves it by establishing a sense of acquisitive relationship between him and the world. Moreover, both Tracey and Gene have tried to rationalize the world and white space, yet both the world and white space reject them on the basis of skin-colour prejudice, indicating no possible agreement between the space and them on the level of reason. Eventually, both Tracey and Gene feel strongly and psychologically imprisoned by the space and the white people in a way that they are distorted, amputated and excised in their identity, since the white space, which has been viewed civilized and honourable, prevents these black people from all participation. The way Kureishi represents Tracey and Gene as black woman and man as well as actress and actor in the theatrical space of the white society and culture actually recalls what Frantz Fanon wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) concerning "the fact of blackness": "In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third person

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consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty…." (2008: 83)

However, Karim comes to realize that this polarization of "apartheid" or labelling between non-whites and whites cannot exist for ever, and thus he feels that there is an urgent need to cross the dividing boundary of skin-colour and free both sides from the categorizing perception and psyche, in which they are merely imprisoned and fixed. Richard Bradford maintains that "for Kureishi's narrator Karim, and many of his fictive contemporaries, their Pakistani legacy is curiosity, something that exists and is indeed still capable of generating racist antagonism, but which can for most of the time be treated with affectionate indifference" (200: 203). It is within this "affectionate indifference" that Kureishi intends to evade the binary opposition of racism and thus empowers Karim to speak for him: "to be truly free we had to free ourselves of all bitterness and resentment, too. How was this possible when bitterness and resentment were generated afresh every day?" (Kureishi, 1990: 227). In order to avoid "bitterness and resentment" which take place very day, Kureishi introduces "affectionate indifference", "a more subtle form of cultural hybridity" and a view of identity beyond the fixity of racial segregation and positioning as being flexible and ambivalent through his representation of his fictional character Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. He endows Karim with energy and vitality to manoeuvre and achieve his purpose of flexibility, ambivalence and oscillation in the novel, since in order to achieve this purpose, Nick Rennison argues that "Karim is [simply] catapulted into a world of shifting sexual, social and racial identities" throughout *The Buddha of Suburbia* (2005: 81). In shattering this fixity of what Peter Childs and Roger Fowler call above "identity of race and nation" and healing and bridging what Victoria Vesna calls "the painful communication gap" between white and non-white (2001: 122), Kureishi obviously creates a different space, a third way and culture or a sense of mixture or "hybridity" through his representation of Karim Amir in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, in which Karim becomes able to perform various identities and roles once he crosses the borders of his racial complexion and immigrant background and culture which, he feels, limit and fix him as well as of the local indigenous dominant white culture which always not only views him as the other, but it also forces him to act in line with the dominant discourse of the colonizing British culture. Simply, Kureishi bestows power and enthusiasm upon Karim to exceed local specificities of both cultures, show his wish to move towards a true humanity of equality and respect, free of racial, national and other prejudices in the local cultural arrangements. To achieve this purpose, he also seeks to destabilize his cultural background and pure local culture by engaging "in the fusion of old and new cultures, in forms of hybridity, and from this in-between position can potentially establish detachment from both participating cultures" (2004: 159).

The use of "hybridity" as a critical term is not new but dates back to the nineteenth century. Robert J. C. Young explains in detail how hybridity has historically come into use in its varying meanings from the nineteenth century to the present (2005: 1-26). In *OED*, hybridity is defined as "the offspring of two plants or animals of different species or varieties, such as a mule" or as "a thing made by combining two different elements". The view of "varieties" or the combination of "two different elements" as hybrid, indeed, undermines the basis of "the political claims of culture [which] rests on essentialist premises", leading to the view of "fluid, permeable, and ever-renegotiable constructions of meaning and signification" (Kompridis, 2005: 319). Within this "fluid" and "renegotiable" perspective, nothing remains "empirical", fixed and "essentialist", regarding culture, race and identity when "hybridity turns into a

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difference-erasing concept, negating the foreignness of the foreigner, the otherness of the other" (322; see also Lal and lal, 1997: 67-80). As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin point out, hybridity becomes "one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory", referring "to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (2007: 108). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin continue to state that "as used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, "hybrid" species" (108). Hybridization has several forms from linguistic and cultural to political and racial, suggesting multiplicity of voice and identity in a society where there are different languages, ethnic groups and culture (Holquist, 1984), yet the term, "hybridity", "has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: 108).

In accord with the periphery and critical perception of the contemporary period, Bhabha revitalizes the term hybridity and employs it in a new way particularly at a time when the culture of the post-war immigrant people come face to face with the indigenous white culture of the colonizing countries, since there appears not only a rigid set of cultures, constructing the rigid view of identities and perception in each side, but the indigenous culture is also very inflexible and thus brings about a lot of difficulties for the post-war immigrant people who strive to find a middle space to express themselves without being exposed to any racial categorization, discrimination and subordination in life. In order to escape this inflexibility and categorization, Bhabha coins the "Third Space of enunciation", in which both cultures are mobilized not only to destroy the hierarchal "purity" of cultures and identity to some extent but also to create a space for ambiguity, flexibility and vacillation concerning the new position of identity within the dominant indigenous society and culture:

> Intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys the mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of historical identity of culture as homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of people (Bhabha, 1994: 37).

In Bhabha's view, the third space enables skin-coloured immigrant people to cross the boundary not only of the marginality of their culture but also of the indigenous local culture and then provides an unstable fluctuating movement for the hybrid identity from one position to another without an end, in which cultural, political differences and domination, together with the fixed different identities, may operate without being exposed to any "homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated" sense:

> It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meanings and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew…It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory…may open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity* (37-8).

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However, the view of "Third Space of enunciation" and "hybridity" are criticized by virtue of the fact that it is a process of assimilation of the immigrant people, along with the loss of the "primordial unity or fixity" of their identity within the native local culture, since they belong neither to their own culture nor to the indigenous culture. Nevertheless, this re-positioning of the identity somewhere "in-between" may shun and displace the marginality of both immigrant and indigenous local cultures. For Bhabha, for example, being positioned somewhere "in-between" does not mean to free thoroughly from national and cultural sentiment of one side as he stated in his 1991 speech:

> I don't think we can eliminate the concept of the nation altogether, at a time when in many parts of the world—in South Africa, in Eastern Europe—people are actually living and dying for that form of society. You can't completely do away with the nation as an idea or as a political structure, but you *can* acknowledge its historical limitations for our time (Huddart, 2006: 79).

In fact, this "in-between", as Bhabha continues to point out, "makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the "people". By exploring this "Third Space", we may avoid the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (1994: 38-9). Moreover, Marvan M. Kraidy also argues that "since hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities, cross-cultural contact, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries, is a requisite for hybridity" (2005: 5). The "cross-cultural contact" is pivotal, since this contact, I think, does not mean a complete assimilation and loss of the culture or identity of the post-war immigrant minority people within the indigenous imperial culture, but it means "to subvert binary categories" (54) or to deconstruct not only the rigidity of both the immigrant culture and the indigenous imperial culture which strive to homogenize both cultures and identities in firm ways in different conducts. To some extent, this "cross-cultural contact" seems a take –and- give process, in which a new free space may be created for new relationships and identities within the dominant cultural and political space, allowing individuals to act and move freely. Thus, the identity constructed in this way is not firm and rigid in itself but ambivalent, multi-layered, and flexible to any relationship and perception in a new space. Finally, Bhabha describes the advantages of such kind of relationships and identities in view of "the exercise of colonial authority" which "requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out our subject populations that are tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power":

> In the doubly inscribed space of colonial representation where the presence of authority…is also a question of its repetition and displacement, where transparency is *techné,* the immediate visibility of such a régime of recognition is resisted. Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the "content" of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power - hierarchy, normalization, marginalization, and so forth. For domination is achieved through a process of disavowal that denies the *différance* of colonialist power—the chaos of its intervention as *Entstellung,* its dislocatory presence—in order to preserve the authority of its identity in the universalist narrative of nineteenth-century historical and political evolutionism (Bhabha, 2003: 33-4).

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In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, "the act of ambivalence", "the differential relations", "disavowal" and "difference" are obviously seen in Kureishi's representation of Karim through his constant oscillation from one set of identity and role to another. With such constant oscillation, Kureishi enables him not to imprison himself within the fixity of categorizing polarities and identity but to negotiate constantly with various identities and roles in what Bhabha terms the "interstitial passage between fixed identifications [which] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (1994: 4). In the novel, Kureishi longs for subverting the boundaries between the non-whites and whites in the British society, stamping out this rigid binary opposition of racism and then constructing an "interstitial passage" or space where individuals may be free to express themselves and act freely in their movements.

Kureishi exploits this new strategy of culture, perception and hybridity, in which identity becomes flexible, ambivalent, and indifferent to whatever restricts it in life - racism, prejudices, traditions, culture and so on. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi's fictional character Karim obviously fits into this view of life. From the first page of the novel onward, Karim is visibly observed as being indifferent, uncaring, and relax in his views and relationship with one another, particularly with the whites. In view of what immigrant people experience in the London streets, ranging from violence and attacks to humiliation and prejudices, he imagines that there could be a different relationship, different approach and view "somewhere", so that he wants to face up to life and "extract be a different life from it all the real joy it has to offer" (Kureishi, 1994: 5). Therefore, it is in this respect that Karim himself not only denies the fixity of his own identity and his father's Indian background together with his English mother's background but also tells the reader how he is the construct of differences:

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an English man 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), from the south London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of the continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it. Anyway, why search the inner room when it's enough to say that I was looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action and sexual interest I could find, because things were so gloomy, so slow and heavy, in our family. I don't know why. Quite frankly, it was all getting me down and I was ready for anything (3).

As the quotation indicates, Karim does not have a fixed, stable and autonomous identity, but he is very loose in his own view of identity as "a new breed" constructed of "two old histories"; he himself declares that he does not belong to any of the backgrounds coming from his parents, since belonging to one of them may give rise to partiality, biased behaviour and fixity of view as well as to racial marginality either this way or another. Karim scoffs at Englishness, challenges it and considers himself "a funny kind of Englishman" which used to be perceived as being serious, powerful, stable, and autonomous in his views, movement and action. Moreover, he does not acknowledge the cultures of his father's Indian background, either, but tries to find his own way of life as he grows up in a culture which actually rejects and sees him as the other due to his brown skin colour. That he does not care for belonging to nowhere avails Karim of the opportunity to feel himself "ready for anything" in life. He does not want to stick to any side of his parents" cultures and values - his father's Indian background and mother's Englishness; he defies these two cultures and backgrounds

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which try not only to construct him as fixed in a marginalized way but also to prevent him from moving freely from one set of life to another; he wants to be simultaneously inside/outside of polarities at a time, pertaining to both and to neither as in the words of Bhabha: "neither One or the Other but something else besides, in-between" (1994: 219). As quoted by Deborah A. Kapchan and Pauline Turner Strong, moreover, Benjamin Lee also argues that "leading edge of change lies in the intersections and interstices of processes beyond the nation-state that have their own global infrastructure. Hybrid spaces created by diasporic migrations are inhabited by bilingual and bicultural resident nomads who move between one public sphere and another" (1999: 245).

Karim's "bicultural" perception, understanding and attitudes may, in fact, derive from his family background and upbringing. Like Kureishi himself, he is the son of a Pakistani father and an English mother as the second generation of immigrants in England. Although he has never seen his father's home, tradition and culture, he is also influenced by his father's culture, perception and world view as well as by the views of those Asian immigrants around him like his father's close friend Anwar. He also has something from his mother's background, that is, English culture, attitudes, "class antagonism" and confusion, "strikes", racism, "prejudices", and so on (Kureishi, 1990: 247, 256). After one of the shows in Pyke's theatre, for example, his mother congratulates Karim upon his success and says:

> I was leaving; I was getting out, when Mum came up to me. She smiled and I kissed her. "I love you so much," she said.
>
> "Wasn't I good, eh, Mum?"
>
> You weren't in a loin-cloth as usual," she said. "At least they let you wear your own clothes. Bu you are not an Indian. You have never been to India. You'd get diarrhoea the minute you stepped off that plane, I know you would."
>
> "Why don't you say it a bit louder," I said. "Aren't I part Indian?"
>
> "What about me?" Mum said. "Who gave birth to you? You're an English man, I am glad to say…"
>
> I don't care," I said. I'm an actor. It's a job."
>
> "Don't say that," she said. "Be what you are."
>
> "Oh yeah." (232)

The quotation shows that Karim's mother considers her son "an English man" due to the birth, even though he is aware that he is half Indian and half English, a new construct of two cultures as he himself states in the quotation given above. In fact, Karim yearns for getting rid of the restrictive boundary of being an Indian or English, yet his upbringing in these two mixed cultures and perceptions may also help him have a kind of the world view and identity based on indifference, flexibility, ambivalence and hybridity as being "a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories". He does not care for being an Indian or English but craves for expressing himself, playing various identities and roles and understanding as oscillating constantly between the same and the difference in the white British society as much as possible.

In this respect, Karim obviously becomes Kureishi's voice to represent these values and perceptions in life so as to go beyond the certainty of the positioning caused by the skin-colour. Due to this flexibility and indifference with his "deviant" attitudes in life (p. 97), Karim is able to see his future life in a way different from what his father and mother would give in life. Like many other young people in Britain, he wants to live on his own way freely and not according to his father's Indian background and his mother's English background: "I've glimpsed a world of excitement and possibility which I wanted to hold in my mind and expand as a template for the future" (19). As

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seen later in the novel, Karim is aware of the view that the racial and skin-colour issue is an ongoing vicious circle, which obviously imprisons and will thus prevent him in the future from expanding and crossing beyond the border, so that he yearns for creating a third space for himself where there may not be any conflict linked to race and skin-colour, where he may be free of the imposition of his family's limiting attitudes and then enjoy his life freely as much as possible. Karim's indifference or view of "third space" in his life deeply stuns Shadwell, the director of the first theatre, where Karim has acted the character of Mowgli as discussed above in detail. It is true to some extent that Karim gets this job Shadwell's theatre because he is "dark-skinned", "small and wiry" (142), and thus there is a kind of prejudice or categorization towards Karim in Shadwell's sarcastic statements as well as in his solid sense of "superiority" (146-7), yet what is important is that Shadwell finds Karim unconcerned about racism as a coloured one. He talks about immigration, imperialism and indirectly pushes Karim ahead to express his view and take sides with these issues, but Karim pays no heed to them. Then he says to Karim: "'That must be complicated for you to accept – belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism. Do you find it difficult? Please tell me. He looked me'. 'I don't know,' I said defensively. 'Let's talk about acting'" (141). In this quotation, as in the quotation above, Karim seems disturbed by Shadwell's insistence on talking of racism; he does not pay attention to racism, to being an Indian or English but to acting which he thinks will enable him to express himself the same as a white actor in the theatre; he thus strives to avoid Shadwell in a polite way, and a few pages later it becomes obvious in Shadwell's colonial discourse that he strives to display his solid sense of "superiority" (146).

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, it is this flexibility which enables Karim to go beyond the boundary of the skin-colour and find job in another "theatre" (137). Matthew Pyke is the director of the second theatre where Karim, as in the previous show, performs an Asian, yet he is not exposed to categorization as much as he used to be in the former one. It is Eva who introduces Karim to theatre which becomes a means for him to reconcile the binary oppositions of racism and culture on both sides. This introduction not only becomes a chance, "big moment" and a new start in Karim's life (136), but it also avails him of the opportunity to prove himself and his ability in acting, intellectual and artistic circle of the white upper class British society. Although characters such as Karim, Tracey and Gene are clearly exposed to racial discrimination, humiliation and segregation among the white actors and actresses on the stage, "theatre" still becomes a means particularly for Karim to express himself and achieve a kind of reputation and status despite his brown colour; it is the theatre which enables him to see the light of the future in his life.

It is funny and unusual, yet his first acquaintance with the idea of theatre takes place in the bathroom of Eva Kays during one of his visits, and it is at this moment that he sees his future in the theatre:

> In the Kays' bathroom there were framed theatre posters for Genet plays. There were bamboo and parchment scrolls with tubby Orientals copulating on them. As I sat down with my trousers down, taking it all in, I had an extraordinary revelation. I could see my life clearly for the first time: the future and what I wanted to do. I wanted to live always this intensely: mysticism, alcohol, sexual promise, clever people and drugs. I hadn't come upon it all like this before, and now I wanted nothing else. The door to the future had opened: I could see which way to go (14-5).

In his second theatre under the directorship of Pyke, Karim achieves his future success, fame and status in his life without any overt segregation. He is happy now and

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enjoys public attention freely the same as the other white actors: "People pointed us out to each other. They bought us drinks; they felt privileged to meet us. They required us urgently at their parties, to spice them up. We went to them, turning up at midnight with our arms full of beer and wine. Once there we were offered drugs..." (235) Karim has been able to find his way for himself in the artistic and intellectual space of the British society on his own without binding himself to the background of his Indian father and English Mother; he is not subjected to any categorization, discrimination and humiliation but praised, so that Karim is offered further roles: "I was offered a small part in a television film, playing a taxi-driver" (235). Eventually Karim also travels to New York to take part in another show under Pyke's leadership and enjoys to some extent the opportunities the dominant cultures of both British and American societies provide their own citizens with.

Furthermore, Karim, thanks to his flexible and unconcerned attitudes, is able to mix up with the young white people and communicate with them without any problem. What is important is that both young immigrant and white people seem indifferent to crucial issues such racism, immigrant and imperialism not only as a general trend but also as part of youth culture which has developed since the 1960s due to rapid and radical changes in social, cultural and political life following World War II. Simply, "the spirit of the age among the people" visibly and profoundly influences the world view of the young generation which is different from that of their elders and creates "the new nihilism" in the life of the young people (94, 153). They often tend to think differently and act differently in a new space where there is no racial segregation, discrimination and prejudices but a peaceful free life all together by creating alternative, unusual, idle, drift relationships, styles and ways in life. For example, Charlie, Eva's son as a white boy and Karim as a "dark-skinned" boy have homosexual relationship, and it is this relationship which enables Karim to see his future:

> As I sat down with my trousers down, taking it in all, I had an extraordinary revelation. I could see my life clearly for the first time: the future and what I wanted to do. I wanted to live always this intensely: mysticism, alcohol, sexual promise, clever people and drug. I hadn't come upon it all like this before, and now I wanted nothing else. The door to the future had opened: I could see which way to go (15; see also 16-9, 32, 88-90).

As a third way of life, the young immigrant and white people long for subverting and defying traditional ways of life by getting involved together in a culture of hippie, in which they are unusual, unconcerned with the so-called normal traditional views and culture based upon social and cultural opposition; they gather in cafes and listen to music at music societies where Karim also plays "The New Stone Album" (53-62). In addition, Helen, the daughter of Hairy Back, who had insulted and irritated Karim before in a nasty humiliating way, has no problem to live together with immigrant children, often meets Karim and others and spends time with them. She is also annoyed at what she observes outside as well as at her family's attitudes. Hence Helen also wants to go to San Francisco to be free of "the pettiness of living with her parents", since she is a well aware that her father will never allow her to have "alternative life-styles" (71). As Kureishi represents in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the young people are different; they wish to undermine the basis of segregation and bias ingrained in the immigrant culture as well as in the local indigenous British culture.

Finally, Kureishi artistically strives in *The Buddha of Suburbia* to cross the border of the skin-colour by deconstructing the essentialist or holistic claim of the fixed view of identity and culture in British society through his representation of Karim in

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The Buddha of Suburbia as being hybrid, variable, and indifferent. Now Karim has a new identity combining the traits of the background of both his father and mother, and he also acts independent of them simultaneously in the multicultural British society. This kind of identity enables him to go beyond the border and eradicate duality in life by existing in multiple situations and contexts. Kureishi radically and internally hybridizes the autonomous, holistic and essentialist view of identity and culture in the indigenous British society and makes them polyvocal, accessible, fluid, permeable, and negotiable. The British indigenous culture as well as its view of identity metaphorically expands, and thus Karim easily not only represents the blending of traits coming from diverse cultures and traditions of his father and mother, but he also becomes aware of his potential and ability to adapt himself to new circumstances without any restriction. This view of identity and culture becomes a model for dialogue and negotiation in the societies where multiple cultures try to survive side by side devoid of the essential categorization and segregation in the contemporary period.

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