

**POPULAR CULTURE, MUSIC AND ALIENATION IN HANIF KUREISHI'S
THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA AND THE BLACK ALBUM**

**Pamukkale University
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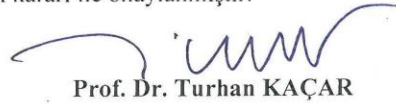


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ABSTRACT**POPULAR CULTURE, MUSIC AND ALIENATION IN HANIF KUREISHI'S
THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA AND THE BLACK ALBUM**

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The main topic of this study is to analyse the concepts of popular culture, music and alienation in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*. The novel is an example of cultural hybridity due to the influence of exchanging values between Asian and English people. In this sense, national, cultural and personal identities of the characters are deconstructed through globalisation, sameness, and popular culture in consumer society.

Chapter one presents an outline of Cultural Studies, the Theory of Popular Culture and deconstruction which are used to criticise and analyse the frames and stories of both novels. Chapter two and three give an explanation of characters' identity problems and alienation due to racial and ethnic differences as a result of being an outsider in the majority, modernisation and globalisation which cause sameness and problem of identification, and deconstructed norms within popular culture that influence language, religion, cuisine, fashion, music, traditions and customs. All these are analysed through examples from *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*.

The purpose of this thesis is to assert that Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* have alienated characters from both Asian and English cultures. The difference between their ethnic roots are deconstructed with globalisation and popular culture. Although the deconstructed version of their identities appear to be more humanitarian, since the gap is diminished, it also causes alienation to their own nations, cultural values, language, aesthetics, and norms. Kureishi creates his stories in accordance with arts especially music and its influence upon the identity process.

Key Words: Cultural Studies, Popular Culture, Deconstruction, Identity, Alienation, Music, Globalisation, Sameness, Cultural Hybridity, Religion, Language, Fashion.

ÖZET

HANIF KUREISHI 'NİN THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA VE THE BLACK ALBUM ROMANLARINDA POPÜLER KÜLTÜR, MÜZİK VE YABANCILAŞMA

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Bu tezin ana konusu Hanif Kureishi'nin *The Buddha of Suburbia* ve *The Black Album* romanlarında popüler kültür, müzik ve yabancılaşma kavramlarını incelemektir. Roman, Asyalılar ve İngilizler arasındaki değerler değiş tokuşu sebebiyle bir kültürel melezlik örneğidir. Bu bağlamda karakterlerin ulusal, kültürel ve kişisel kimlikleri, tüketim toplumundaki globalleşme, aynılık ve popüler kültür aracılığıyla yeniden yapılandırılmıştır.

İlk bölüm, her iki romanın öykülerini ve genel çerçevesini incelemek ve analiz etmek için kullanılan Kültürel Çalışmalar, Popüler Kültür Teorisi ve yapı söküçülüğün ana hatlarını sunmaktadır. İkinci ve üçüncü bölümler karakterlerin, çoğunluk içinde dışlanma ve kimlik sorunlarına neden olan modernleşme ve globalleşme ile dil, din, yemek, moda, müzik, gelenekler ve alışkanlıkları etkileyen popüler kültür içerisinde yeniden yapılandırılmış normların bir sonucu olarak yaşadıkları kimlik problemlerini ve yabancılaşmalarını sorgulamaktadır. Tüm bunlar *The Buddha of Suburbia* ve *The Black Album*'den alınan örnekler aracılığıyla incelemektedir.

Bu tezin amacı, Hanif Kureishi'nin *The Buddha of Suburbia* ve *The Black Album* romanlarında hem Asya hem de İngiliz kültürlerinden gelen karakterlerin yabancılaşp yabancılaşmadığını sorgulamaktır. Kimliklerinin yapıcı sökülmüş versiyonları, aradaki uçurumu azalttığından, daha insancıl görünmesine rağmen, aynı zamanda kendi uluslarına, kültürel değerlerine, dillerine, estetik öğelerine ve normlarına yabancılaşmalarına sebep olmaktadır. Kureishi, hikayelerini sanatla, özellikle müzik ile, ve kimlik kazanım sürecinde kişinin üzerindeki etkisiyle paralel olarak kurgulamaktadır.

Key Words: Kültürel Çalışmalar, Popüler Kültür, Yeniden yapılandırma, Kimlik, Yabancılaşma, Müzik, Globalleşme, Aynılık, Kültürel Melezlik, Din, Dil, Moda.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1

CHAPTER ONE

KUREISHI AND HIS CULTURAL MILIEU	6
---	----------

CHAPTER TWO

THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA	23
-------------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER THREE

THE BLACK ALBUM	38
------------------------	-----------

CONCLUSION.....	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	54
C.V.....	56

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to analyse how identity is influenced by popular culture and how alienation and the importance of music occur in parallelism with the themes of the novels. Identity is handled in terms of national identity, cultural identity and personal identity. Since identity is constantly in progress and change in accordance with the relationships and interactions in daily life and historical changes in the world, alienation is inevitable. Moreover, popular culture reforms norms and values through globalisation and sameness; hence, the culture is interrelated with the attack of past, present, and future.

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* reflect the cultural exchange by culturally hybrid protagonists whose Asian origins are blurred within the English identity. Culture is composed by language, race, ethnicity, religion, aesthetics such as architecture and music, cuisine, fashion, traditions and customs. Simon During asserts in the introduction of *The Cultural Studies Reader* that "[a]s culture was thought about less as an expression of local communal lives and more as an apparatus within a large system of domination, cultural studies offered critiques of culture's hegemonic effects" (During, 4). Hegemony, therefore, has a superiority to alienate minors to their own identities through the deconstructed norms and values of society. Namely, their cultures are never pure due to being migrants and impositions of popular culture through models, symbols and icons. For this reason, since identity is shaped according to the culture itself, it means that identity is continuously being regenerated in time. Therefore, both the signifier and the signified are apt to be deconstructed in relation to the change of cultural artefacts and identity that are influenced by popular culture, which shows that alienation occurs with a view to national and ethnic roots by being an outsider in the major society, modernised and urbanised life by globalisation and monopolisation, and as a result of being a cultural hybrid. Perception is ideologically manipulated by means of multicultural and interracial interactions because the meaning of symbols is deconstructed.

Deconstructed values are consequences of globalisation and urbanisation. As for historical context, after the colonial rule, Asian people immigrated to England in order to be wealthier and well-educated. The coloniser became the host society where immigrants

constituted the minority in the society. Nonetheless, although post-colonial people are still perceived as others and unprivileged, there happens to be a cultural exchange through the mutual comprehension of religion, language, aesthetics and cuisine. This process is influenced by globalisation and urbanisation. Homi Bhabha says that about the process of cultural hybridity:

For the liminality of the Western nation is the shadow of its own finitude: the colonial space played out in the imaginative geography of the metropolitan space; the repetition or return of the postcolonial migrant to alienate the holism of history. The postcolonial space is now 'supplementary' to the metropolitan centre; it stands in a subaltern, adjunct relation that doesn't aggrandize the presence of the West but redraws its frontiers in the menacing, agonistic boundary of cultural difference that never quite adds up, always less than one nation and double. (Bhabha, 241)

All cultures have lost their authenticity because the border lines of the countries are blurred as a result of globalisation. The thing that has made the world's borders smaller is consumerism and materialism after industrial developments. The goods consumed turn into the signifier of the identity. For this reason, Kureishi mentions about a lot of brand names such as Marks & Spenser and Paul Smith. Clothes are means of identity, which stands for the fact that identity is symbolic through popular culture. Since popular culture iconizes people and trends, people have been the same. Hence, originality has been lost. On the other hand, it can be claimed that it is ideological because popular concepts are consequences of the perception and perception is about to be altered. Louis Althusser suggests that ideology is in relation with the material consumed:

[T]he ideological representation of ideology is itself forced to recognize that every 'subject' endowed with a 'consciousness' and believing in the 'ideas' that his 'consciousness' inspires in him and freely accepts, must 'act according to his ideas', must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice. (Althusser, 4)

Identity search functions to name who the one is despite the sameness. In Kureishi's novels, music is also used as the determiner of one's identity because it is in parallel to the cultural hybridity of the characters.

Karim Amir's bisexuality can be considered as sexual hybridity. He likens the obligation of sexual choice between man and woman to the preference between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Shahid Hasan is a fan of the Prince because they represent cultural

hybridity referring to black and white races. Hanif Kureishi juxtaposes the values of two cultures within the influence of globalisation and the facilities provided by city life. Both Karim and Shahid move to London leaving suburban life behind because the city embraces pluralism; therefore, they are able to find sufficient space to identify who they are.

The endings of the novels present the same idea. That is to say, even though Karim has had to face many prejudices because he is Indian, he lets the idea of struggling against racism unlike Jamila. He accepts being a cultural hybrid. The reader is not sure about whether he is going to decide to accept the offer from a TV channel, since he wants to follow the iconographic world of popular culture, at the end of the novel. Moore-Gilbert points out that:

...[T]he *Buddha* ends with a strongly melancholic undercurrent, which flows against its characteristic optimism about the liberating potential of plural and partial identities. This perhaps explains why physical escape is often apparently the only viable option for Kureishi's 'in-between' protagonists... (Moore-Gilbert, 204).

Therefore, Shahid betrays the religious group which represents the unification of others with the help of religion. It points out the fact that Shahid does not take care much about power that is supposed to arise out of belonging to the same origin. He prefers to be with Deedee instead of Riaz and the idea that he represents. Although he lacks the sense of belonging, he meets the group and works for them. When Riaz asks Shahid to edit his pamphlet, he changes Riaz's pamphlet's title from "The Martyr's Imagination" into "A Heretical Artist" (69), which proves his command of English that enables him to manipulate what Riaz wants to express in writing. He liberates himself through the deconstruction of Riaz's art. This liberation is also through the end of the novel because the reader does not know if Shahid and Deedee could arrive in Kent or she wants to continue her life with Shahid. His ambivalence stems from his culturally hybrid identity. "...[t]heir conception of a 'common culture' is achieved at the cost of denigration of, or blindness to, difference" (Moore-Gilbert, 202). In other words, they are alienated to their identities because otherness are eliminated by sameness.

The first novel which will be analysed during this study is *The Buddha of Suburbia* published in 1990. The name of the protagonist is Karim Amir. From the very beginning of the novel, it is obvious that Karim has identity problem because he defines himself as

“almost” (3) English. Karim lives in the suburbia where there is no privacy nor hope for the future. The only thing the suburbia gives him is the stability. Nonetheless, he wants to live in dynamism. Therefore, he moves to London with his father, Haroon and his father's new girlfriend, Eva who has a benefit from Haroon. Because he is Indian, he is accepted stereotypically. Although he is not a Buddhist, he behaves as one, which becomes a set-up. Eva uses Haroon since he is regarded as respectable due to his deconstructed religious understanding, and Haroon uses Eva's enthusiasm because it is a means for him to be popular and accepted by White man who has alienated people of Asian origin to their national identities throughout history. Eva has a son named Charlie who is the representative of popular culture owing to his fashionable clothes, stylish manner, and the music icons he listens to. Charlie, although he is totally a white man, immigrates to USA with the hope of liberating himself from the identity which is imposed upon him by English culture. Another immigrant is Changez who has come to England to get married to Jamila who is a female representative of liberalism in terms of gender identity and political thoughts against racists. Kureishi knits the story of the novel through various characters in an explosive way by using humorous tone while mentioning about serious issues. This interconnection always centres on the main idea that identity is related to culture and since culture is always in the process of change due to the fact that all relationships and interactions change the probabilities of life span, identity is prone to be deconstructed. Therefore, alienation occurs. Moreover, it is increased by the traces of popular culture, which resembles people to each other, such as the way one dresses, believes, eats, and consumes.

The second novel studied in this thesis is Kureishi's *The Black Album*, published in 1995, a novel of a Pakistani protagonist, Shahid Hasan. The fact that the Eastern identity is influenced by cultural hybridity in post-colonial era is represented by cuisine at the beginning of the novel. Shahid meets the members of religious Islamic group in such a location that is depicted with restaurants of Eastern and Western on the same street. Shahid, like Karim, is a migrant, as well. He moves to London and begins a college, the dormitory of which is resided by diverse national groups, which refers to the fact that Shahid can find an appropriate place in the city to identify himself. He has begun an affair

with his teacher, Deedee Osgood who is the female representative of liberalism in this book with her Marxist ideas and the way she lives in terms of the fact that her relationship with one of the students cannot be welcomed in traditional context; she, furthermore, is middle-aged whereas Shahid is very young. Shahid explores his sexual identity with the help of Deedee and her experiences, which is also supported by the influence of drugs. Kureishi uses the third person narrator in this story which means that the details and dream-like atmosphere of drug effect are narrated cinematographically. The viewfinder style of the novel leads the reader to the way how the narrator narrates the story, which alienates the reader to their sense of imagination. Shahid is an alienated character to his ethnicity and belief because he prefers white man's representative and philosophy. This philosophy is meant to be ideological because it reflects the ideas and deconstructed norms of popular culture. Popular culture is so effective in the formation of identity that Riaz, despite the fact that wearing attractive colours is not suitable according to his belief, likes to wear Chili's "red Paul Smith" shirt. The way one wears is a part of his/her identity. For this reason, while Shahid's father is narrated as a veteran of brilliant tailors, Karim's father is depicted as a normal man who wears a suit and a tie. Identity is constituted as a result of the change of possibilities in relations, which is directly in relation with the level of income. The fathers' clothes indicate their income level and it is emphasised in the following chapters of the novel. The icons that popular culture exhibits are ideological then because they are all symbols and models are prejudices.

This thesis, therefore, studies these two novels from the perspective of Cultural Studies. Since culture is a dynamic comprised of language, race and ethnic root, religion, fashion, aesthetics, social norms and values, the characters' interactions and relationships with mutual sides, both Eastern and Western, constitute a new identity; they are cultural hybrids. Their national cultures are hybridised through the immense influence of popular culture in terms of music, clothes, manners, ideas, life style and philosophy. Popular culture decreases the gap between black and white; on the other hand, it leads people to sameness as a result of globalisation.

CHAPTER ONE

KUREISHI AND HIS CULTURAL MILLEU

In order to understand Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*, such concepts as language, ethnicity, race, gender, aesthetics, music, fashion, identity, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity, and alienation need to be analysed. Cultural Studies is the theory that will be used in this thesis since it embraces all these notions and connects them with each other through popular culture.

Cultural Studies is interdisciplinary and not monolithic in terms of methods and diverse approaches. It is not a united but a dynamic structure composed of ideology, social class, politics, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and many other concepts in connection with these such as hegemony, language, body, values, food, clothes, music, and symbols.

Cultural Studies has multiple discourses; it has a number of different histories. It is a whole set of formations; it has its own different conjunctures and moments in the past. It included many different kinds of work...It always was a set of unstable formations...It had many trajectories; many people had and have different theoretical positions, all of them in contention. (Morley&Chen, 267)

Cultural Studies has multiple discourses and can be interpreted from different perspectives in accordance with the culture itself. Since culture is always to change within time, it is apt to be deconstructed.

Cultural Studies is a network of several disciplines in which cultures are studied according to their traditions, values, language, politics, history; namely cultural concepts. If culture is a construct, it means that who owns it controls this product. Therefore, how it is distributed to the masses, and the consequences of these patterns in the community are also studied. For that reason, the key concepts of Cultural Studies are cultural materialism, hegemony, identity, ideology, language, politics, popular culture, power and representation.

The connection between deconstruction and Cultural Studies is provided by the interests of cultural materialism. "Graham Holderness describes cultural materialism as 'a politicised form of historiography'" (Barry, 182). He has essays on Shakespeare's works, yet he is against the idea that Shakespeare is a cultural icon to identify the literary canon of Britain. Shakespeare is represented as a symbol in an iconographic world. In other words, history is manipulated ideologically. Cultural

materialism claims that it is possible to reverse the influence of these ideological cultural products by close textual analysis. In this sense, cultural materialism shares the same methodological approach as deconstruction for the analysis of a text.

Deconstruction, derived from Derrida's work *Of Grammatology*, opposes the idea of underlying stable structures since it uses 'binary oppositions' for this. It means, briefly, white cannot be analysed if there is not black. Hence, there is no hierarchy between notions or concepts. By rejecting the oppression of the imposed ideas and cultural icons, cultural materialism also shares some notions with Marxist criticism because they both reject to the idea of being shaped by the ideals of superstructure. In other words, it deconstructs the situation.

'Materialism' signifies the opposite of 'idealism': an idealist 'belief' would be that high culture presents the free and independent play of the talented individual mind; the contrary 'materialist' belief is that culture cannot 'transcend the material forces and relations of production. Culture is not simply a reflection of the economic and political system, but nor can it be independent of it.' (qtd. in Barry, 183)

Culture includes all types of cultures such as media, popular music and fiction. It means that cultural materialism does not limit itself to 'high' cultural forms such as Shakespeare, Chaucer and Dickens. Culture can be divided into three kinds; the first one is high culture. It is stable throughout the history and it does not change according to location. World classics are examples for this. Western identity is an idealised version of human kind. Listening to classical music, wearing a suit and a tie as the symbols of being 'civilised' are the essences of high culture. The second one is folk culture. Folk culture stems from the community's traditions, beliefs and customs, and it changes from one regional place to another. Myths, legends, dances, local music or clothes, and language are just a few examples for folk culture. Yet time is not of importance; it resists against the changes to come within time. The last type of culture is popular culture. The most effective communication between different communities is perceived in popular culture because it reduces the gap between differences of cultures by creating its own concepts. Popular culture produces its own hero. Despite the number of cultures, there becomes a standard that is familiar to all these cultures. It is achieved by symbols. For instance, when a person wears tattoos and piercings, waxed hair, dressed in tatters, worn-out trainers, no one thinks he/she would be a teacher because every identity is coded with particular symbols. Such kind of a person prompts the idea that he/she is supposed to be a rock music fan. However,

although popular culture creates a type of cultural uniformity in all parts of the world, which denotes to the fact that it does not present considerable changes from one place to another, it does change through time unlike folk culture. Thus, it appears to be a new system full of interpretations but there is no absolutism in these multiple interpretations within the realm of popular culture.. It becomes one of the key concepts of multicultural society.

Popular culture embraces cultural pluralism. Karim and Shahid, The protagonists of *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* are the products of popular culture since they can find a space to understand and identify who they are within the popular culture. They are originally Indian; however, they are British. In order to cover their ethnicity and to overcome the problems they will have to face, they are someone among youth culture by listening to popular music, watching cinema and discerning the produced-heroism of media, stringing along with fashion. Popular culture provides them to exist. For instance Charlie, Eva's son in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, becomes a hero in popular music world. Karim wants to be popular like him. Charlie advises Karim to wear "an old pair of frayed jeans or a wide-collared shirt" (88) instead of a headband and an old-fashioned shirt. If Karim wears these, he can identify himself with the mass society. On the other hand, it brings standardisation. This standardisation refers to the insignificance of the location for popular culture. Whether one is an Indonesian or an Irish, he/she is aware of the styles of each concept. In a multicultural society there is supposed to be universal cultural codes, so each culture can be in communication with each other.

Universal culture is a combination of so many phenomena in a multicultural society. Universal culture is enabled by the influence of Industrial Revolution. Capitalism ideologically benefits from the concepts that compose a culture such as race, gender, religion, language and identity, because the dominant powers that constitute the hegemony in a society are determined by the financial means. It is those financial means and the cultural traits that mutually support each other's existence and ideological domination over the society. In other words, the capital means use the cultural and ideological values as their means of marketing strategy. As a result, the superstructure is directed and shaped by education, literature, music, fashion and imposing new ideas, which are all dependent on, in Marxist terms, the relationships of production in a society. Economic relations in a society result in reification. According to Marxist criticism, working class people are reified and mechanised in a

capitalist society. The process of reification leads to alienation among the people in a society and thus the culture, beliefs and ideological concepts are devalued. Yet, reified values create a cultural uniformity which results from the devaluation of concepts and cultural traits. The devalued cultural concepts become commercialised and once commercialised they inevitably yield to sameness since they are stripped of their essence due to reification. After all, cultural uniformity leads to alienation.

According to Adorno and Horkheimer,

[C]ulture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together. Even the aesthetic manifestations of political opposites proclaim the same inflexible rhythm (94).

This process of “sameness” is taken further by Arif Dirlik and called as “global unity” created by trans-nationalisation of production (349). Dirlik’s assumption is that the world is homogenized both economically and culturally (349). Homogenisation becomes a tool in creating brands and conditioning individuals to buy those brands. Cultural identities, therefore, are replaced by consumer identity, which inevitably look alike in all parts of the world, since all the consumer identities are shaped by iconic heroes as a result of global marketing. Thus, consumer culture becomes the threshold of popular culture.

Popular culture draws attention to hegemony as well as Marxist criticism; however, it deconstructs the hegemony because there is not a stable idea of the privileged class which tends to change hands. Popular culture always has a tendency to change, since it represents the interests of the mainstream culture of the society. For instance, styles are determined by fashion and these styles turn out to be the concepts shared by everyone in the world. This symbolic or iconographic world is absorbed by a universal culture. That is to say, the boundaries between nations and authentic values of a culture such as clothes, music, cuisine or language are reduced.

There is a relation between universal culture through globalisation, absence and presence theorizing that ‘the other’ is fictionalized, language as a discourse including symbols and icons which reflect identity, and also rejection of a transcendental signified, which is an idea to embrace pluralism.

Kureishi criticism ranges from fairly traditional (though, of course, necessary) kinds of content and formal analysis, through various cultural-historical contextualisations to sometimes highly theorised discussions grounded in the conceptual frameworks of

Cultural Studies, gender studies, film studies, postmodernism and minoritarian/postcolonial theory. (Moore-Gilbert, 194)

Therefore, because Hanif Kureishi is a juggler of story telling through an explosive characterisation by juxtaposing dissimilarities with similarities in the same sphere, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* shall be studied through Cultural Studies and Popular Culture theories by deconstructing the elements of culture.

What a culture is composed of is not a simple question to answer, but it can be said that culture is a system of importance and meaning, which is human-made and to change throughout the history. The terms that are influential in the construction of this dynamic are language, religion, cuisine, aesthetics, values, ideology, norms, gender roles, class structure, and universals. The theory of Cultural Studies includes and analyses all these concepts. Meaning is generated through the signifiers. With post-structuralism it is learnt that meaning is reversible. Deconstruction lets the idea of 'essentialism' end. Essentialism assumes that there are some stable social categories which reflect and represent an essential identity. By the same token, there is a constructed identity for black people. By deconstruction it is understood that black identity is neither a fixed universal thing nor a social convention. The stories of Karim and Shahid belong to this deconstructed ideal of black identity. Kureishi's protagonists are cultural hybrids of England in post-colonial era and want to identify themselves by experimenting and experiencing in city life, being a member of popular culture.

Popular culture involves changes in culture especially after mass modernisation with the influence of globalisation in the 20th century. Popular culture means the entirety of all ideas, factors, and social products that are consumed in a certain period. Popular culture is a way of rebellion against absolute determinism, it can be assumed as a means for cultural hybridity, because absolute determinism stipulates limitation to utter a meaning to a person, object or concept, there is no possibility for accepting hybridity.

The term cultural hybridisation stands for the process throughout which a culture adopts globalised world's culture to a degree as clinging to aspects of its original culture Homi K. Bhabha explains how cultural hybridity occupies in culture in *The Location of Culture*:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabba, 5)

Hybridisation extends beyond the physical appearance. For example language can be hybrid in form even as a new language emerging from an immigrant society or a colonised community in the imperial centre under the hegemony of capitalism. It is, therefore, essential to analyse hybridity as an indispensable part of globalisation since globalisation occurs as a result of late capitalism. Nonetheless, what is global is indeed Western. Within globalisation, cultural hybridisation seems to be celebrated. However the process and progress of globalisation do not stand for minorities. Europeans, best defined as white majority, have used the power of money to shape a new generation of a cultural milieu causing the cultural hybrids to carry out the Westernised iconographic consumer and popular culture.

John Storey defines popular culture six times, each of which underlines the impossibility to define it exactly because it is dependent upon the context the phrase is used in. He starts with the idea of being well-spread in the beginning phases. Yet he correlates it with political connotations in following phases; it is related to commercialism and capitalist fashion. Dominic Strinati, in *An Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture*, says

...[w]hat or who determines popular culture. Where does popular culture come from? Does it emerge from the people themselves as an autonomous expression of their interests and modes of experience, or is it imposed from above by those in positions of power as a type of social control? Does popular culture rise up from the people 'below', or does it sink down from elites 'on high' or is it rather a question of an interaction between the two? (Strinati, 3)

Storey claims popular culture emerges from the urbanization of Industrial Revolution. Therefore, it is the product of the hegemony, which means that popular culture "...as a site of struggle between the 'resistance' of subordinate groups in society and the forces of 'incorporation' operating in the interests of dominant groups in society" (Storey, 154). When the history of world is taken into consideration, the more powerful the financial means increases due to the influence of capitalism, the crueller the imperial powers get in order to gain more. The British colonizers

tyrannized over the third world countries during the colonial period. They enslaved black people, and then assimilated them by forcing them to speak English. As time passes the world has witnessed the recursion of colonisation in different ways.

The formerly colonised people have migrated to Britain. Their assimilation is foregrounded by the culture itself once more because, in addition to the obligations in colonization period, they have had to speak English after migration to be able to communicate with other people. On the other hand, this situation has led to the formation of a new community. ‘Others’ have become members of a sub-culture in England. A sub-culture is a group of people within a culture that enables them to separate themselves from the larger dominant culture to the culture which they belong to. Members of sub-culture have begun to stop alienating themselves from the majority; even though they are hybridised by inter-cultural marriages.

Hybridisation is also seen as mutual process in terms of culture. Indians begin to assimilate English from the aspects of cuisine, sex positions, language itself and the image of Englishness. This process is a representation of deconstruction since, as binary oppositions claim, the privileged understanding is spoiled by underlining that every concept can only be understood by the presence of its opposite. Namely, the existence of white man can be proved by the existence of black man. The notion of being English is deconstructed as a result of globalisation because globalisation embraces pluralism despite the fact that it also brings standardisation. Globalisation starts with urbanisation and mass consumerism. Mass consumerism creates new styles and fashions for people to buy. In this sense popular culture and globalisation are hand in hand to shape people’s identities. The ideology that makes Western the owner of the world cracked with cultural pluralism. This pluralism leads to hybridity of cultures within themselves, which comes with globalisation rejecting the idea of homogenisation of idealized Western white man. “[globalisation]...overrates the homogeneity of Western culture and overlooks the fact that many of the standards exported by the West and its cultural industries themselves turn out to be of culturally mixed character” (Storey, 161). In the last phase Storey claims that there is no distinction between high and popular culture. He says in his *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture* “...[p]roduce different political articulations, in terms of class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, generation...cultures...are never monolithic. And he adds a quotation from Edward Said “[A]ll cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily

differentiated, and unmonolithic” (Storey, 162). Furthermore, he supports that with a quotation from Nederveen Pieterse, who claims that hybridisation is related to power and questions the conditions of mixing culturally:

‘Cultures have been hybrid *all along*, hybridization is in effect a tautology: contemporary accelerated globalisation means the hybridization of hybrid cultures’ (64). He argues, ‘Hybridity unsettles the introverted [territorial] concept of culture which underlines romantic nationalism, racism, ethnicism, religious revivalism, civilizational chauvinism, culturalist essentialism’...[I]n relation to the global human condition of inequality, the hybridization perspective releases reflection and engagement from the boundaries of nation, community, ethnicity, or class...(ibid.) (Storey, 162-3).

Hybridisation is reflected in popular culture with regards to language, ethnicity in relation with icons, the sense of belonging in terms of race, class and gender differences, aesthetics such as music, fashion, architecture and its influence upon the declaration of identity, pluralisation of the self with the deconstruction of cultural universals, which are common patterns, systems or concept to all human cultures such as language, symbolism, family, status and social roles, sexuality, music, dance, beliefs and cooking, in postcolonial society as a result of globalisation and standardisation in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* by

...[s]urrounding the deconstruction and pluralisation of the self have resulted in an interest in models of hybridity and inbetweenness, of identities that reside on the borders between, and *in* between, traditional categories of identity. This has led the novel to investigate questions of ontology often expressed as an uncertainty about the relationship between the real and the unreal, between simulacra and simulations, about authenticity and fakery, as well as nostalgia for lost or displaced selves and organic communities. (Bentley, 10).

Since the protagonists of the novels, Karim and Shahid are Indians who live in England, they are portrayed as in-between-characters by Kureishi in an explosive manner with references to music, architecture, the new understanding of heroism created by popular culture.

From theoretical perspective the first element which shall be handled to analyse these novels is language seeing that it is the essential medium of ideology. “Language is the primary means of signification... Although language is the primary sign system, it is not the only one.” (Bressler, 116). Fashion, cuisine, individuals’ acts, relationships, and other activities or norms are codes, indeed. It can change from one culture to another, which means that there is no a transcendental signified.

If meaning is no something fixed and guaranteed in nature, but is the result of particular ways of presenting nature in culture, then meaning of something can never be fixed, final or true; its meaning will only ever be contextual and contingent and, moreover, always open to the changing relations of power. From a Foucauldian perspective...representation always takes place in discourse... (Storey, 6)

This theory about language is applied to Cultural Studies, as well because it is an ‘interdisciplinary study of literary and artistic forms analyzed in their social, economic, or political context’ (Bressler, 235). In terms of political context White Western man is an idealised version of humanity; they are privileged. The idealisation of white European identity is associated with civilisation. However, civilisation means the formation and complexity of social systems in a community. That is to say, the first condition to talk about civilisation is society. Every society has its own norms, specific set of ideas and customs and arts that make this society unique. Civilisation intends to systemise all these sets through education, literature, aesthetics and organised religion. The formation of civilisation benefits from technology, science, and division of labour which are the means for the growth of wealth. Civilisation is used as a mask to expand the ideology of economically powerful Westerners. There seems to be a hierarchy between the civilised and the uncivilised. In order to civilise the third-world-countries like in Africa or Asia culturally, idealised White man enslaved, chained, tortured and assimilated them. For that reason, they have been alienated to their own customs, language, arts, and belief systems. They are oppressed and alienated because of the ideology that White Western man is civilised and privileged.

...[m]any Westerners subscribed to the colonialist ideology that all races other than white were inferior or subhuman. These subhumans or “savages” quickly became the inferior and equally “evil” Others, a philosophical concept called alterity whereby “the others” are excluded from positions power and viewed as different and inferior. (Bressler, 236)

Hence, the alienated and oppressed colonised are unprivileged in colonisation period. However, then, the early 20th century witnessed a new process called decolonisation. India gained its independence. The themes of post-colonialism have always presented characteristics in form and content that invite post-structuralist analysis. Derrida’s claims stem from the Freudian idea of the decentered self. Even the self cannot be comprehended by combining contradictory parts named id, ego and superego. Each centre has its contrast. The idea about binary oppositions shatters

down the idea that one concept is superior whereas another one is inferior because one can only be defined with the existence of the other. There is not supposed to be a hierarchy between binary oppositions, yet there still is. In postcolonial era this European ideal is felt with the alienation process. They are alienated because they are inured to the imposed identity that Westerners approve for them.

The process of cultural impositions first began with language. They made Indians speak English in colonial period. “The message sent to these ‘Others’ by dominant culture has been clear and consistent – conform and be quiet; deny yourself, and all will be well” (Bressler, 234). Indians speak in English now because they are English, too. They are born, educated, fed in England. Nonetheless, “...[t]heir past and their present are intricately interwoven” (Bressler, 235). If they denied their past, they would be denying who they are and if they denied their Englishness, they would be denying their present, as well. Therefore, they are members of a multicultural society; they are cultural hybrids of Britain. It also means that they lack the sense of belonging.

As a result of colonialism, Fanon asserts that both the colonized (the other – that is, any person defined as “different from”) and the colonizer suffer “psychic warping,” often causing what Fanon describes as a “collapse of the ego.” Fanon believes that as soon as the colonized...were forced to speak the language of the colonizer, the colonized either accepted or were coerced into accepting the collective consciousness..., thereby identifying blackness with evil and sin and whiteness with purity and righteousness. (Bressler, 239)

Bhabha calls this as the feeling of ‘unhomeliness’. “This feeling or perception of abandonment by both cultures causes the colonial subject (the colonized person) to become a psychological refugee” (qtd. in Bressler, 241). This situation causes identity and ethnicity problems. These problems are to be reflected in

...a new discourse rejecting all the established transcendental signifieds by the colonizers. Such a writer must embrace pluralism, believing that no single truth or metatheory of history exists. To accomplish such goals, Bhabha consistently uses the tools of deconstruction theory to expose cultural metaphors and discourse (Bressler, 241).

The interaction between cultures, if they collide somehow, is inevitable, as Bressler quotes from Said:

According to Said, nineteenth-century Europeans tried to justify their territorial conquests by propagating a manufactured belief called Orientalism: the creation of non-European stereotypes that suggested so-called Orientals were

indolent, thoughtless, sexually immoral, unreliable, and demented. (qtd in Bressler, 240)

However, Orientalism creates curiosity about ‘the other’, which tempts the privileged Westerns to interrelate with the unprivileged others. It means that ideology is deconstructed and the other becomes the signifier of meaning.

As already stated language is not merely a system of letters and words; every sign, symbol, notion, idea or activity can be classified as a type of language. Authenticity of a nation lies in its original language. If other terms are accepted as a language, it means that being other is deconstructed in many ways such as food, clothes, names, music, fashion, architecture, religion or the change of symbols. Indian food has found a place in English cuisine; they had no spice before, but in postcolonial era there are Indian restaurants in England. Because food is a representative of a culture’s sense of taste, it is possible to say that food is a part of identity. On one side English people has made Indians turned into, as Karim declares, ‘almost’ (3) English. On the other side, Indians have an effect upon them, as well. However, this inevitable interaction stands against ‘others’ mostly in terms of identity metamorphoses and alienation. John Fiske states

...[p]opular culture is a semiotic battlefield in which conflicts are fought out between the forces of incorporation and the forces of resistance, between imposed sets of meanings, pleasures and social identities produced in acts of semiotic resistance: ‘the hegemonic forces of homogeneity are always met by the resistance of heterogeneity’ (qtd in Storey, 33)

Alienation appears in consumer modern society because it makes people away from distinguishing the difference between reality and illusion. Consumerism encourages people to buy; however, the thing one consumes determines his/her social position in the society. For this reason what matters is nothing but the good you consume.

The ideology of consumerism brings alienation because the ideologically given identity means that every person turns out to be the same, which is a type of monopolisation in all parts of humans’ lives such as politics, belief, values, arts, symbols and body. It is the influence of globalisation, and in accordance with this, popular culture. Popular culture generates its own icons, which are, indeed, brands of different identities. These labelled identities are provided mostly with the help of fashion actually. “[c]lothing which indicated a fixed social status came to be avoided

and an individual's dress and demeanour came more and more to be taken as an expression of his personality" (Featherstone, 170). It is mostly done by fashion since the way one wears is the signifier of his/her identity. However, because this identity makes one away from his/her own reality into illusion that is constructed by consumer culture and capitalism, it can be claimed that "[c]ulture today is infecting everything with sameness" (Adorno, 94).

An individual stands for a sense of psychological identity and a social product. Existing authentically in a society has always been open to debate since the birth of the mass consumer society

...[r]efers to the disruptive consequences of industrialisation and urbanisation. The rise of large-scale and mechanised industrial production, and the growth of massive and densely populated cities, are argued to have destabilised and then eroded the societies and values which previously held people together. These radical changes included... the development of large anomic cities populated by anonymous crowds, and the relative absence of moral integration... (Strinati, 5-6)

Therefore, the false pleasures of mass consumption results in artificiality and standardisation of one, which stands for one's dissatisfaction with his real needs such as humanitarian relationships or values. In such a society there seems to be only one way to continue living; exchanging values.

Values are signifiers of the identity which means that if your values are not authentic and unique to a specific culture, in other words if you exchange yours with the ones of the culture you live in, you are ideologically hybridised. There is a place for you to identify yourself in the society, yet it is certainly pseudo. In this sense, this hybridisation points out to the creation of universal culture.

The role of mass culture is to educate people culturally and create arbiters of taste through trends and fashion. Every new trend makes its own hero in popular culture. Richard Hebdige, a media theorist, says

'...[p]opular culture – Hollywood films, advertising images, packaging clothes and music – offers a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts which can be assembled and re-assembled by different groups in a literally limitless number of combinations.' In this process, 'the meaning of each selection is transformed as individual objects – jeans, rock records, Tony Curtis hair styles, bobby socks etc. – are taken out of their original historical and cultural contexts and juxtaposed against signs from other sources' (qtd. in Strinati, 30)

Icons, which are man-made productions, supervise people. It means that the space that people are seeking for in order to escape does not indeed exist. They are

not authentic individuals in the iconographic world. For that reason, alienation is inevitable.

As opposed to authenticity, popular culture in this iconographic world generates standardised people. Standardisation disposes ethnic discrimination. Ethnic discrimination was the basic ideal which the ‘unprivileged’ or ‘other’ suffered from in colonial era. In postcolonial era ethnic discrimination is partially discriminated but through alienation because the authentic values of a nation are not its hallmark any longer, which stems from globalisation and standardisation with the influence of Industrial Revolution and, in accordance with it, urbanisation:

...[b]inary structure of opposition between different cultures and cultural traditions, thus potentially diminishing possible hostilities between them. In this regard, ‘hybridity’ involves a critique of the ‘Purities’ around which minoritarian cultural nationalism mobilises as much as those of the dominant or ‘host’ society. (Moore-Gilbert, 195)

On the other hand, globalisation could not solve the problem that Europeans perceive ‘others’ as physically attractive just because they seem different. It recalls ‘Orientalism’; black people are liked by white ones owing to their physical exoticism. They are still ‘others’, in fact. There is a tendency for commodification of ethnicity. Nonetheless, this is reflected in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* in a new understanding. Kureishi is the translator of minorities in England. Moreover, he does not refrain from delineating the major community but he inverts the dominant gaze because “As Coco Fusco suggests, ‘To ignore white ethnicity is to redouble its hegemony by naturalising it. Without specifically addressing white ethnicity, there can be no critical evaluation of the construction of the other.’[(37)]” (Ranasinha, 14). White European characters are represented in his novels even as leading characters; notwithstanding he draws this panorama so realistically that almost every connection between ‘other’ and ‘white’ fails in some way. For example, Haroon, a middle class Indian man, sets out a new quest by divorcing his English wife. He begins to live with another white woman, Eva, who portrays a different type of life for him abandoning suburbs and moving London. He finds himself in an artistic avant-garde community which appeals Buddhism since it has become a trend among them. Haroon makes use of their popular artefacts and although he is not, behaves as if he were a Buddhist. However, this reputation is shadowed by Eva’s in the following days. When Haroon learns that his ex-wife is together with another man, he does not want to continue his

relationship with Eva any longer. Yet he proposes to her because he cannot take care of himself. The relationship between Charlie, Eva's son, and Karim fails, as well. Karim wants to have sexual intercourse with Charlie. However, it is experienced to an extent that Charlie wants. Whereas Charlie becomes a hero of youth culture in his band and Karim acts in a theatre not because of his tremendous skill but due to the colour of his skin. Nonetheless, Kureishi makes Karim his protagonist of his novel. "Aware of his individualism, Kureishi is an observer of society, involved yet separate. Distanced by colour, culture, and race, he is also separated by his art." (Kaleta, 4). It means that despite difficulties or problems he has to face due to his ethnicity, these experiences are shared with white people and it stands for the fact that dark-skinned people have space in the community:

...[K]ureishi subverts notions of identity and culture as immutable, authentic and fixed in conceptions of origins. While the text emphasises that identities are, to an extent, culturally and politically constructed by stressing the role of performance, it is sceptical of questions of identity being 'resolved' in performance and maps its limitation. (Ranasinha, 63)

He narrows the abyss between white and dark races by underlining the contexts of lives from both sides. He demonstrates in his novels that identities cannot only be considered in terms of cultural difference, but also need to be examined in connection with the differences between classes, gender roles, generations or sexual refinement during the process of identity quest.

Identity quest is born in London, mentioned as the city in the novel. Since they cannot find space to declare their identities in suburbs, Kureishi's protagonists escape to the city where they are planning to have freedom and privacy unlike in the suburbs.

Almost all Kureishi's work is set in and around London, which he calls his 'playground'. Defined against suburbia, London represents much more than the backdrop of his work. It is central to Kureishi's purpose and politics: his sustained exposure of its underbelly, dereliction and violence, as well as his celebration of its freedoms, potential for self-reinvention and energizing creativity. His protagonists' escape from the suburbs to the metropolis is key to their self-development... (Ranasinha, 9-10)

The issue where these cultural hybrids seek for their identities is related to the city life because city is not homogeneous. That is to say, it embraces every type. City refers to dynamism, diverseness, stimulation and "...[o]pens up the potential for sexual experimentation and possibility" (Bentley, 209). Suburbs, on the other hand, as indicated by Silverstone, refer to the fact that "In images as in life... what was being

asserted was – and palpably still is – an ethnic of exclusion – insistently homophobic, consistently racist” (qtd in Bentley, 211)”. Hence, Shahid escapes from racism and Karim escapes from homophobia of suburbs. In addition to these negative connotations of suburbia, the members of lower middle class are remembered at first instead of upper class or bourgeoisie when ‘suburbia’ is implied.

In cities people can determine who they are by experiences and experiments, especially in terms of sexual intercourses:

[K]ureishi foregrounds sexual desire and pleasure. His protagonists are identified and identify themselves by fluid sexual identities, which are presented as potentially liberating, transgressing race and class divisions. His male and female characters deploy sex to contest prescribed gender roles and oppose reductive attempts to categorize them according to ethnic boundaries... (Ranasinha, 17)

Body is the only unconquerable space that we have in this universe. Performativity is a critical term to express Karim and Shahid's situation in the novels because as Judith Butler claims gender is a constructed identity and through repetitions the way one performs structures the way the one is perceived. The perceived is supposed to be ‘normal’; namely heterosexual, that is the identity one proclaims in accordance with the institutions and judicial system of a society. As asserted by Judith Butler on performativity “...[t]he distinction between the personal and political or between private and public is itself a fiction designed to support an oppressive status quo: our most personal acts are, in fact, continually being scripted hegemonic social conventions and ideologies” (qtd in Felluga, 2006). Therefore, the concept of performativity is closely related to the discourse. If one is male, the norms of the society expect him to behave manly, not effeminately. Discourse can be explained as a generalisation of all signs, a system of language indeed. Discourse includes the way one speaks, the things one thinks about and the things one does. Butler sees gender as something one does rather than one has. Therefore, the things one do are in the process of self-making, the identity. Butler considers that homosexuality or heterosexuality is not fixed categories since the acts or behaviours of a person are not independent upon circumstances of the culture. The culture and the one forms a dynamic to constitute an identity, this dynamic is about to change in each possible condition. Karim, for instance, does not fit the gender identity that is imposed upon by social norms because it is possible to find him in unusual sexual intercourses. Owing to racist approach he is not supposed to sleep with a white

woman, but he does. Due to the fact he is supposed to be heterosexual, the sexual intercourse he wants to be in with Charlie is thought to be weird. Since the married woman is supposed to be loyal to her husband, Karim cannot make love with Jamila, yet he does. The performance of sex is supposed to be private between two people, one is man and the other is woman; however, Karim sucks a man's penis while his wife is satisfying Karim. Shahid exchanges his costumes with Deedee's and allows her to direct the manner of their sex; he does not have problem with being passive although he is supposed to expose his manly power upon the woman. The things performed by Kureishi's protagonists show the fact that gender is ideological, but the way one performs shapes the identity one is continually having. Identity is in progress with the circumstances of the culture. It refers to the fact that the identity Karim and Shahid seek for is in connection with ideology and its traces such as ethnicity, gender, fashion, hegemony, traditions and social structure. Karim and Shahid perform as cultural hybrids of England in terms of race, gender relations, sexual preferences and the way they want to live. They are deconstructed manly figures of popular culture. They are together with women, which means that they do not reject the social norms of the majority. Along with this fact, they also do not resist against what they want to experience to understand who they are. That is why, Shahid makes love with his middle-aged teacher, Deedee or Karim finds himself in group sex with the director of the theatre he is acting in. They are liberating themselves.

The focus on sexuality paralleled an increasing interest in the 1990s with the politics and aesthetics of the body: the body as the space in which identity locates itself, but also as a site of performance, empowerment, spectacle and the intimate expression of power relationships. (Bentley, 8-9)

Despite unorthodox preferences or radical comprehensions, people can live what they want in the city. The suburbia is xenophobic and monologic whereas city is polyphonic and dialogical. Despite many different discourses, the number of the people, they can communicate with each other. The city serves each people appropriate space to identify themselves with entertainment industry. Popular culture in London opens new ways to communicate with a new language. The city creates its own notions, ideals, and icons. “[urban residents] decry forms of culture that challenge or disrupts their self-identities, that seek to extend – rather than merely confirm – established modes of thought or structures of feeling” (Chrisman& Parry, 134).

Urbanisation is one part of *fin de siècle* in Britain. Another indication that Britain has changed after Industrial Revolution and its consequences such as materialism, consumerism, colonialism, and social changes in values with globalisation and standardisation, the deconstruction of the transcendental signified and the change in the understanding of hegemony with the influence of popular culture. Hanif Kureishi states in *The Faber Book of Pop*:

...[p]opular culture always has its base in the experiences, the pleasures, the memories, the traditions of the people...Hence, it links with what Mikhail Bakhtin calls 'the vulgar' – the popular, the informal, the underside, the grotesque. That is why it has always been counterposed to elite or high culture, and is thus a site of alternative traditions. And that is why the dominant tradition has always been afraid of it, quite rightly. (Kureishi, 669)

Popular culture iconizes outsiders of the society. Alienation can be perceived in terms of racial and ethnic differences – being an outsider in majority –, modernisation and globalisation – being an icon in popular culture –, and within – being a cultural hybrid. The three phases of alienation will be analysed in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* in the following chapters. The other thematic analysis of the novels will be on music because Kureishi creates his stories in parallel to music. Since music is regarded as a part of the identity, the groups and songs referred in the novels stands for significance in terms of the constitution of the characters' identities.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA

This chapter intends to explain the influence of popular culture through the deconstruction of identity and, as a result of it, alienation upon cultural hybrids of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* published in 1990. Hanif Kureishi becomes a "cultural translator" (Yousaf, 14) in his novel by creating culturally hybrid and in-between characters who lack the sense of belonging owing to their roots and racial prejudices of the majority. However, the world Kureishi presents to the audience is a new description of Englishness. Kureishi deconstructs the culture, values, traditions, sign system and notions of England. "In this way, Kureishi draws in the discourses of nationalism and 'patriotism' and the commodification of 'Englishness' with those of race and community..." (Yousaf, 15).

As stated in the theory chapter previously *The Buddha of Suburbia* shall be studied from the perspective of culture. It is possible to come across with many references that constitute a culture such as language, religion, fashion, architecture, race, ethnicity, traditions and values, which make a culture original. Yet with the mix of interrelations of all these under the effect of sameness and alienation due to globalisation and popular culture, Karim's quest to identify who he is becomes a carnival in the dialogical atmosphere of London. The notion of identity is shown from different perspectives through the deconstruction of otherness because "...yesterday's colonies are now indispensable part of contemporary London" (Kaleta, 2) and race since "[N]either cultural nor national identity is organic but social institutions may operate hegemonically to make it appear so" (Yousaf, 16); however, the ideology of hegemony to expose an identity upon a person is in interrelation with the fact that identities are socially constructed.

The culture that shall be handled to analyse *The Buddha of Suburbia* is popular culture. Karim Amir introduces himself with this induction:

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), from the

South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not...(3)

Karim is aware of the fact that he is not a totally acceptable English despite born in England since the colour of his skin reveals his ethnic root. Therefore, he is “almost” English. He declares himself being “funny” with regards to Englishness because of social prejudices about ‘others’. He lacks the sense of belonging. He knows he is not English but he also does not feel like an Indian; as he states he is a cultural hybrid.

The contradictions and problems of reshaping identity overlap in differing cultures; the evolution of the dream of Elsewhere that underlies them remains, and remains unfulfilled. Portraying the tension inherent in this retooled immigrant dreamer’s quest is fundamental to Kureishi’s themes. His pairing of “immigration and exile” exposes the contradictions that he sees intermingled in multicultural acceptance and assimilation. (Kaleta, 17)

Karim is trying to reshape his identity and says “...[s]earch the inner room when it’s enough to say that I was looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action or sexual interest... I was ready for anything” (3). Nonetheless, his dream land is not as how he expects it to be because although he says “I don’t care” about racial and ethnic identity, there are many racial statements and also references to the commodification of race in the novel.

He sets out a quest and moves to London where he hopes to find who he is. He states in the first half of the book: “I knew it did me good to be reminded of how much I loathed the suburbs, and that I had to continue my journey into London and a new life, ensuring I got away from people and streets like this” (101). The book is divided into two parts as the lives of the characters, especially the protagonist. Here we see there is a title although the first part has none. The title is “In the City” which can be regarded as a foreshadowing for the upcoming differences in our characters’ lives. Their lives are in a shift. On the other hand, chapter numbers continue. It can be interpreted with Kureishi’s acceptance of life with pros and cons, with tragedy and comedy. It is still in a progress. In the first chapter of the second half Karim says “The city blew the windows of my brain wide open. But being in a place so bright, fast and brilliant made you vertiginous with possibility: it didn’t necessarily help you grasp those possibilities. I still had no idea what I was going to do. I felt directionless and lost in the crowd. I couldn’t yet see how the city

worked, but I began to find out” (126). Karim finds an identity in the city where he relates his existence to the unreachable cloves of the metropolis. As John Clement Ball points out, “...[t]he novel dramatize(s) contradictory images of London through conflicts among racial groups, and among different generations and economic classes within the same group...in different ways, display the gaps opened up by perceptions of London as an international space” (Ball, 1996).

However, towards the end of the novel after all things he has lived in London he has had to admit that “...the rotten was being replaced by the new, and the new was ugly. The gift of creating beauty had been lost somewhere. The ugliness was in the people, too. Londoners seemed to hate each other” (258). Facilities the city seems to offer Karim seem to fade away towards the end of the novel. “London [was] something of a spree, a passport to mobility, a chance to rid themselves of their cosseted, comfy suburban pasts” (Sandhu, 2000). City embraces multiculturalism while this multiculturalism creates monopolisation as a consequence of globalisation and popular culture, which is the new identity of the mass community; the new identity points out to sameness. The discourse of *The Buddha of Suburbia* presents the process of change from various aspects such as family issues, fashion as a reflection of identity, the commercialisation of religion, the influence of cuisine, reality versus illusion, symbols, icons and cultural materialism.

There is confusion between the meanings of dominant and dominated cultures because of the effect of globalisation. When Industrial Revolution appeared, the power of hegemony shifted from landing in rural areas to manufacturing in urban areas. The industrialists formed new ideologies in order to produce more and be wealthier. This ideology was named ‘civilisation’. The industrialists went third culture’s worlds such as India, Asia, South America and Caribbean and tortured, enslaved and assimilated the natives there. Yet, these natives, then, immigrated to Britain. There occurred a sub-culture. Since these people were not rich enough but have to work in factories, they settled down suburbia instead of London. The sense of belonging is lacked in the difference between city and suburbia. Karim depicts this difference “...[I]n London the kids looked fabulous; they dressed and walked and talked like little gods. We could have been from Bombay. We'd never catch up” (128). Owing to the fact that he lacks belonging sense, he has identity problems.

Identity originates from Latin implying ‘sameness’. In modern period it is associated with the sense of self by the flowering of psychology as a social science. It is defined as “the condition of being same with something described or asserted” (Merriam Webster¹); namely it stipulates the existence of a group to be identified, belonging is the first priority. Identity can be divided into three main sections; national identity, cultural identity and personal identity. After all, these sections are interrelated with each other and one can only be understood by handling others, so they all will be reviewed intricately in the analysis of novels.

Karim’s national identity is not pure. He is the son of an Indian man, and a son of English woman. He is a mixture of blood. He is culturally hybridised by the mixture of two nations’ language, traditions, cuisine, fashion, architecture and religion. This is a mutual interaction. Physical appearance is ethical heredity. Karim is commodified because of his dark body. Oriental point of view regards his exotic, rather than a normal person. On the other hand, when Changez comes from India to England, Karim depicts Changez’s orientalist view. He says: “...a man recently married and completely celibate who saw Britain as we saw Sweden: as the goldmine of sexual opportunity” (96). The understanding of national identity is deconstructed throughout time because two nations influence each other in terms of culture. English cuisine is affected by Indian meals such as “keema, and aloo and all, and rice, chapatis, and nan” (80). Haroon cannot remember the kitchen of their house in India because he has never entered there. He was an upper class member of Indian society whereas he is just a middle class in England’s suburbia now. Haroon’s identity is affected by the reversal of his economic situation. The inhabitants of suburban culture do not want to be excluded from the society. That is why, their house should be looked like an English house, which refers to one of the English hobbies named Do It Yourself. Architecture defines one’s identity. Hence, showing off leads to the supposition of wealth regardless of the fact that it is real or just illusionary. Karim narrates the identity obtained by Englishness of the house.

All the houses had been ‘done up’. One had a new porch, another double-gazing, ‘Georgian’ windows or a new door with brass fittings. Kitchens had been extended, lofts

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity>

converted, walls removed, garages inserted. This was the English passion, not for self-improvement or culture or wit, but for DIY, Do It Yourself, for bigger and better houses with more mod cons, the painstaking accumulation of comfort and, with it, status - the concrete display of earned cash. Display was the game. How many times on a visit to families in the neighbourhood, before being offered a cup of tea, had we be taken around the house – ‘The grand tour again,’ sighed Dad – to admire knocked-through rooms, cunning cupboards and bunk-beds, showers, coal bunkers and greenhouses. (75)

The national identity of minorities ends with alienation. When Karim is asked to act in the role of Mowgli, he is dehumanised by colouring him darker with brown, dressing him up like an Indian and forcing him to make Indian accent. Although he is aware of the fact that he is humiliated - because the culture of India is insulted- he accepts. He is alienated to his own culture. It is also because of his father’s indifference to his original culture. Karim blames his father about this issue. Haroon “...was always honest about this: he preferred England in every way... So if I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to create it” (213). However, Karim knows this situation means cultural alienation. He admits being ashamed of the people with whom the same race is shared. Nonetheless, he knows what it means; this is alienation.

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, as if half of me were missing, and as if I’d been colluding with my enemies, those whites who wanted Indians to be like them. (212)

Cultural alienation comes with being same, leaving authenticity behind. The progress of sameness was initiated by Industrial Revolution. Labouring produces reification. People are unified culturally by devaluation of concepts, which means that cultural uniformity occurs with homogenisation and monopolisation. Trans-nationalisation of production leads to deconstruction in capital means such as heroism, customs, music, fashion, religion and social norms.

Charlie, the son of Eva, is a representative of mass consumerism because he is famous among young people due to his way of clothing and following new trends in his music. Charlie’s national identity gives him primacy; however, his identity, which is related to the sense of self, is incomplete. He is trying to complete his identity by imitation. Charlie imitates popular icons as a result of an identity search. On the one hand, he cannot

deny the primacy given by his race, on the other hand he is under the influence of another identity which is imposed by popular culture. Karim depicts Charlie in this way:

[H]e stood out from the rest of the mob with his silver hair and stacked shoes. He looked less winsome and poetic now; his face was harder, with short hair, the cheekbones more pronounced. It was Bowie's influence, I knew... several years before in a group photograph in the dining hall was his face. Boys were often to be found on their knees before his icon, praying to be made into pop stars... (68)

He imitates Bowie, as a symbol of Englishness with his blondeness, his blue eyes, pale skin. However, like Bowie's different coloured eyes – because he had an accident – Charlie cannot decide who he is. Another example proves that Charlie, although he is originally an English boy, he is another mixture of popular culture and devalued traditions. Karim narrates Charlie's attic:

[M]andalas and long-haired heads were painted on the sloping walls and low ceiling. His drum-kit stood in the centre of the floor. His four guitars – two acoustic and two Stratocasters - leaned against the wall in a line. Big cushions were flung about. There were piles of records and the four Beatles in their Sergeant Pepper, period were on the wall like gods... (16)

Hanif Kureishi makes his plot in parallel with the music itself. We can analyse Charlie and his deconstructed racial identity with “mandalas” on the wall and his “Stratocasters”. Mandala, originally Hindu, is a square with four gates containing a circle with a centre point which represents cosmos, the relation between microcosm and macrocosm. Stratocaster can be accepted as a signifier because the leading players of this guitar are representatives of ostracised from the society because of the fact that their thoughts about justice, education, racism and peace are in clash with the state's ideology. David Gilmour (English, guitarist and vocal in Pink Floyd), Ritchie Blackmore (English, guitarist in Rainbow), Jimi Hendrix (USA, guitarist and vocal), Yngwie Malmsteen (Swedish, guitarist) and Eric Clapton (English, guitarist and vocal) are respectively against the educational system, bring newness in metal music, became the voice of black people in music calling all people for love and peace, mixed folkloric elements with rock music, and was a drug addicted. These names identify who one is; you are against the ideology of the majority. Charlie wants to be other in English society, which gives him liberation. Whereas Charlie is trying to reshape a new identity liberating himself from the boundaries of ethnicity, he cannot resist against this primacy. Beatles proves this fact with his English

group members. On the other hand, Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band became legendary because of the cover photo of the album. Beatles pictures popular icons such as Bob Dylan, Marilyn Monroe, and Marlon Brando, philosophers and writers such as Carl Jung, Aldous Huxley, Edgar Allen Poe, William S. Burroughs, H. G. Wells, James Joyce, Bernard Shaw, and Oscar Wilde and some kinds of symbols such as a ceramic Mexican craft known as a tree of life, a doll of the Hindu goddess Lakshmi, a fukusuke – Japanese china doll associated with good luck. The denotations and connotations Kureishi chooses to narrate his characters' identities serve his explosive characterisation and its thematic cohesion.

This style of imposition to reinforce content is found throughout the text. Kureishi uses words as sounds and as signification to create linguistic and thematic cohesion throughout his novel. His literary style carries his themes to his final paragraph, completing his piece in much the same way that a classical coda completes a symphony. A novel of style, its language is like music. (Kaleta, 71)

Haroon, Karim's father listens to Pink Floyd and Nat King Cole who is a black American pianist, which refers to the fact that popular culture icons create sameness, indeed. Both Charlie and Karim have shared the same social culture, which point out deconstruction of traditions, race, aesthetics, and social norms.

One of the essential means of identity and ideology is fashion. The deconstruction of racial and national identity is in parallel with the deconstruction of fashion. This dialogue occurs between Papa and Mother when they are invited to Eva's. Mother says: "But it isn't me that Eva wants to see,' Mum said. 'She ignores me. Can't you see that? She treats me like dog's muck, Haroon. I'm not Indian enough for her. I'm only English.' 'I know you're only English, but you could wear a sari' says Papa." (5). The understanding of privileged and civilised which is reflected in fashion with the help of a suit and a tie is devalued. It is deconstruction of power among races and given-identities because "[O]nly the disadvantaged are going to succeed in seventies' England" (165).

Style is individual and style is superficial. Therefore, style is indicative of the contradictions of conformity in our society. Characters ironically assert their individuality by complying with the conventions set down by a celebrity, a designer, or a recognised group. However, contemporary style no longer only emulates the fashions of the rich or the celebrated. Style today is often rooted in emulating the clothing of the urban disenfranchised. Style is increasingly street-generated and street-conscious. The street has

become not only a thoroughfare but a way of life from cruising to homelessness. Thus, fashions now selectively imitate the radical, marginal class; that is, they “trickle up” onto the music charts and the haute-couture runway, and they also “trickle up” into middle-class conventions. Outrageous fashion makes the conventional look – and feel – radical. (Kaleta, 8)

Karim and Charlie go to a pub where people seem too strange. The detailed description of this group, not only the band but also the audience “...[k]ids in ripped black clothes. And the clothes were full of safety pins. Their hair was uniformly black, and cut short, seriously short, or if long it was spiky and rigid, sticking up and out and sideways, like a handful of needles,... holed black stockings, with white face-slap and bright-red lipstick” (129) serves to the fact that the way how one wears is a part of his/her identity. Eva wears a kaftan at the party while Haroon wears Marks and Spencer. They are not supposed to wear in this way. On the contrary, when their culture is taken into consideration they are supposed to be vice versa because kaftan symbolises Eastern and Marks and Spencer is a symbol of White middle-class people. Fashion is deconstructed. In this sense, identity is deconstructed, as well.

Deconstruction of the other or pluralisation of the self are interrelated with alienation through fashion. It is seen that religion is estimated as a kind of fashion or a product which is to be commercialised in *The Buddha of Suburbia* of Kureishi. The rituals of Buddhist activity and the atmosphere that Eva created for Papa seem to be underestimated. The respect for him is totally hand-made:

Eva and Marianne were starting to organize the room. The candle industry was stimulated, Venetian blinds were lowered, Indian sandalwood stinkers were ignited and put in flowerpots, and a small carpet was put down for the Buddha of suburbia to fly on. Eva bowed to him and handed him a daffodil. God smiled at people recognized from last time. He seemed confident and calm, easier than before, doing less and allowing the admirers to illuminate him with the respect that Eva must have been encouraging in her friends. (32)

Religion turns out to be a production. Its essential meaning is emptied, it is rather a fashion and comprehended iconographic. The title of the book is directly mentioned in chapter 9 – the first chapter of the second half – named ‘In the City’. The usage of this phrase in this chapter is not a coincidence, but refers to the fact that the religious position of Haroon becomes worse after they move to London when compared to that in the suburbia. He is now a jester by being a part of this stylish popular occupation. Karim

“...[w]ondered, in the suburban night air, to the wailing of Christian curses from the mouth of a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist?” (16). Karim harshly criticises his father being a trickster.

[K]ureishi flaunts the animosity between father and son and reveals the tensions within the Asian community in England. In depicting this struggle between father and son, Kureishi brings the conflict between modernism, fundamentalism, and consumerism boldly to the centre and proclaims that immigrant assimilation in the west and immigrant traditions from the east constitute an important English issue. Both of Asian characters in this story are, after all, English, and changing English society cannot therefore afford to marginalise this religious conflict, because Asian-Anglos are thus already an integral part of its newly defined English nationalism. (Kaleta, 160)

Haroon dresses like a Buddha although he is not because he loves taking attraction of White man; he wants to be approved. He is aware of being alienated from his beliefs and customs, yet he rejects being alienated from the society he has to live in. Karim looks down upon the religious act of Haroon and interprets this situation:

...[I] wanted to see if Dad was a charlatan or if there was anything true in what he was doing. After all, he'd impressed Eva and then done the difficult thing – knocked Charlie out. His magic had worked on them and I'd given him the 'God' moniker, but with reservations. He wasn't yet fully entitled to the name. What I wanted to see was whether, as he started to blossom, Dad really did have anything to offer other people, or if he would turn out to be merely another suburban eccentric. (22)

Papa is in the role of 'God' in the eyes of Westerners. Yet the thing he does is just to commercialise the belief system of his original culture. Furthermore, although once British had assimilated people into Christianity, they are interested in Buddhism now since religion is recognised as a kind of fashion after industrialisation and globalisation.

In terms of issues addressed, there is an equal rage and of diet to analysis of his working practices and processes of composition, his onomastics, gender issues and Kureishi's use of pop. Thus far, however, Kureishi criticism has focused predominantly on his treatment of the complex nexus of individual, racial, ethnic, (sub-) cultural and national forms of identity and belonging. (Moore-Gilbert, 194)

Haroon is called "Harry" (33) by cousins of his wife, who is English, in order to anglicise him. Karim utters this reality with these words: "My brother Amar, four years younger than me, called himself Allie to avoid racial trouble" (19). From this perspective names are also signifier of the meaning in the community. Haroon, as an Indian man, could not find a place to exhibit his identity totally and Allie does not want to deal with racial

problems. Thus, their given names are a proof for the fact that there is an attempt to deconstruct his identity by the mass culture. It stands for the reality that culture belongs to the major race of a nation, which means that identity is ideological. Kureishi's characters suffer from being cultural hybrids since multiculturalism makes these people lack of distinguishing reality from illusion. They have belonging problems due to their race and ethnicity; they are ethnically alienated because they are neither English nor Indian to the whole extent.

Commodification of ethnicity results in alienation under the influence of globalisation. To fit the audience's expectations of Mowgli Karim is directed to speak with Indian dialect although he has never been in India before. Since he is "beige", his skin is darkened with brown colour. In the ideological point of White man, the director of the play – Pkye – makes Karim to fit an authentic Indian stereotype of White society. His individual identity is occupied by ideology. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes on it: "...[t]he horror of an absolute act of intercultural performance... 'I perform my life this way because my origin stages me so.' National origin, ethnic origin. And, more pernicious: 'You cannot help acting this way because your origin stages you so'" (29). It should be perceived from two perspectives. Indians are alienated to their race being an outsider in majority whereas English people are alienated by cultural solipsism. Eva calls Karim "Creamy" (137) because he is coloured darker to get a role in the theatre. She insults him by giving Karim a nickname. His situation is already to feel pity for him since his body is commoditised. On the other hand, Karim mentions about Helen's father as "Hairy Back" (40). He has to hear very racist statements. The man says "However many niggers there are, we don't like it. If you put one of your black 'ands near my daughter I'll smash it with a 'ammer! With a 'ammer!"(40). The fact that Indians are alienated within themselves with regard to prejudices is an inevitable truth. Anwar makes Jamila get married to Changez because he wants an Indian "seed". Jamila resists against this idea because she is such a woman that she has some books and posters of Angela Dawis – a black political activist in communist party fighting for civil rights, Baldwin – writing on racial problems, Malcom X – a black defender against racism, Greer – a feminist, Millett – a queer theorist and Christina Rosetti – writing on religious and sexual repression of the society. (95). However, she does not

want to get married to an Indian man, a representative of other. Anwar begins hunger strike and hence she has to accept this unwilling marriage. She is ashamed of her own culture's customs and says: "...our culture as being ridiculous and our people as old-fashioned, extreme and narrow-minded" (71). Alienation to the original culture can be exemplified by Haroon's statement about approving Karim's relationship with Helen because she is English:

...[h]e was keen for me to go out with anyone, as long as they were not boys or Indians. 'Why go out with these Muslims?' he said once, when I brought a Pakistani friend of Jamila's home with me. 'Why not?' I asked. 'Too many problems,' he said imperiously. 'What problems?' I asked. He wasn't good at being specific; he shook his head as if to say there were so many problems he didn't know where to begin. (73)

Racial and ethnic alienation of characters are seen within different aspects. For instance Charlie, after he moves to America, wants Karim to watch the sexual torture a prostitute is going to make upon himself. However, the limit Charlie is talking about is not related with identity problem. He is talking about masochism. We can claim that since he is suffering spiritually, he wants to find a way to suppress and forget it at least for a while. He replaces his spiritual suffering with the physical one. He wants to be tortured and the music is important here. He chooses Gregorian chants which inspire timeless calm and serenity. In popular culture, in the 20th century, it reanimates again since it is tranquilising. It represents that Charlie is trying to find relief in torture. When searched on the net, this type of hymn is associated with absolution, crucifixion, massacre of disciples etc.

Charlie is in the same situation in America as that of Karim in England. Being 'other' becomes a means to be sold in popular culture. Karim utters:

I walked down the street, laughing, amused that here in America Charlie had acquired this cockney accent when my first memory of him at school was that he'd cried after being mocked by the stinking gypsy kids for talking so posh. Certainly, I'd never heard anyone talk like that before. Now he was going in for cockney rhyming slang, too. 'I'm just off for a pony' he'd say. Pony and trap - crap. Or he was going to wear his winter whistle. Whistle and flute - suit. He was selling Englishness, and getting a lot of money for it. (247)

Commodification of culture is through the deconstruction of language, fashion, religion and traditions, which also certainly brings alienation. Karim's alienation echoes in the world of iconography because he thinks being authentic stands for being apart from the social norms, yet he forgets it is not through imitation, either. For example, he says

I recognized that what I liked in Dad and Charlie was their insistence on standing apart. I liked the power they had and the attention they received. I liked the way people admired and indulged them. So despite the yellow scarf strangling my balls, the brown make-up, and even the accent, I relished being the pivot of the production. (150)

The ill-comprehension about authenticity is put in Karim's head by the ideology of White Man. Karim decides to make use of it; however, it is not authenticity as Shadwell declares. In contrast, it is nothing but racism and prejudice. This nonsense becomes his way of survival. Karim's alienation within himself comes onto the surface when he accepts to imitate Changez's accent in the theatre despite his unwillingness. He, like his father, wants to be approved by the majority. On the other hand, he knows how this identity has been imposed upon 'others' throughout the history. Thus, he says

... [English] 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 the Empire and all its self-regard - 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. But 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? (227)

Social alienation as a result of ethnic difference is in process through stares, utterances, attitudes. As Karim states they are part of England but they are not English. Hence, this 'bitterness and resentment' is never-ending.

Then, suddenly, this was it, the night of nights, and I was on stage alone in the full glare of the lights, with four hundred white English people looking at me. I do know that lines that sounded over-familiar and meaningless to me, and came out of my mouth with all the resonance of 'Hallo, how are you today?' were invested with life and meaning by the audience, so much so that the evening was a triumph and I was - I have this on good authority, that of the critics - hilarious and honest. At last. (228)

"At last" Karim has been approved by white men. Applauses he gets are so surprising in his life that he tells this situation as a dream-like issue. Likewise, alienation within family does not, as well. Although Mother has had two sons from an Indian man, she refuses their ethnic hybridity and says "...[y]ou're not an Indian... You're an English man" (232) while Karim's performance is being criticised among family members. This kind of family issue in relation with the privilege of Englishness is in Karim's mind, though. When he finds out that Eva and his father are together, he is fond of having Charlie as a brother although he attempts to have a sexual intercourse. He says "...in his jeans he

was growing. I began to feel confident” (16). He is happy that he has been found attractive by a white boy. Furthermore, he says to be “flattered” (69) since he is a part of an English family by Charlie is his brother. When the cousins of Mother learn the truth about Haroon and Eva’s relationship, they decide not to tell anyone because by letting Haroon get married their English cousin, they have given him a chance to live in an English family; however, he has cheated upon his wife, which means that white man is betrayed by an Indian. It should not be known by neighbours because it is humiliating for them as an English family.

That Karim is flattered to be a part of English family stands for the fact that perception is ideological. This causes alienation in one’s personal identity. Karim is an alienated one in terms of ethnicity and culture. These influence his personal attitudes, as well. He has always been ‘other’ in English society. He has been abused by his teacher in the school, insulted by Helen’s father and Pkye openly. He is in search of reacting against it. That is why, he wants to oppress Changez when he comes to get married to Jamila. Karim insults Changez about his physical appearance. The burden Changez carries owing to otherness is as twice as that of Karim since he is coming from India without any bound to the identity neither of Englishness nor of England in addition to being disabled. In this sense we can claim that Karim reveals his troubles upon Changez because his situation, for the first time, is better than someone. Since Changez lacks sexual intercourse with Jamila although they are married, he begins to go to a prostitute. A disabled man is together with a prostitute; in other words, they are both alienated and othered in the society and try to survive together. We can also add his relationship with Karim due to the same reason. Changez says “...I can love my wife in the usual way and I can love Shinko in the unusual way!” (101). Namely, traditions also make Changez alienated once more because he is supposed to behave as a husband despite the fact that their marriage is a lie indeed. That’s why, he chooses to use ‘usual’ and ‘unusual’ words. His attitudes are not in accordance with what he wants but with what the society and the social group he belongs to wants him to do. Alienation within the characters themselves can be exemplified with Jamila’s statement about Changez: “Karim, this world is full of people needing sympathy and care, oppressed people, like our people in this racist country, who face violence every day. It is

them I sympathize with, not my husband. In fact, he irritates me intensely sometimes. Fire Eater, the man's barely alive at all. It's pathetic!" (108). National and ethnic identity they lost have metamorphosed into alienation in terms of lacking humanitarian approach towards the people who suffer more than those.

This can be due to the fact that culture is regarded as a material. The twentieth century is an age of lost soul. Haroon says

We live in an age of doubt and uncertainty. The old religions under which people lived for ninety-nine point nine per cent of human history have decayed or are irrelevant. Our problem is secularism. We have replaced our spiritual values and wisdom with materialism. And now everyone is wandering around asking how to live. Sometimes desperate people even turn to me. (76)

That the belief system is removed by the power of money is the ideology of Westerners. In fact, religion becomes a way of earning money and a mean of capitalism. The community Haroon sells Buddhism with Eva's newly updated services is composed of "a regular and earnest young crowd of head-bowers - students, psychologists, nurses, musicians - who adored him, some of whom rang and visited late at night in panic and fear, so dependent were they on his listening kindness" (115). Being a member of such an esoteric group stands for the level of one's intellectuality. Whether this group believes in what Haroon is doing is debatable. They come because it is about being labelled. Being labelled as something or somebody requires belonging to a group firstly. For example, Karim has had to find money for a communist party; he has to belong to somewhere. He makes himself alienated within himself because he does not believe the ideology of this party. On the other hand, even though Jamila is an active supporter of communist party, she behaves in contrast with the necessity of democracy. She says to Changez "...Anyone can be removed from this house by a democratic vote. Where would you go to then, Bombay?" (304) because he disagrees with the idea of majority in the communal house they live in. It represents majority holds the power and directs the idea.

Identity is continually constituted by the dynamic interactions between people and time. National or ethnic identity is in relation with cultural identity. Culture, as an umbrella term, includes popular culture which leads people to be identified creating new notions or symbols. Since popular culture embraces multiculturalism, the notion of ideal human being

is deconstructed. The people who are identified just as 'other' find space for themselves in popular culture and popular culture iconizes them. For this reason, Charlie is named "hero". Owing to the influence of mass culture people are directed in accordance with ideology. By the increase of industrialism, consumerism causes globalisation which results in sameness being alienated to the national identity, social identity and personal identity. Accordingly, Kureishi's characters are in a kind of cultural collage.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BLACK ALBUM

The Black Album is a novel set in 1989 whose protagonist is in search of identifying himself by experiencing sexual affairs, joining a religious group, moving to London and going to a multi-national college. The effect of popular culture especially from the perspective of music is related with Shahid's hybrid cultural relationships with Deedee, as a representative of liberalism which is the ideological explosion of White modern man, and with Riaz's Muslim-fundamentalist group which represents an aggressive reaction against racism and assimilation throughout the history of mankind, and with his own family of which members appear to be alienated under the effect of consumerism and global trends of iconographic world.

Shahid is a son of Pakistani mother and father. Yet he has grown up in England. Hanif Kureishi portrays in-between-characters with regards to their language, belief system, traditions, food, music and fashion. The author's attitude that the city life embraces all types of people can be felt from the very beginning of the novel. The protagonist is excited about finding a place in London's multi-cultural atmosphere. There are some similarities and differences between Kureishi's first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and his second novel, *The Black Album*. Both of their themes focus on the deconstructed cultures of English and Asian characters owing to the impacts of popular culture and globalisation and, as a consequence of this, characters' alienation to their national identity, cultural identity and personal identity. On the other hand, their narrations are different. Kureishi uses the third person narration in *The Black Album*. Therefore, what the audience sees is what the narrator wants them to see. It functions as the viewfinder of a camera. The narrator's point of view functions as the viewfinder of a camera to describe the clothes of characters. It continues to describe the accommodation allocated to Shahid by the university; full of characters of multiple ethnic backgrounds referred to as "others". They arrived in England carrying their own cultural characteristics with them.

The novel begins with a phrase "one evening..." alluding to the beginning of fairy tales. This beginning can be associated with the fact that the story centres on characters of eastern origin. Shahid meets some other students of Asian origin. He goes to an Indian café "situated between a Caribbean wig centre and a Romanian restaurant" (1) with Riaz, which shows that London gives them chance to find a place

to live in. The restaurant is depicted as where “ordinary people eat” (4) because the meaning of ‘other’ and ‘English’ is deconstructed within themselves by cultural interactions. The narration focuses on cinematographic details such as dishes containing eastern food and plates bearing Koranic verses on the walls. The food is presented as a part of national identity while Shahid and Riaz are talking to their roots and aspirations for their past. Riaz says “Naturally you miss such food. You are my fellow countryman” but Shahid’s response his alienation to his cuisine due to the fact that he is a cultural hybrid in modern world, so he says “Well...not quite” (2). Nonetheless, it is possible to claim that Shahid is confused since whereas he implies his lack of belonging sense to his Asian culture, after a few minutes, he says “That “originally” is a quite big thing” (6) when Riaz says he is originally from Lahore. He is trying to find his own identity. The importance of race is almost decreased by the importance of individualism. He “chooses liberal sensualism over Islamic ‘fundamentalism’ *and* anti-racism.” (Ranasinha, 189). Shahid is away from a conventional hero since he leaves his people and follows his own desires. He chooses to be with Deedee, who calls police for book-burning in the yard of the college. It can be claimed that Shahid is selfish and he does not actively support the group which is supposed to politically defend all ‘others’, which refers to the point that

[T]his projector is partly in keeping with his [Kureishi] role as chronicler ‘reflecting’ the contemporary shift from macro to micro-politics. Kureishi comments that ‘if Britain feels pleasantly hedonistic and politically torpid, it might be because the ... politics of personal relationships has replaced that of a society, which seems uncontrollable.’ This movement also points to Kureishi’s own political orientation and direction ... in his work, ‘politics’ and ‘desire’ both collude and collide: sexual pleasure is simultaneously politicized and in tension with political commitment. (Ranasinha, 17)

All depictions in the novel are a thorough embodiment of sub-headings of a culture from the perspective of hybridity and alienation because of globalisation, standardisation and popular culture. For example;

There was only broken glass beneath his feet and a black kid crashing across the pavement on a bicycle, pitching it down and running into a burger bar; a man with his head over a rubbish bag, stuffing half a pie into his mouth, and a woman screaming from a window; ‘Go away, cunt, or I’ll sort you!’ Two people lay end to end in a rain-swept doorway under a mound of newspapers and cardboard; empty cider bottles stood at their head like skittles. The streets of deserted burger bars, kebab houses and shuttered shop fronts mocked him, as they did, he realized, anyone who’d contrived no escape. (16)

“Black kid” refers to the fact that this book includes fascist statements, “a rubbish bag” shows that there is a gap between perspectives for the poor and wealth, and “a woman” with filthy mouth is thought that she is from suburban area, and that culture is hybridised by cuisine cannot be ignored since “burger bars, kebab houses” are side by side on the streets.

Obviously from the quotation above, the level of income determines the way one lives and ideas about him/her. Shahid’s family run a travel agency, which indicates that he comes from an upper middle class family. The way Chili consumes stands out as the approval of this claim. His inclination to consumerism is defined in this way; “In Chili’s hand were his car keys, Ray-Bans and Marlboros, without which he wouldn’t leave his bathroom. Chilli drank only black coffee and neat Jack Daniels; his suits were Boss, his underwear Calvin Klein, his actor Pacino...” (38).

Chili is a representative of materialism of West and idealised life style. “...[h]e watched *Once Upon a Time in America*, *Scarface*, and *The Godfather* – as careers documentaries” (53), for instance. Brand names give an idea about who he/she is, since these brand names are particularly used by the author to indicate Chili’s identity. The use of brand names in the novel functions as the logo-centric semiology in the text. Semiotically, the logos stand out as the representative of identity, social class, profession and relationships instead of the objects that they are supposed to label. For this reason, fashion becomes a part of Chili’s identity.

Architecture is used as another means to show off in order for the Asians to gain the respect that they cannot achieve with their identity. Sukhdev Sandhu says that “None of Kureishi’s more lovable or deserving creations lives in a wholly tidy, respectable or ‘hygienic’ house... In Buddha, Jamila leaves her family home to enter a commune full of rotting tarpaulins and leaking pipes, one which is inhabited by radical lawyers, vegetarians, intellectual lesbians and jazz-lovers” (138). In contrast, Shahid’s father always decorates their house because he is afraid of staying behind the requirements of popular culture.

Their family house was an immaculate 1960s mansion, just outside the town, a caravanserai, as filled with people as a busy hotel. Papa had constantly redecorated it, the furniture was replaced every five years and new rooms were necessarily added. The kitchen always seemed to be in the front drive, awaiting disposal, though it appeared to Shahid no less ‘innovative’ than the new one. Papa hated anything ‘old-fashioned’, unless it charmed tourists. He wanted to tear down the old; he liked ‘progress’ ‘I only want the best,’ he’d say, meaning the newest, the latest, and, somehow, the most ostentatious. (39)

In this sense Chili resembles his father more than Shahid does. Shahid is an ardent reader. He is so much interested in books that he is alienated himself to the real world. They make fun of with Shahid's reading Keat's and Shelley's poems to the girls. After Lorca evening when the family watches a play on the stage, Shahid begins to write. His father ridicules him, he says "...[M]y nephews are lawyers, bankers and doctors. Ahmed has gone into the hat trade and built a sauna in his house! These artist types are always poor – how will you look relatives in the face?"(75). The Islamic group he wants to join to relieve the lack of belonging sense rejects the idea of reading, as well. Hence,

Chad interrupted: 'How old are you- eight? Aren't there millions of serious things to be done?' Chad pointed towards the window. 'Out there...it's genocide. Rape. Oppression. Murder. The history of this world is – slaughter. And you reading stories like some old grandma.' (21)

Chad alleges that Shahid is alienated to the troubles of the world. On the other hand, Shahid reads books because he wants to get rid of with the idea of being excluded by the knowledge itself. Alienation comes through the magnificence of literature and popular music in Shahid's life.

Shahid explained that his satirical uncle Asif had returned to Pakistan leaving his books in Papa's house. Shahid had picked up Joad, Laski and Popper, and studies of Freud, along with fiction by Maupassant, Henry Miller, and the Russians. He had also gone to the library every day; desultory reading was his greatest pleasure, with interruptions for pop records. He had moved from book to book as on stepping stones, both for fun and of the fear of being with people who had knowledge which might exclude him. (20)

Racism is shown in a musical way but not without referring to its humiliating effect. "...[t]he class... chanted at Shahid, 'Paki, Paki, Paki, Out, Out, Out!' He banged the scene into his machine as he relived it, recording the dismal fear and fury in a jagged, cunt-fuck-kill prose that expressed him, like a soul singer screaming into a microphone" (73). Shahid's own world is full of names from literature and arts whose works bring Western canon under attack. His room is depicted as covered with reproductions of Matisse, whose works express nudity in sharp colours gallantly, Peter Black, who produces iconic pictures of British pop art, Millais, whose perspective is distorted; posters of Allen Ginsberg – Beat Generation writer –, Jean Genet – whose protagonists are vagabonds and prostitutions –, and Jane Birkin who is

an outspoken proponent of democracy in Burma. He does not feel belonged to neither his family nor Riaz's religious group because exclusion is inescapable for Shahid. "Riaz may be keeping watch "against the hypocritical and smug atmosphere that has formed Shahid. It is too ingrained in him and he likes it too much to dispose of it. Even while trying earnestly to pray to Allah, Shahid hums Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" to himself, to get into a more religious mood" (Shapiro, 1995).

Kureishi frames his character's stories with the help of music. Shahid feels very excited because he begins to flirt with Deedee. This excitement seems to be paralleled with the music itself: "Shahid had never heard music so fast; the electronic beats went like a jackhammer. Everyone wore Lycra cycling shorts and white T-shirts imprinted with yellow smiling faces. They hugged and kissed and stroked one another with Elysian innocence" (25). Music embraces all humanity.

Deedee is a fan of Prince and Shahid, too. There is a parallelism between Shahid's answer for the reason why he loves Prince and a quotation pinned on the wall of Deedee's office where there are pictures of Madonna, Prince and Oscar Wilde. The quotation is "All limitations are prisons" (26). Shahid's answer for his love of Prince is "He's half black and half white, half man, half woman, half size, feminine but macho too. His work contains and extends the history of black American music, Little Richard, James Brown, Sly Stone, Hendrix..." (25). There is no limitation for Prince to identify themselves with a precise concept. Shahid finds their hybridity in himself. He oversteps the bounds of ethnicity by being a cultural hybrid, and gender by exchanging socially constructed sexual identity with that of Deedee. He allows her to make him up "reddening his lips, darkening his eyelashes, applying blusher, pushing a pencil under his eye. She back-combed his hair. It troubled him; he felt he were losing himself..." (118). He feels as he were losing himself; however, he begins to find his own identity. His

...[d]ilemma stems from the fact that he is Anglo-Pakistani and he is being forced into the senseless, crudely simplistic position of having to decide whether he is more "Anglo" or "Pakistani". He desperately wants to belong to some groups because "these days everyone was insisting on their identity, coming out as a man, woman, gay, black, Jew-brandishing whichever features they could claim, as if without a tag they wouldn't be human. (Shapiro, 1995).

Shahid is in search of identifying his real self. However, he is torn between the expectations of his family about being a man, not an artist, his fanatical friends, and an interracial love affair with his middle-aged ex-Marxist teacher. "In *The Black*

Album, Deedee, a former Marxist, abandons political commitment for a liberal sensualism. This trajectory is partly in keeping with his role as chronicler ‘reflecting’ the contemporary shift from macro to micro-politics” (Ranasinha, 17). Whether Deedee help Shahid find his identity or manipulates his sexual identity by tempting him “yes” (50) to new sexual experiences is an arguable question in terms of the fact that Shadid, as a representative of ‘other’, submits to a white person’s advice to live “practically” (50), which refers to his inevitable alienation to his ethnic, sexual, and personal identity. Shahid feels isolated from the majority of society being “the only dark-skinned person” (10) as he is wandering around the streets of London. He confesses that “I was confused and... fucked-up. But I didn’t know what to do.” (10). Since the city embraces pluralism, Shahid expects that “...[T]he city would feel like his; he wouldn’t be excluded; there had be ways in which he could belong” (16). However, it is obvious that he is disillusioned by “...[r]ather the spooky shadows of the city than the thin sunlight of the countryside” (16) after migrating from Kent to the city centre.

The idea that the city gives a chance for minors or radicals to find a sphere to live in cannot be denied because “There had to be innumerable ways of being in the world” (274). This can also be inferred from Shahid’s words, he says “...[e]verything is anonymous! Lunatics are everywhere but most of them look normal!...” (17). In order to portray this multi-cultural frame in addition to interracial relationships, Kureishi creates a world where there is a tolerance for unorthodoxy through his characterisation of not the protagonist but also other characters such as Chili, Deedee, Riaz, Chad, Brownlow, Strapper and Zulma. Unorthodoxy can be tolerated, but it cannot be welcomed even among the member of the same race apart from racial differences. All people are inclined to solipsism and monopolisation because of the influence of globalisation and popular culture. Riaz, for example, works for recreating a new union who is supposed to react against ongoing racism of white man. However, he wears a “red Paul Smith shirt” without any rejection. Shahid lost Riaz’s colourless clothes in the laundrette, so Chad gave Riaz Shahid’s shirts. “While Riaz wears the red shirt, he is unaware that he ironically appears to be the epitome of the western consumerism he loathes” (Kaleta, 141). Moreover, “An awareness of the significance of the red shirt demands not only fashion savvy, but a knowledge of fashion in and as pop culture” (Kaleta, 141). Although Riaz defends the idea that people shall not draw attention with their physical appearance owing to the requirements of Islam, he seems

to like it. He does not welcome this idea, yet he does not refrain from doing it. He even wants to be broadcasted on TV after sacred aubergine issue happens. He damns the drug effect of popular culture upon the youth, but he wants to make benefit from it. Chad can be another example for duplicity. Deedee tells the story why Chad is named “Trevor Buss”. She tells Shahid that “He was adopted by a white couple... Chad would hear church bells. He’d see English country cottages and ordinary English people who were secure, who effortlessly belonged” (106). He, however, could not belong since

...[h]e saw he had no roots, no connections with Pakistan, couldn’t even speak the language. So he went to Urdu classes. But when he tried asking for the salt in Southall everyone fell about at his accent. In England white people looked at him as if he were going to steal their car or their handbag, particularly as he dressed like a ragamuffin. But in Pakistan they looked at him even more strangely. Why should he be able to fit into a Third World theocracy?’ (107)

Deedee says “Trevor Buss’ soul got lost in translation...” (107). He changed his name and insisted on his whole name, Muhammad Shahabuddin Ali-Shah. Yet he is stripped of his own identity by the transformation of his name into Chad. This can be stated as cultural imperialism which undermines his identity and makes his identity ridiculed and humiliated. As Shahid’s imprisoned uncle Asif declares language is apt to be manipulative and ideological in usage. He “...[a]ssert(s) that the only people who spoke good English now were subcontinentals. ‘They gave us the language but it is only we who know how to use it.’” (6). Chad brings Shahid a present, “a white cotton salwar kamiz”. It is the first time Shahid is seen in a “national dress”. The present Chad gives to Shahid questions the stereotypes of a nation. Clothes are once more used as a signifier of identity, stated as something about feeling “proud”. When Chad asks Shahid how he feels, and Shahid’s ambivalent answer shows his in-betweenness:

‘A little strange?’
 ‘Strange?’
 ‘But good, good.’ (131)

He just manages the situation, he is just be dragged along the road. Dr. Brownlow is Deedee’s ex-husband. He was once a Marxist-Leninist lecturer. He has been stuttering since Eastern Europe began collapsing, which refers to the fact that he is an embodiment of disappointed ideology. He purports to be helpful for expanding the idea that minorities should be behaved equally. However, the fact that he wants to

help the group express themselves to the society in the media is a way of humiliating their purpose. Riaz's Islamic group wants to be able to react against inequalities and Western tyranny over them for long years with a view to their nation, ethnic roots, language, religion, clothes, music, and cuisine. For this reason Shahid wants to alienate himself by resembling his ideas to those of this group.

I argued... why can't I be a racist like everyone else? Why do I have to miss out on that privilege? Why is it only me who has to be good? Why can't I swagger around pissing on others for being interior? I began to turn into one of them. I was becoming a monster. (11)

Shahid personally alienates himself; Simon During calls this post-colonial desire "the desire of de-colonised communities for an identity" (458). The only identity Shahid knows is the one which has been exposed upon minorities during their life span. Although his both father and mother are originally from Pakistan, the way the father thinks about his own people from the same ethnic root is the conclusion of the ideology of white man. The only target is to earn more money; father undermines not only his own people but also from whites. While Shahid is talking to the group members about his family business, the dialogue is:

...[I]augh at their customers for boiling their ugly bodies on foreign beaches and going off to karaoke bars.'

'Yes, they are precisely right! No Pakistani would dream of being such an idiot by the seaside- as yet. But soon- don't you think?- we will be parading about everywhere in these bikinis.'

'That is what my mother and Chili are waiting for. Asian people to start taking package tours.'

'Excuse me, can I ask you- I know you won't mind- but your family has some distinction, I can see.'

'To me they have, yes.' (8)

As clearly stated by Shahid himself, his alienation to his family is interrelated with the way of earning money and evaluation of aesthetic values such as literature and music. The deconstruction of the point of view about ethnicity and solipsism can be felt in mutual cultures – West and East – due to the fact the traces of economic means in global world lead people to commodify themselves and commercialise their own cultures through the agency of labelism and iconography as a result of popular culture.

Strapper is a drug-dealer whom Shahid meets in a pub where he goes with Deedee. He enters into the novel as an insignificant character but he becomes

important since “[H]e likes Asian people who are not Westernised because he thinks resisting global accumulation will speed the breakdown of Western civilisation” (Çelikel, 205). While Shahid is searching for Chili, he wants Strapper to help him. A black person needs the help of a white one again; however, the Westernised thoughts of Strapper are not as how expected. He loves Asian people on the condition that “[N]ot when they get too fucking Westernised. You all wanna be just like us now. It’s the wrong turnin’” (195). Strapper, as a drug-dealer, is an extremist, so he is not supposed to think rationally. Nonetheless, he does. It shows the deconstruction of social norms.

The deconstruction of social norms can be perceived in the characterisation of Kureishi’s female characters; Zulma and Deedee. Papa introduces his daughter-in-law to his rich and upper class guests because they seem to be interested in her ideas whenever a political issue is opened to debate. Kureishi uses some names to symbolise their income level and their place in popular culture. “[w]ent to dinner with politicians, bankers, businessmen, film producers like Ishmael Merchant and fashionable actors like Karim Amir, with whom she was photographed by *Hello! Magazine*” (86). On the other hand, Shahid depicts her personality from the perspective of Western man:

He argued she was a dupe, explaining what racists the Thatcherites were. She might imagine she was an intelligent, upper-class woman, but to them she’d always be a Paki and liable to be patronized. She appreciated the truth of this, but it was a colonial residue – the new money knew no colour. (87)

As Shahid mentions, the main column which holds the whole cultural and social structures together is money in the modern world. Therefore, the importance of race and ethnicity appear to be diminished in the world of capitalism because it does not differentiate people. The only main is to tempt people, regardless of their gender, race, or religion, to consume. The walls of a consumer society is bonded by the deconstruction of traditions, values, belief system, signs, symbols and icons, which results in the standardisation among people. As for Deedee, she is Shahid’s white liberal teacher. She is out of line; for example her classes start with Hendrix. She makes her students listen to Prince. As time passes, she likes Shahid more. While they are talking on arts and artists, they go to pubs, use drugs, and attend raves. They two become an item whose pieces are complete by each other. He says about this unification: “Thinking of her was like listening to his favourite music; she was a tune

liked to play” (130). She shows Shahid that there is no limitation through new experiences in sex. He lets her dress him up in female clothes, because she repeats the idea that the only practical way to continue living is acceptance. In this way, it seems that the boundary of limitation ends where there is dominance. On the other hand, Deedee encourages Shahid to explore and reshape his sexual identity in an erotic and artistic way. Artistic way is through some authors’ names and icons of popular culture like Madonna; they “buy bootlegs of the Dead, Sex Pistols and Charlie Hero” (112), who is a character in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Maria Degabriele asserts that the title of the novel is a reference to Prince’s *The Black Album* which has neither a name nor an illustration on its cover but just in black colour emphasising the fact that black people are not taken into consideration sufficiently in the society since they are still considered as “the other”¹. Additionally, she points out that this attitude is mutual because The Beatles, as the representatives of Englishness and Western music played with guitars, are profoundly influenced by Eastern philosophy after they met an Indian guru. This also has an effect in their music. These examples point out the fact that culture is in interaction with the trends of time and this process turns into progress in that it is lived mutually in cultures. Therefore, it is possible to claim that identity is continually in formation. Every relation creates a new possibility for it. Deedee does not like Riaz and his vigilante group. However, since she is afraid of being labelled as racist, she does not criticise them. Upon the book-burning event, she calls the police and complains about their act. This event questions democracy from different perspectives. Riaz says “Are the white supremacists going to lecture us on democracy this afternoon? Or will they permit us, for once, to practise it?” (224). All practises are prevented from reality as Riaz cries. Democracy is so ragged that it becomes a kind of trend, or stylish ecolé. Another example can be given:

...[S]he and other post-modern types encouraged their students to study anything that took their interest, from Madonna’s hair to a history of the leather jacket. Was it really learning or only diversion dressed up in the latest words? Were students in better colleges studying stuff to give them the advantage in life? Could this place be like those youth clubs that merely kept bad kids out of trouble? (26)

Kureishi creates the frame of his novel with the help of music. Every single reference to music generates its own story. For instance, Deedee and Shahid “clambered into the silence of the taxi and discovered their ears were yearning for

¹ <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue2/Kureishi.html>

music much as one's stomach complains for food, but there was none available. Deedee put her head on his shoulder. 'Tell me a story.'" (64). Every urge to listen to music leads another story which can be considered that everyone's presence is built through and within interrelatedness. The other element that the author benefits from is eroticism that refers to the protagonist's maturation of his identity, which intermingles with other characters' stories. Kureishi relates the erotic side of the story with the effect of music:

Off he went, being exemplary, until, that is, she crossed her legs and tugged her skirt down. He had, so far, successfully, kept his eyes averted from her breasts and legs. But the whole eloquent movement- what amounted in that room to an erotic landslide of rustling and hissing- was so sensational and almost provided the total effect of a Prince concert that his mind took off into a scenario about how he might be able to tape-record the whisper of her legs, copy it, add a backbeat and play it through his head-phones. (26)

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi uses the same element to ornament his story. Karim is thought to be sick because of his bisexuality; however, he cannot understand why he has to choose one of them, why he has to be identified within a frame. Hence, he says the obligation to choose woman or man is similar to the preference between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Kureishi uses the influence of popular culture in the formation process of identity.

Chili is another character represented in the discourse of popular culture. He pays attention to physical appearance. He has always passion for "clothes, cars, girls and the money". He finds Shahid's "bookishness effeminate". Chili supposes Shahid "nearly a man now" because he has "the shorter haircut, and gets rid of his contact lenses" (41). Chili claims that the condition one is accepted as a man is through his sexual intercourses as many as possible:

Chili thought, for instance, that men were scared of making fools of themselves with women, so they held back when they should have been going forward. Chili called himself a predator. When a woman offered herself – it was the most satisfying moment. Often, it wasn't even necessary to sleep with her. A look in her eyes, of eagerness, gladness, acquiescence, was sufficient. (51)

He always tells his unusual sexual experiences with some random girls "behind the tennis club", "in the dormitory of a girl's school", or "in a club" (p. ?). Their father is "pleased" with Chili's sexual identity because he is like anyone else. He is not pleased with Shahid's because his sexual identity does not fit the expectations of the traditional values nor of the popular culture of which the only

purpose is to consume. The body is regarded as a product to be consumed. Chili's point of view is so alienated by Western canon that his way of living has deconstructed into Eurocentric form.

The way Shahid lives and the way Shahid's life is perceived seem to be in clash. Shahid's indecisiveness about who he will be and how he will approach towards the incidents in his life, such as his relationships with family, Deedee and Riaz's religious group, shows a common feature of migrant cultures. He is an ambivalent character. Is it ambivalence or rejection against absolutism? He is ambivalent because he has problems with his national, ethnic, religious, sexual and personal identity. He is alienated to his past, present, and future. His alienation to his past is due to his post-colonial identity:

The new cultural condition in the post-colonial society alters the dominant cultural form from cultural homogeneity to heterogeneity and thus creates a new cultural dominance which reproduces ideological perceptions and mutual prejudices between juxtaposing cultures. (Çelikel, 231)

In other words, his colonial past has been hybridised by means of cultural exchange. The city, London, gives Kureishi's protagonists a fair crack of the whip to create a new identity which is neither Asian nor British. In this sense, being isolated from his two sides, he becomes a new production of cultural hybridism. "Through time the identity of migrant social groups and individuals changes, not simply because the people involved age, but because the experiences undergone progressively build up to influence the evolution of identity" (White, 4). Two different cultures, Asian and British, collide with each other; moreover, this mixture is under the influence of the present; namely, popular culture. It causes deconstruction in the requirements of Englishness since people's new perception is no longer based on the superiority of the former colonisers. For this reason, it is also possible to claim that ambivalence stems from the rejection of absolutism through deconstructed value system in popular culture. Collision serves as cement of the construction of the story. Kureishi uses religious side of Asian group and political side of English people for it. That Islam and Thatcherism are used as pieces of this subjectivity integral; Kureishi is interested in religion as ideology not from the perspective of spirituality. Kaleta asserts that

In fact, however, Kureishi uses Islam here as he has employed Thatcherism: It is neither vindication nor condemnation of either that he seeks; rather, he uses both as definite ideological beliefs to fuel his story. He has, indeed, admitted that he sees the

similar power of these dissimilar philosophies, saying “Islam is rather like Thatcherism. It’s an intoxicating force to test yourself against.”” (138)

The use of religion and politics is for the sake of voicing the idea that identity is a dynamic which is continually inflected by the ongoing-cultural artefacts that are under the influence of race, ethnicity, religion, signs and norms. This may lead Indians to alienation, which can be claimed in the situation of Shahid’s family in *The Black Album* as well as Karim’s in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Shahid’s family members are not interested in religion because it reminds them of India and regards their own religious customs and belief systems as unprivileged. When Riaz informs Shahid it is time for namaz and Shahid remembers:

In Karachi, at the urging of his cousins, Shahid had been to the mosque several times. While their parents would drink bootleg whisky and watch videos sent from England, Shahid’s young relatives and their friends gathered in the house on Fridays before going to pray. The religious enthusiasm of the younger generation, and it links to strong political feeling, had surprised him. One time Shahid was demonstrating some yoga positions to one of his female cousins when her brother intervened violently, pulling his sister’s ankles away from her ears. Yoga reminded him of ‘those bloody Hindus’. This brother also refused to speak English, though it was, in that household, the first and common language; he asserted that Papa’s generation, with their English accents, foreign degrees and British snobbery, assumed their own people were inferior. They should be forced to go into the villages and live among the peasants, as Gandhi had done. (91-2)

On the other hand, just in the following pages, Dr. Brownlow, despite the fact that he is an atheist and a white man, relates this idea with racism and says “...[r]ace antipathy inflecting everyone, passed on like Aids” (94). This process is the reflection of deconstructed understanding of nationality, ethnicity, and thus culture. He interprets this situation with these words:

Shahid wondered if the others were as puzzled as he was. Here was someone who’d been granted breeding, privilege, education; his ancestors had circumnavigated the globe and ruled it. Shahid expected something more from all that had made him. At the same time he and the others couldn’t help being pleased. The people who’d ruled them, and who still patronized and despised them, were not gods. Brought up to rule, to lead, now they were just another minority. (95)

That is to say, by the influence of globalisation, the lines between nations and races have begun to fade out. As a consequence of this process, alienation to cultural identity is in incorporation with popular culture. Identities are newly formed in

accordance with hybridity of culture within the present under the effect of monopolisation, commodification and iconography.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has studied Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* through Cultural Studies in connection with popular culture and deconstruction. Kureishi's characters are in search of identity. Their identity problems stem from the lack of the sense of belonging because they live in England as outsiders. They are of Eastern origin. Karim is Indian, and Shahid is Pakistani. Their ethnic roots make them alienated to the national culture they live in. On the other hand, alienation occurs mutually due to the result of globalisation.

Based on a theoretical background, the novels are analysed through Cultural Studies since the outline of the stories is constructed on the interaction between Eastern and Western cultures. Culture is formed by the majority. In this sense, there is a hegemony in the meaning of identity. For this very reason, identity is ideological. The means of imposing this ideology are language, belief system, media, and perception. Cultural values are deconstructed in time owing to globalisation. While globalisation opens a new way to live in a heterogeneous society, it also causes people to feel alienated to their own cultures. National and ethnic alienation of the characters are supported by the traces of popular culture throughout the novels. Popular culture iconizes people; and icons stand for an ideal model of a type. However, iconographic world produces sameness among the members of the society.

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Karim, the protagonist, is a representative of cultural hybridity because his father is Indian and his mother is English, so he is exposed to racist statements and behaviours. However, he does not feel Indian despite his dark skin. Nonetheless, he does not feel English, either. He is an in-between-character since he wants to find his identity. Thus, he moves to London, a city that is represented as a place where multiculturalism leads people to exhibit their own identities without prejudices. However, Karim and Haroon are perceived as practitioners of new trends. For example, Eva, Haroon's girlfriend, earns money by means of reflecting Haroon as a Buddhist although he is not. Karim acts in a play thanks to his skin colour; however, it is ironical that his skin colour is darkened with brown paint, which means that there are cultural stereotypes in the

minds. Identity and perception are ideological, and they are in connection with the popular culture that is always prone to change.

Music is significant in characters' lives. It is also used as a means of reflecting the main theme of the novel. The fact that Charlie, Eva's son, has the poster of the Beatles on the wall of his room and wants to imitate David Bowie shows the importance of popular culture in the novel. Alienation, on the other hand, is inescapable. Charlie immigrates to the USA to search his identity although he is thoroughly English. Identity, culture and alienation are interrelated with popular culture, globalisation and sameness.

The claim that music is essential in Kureishi's novels is approved by his second novel. The title *The Black Album* is a direct reference to the Prince's album that bears the same title, and it may also be interpreted as a reaction against the Beatles' *White Album*. The protagonist, Shahid, is the son of a Pakistani family. From this perspective, his alienation does not stem from his ethnic root. Nonetheless, the way his family lives does not suit Shahid's understanding of life. While his family is keen on materialistic values such as physical appearance, brands and relationships with celebrities, he is interested in arts especially literature. He is even ridiculed by his father because of his interest in literature. Shahid is alienated since he lacks the sense of belonging, as well, because he is rejected by his own family members. For this reason, he joins a religious group. Kureishi uses religion in this novel as a means to reflect identity problem and alienation because Shahid betrays this group at the end and prefers Deedee, his tutor in the college.

In a brief conclusion, in his novels, Hanif Kureishi portrays cultural hybrids who are alienated to their own culturally inherited identities not only due to geographical distances to their homelands but also due to the bombardment of images within popular culture. Hence, they are in a quest to find who they are through sexual and/or artistic experiments. Both in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*, these experiments provide fresh opportunities for the protagonists in regenerating their identities. Since city life embraces multiculturalism and pluralism, they are new migrants of post-colonial families. Popular culture provides them with new identities; however, it also brings another type of alienation through sameness and monopolisation due to its iconographic world. It also points to the fact that identity is continuously reinvented in accordance with the time.

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