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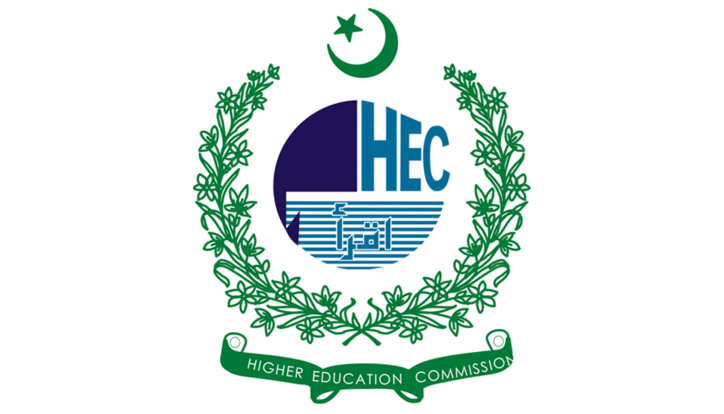
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**HYBRID IDENTITIES EAST-WEST BINARIES: A REORIENTALIST OVERVIEW OF THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA BY HANIF KUREISHI**

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**Abstract**

This paper investigates how the intricate negotiation of hybrid identities and the defamiliarization of East-West binaries is reflected in Hanif Kureishi's important novel The Buddha of Suburbia (1990). This exploration focuses on the cultural representation of identity through an orientalist lens, as evidenced by the multi-dimensional characters of Kureishi that do not fit into colonial binaries in their depiction of the characters regardless of their colonial underpinnings. The travel route of the central character, Karim Amir, between a suburban London town to the thickest of theatre life in the city carries with it the ideas of cultural hybridity, the postcolonial girding of identity, and the opposition of the Western transcendent stereotypes regarding the eastern spirituality and identity. The storytelling technique used by Kureishi also fractures our traditional understanding of authenticity and belonging, placing his characters as inhabitants of a border zone that does not want to grant them the relief of definite cultural belonging. The suburbs thus depicted in the novel form a battleground on which boundaries such as race, class, sexuality, and nation are crossed and broken, proving new approaches to self-definition. By exposing us to how Karim interacted with different groups of people, the father with his ad hoc meditation meetings, and the avant-garde theatre people in London, the text exposes the performative practice of cultural identity as it is being vitally practiced by the current band that takes the stage. At the same time, the text critiques the mode of commodification of Eastern spirituality enacted in a Western cultural setting. Such analysis indicates the way Kureishi uses irony, satire, and narrative complexity to challenge not only the Western Orientalist presumptions but also the Eastern simplifying views, concluding that multicultural identity in modern Britain should be described using a deeper and more diverse perspective. The article adds to postcolonial literature criticism because it shows how even the hybrid text can deconstruct and reconstruct the meaning of culture at the same time.

**Keywords:** Hanif Kureishi, The Buddha of Suburbia, hybrid identity, Orientalism, postcolonialism, cultural identity, East-West binaries

**Introduction**

The Buddha of Suburbia by Hanif Kureishi was first published in 1990 and existed at a critical point in the development of British literary culture as postcolonial writers started to reassert themselves and call into question what is meant by cultural and national identity and who belongs where. The treatment of hybrid identities in the novel about the situation of Britain in the 1970s offers a fertile ground in which it is possible to see how East-West binaries are written, challenged, and finally displaced (Sabir et al., 2021a; Ullah et al., 2021). Viewed through the theory of Orientalism, which has evolved into the theory of Orientalism, through which some authors explore the focus on the way Eastern subjects can take their power back in controlling the representation of themselves, this paper presents an in-depth discussion of the subtlety with which Kureishi depicts his characters who do not want define themselves in the strictest terms of culture (Ali et al., 2016; Iqbal et al., 2021; Javed Iqbal et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020; ).

Reorientalism, as it has been formulated by such authors as Lisa Lowe and Gayatri Spivak, is a critical concept that the critical patterns that emerge in the work of postcolonial writers such as Kureishi allow regarding their exploration and disruption of Orientalist discourse. Instead of a mere reversal of the Orientalism power relationship, orientalist writings provide room within which the hybrid identities can be introduced and escape both Western stereotyping and Eastern essentialization. The novel by Kureishi is an example of such practice as his protagonist Karim Amir dedicates most parts of his life to discovering himself and demonstrating the wrongness of applying binary thinking to the new multicultural identity (Sabir et al., 2021b; Ullah et al., 2020).

In this paper, it is posited that The Buddha of Suburbia acts as an Orientalist text whose deconstruction of East-West binaries proceeds sequentially in how it displays hybrid identities through its satiric way of dealing with spiritual commodification and in bringing down both the Western form of Orientalism and the eastern form of cultural orthodoxy. Based on textual evidence and character analysis, this type of analysis shows that Kureishi draws a narrative position that makes identity fluid, performative, and resistant to the categorical way of thinking.

**Literature Review**

Criticism of The Buddha of Suburbia has been considerable, with scholars writing about it in diverse theoretical approaches, such as postcolonial studies, diaspora theory, and cultural studies. The analysis performed by Bart Moore-Gilbert within the publication Hanif Kureishi (2001) identifies the novel as a part of a larger body of British-Asian writing and claims that the work written by Kureishi is a breakthrough compared to the previous writing on the topics of immigrant life. According to Moore-Gilbert, the characters created by Kureishi not only happen to be displaced within the context of culture, but they also play roles in the formation of hybridity.

In her essay, Susie Thomas concentrates on the role of multicultural Britain in the literature by discussing how Kureishi contributes to the transformations of the demography in post-war Britain, yet at the same time deplores the role of multiculturalism as a political theory. Thomas claims that the strength of the novel is its unwillingness to give easy answers to complex cultural negotiations, and thus, identity was offered as a way of becoming rather than being.

The orientalism concept did not directly refer to the Kureishi work during early criticism, but it emerged significantly in contemporary postcolonialism research more recently. The article by Ning Wang- Orientalism versus Occidentalism? The work of (1997) as well as Xiaomei Chen, Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter Discourse in Post-Mao China (1995) has added to the body of theoretical work in looking at how Easterners are engaging the Western discourse yet remaining agent in self-representations.

What we call more recent scholarship was starting to look at the problem of Kureishi through cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. It is stated in the article by Ruvani Ranasinha and Hanif Kureishi (2002) that the characters utilized by Kureishi can be viewed as a type of cultural cosmopolitan identity that is not confined by nation but is also within a specific cultural context. This view can be compared to the orientalist reading suggested in this paper since it focuses on the agency of hybrid subjects to define their identity by themselves.

**Theoretical Framework -Reorientalism and Hybrid Identities**

From a theoretical perspective, Orientalism has followed and expanded on the underlying concepts of Orientalism (1978) created by Edward Said but has been used to solve the limitations of this concept, highlighting the level of Eastern agency and the idea of self-representation. In reorientalism, where Said was mainly concerned with Western representations of the East, reorientalism looks at the response of the Eastern subjects to the discourse of Orientalism and their subversion and refashioning with respect to it. It is specifically applicable to the study of postcolonial literature, wherein writers with an Eastern heritage who write in Western languages establish a complicated dynamic of the interaction of various cultural regimes.

Homi Bhabha expresses the most refined variant of the concept of hybrid identity, which lies at the foundation of the postcolonial theory. Bhabha in The Location of Culture (1994) stipulates that hybridity brings about the third space in which the process through which cultural differences are negotiated and a new kind of identity can emerge. The third space involves the opposition of binary thoughts and the ability to create new meaning through cultural interpretations.

The example of Kureishi's novel perfectly demonstrates this theoretical framework, as it consists of characters that occupy several cultural spaces at once. The main character, Karim Amir, would be his hybrid subject in the modern meaning explained by Bhabha, but he does not live in the Eastern culture paradigm or in the Western one but instead opens new possibilities of identity, which he can create by negotiating both paradigms.

The Orientalist paradigm enables one to see how the novel that Kureishi works in does not only comply with the critique of Western Orientalist presumptions but opposes the Eastern ones as well. The novel is able to employ devices of introducing characters that do not fit the Western stereotypes or Eastern orthodoxies, thereby opening up room for true cultural discourse and change within the novel.

# Research Methodology

## Research Design and Approach

In this work, the qualitative literary analysis approach is used. Textual analysis and close reading approaches are employed to examine the performance of hybrid identities and the breakdown of West-East binaries in The Buddha of Suburbia (1990), a novel by Hanif Kureishi. The research design is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, indicating that literary texts are social constructs that must be interpreted subjectively within their given cultural and historical contexts (Creswell, 2014). This method is particularly applicable to analyzing postcolonial literature, as it enables the examination of multiple layers of meaning and cultural implications within the text itself.

The research employs a single-case design, which works in a concentrated manner, examining Kureishi's novel as the unit of analysis. This is due to the novel's importance as one of the key texts in British-Asian writing and its exemplary demonstration of the creation of a hybrid identity in postcolonial Britain (Procter, 2003). A single-case design enables the in-depth examination of the interplay between characterization, narrative strategies, and cultural presentation within the context of 1970s suburban London.

The study is grounded in the methodology of postcolonial literary criticism, which provides a theoretical framework for examining the interaction of the text with issues such as identity, belonging, and cultural authenticity. Such an approach acknowledges the possibility of literature as a field of cultural negotiation through which dominant discourses can be both strengthened and criticized (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013). The methodological approach emphasizes the importance of examining how literary texts engage with the broader cultural discourse of race, ethnicity, and national identity in postcolonial societies.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on a theoretical framework that rests on three intertwined theoretical approaches: Orientalism and the theoretical assumption of hybridity by Homi Bhabha, as well as Edward Said's theory of Orientalism. This is a layered theoretical framework that provides a comprehensive view, allowing for the analysis of the complexity of cultural interaction in the form of the Kureishi novel.

Reorientalism is the primary theoretical perspective, as it represents the development and expansion of the original concept of Orientalism, as outlined by Said. Although Said has concentrated his work on informing us about the Western portrayal of the East, reorientalism discusses how Eastern subjects react to, disrupt, and reinvent Orientalist discourse (Chen, 1995; Wang, 1997). This method of theory is especially applicable to the study of postcolonial literature composed by Eastern ethnic authors writing in the tradition of Western writings. Reorientalism offers the discursive terms through which to evaluate how the characters in Kureishi's works capitalize on and negotiate between Western stereotypes and Eastern essentialisms, inventing new forms of cultural signification that transcend binary sets and definitions.

The second pillar of the theoretical framework is Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. The concept of the third space, developed by Bhabha, is a crucial means of analyzing how cultural differences are negotiated and new forms of identity are created (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha suggests that such hybridity establishes a zone of cultural translation, where identities are transformed and performative significations. This is a theoretical framework necessary for analyzing how the characters of Kureishi live in two or more cultural spaces and fail to fit into essentialist descriptions of belonging to a cultural landscape.

The theory of Orientalism by Edward Said provides a general insight into how Western discourse in the past has constructed and portrayed Eastern people. The critical approach that Said proposes regarding Orientalism as a set of knowledge and power relations provides the analytical tool for tracing and examining the stereotypical presentation that Kureishi's novel deals with (Said, 1978). Such a theoretical premise is needed to explain the contextual background against which the orientalist tactics of the book are unfolded.

Combining these three theoretical approaches yields a comprehensive analytical scheme that enables understanding of how The Buddha of Suburbia not only critiques the Orientalist discourse but also transcends this, exploring hybrid identity formation in a highly artistic manner. Such a synthetic approach enables the complex interaction of the novel with questions of cultural authenticity, performance, and belonging in postcolonial Britain to be examined (Huddart, 2006).

**Methods of Collecting Data**

This research will include, as its primary source of data, textual evidence based on Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Suburbia (1990). The data-gathering procedure adheres to systematized close reading practices, which target specific text peculiarities, shedding light on how the novel addresses the issue of hybrid identities and East-West cultural relations. They are driven by thematic sampling, which corresponds to a single extraction of textual passages referring to the study's central research questions.

Character Analysis Data: The collection procedure is designed to extract dialogue, intra-monologue, and descriptions of narration from the three central characters: Karim Amir, Haroon Amir, and Eva Kay. Particular interest is given to situations when these characters explain their culturally defined location, work out the issues of conflicting identity, or contend with problems of authenticity and belonging. The data comprise both character statements directly and situational characterization, achieved through both description and action.

**Cultural Representation Data:** The research gathers textual novum on the representation of Eastern spirituality and Western suburban culture, as well as the overlap between these two cultural areas in the novel. These are descriptions of meditation experiences, theatrical presentations, the commercialization of cultures, and cultural interactions in cross-cultural encounters. It concentrates on the passages when it is possible to trace the satirical presentation of the cultural stereotypes and cultural hybridity in the novel.

Data collection involves applying the principles of purposive sampling to identify the most relevant textual passages that align with the theoretical models and the research aim of the study. Such a strategy will make sure that the chosen textual evidence can be effectively used to support the discussion of orientalist strategies in the novel and the novel deconstruction of the opposites between East and West (Sabir et al., 2021c; Shah et al., 2020; Ullah, Ali, & Khalid, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

**Analysis Procedures of Data**

The analysis of the data is conducted using a systematic thematic analysis method, which involves dividing the study into central, conceptual, and theoretical ideas. Analysis activities have several levels of interpretation, as certain stages of analysis begin with textual observations to further theoretical analysis. Such a process is described as multi-stage, guaranteeing an intense reading of the textual material and theoretical soundness (Ullah et al., 2021).

**Stage 1:** Thematic Coding The first stage of the analysis involves coding text passages based on pre-selected themes derived from the theoretical perspective. The following themes are explored: the creation of a hybrid identity, cultural performance, Orientalist stereotypes, the commercialization of spirituality, and the opposition to cultural orthodoxy. The coding procedure will also help identify appropriate instances within the text that can be used to describe each thematic group, allowing for a systematic inventory of textual support.

**Stage 2:** Case Study of the Major Characters. The second phase involves examining each of the major characters as a case study in relation to hybrid identity formation. This entails an examination of how individual characters navigate cultural boundaries, cultural performance, and essentialist resistive categorization. The authors can trace how each character develops their cultural positioning throughout the novel, identifying those particular moments when conflict, negotiation, and change occur.

Constant comparative methods, used in the analysis process, contrast textual evidence on a single theme or character with evidence on other themes or characters to identify patterns and contradictions (Charmaz, 2014). This strategy will ensure that the analysis incorporates the complexity of the novel in a way that does not reduce the interactions of culturally and politically charged issues during the novel's era.

**Textual Analysis: Breakdown of Hybrid characters in The Buddha of Suburbia**

**Karim Amir: The Amythyst Hero**

Karim Amir, who is the protagonist of the novel, is the key to revealing the questions of the formation of a hybrid identity. The author makes it clear through the first lines of the novel: Karim has a complicated relationship with himself and his identity: My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman, born and bred nearly. I can always be classified as a funny type of Englishman, a new kind, after all, a product of two old histories" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 3). It is clear that in this opening statement, there is a created tension between the claim that Karim feels English and the modification of this message by the use of the word almost to imply this identification is not wholly satisfactory.

The basic hybridity of Karim's identity can be traced to how he describes himself as originating out of two old histories. He is neither English nor Indian but something unlike any other kind of cultural identity that borrows relatively and is even beyond the two cultures. This split identity is not raised as an issue to be solved but one that holds creative Potential.

In the novel, the identity of Karim can be defined as performed instead of fundamental. His experiences in the theater, where he is continuously cast to play the ethnic background he has in order to be exoticized, show us how identities can be performed upon and how performance can be used to make identity whilst exposing the faults of stereotypical representations. As he becomes cast as Mowgli in The Jungle Book, he thinks: I was the only Indian in the group, and I was playing Mowgli. I was the wild boy of the jungle, the savage, the primitive. I used to be the dreams of the Empire in what it wanted the Indian to become" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 157).

Here, this text shows that Karim is conscious of being made into such an identity as the creation of Western imaginations of the Eastern subject. His keen awareness of the colonial representation goes further when he notes: "They wanted me to be more Indian than I was and be the stage Indian they could feel good about" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 162). This phrase shows that Western theater spaces require their actor to perform the authenticity of ethnicity beyond that experience.

The fight against these identities that Karim is forced to adopt is reflected in the fact when he thinks of his positioning himself culturally: I was not sure what I was supposed to be. Half-caste, part-Indian, or quarter-English, or what? I had a new breed, or none so existed in the past" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 89). Such admittance of his unprecedented cultural status indicates that hybrid subjects have to establish new types of identity, whereas they cannot match existing ones.

The complexity of cultural navigation that Karim is faced with comes out stronger when he explains his relations with the Indian side of the family: India was the father country but not mine. Never had I been there. It was my France or Germany just as alien to me (Kureishi, 1990, p. 213). The extract refutes essentialist understandings of cultural belonging as it exposes how hybrid subjects need to pass through some negotiation process regarding claims of cultural authenticity.

He can identify and criticize these stereotypes, which proves the agency of the hybrid subject in making a deal in terms of cultural representation. Faced with the musical audience's expectations, Karim comes up with an elaborated awareness of cultural performance: "I started to realize that what people were looking to see was not an unvarnished truth but a semblance or shadow of the truth, not reality but an imitation of reality, not truth but the performance of truth" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 178).

**Haroon Amir, The Commodified Guru**

Haroon Amir, the father of Karim, also contributes another angle through which the idea of hybrid identity can be looked at in the novel. The single person to display the most opulent achievement of spiritual self-help is Haroon, who has converted himself into a domestic spiritual guide by means of a manifold negotiation of Eastern spirituality as well as Western consumer culture. His self-willingness to play the character of a religious mentor is both real and dramatic, which shows the performance character of cultural identity.

Spiritual teachings by Haroon are set in a tongue-in-cheek manner. His suburban living room meditations draw minions who want to hear the truth of true Eastern wisdom, but he is tangled in his relationship to the wisdom by his role as a cultural translator. Dad felt sure at last that he was on the right path, as Karim notes. He had been reading Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Zen. He also had been reading books about Indian philosophy, and he had discovered that a lot of what was written in them went along with what he believed" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 16).

The irony of the role of Haroon is even more seen through his interaction with his suburban audience. Much of his attractiveness to the Western seekers lies in his exotic status: "Dad had grown to a good deal of a suburban holy man. People would go to him to give them advice, they would go to learn how to meditate and what the meaning of life is. He was perceived to be somebody with knowledge of ancient wisdom, somebody who could lead them on the path to the right direction" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 43).

The uncertainty of the role Haroon is in is evident even when he admits that he is performing this role: Sometimes I feel like I am playing a part, like I am pretending to be something I am not. Then, I believe that we are just all playing and putting on a show, we are all acting out our lives" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 67). This consideration shows that he was conscious of the performative aspect of any identity construction.

His interactions with Indian indigenous culture are also quite mixed. When Haroon is asked the question of being authentic, he answers: I do not owe anyone my Indianness. I happen to be who I am, and I can use whatever I want out of my culture and discard what I don t need" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 98). In this statement, he expresses his agency in creating his cultural relationship with cultural tradition.

The commercialization of his spiritual task becomes clear when Eva starts treating his teachings as a business: Eva has commercialized the spiritual work of Dad. She ran his sessions in the local paper, charged people to attend meditation classes as well as sold incense and books on Eastern philosophy (Kureishi, 1990, p. 124). This commercialism exposure provides insight into the realization of how spiritual practices get transformed under the Western consumer culture.

Here, we see how Haroon develops his spiritual identity by combining the elements of various Eastern traditions in order to obtain a type of spirituality that will suit the needs of his audience in the West and retain at least some ties to Eastern philosophy. The irony of this point is that even the knowledge of these traditions that the person possesses himself is mediated by books instead of experience, and this is a critical reminder of the difficulty surrounding the authentic transmission of culture and how performance defines self.

Such commodification of Eastern spirituality in a Western consumer culture is also seen in the form of Haroon as a suburban guru. His teachings are made and distributed in order to quench the West's thirst for exotic wisdom, and his agency as the teacher involved makes the act more complicated to and out as cultural appropriation. Haroon is not the victim, neither is he the culprit, but a complicated actor who has to balance various cultural imperatives..

**Eva Kay The Western Seeker**

Eva Kay is a lover and later the wife of Haroon, a Westernist with an interest in Eastern spirituality. Her character is used to give insight into the Western Orientalist lust as well as show that the actual exchange of cultures is possible. In part, we can attribute Eva's attraction to Haroon to the romantic associations of her perception of Eastern wisdom and spirituality, but character development within the novel points to a deeper relationship with cultural differences.

The origin of Eva's attraction to Eastern spirituality can be expressed in her own words, as she says: I always felt that something was lacking in the Western life, something spiritual, something more profound. In the case of Haroon, it was as though I had finally gotten my hands on what I wanted: "When I found Haroon, I thought that I have found what I was seeking" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 52). This quote is one of the generalizations of the West, which views the Eastern world as more spiritual.

She went over to the East to find her spirituality and transformed from a suburban housewife into an Eastern religious practitioner, which represented the cultural shift in 1970s Britain. Eva had already done an entire job of reinventing herself, as can be seen when Karim says: She was dressed in Indian garb, smoked incense in each of the rooms, and talked all the time about karma and reincarnation. In a sense, she was now more Indian than Dad (Kureishi, 1990, p. 76).

Karim cannot ignore the irony of the transformation in Eva as he remarks: It was ironic how Eva, a person who had never been to India, was more well informed of Indian culture than I was. She also possessed books on Indian philosophy, Indian cuisines, and Indian music. She was now the specialist of a culture that was theoretically of my own" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 145).

The very act of commercializing spirituality associated with Eva's way of thinking illustrates the consumerism of Western culture in shaping Eastern practices: Eva had turned the house into some Eastern marketplace. She was selling meditation cushions, crystals, books on chakra, and even Indian spices to cook. All this could be purchased at the correct value" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 186).

Her acquaintance with Haroon also shows us the potential of real cultural exchange, which has nothing to do with the first stereotypes. At some point in their relationship, Eva starts to see the depth of Harooni's position: I realized now that I was seeking something exotic, something that was not my ordinary life. Haroon is not exotic, however. He is nothing more than a man who is trying to understand his identity, like all of us (Kureishi, 1990, p. 203).

The term change in culture is noticeable in the change of Eva, a suburban housewife, to a follower of Eastern mysticism in 1970s Britain. Her path is similar to Haroon's in a performative nature because she changes her method of dressing and thinking, as well as speaking in new ways that resonate with her spiritual endeavors. Her affair with Haroon is, however, also an act of exchanging cultures that does not only involve appropriation.

The example of Eva is not entirely positive and not negative in the novel. It can be argued that her initial interest in Haroon is founded on Orientalist fantasies, but the fact that she is focusing on the relationship and that she is open to cultural change indicates greater complexity in relation to her engagement with difference. The character she represents shows how Orientalist stereotypes can be transcended through Western subjects in order to achieve an honest dialogue in the cultural field.

**Deconstruction of East-West Binaries**

**Opposing the Orientalism Stereotypes**

The novel written by Kureishi is a systematic attack on the stereotypes of the Orientalist world because of its multidimensional characterization and ironical narration. The text exposes the insufficiency of Western notions of Eastern spirituality, sexuality, and identity as a way to explain the life experience of hybrid subjects. This confrontation is achieved not in the form of polemics but with the help of a slight tipping of characters that do not fit into stereotypical categories.

Eastern spirituality, as it is treated in the novel, is especially successful in busting at least some of the Orientalist assumptions. Instead of Eastern wisdom being inauthentic or not, the text shows how spirituality is a type of cultural translation that has various roles and motives that apply to different characters. The teachings on spirituality by Haroon are both sincere and theatrics at the same time, authentic and marketed, showing how misleading the use of binary categories in explaining social phenomena can be.

Another character whose placement in the novel opposes the stereotypes of the East is Anwar's uncle Ka, rim. The hunger strike that Anwar is on to pressure his daughter Jamila into acceptance of an arranged marriage is just the Eastern cultural orthodoxy at work, which validates the weird Western notion of women being oppressed in the East. Recently, in the novel, however, the situation is treated so that its complex nature is disclosed as opposed to being criticized or defended.

The position of Anwar is depicted as being culturally authentic and yet personally harmful on the one hand and culturally complicated and justified by Jamila on the other hand. The novel does not allow posing this conflict as a mere opposition of East and West; the two characters are balancing between various cultural demands and personal wants.

**The Cultural Commodification As a Satirical Treatment**

This is because the satirical satirization of cultural commodification in the novel is used to discredit both Western Orientalist fantasies and Eastern cultural tyrannies of orthodoxy. The irony displayed by Kureishi demonstrates how cultural practices can be altered in the process of terminating between two cultural environments. However, at the same time, it also criticizes the business-related nature of it.

The meditation classes in suburbs that Haroon conducts serve as a fecund locale to this satiric handling. The discrepancy of the spiritual teachings to the surrounding suburban space develops a comic effect that, however, discloses some serious concerns concerning cultural authenticity and misappropriation. The description of those sessions in the novel balances sympathy for spiritual practice and a joke of cultural translation of those practices: The living room had been turned into a shrine. A suite consisting of three pieces had been thrust into the walls and draped with Indian cloth. A candle was burning at the corner, and a little figure of the Buddha (surrounded by a photograph of the dead husband of Eva) was on the mantelpiece (Kureishi, 1990, p. 21).

The difference between spiritual searching and suburban materialism complements Karim's observation: the same individuals who attended the meditation classes with Dad were the ones who frequented the garden center and stayed at home on weekends to watch TV. They needed to be enlightened, and at the same time needed to have their creature comforts" (Kureishi, 1990, p.

The commodification of the spiritual practice is made clear by the novel through the description of the spiritual marketplace that grew up in and around the teachings of Haroon: "Soon came workshops in chakra healing, classes in Indian cooking, and even tours to ashrams in India. This was the land of anything you wanted so long as you could pay the money (Kureishi, 1990, p. 134).

This commodification is known to Haroon, and it can be seen in his free time: Often, I think I have a spiritual supermarket. Individuals move into the shop and select what suits them on the shelves of Eastern wisdom, put their money on the counter, and drift away. They do not necessarily want to alter their lives but only to have something to be proud of concerning their life (Kureishi, 1990, p. 167).

It is mainly the satirical edge to the novel mentioning the idea of Western spiritual tourism: These were all people who had never had anything complicated, really poor, or painful in their lives. They were experimenting with being spiritual; they were testing it as a new garment. At some point, when it became awkward or unpractical, they had the option of removing them and going back to their everyday lives" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 195).

This excerpt has expressed the way in which Eastern spirituality is implemented into Western domestic contexts, thus making their marriage comprised of outcomes of hybrid spaces that are neither Eastern nor Western. The situation with the Buddha statue facing the photo of the deceased husband of Eva does provide a visual representation of cultural hybridity, which is brilliantly funny and satisfying at the same time.

The satirical treatment of the story continues to the image of the theater world where the ethnic background of Karim is commodified and stereotyped at the same time. The way Karim is cast as a holder of an exotic Indian background indicates how the Western theatre perpetuates the stereotypes of the Middle East- minorities without the issue of being diverse. However, the fact that Karim can understand such stereotypes and manipulate them shows the agency hybrid subjects have in resisting the commodification of cultures.

**Indictment of Cultural Orthodoxies**

The novel criticizes Western Orientalist ideas, though it criticizes Eastern cultural orthodoxy, which insists that one lives up to traditional ways. Such a two-pronged criticism is characteristic of the orientalist discourse, showing the manner in which hybrid subjects are resistant to being stereotyped in the West as well as essentialized in the East.

Jamila is the most direct assault on Eastern cultural orthodoxy. The way she pitches against the desire of her father to get her into an arranged marriage is a form of her fight against the expectations of gender roles and cultural norms. However, the way the issue of this resistance is handled in the novel can be considered complicated because they do not underestimate the right of her stand but only take into consideration the cultural relevance of what her father is so concerned about.

Jamila makes her stand clear in refuting her father: I am not your possession to be disposed off to the highest bidders. I am a human being who has my mind, who has my wishes, who needs to live his own life. I am not going to be sacrificed to your notion of tradition (Kureishi, 1990, p. 78).

She does not criticize only the personal relations within a family, as it is a whole culture that she criticizes: "These are the arranged marriages, which are not based on the issues of love or compliance." They are all about controlling systems of power, keeping women in their position in society, and trying to uphold the belief that the culture has not been corrupted" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 112).

Jamila is logical about cultural resistance, and this can be traced to her reading practices: Jamila had been reading feminist theory, postcolonial criticism, and books about women's rights in traditional societies. She would be able to easily quote Simone de Beauvoir and Angela Davis as she could recite prayers out of the Quran" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 156).

Her ultimate concession to marriage indicates the delicate workings of maneuvering the cultural norms of marriage: Jamila wed Changez in her way. She did not give up her work, her independence, or her activism in politics. Even the marriages turned into a cultural display that fulfilled family honor and also maintained individual freedom (Kureishi, 1990, p. 198).

The hunger strike of Anwar in the novel makes the censure of patriarchal power difficult. He is shown suffering in his desperation: Anwar was not a monster. He was a scared old man who was clinging to the few certainties he had left in a world that appeared to be sweeping too quickly to fathom almost everything that he had done and continues to do" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 139).

Jamila finally makes a compromise by getting married to Changez and remaining independent in her actions, which shows that hybrid subjects are able to become intermediaries between other cultures without turning their back on one completely. The marriage turns into a cultural play, which meets family demands and makes her keep her autonomy.

The image of Changez (husband of Jamila) in the novel complicates the mere criticisms of arranged marriage. Changez is introduced as a considerate learning man who appreciates the independence of Jamila and, at the same time, upholds cultural obligations. His personality proves the possibility of reshaping the established customs to modern conditions and maintaining their cultural value.

**Conclusion**

The extensive exegesis of the novel The Buddha of Suburbia revealed that the story can be viewed as an advanced form of Orientalist discourse, focusing extensively on the deconstruction of East-West binaries through the subtle strategies of developing hybridity. The study of the novel's multidimensional characters, its satirical approach to cultural sales, and the derision directed at both Western Orientalism and Eastern cultural paradigms reveals the depth of postcolonial identity construction in modern-day Britain. The theoretical approach of orientalism, together with the concept of hybridity presented by Homi Bhabha and the work of Edward Said about Orientalism, has helped me to explore in this paper how A. Kureishi uses the theory of orientalism to theorize a narrative world in which culture in general and traditional cultural boundaries in particular are given challenge, negotiation, and ultimate crossing.

**The Major Findings and Theoretical Succor**

The analysis has brought to the fore several essential considerations that aid in our understanding of post-colonial literature and hybrid identity formation. To begin with, the figure of Karim Amir serves as a typical illustration of the hybrid subject, who cannot be reduced to a set of cultural labels. The transition mode proposed by him in his exploration of a gray identity is highly highlighted in his transitions from suburban London to the centimetric theater world, which does not merely indicate that hybrid identities are a product of cultural mix but an active marker of cultural negotiation and resistance. The keen sense of awareness as to how his color is being commodified and stereotyped in the Western cultural arena shows how hybrid agents have the agency to rebel and subvert the mainstream representations.

The notion of a commodified guru, or the depiction of Haroon Amir as such, sheds light on the complicated nature of cultural translation and the spiritual commodification inherent in Western consumer culture. Instead of merely critiquing cultural appropriation, Kureishi, through his portrayal of Haroon, focuses on the issue of the performance of all cultures and, at the same time, reveals how Eastern spirituality is being appropriated and commodified in the West. This interpretation is offered as a theoretical contribution to the debate on authenticity and performance in postcolonial literature, demonstrating how hybrid subjects navigate and negotiate between authentic spiritual pursuits and the commodification of culture.

The story of Eva Kay, a simple suburban housewife who becomes an Eastern spiritual practitioner, shows how genuine cross-cultural sharing is possible and also highlights the flaws in Western Orientalist fancies. The way her character is developed throughout the novel demonstrates that the stereotypical attraction to Eastern culture can translate into more complicated and varied cultural relationships, but only under some conditions. This observation enriches postcolonial theory since it shows that Western subjects are not only the subjects of Orientalist discourse but can also become actors in genuine cultural communication.

**Reorientalist Strategies and Cultural Resistance**

The paper has identified several crucial areas of orientalism that Kureishi employs to dismantle certain cultural discourses. The satirical nature of the novel, as a caricature of cultural commodification, serves a twofold purpose: the author critiques the notion of Western consumer culture as one that employs Eastern spirituality and takes a stand against the doctrines of Eastern culture, which insist on rigorous adherence to established traditions. The ambivalence of this satirical touch is typical of the Orientalist project, which struggles against Western stereotyping as well as against Eastern essentialism.

As seen in its analysis, the writer employs irony and narrative complexity to open up spaces of cultural dialogue beyond the usual binary oppositions. The context of suburbs, in which much of the novel's action takes place, becomes a liminal space where cultural boundaries are blurred, and new versions of identity are created. The spatial analysis contributes to the study of postcolonial geography by demonstrating how seemingly ordinary suburban spaces can be transformed into places of cultural change and struggle.

The cultural performance of the novel demonstrates that identity construction in the postcolonial setting is a process that entails deliberate efforts of cultural translation and bargaining. The characters, such as Karim and Haroon, cannot be described as merely assigned to defined cultural roles but rather as actively creating their identities; this picking and choosing of regimes from different cultural traditions is performative. The finding above supports the theoretical work on performativity. Still, it pushes it further toward the postcolonial post-colonial setting, whereby cultural performance becomes a resistance and a self-defining self-defining strategy.

Final Reflections

Through this interpretation, the Buddha of Suburbia emerges as a revolutionary text that addresses numerous issues that shape contemporary multicultural societies. The maturely handled theme of hybrid identity creation by Kureishi offers an example of how people and groups navigate rather complicated cultural environments, on the one hand, while preserving their artistic influences and, on the other, retaining their agency. The orientalist strategies employed in the novel serve as an excellent source of information on how modern writers, critics, and cultural analysts can comprehend and help present multicultural identity as the current world continues its process of globalization.

It is not that Kureishi's snivel-eyed attempts to provide us with tidy solutions to messy cultural issues, but instead that, he shows us how literature can offer resolutions through space-making about culture and its negotiation. The Buddha of Suburbia demonstrates one way of being critical of cultural production without taking sides in the debate between cultural appropriation and cultural orthodoxy by refusing to endorse either of these cultural visions. This critically balanced perspective can offer a significant contribution to modern cultural discourse and demonstrate the importance of postcolonial literature in addressing a range of questions about identity, belonging, and cultural differences among people in multicultural societies.

The novel by Kureishi combines satirical humor with cultural criticism and empathetic portrayals of motivated characters while also critiquing significant cultural stereotypes and providing space for cultural understanding and exchange, symbolizing a truly perceptive approach to the issue. This is why The Buddha of Suburbia is not just an essential example of postcolonial literature but also a remarkable work that will have the power to promote debate on the significant issues related to fostering and developing cultural pluralism or diversity over the decades.

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