HYBRID IDENTITIES IN *THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA* BY HANIF KUREISHI AND *THE NAMESAKE* BY JHUMPA LAHIRI

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

SEPTEMBER 2012

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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M.A., English Literature

Supervisor : Prof. Dr. Meral Cileli

September 2012, 106 pages

This thesis studies two novels: *The Buddha of Suburbia* by Hanif Kureishi and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. There are characters with hybrid qualities in each novel and they tend to use or encouraged to use mimicry to find their identities and establish themselves in the cultures they live. Hence, the result of mimicry is ambivalence on both sides, the colonizer and the colonized. The first chapter is dedicated to explaining the theory of hybridity based on the ideas of leading theoreticians like, Homi Bhabha, Robert Young and others. The situation, problems and the coping strategies of character are studied in detail, in individual sections. The final chapter is dedicated to the comparison of the hybrid situations of the second generation male and female characters. Eventually it is seen that all hybrid characters, especially the second generation immigrants use mimicry to create their own 'Third Space' and find their own voices to exist in their environment.

Keywords: Hybridity, Post-colonial, Hanif Kureishi, Jhumpa Lahiri

ÖZ

HANIF KUREISHI'NİN *THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA* VE JHUMPA LAHIRI'NIN *THE NAMESAKE* ADLI ROMANLARINDA HİBRİD KARAKTERLER

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Tez Danışmanı : Prof. Dr. Meral Cileli

Eylül 2012, 106 sayfa

Bu tezde, Hanif Kureishi'nin *The Buddha of Suburbia* ve Jhumpa Lahiri'nin *The Namesake* adlı romanları ele alınmıştır. Her iki romanda da hibrid özelliklere sahip karakterler bulunmaktadır ve bu kişiler, yaşadıkları toplumlarda varolabilmek için diğerlerini taklit ederler ya da taklit etmeye teşvik edilirler. Bu taklit etmenin sonucu olarak, hem sömüren hem de sömürülen taraf bir çelişkinin içine düşer. Bu çalışmanın ilk bölümü Homi Bhabha, Robert Young gibi kuramcıların eserlerine dayanarak, hibriditenin açıklanmasına ayrılmıştır. Her bölümde ise, hibrid karakterlerin durumları, sorunları ve bunlarla başa çıkmak için kullandıkları yöntemler detaylı bir biçimde ve ayrı ayrı ele alınmıştır. En son bölüm ise, kadın ve erkek ikinci nesil hibrid karakterlerin durumlarının kıyaslanmasına ayrılmıştır. Sonuç olarak görülmüştür ki; özellikle ikinci nesil olmak üzere, bütün hibrid karakterler kendi 'Üçüncü Uzam' larını yaratabilmek ve yaşadıkları çevrede kendi seslerini bulabilmek için, taklit etme yöntemini kullanmışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hybridite, Post-koloniyel, Hanif Kureishi, Jhumpa Lahiri

TO THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE; ELIN…

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Hybridity is not a new notion in many scientific fields, especially in botany, zoology or biology. According to Miriam Webster online dictionary, the first entry of the word in a dictionary in English dates back to the 17th century. But hybridity of humans, stemming from the same notion; an offspring of two different races, became a remarkable subject during the colonial era. As it will be discussed in more detail in the first chapter, hybridity of humans, was discouraged to sustain 'racial purity' and the idea was much tackled by scientists and philosophers. Cultural hybridity, on the other hand, drew attention much later.

Thus, hybrid people, people brought up in two different cultures simultaneously and learnt two (or more) languages at the same time, or sometimes people who came from two distinct races, have existed for many years, even centuries. However, the theory of hybridity became one that mattered and caused debates and discussions not too long ago. Ziauddin Sardar, in his foreword for the 2008 edition of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* notes the arrival of post-colonial as the 1990s (x). Considering the short history of post-colonial literary theory and criticism- some consider the publishing of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, a milestone in the post-colonial studies-, it is not difficult to see how recently the discussions on hybridity emerged.

There are many theoreticians in post-colonial studies, i.e. Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Robert J. Young, Stuart Hall, Salman Rushdie, Paul Gilroy, to name but a few. But as Fernando Lloyd, a professor of English literature and a writer from Malaysia says ". . . this field has become too vast and complex for anyone to specialise in more than a small part of it, whether African, Indian, South East Asian, West Indian . . ." (51). Thus dividing this broad topic to sub-titles, under post-colonial studies was inevitable and the theory of hybridity is only one

of them. However, although certain theoreticians specialise in certain subjects and areas, it should not be thought that they do not write and talk about other distinct titles. Many areas in post-colonial studies are related to one another closely, organically.

Upon a quick scan for the 'theory of hybridity' in post-colonial studies on the internet or in books, there is maybe one name that always comes up; Homi K. Bhabha, the person to develop the concept of 'hybridity'. Of course, he is not the only important theoretician in the field and his ideas are not always accepted as they are. But, next to him some other important theoreticians who write on hybridity can be listed as Robert, J. Young, Iain Chambers, Aijaz Ahmad and Paul Gilroy. Bo Petterson of University of Helsinki notes that Bhabha bases his concept of hybridity on ideas from Frantz Fanon, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derida and Roland Barthes. So, it would be best to define the concept of hybridity in Bhabha's own words as they appear in *The Location of Culture*:

> Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name of the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal . . . Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. (112)

While Bhabha talks about the displeasing sides of hybridity, his work on the subject, in general, celebrate cultural hybridity on different levels (Wohlsein 13). Bhabha is not the only theoretician to celebrate hybridity. In his *Imaginary Homelands*, talking about his much controversial novel *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie reveals his ideas on hybridity as well:

> . . . Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity,

> intermingling, and the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. (394)

Even though Moore-Gilbert sees 'crucial distinction between Rushdie and Bhabha's models' (196) of hybridity, he still puts them in the same category of theoreticians that take the concept as a positive one.

A rather simplified definition of the term comes from Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, in their *Post-Colonial Studies, Key Concepts Second Edition*: ". . . the creation of new **transcultural** forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (108).

Hybridity is what comes out at the point of intersection of two unique things; socially, culturally, linguistically, psychologically… At this point of intersection, an in-between condition occurs, causing things to be 'neither/nor'. In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha explains how the outcome of this contact creates what he calls a "Third Space of enunciation" (37). According to Susie Thomas, Bhabha sees any identity as already hybrid and ". . . that cultural differences are not synthesized into a new 'third term' but continue to exist in a hybrid 'Third Space'" (63). And this is the starting point of the whole hybridity concept.

To better understand the hybridity theory, it can be useful to mention some other key terms, which actually help explain one another; i.e. 'ambivalence' and 'mimicry'. In Bhabha's "Of mimicry and man" we read that mimicry occurs when the colonizer urges the colonized to imitate him, but this mimicry never fetches the desired effect and the outcome is simply ambivalent for both sides. And this ambivalence caused by mimicry brings along a sort of mockery that challenges the authority. Bhabha contends that ". . .

colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence. . .” (85-87). The term ‘almost the same but not quite’ is almost synonymous with mimicry in Bhabha’s theory as it actually means imitation, something never completely real, thus never satisfactory. Ambivalence, on the other hand, is another contribution of Bhabha’s to post-colonial theory. In its original use in psychoanalysis it is used “to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting the opposite” and in colonial discourse “it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized” (Ashcroft et al. 10). The concept of hybridity, its definition and history is studied in detail in the first chapter of this study.

What made theoreticians and critics to think and write about hybridity is the emergence of literary works produced by the writers from the ex-colonies. When these writers started writing literary pieces that attracted the Western society, then the Western criticism has started talking about them as well. The emergence of indigenous writers writing in the colonizers’ language, especially in English accelerated the Western recognition. Those who have left their colonized homelands and settled in the West for political or educational reasons produced such literature that they changed the course of post colonial criticism. There are writers like Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming or Wole Soyinka born in their ancestral lands and moved to the West for various reasons. Their work embodies hybrid elements. Then there are writers like, Zadie Smith, Hanif Kureishi and Jhumpa Lahiri, relatively a younger generation of writers who were born in the West to mixed race families -or sometimes not, as in the case of Lahiri. These writers are born as hybrids and their work somehow reflect this quality.

The writer of one of the books studied in this thesis is Hanif Kureishi. He was born in England in 1954 to an Indian father and English mother. He was interested in writing starting from early ages and today he is a well known, well read, award winning writer. As Bradley Buchanan says, he is compared with Salman Rushdie, V.S Naipul and others, who "often critique Western culture (implicitly or explicitly) from a non-Western perspective, Kureishi has largely accepted its traditions" (13). Moore-Gilbert too, sees the roots of Kureishi's writing "overwhelmingly from within Western traditions" at the same time tracing some influence of Salman Rushdie in his work (108). On the other hand, Susie Thomas sees his stance different from these writers and says that "he is not a displaced postcolonial writing *back* to the centre; he writes *from* the centre" (1). As a result of his different stance, critics like Bruce King argue that it would be strange to apply postcolonial criticism to his work. (quoted in Buchanan 13). Yet, almost always his work is viewed through post colonial perspective.

Kureishi started his writing career with screenplays. "My Beautiful Launderette" (1985), "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (1988) and "London Kills Me" (1991) became some of his best known work as they were made films. His first novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), which was also made into a four part BBC serial, brought him the prestigious Whitbread Award for Best First Novel. Although in all his work the reflections of his first hand experiences can easily be seen, especially this award winning novel by him has a lot of elements from his own life, as a second generation hybrid character growing up in London's suburbs in the seventies. Although Kureishi sometimes opposes the novel's being taken as an autobiographical one, once a critic claimed that the novel's "portrait of English racism is autobiographical enough" (quoted in Kaleta 72).

Jhumpa Lahiri, like Kureishi was born in London in 1967 to an Indian Bengali immigrant family. The family moved to the United States when she was only three. Her

first book is *The Interpreter of Maladies,* a collection of short stories based on experiences of immigrants, and it brought her the prestigious Pulitzer in 1999. In her first novel *The Namesake* (2003) there are many incidents from her own life; Indian parents who wanted to bring up Indian children, the story of the embarrassing pet name, frequent visits to India, etc. As Michiko Kakutani says the novel is " about exile and its discontents, a novel that is as effective in its Chekhovian exploration of fathers and sons, parents and children as it is resonant in its exploration of what is acquired and lost by immigrants and their children in pursuit of the American Dream" (quoted in Friedman 112). *The Namesake*, like Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia,* again is the writer's first novel and was made film in 2006 by Mira Nair. Lahiri is a young writer and as Friedman posits ". . . the corpus of criticism about it [is] still small" (111).

The reason these novels are chosen in this thesis is because their writers are hybrids themselves; Hanif Kureishi a biological hybrid as well as a cultural one and Jhumpa Lahiri is a cultural hybrid. And the main characters portrayed in their respective novels, to a certain extent, reflect the personal experiences of their writers. Another reason is the locations of the novels. While *The Buddha of Suburbia* takes place in Britain, the ex-colonizer of India, *The Namesake* takes place in the United States which has neither the historical nor the organic relationship with India as in the case of Britain. In both novels the main characters are of Indian (more specifically; Karim has a Pakistani Muslim background and Gogol has a Bengali Hindu) descent. Thus, the events and characters sometimes show a semblance; i.e. the main characters in focus are both second generation immigrants, children of immigrants who were Westernized way before they arrived in the West and sometimes they differ; i.e. Karim's physiological hybridity and Gogol's pure Bengali background or Karim's father's indifference to his cultural heritage and Gogol's parents' insistence on their Bengali heritage, making it somewhat more interesting to compare them in both these novels.

All the characters that are studied in this thesis have hybrid characteristics. There are first generation immigrants in both novels and then their children born in the West, mostly considered as the second generation immigrants. Whatever their history is until the moment of contact with the West, in the final analysis they struggle to exist in a foreign or partially foreign culture. The experience is different for the first generation (Haroon in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Ashoke in *The Namesake*), the racially mixed (Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia*) or pure (Gogol of *The Namesake*) second generation, or the male and the female. Whatever the case, they develop strategies of their own to establish their identities in the face of the society and their families. As encouraged by the Western mentality, the hybrid resorts to imitating the ways of the authority, which enables him/her to exist within the borders of its establishments. Ultimately, the hybrids', sometimes unconscious utilisation of imitation and mimicry, for their struggle to exist in the colonizer's world, gives them a voice which enables them to express themselves. This way they also enrich their identities and obtain a stronger position in all walks of the society.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the problems these hybrid characters are faced with and how they cope with these difficulties, how they eventually manage to find their voice to exist in their respective societies. Their situations and journeys are studied individually and later the main male characters of both novels (Karim and Gogol) and the two most prominent female characters (Jamila and Moushumi) are compared with regard to their gender and the countries and societies they lived in. All the analysis is based on studies done in post-colonial theory, on theory of hybridity in particular. The works of leading theoreticians like Robert J. Young, Stuart Hall, Iain Chambers, and especially Bhabha's theories on 'mimicry' and 'Third Space' are employed to explain the situations the hybrid characters are faced with.

CHAPTER II

HYBRID. A DISEASE OR REALITY OF THE 21ST CENTURY?

2.1 DEFINITION AND HISTORY OF THE TERM

Although the post-colonial studies have gained an impressive momentum only in the last 30-40 years and the number of both fiction and critical works have come to adorn the shelves of book shops and attracted larger portions of readers, as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin demonstrate in the *Post- Colonial Studies Reader*:

> 'Post-colonial' as we define it does not mean 'post- independence' or 'after colonialism', for this would be to falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process. Post-colonialism, rather, begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. It is the discourse of compositionality which colonialism brings into being. In this sense post- colonial writing has a very long history (117).

So, where does post-colonial start, where does it end? Where does this 'very long history' date back to? Although in many critical works, Columbus's landing in America seems to be a milestone for post-colonial studies, Boehmer writes:

> Marlow in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness', for example, draws attention to the similarities between the British colonization of Africa and the conquering of Britain by Imperial Rome many centuries before. According to this view, *Beowulf* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* could be read as post-colonial texts (1).

Post-colonial studies cannot easily be defined as it is a continuously developing, shifting area of study, a somewhat 'organic' field. At the very beginning it was the study of the interactions between Europe and the colonized Orient. Later on, the others joined in and they each became a title on their own to be studied in detail. Now alongside South India, Africa, Caribbean, even though they speak the same language,

share same values and religion in general, Australia, Canada and even Ireland and United States have become the subject matters for post-colonial studies.

Because it is such a vast area of study, stretching from one end of the globe to the other and the experiences of all concerned cultures are different from one another, some divisions had to be made under the title post-colonial, although these sub-titles are still inter connected; language, religion, economics, culture, feminism and history being among them. Post-colonial study is also an inter-disciplinary study, as sociologists, historians, anthropologists, linguists and many other disciplines are continuously conducting research concerning their area of interest.

According to the online Oxford Dictionary, the word 'hybrid' originates from Latin 'hybrida' which was used to describe the "offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, child of a freeman and a slave, etc." Today, it exists in many languages, still originating from Latin, more or less meaning "mixed or composed of different elements." Now people talk about hybrid animals and plants, hybrid cars, hybrid anything. Within the framework of post-colonial studies, it can simply be defined as "the creation of new trans-cultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al. 118).

Within the post-colonial terminology, there are other words that are used synonymously with hybridity: creolization, mestizaje, in- betweenness, diasporas, liminality, etc. Although they may have emerged from different contexts or situations, as Loomba says they all boil down to the same thing, which is "a cross-over of ideas and identities generated by colonialism" (173).

As a natural result of colonization, different cultures, colours, religions have met, usually under not-so-natural circumstances. This contact was sometimes encouraged

and sometimes feared and discouraged. In the case of the Spanish and Portuguese invaders, the Portuguese admiral Albuquerque, for example, "invited his men to marry 'the white and the beautiful' widows and daughters of the defenders of Goa" (Loomba 110). Another example mentioned by Loomba is the case of Pedro Fermin de Vargas, an early nineteenth century Colombian who encouraged a policy of mixing whites and Indians for the sole purpose of 'hispanicising' and eventually 'extinguishing' Indians (173). On the other hand British didn't allow, let alone encourage, cultural or physical contact with the local people of the colonized lands to avoid the 'contamination' of their blood. However, in 1835, a British politician who took office in India between 1834 and 1838, Lord Macaulay, in his famous and influential 'Minute on Indian Education' suggested a way of creating "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Ashcroft et al. 430) to serve the empire without contaminating the British blood. His solution was creating cultural hybrids with no risk of racial mixing.

In Europe in the 19th century some scientists set out to prove and explain the wrongness of mixing different races, saying that a hybrid being would be infertile, thus useless. The ideas of Comte de Buffon from France and John Hunter from Britain were reflected by an anatomist and racial theorist from Edinburgh, Robert Knox who claims that:

> Naturalists have generally admitted that animals of the same species are fertile, reproducing their kind for ever; whilst on the contrary, if an animal be the product of two distinct species, the hybrid, more or less, was sure to perish or to become extinct…the products of such a mixture are not fertile. (quoted in Young 7)

Even with these few examples, it is easy to see that hybridity, mixing of different races was seen as a negative thing and almost always discouraged for different reasons. Knox came to this conclusion from the example of mixing a horse and an ass which would

produce a mule and a hinny, both of which are infertile. However humans from different races should be fertile as they belong to the same species, which was a point, omitted by these Europeans who were only trying to prove their own point.

Despite all this negativity, there were some who thought of hybridity as a positive, creative and organic phenomenon. One example would be Herbert Spencer, who in 1850 discussed that "… progress consists in a change from the homogeneous to heterogeneous" (Young 4).

The whole 'hybridity' problem has been occupying the minds of scientists of many fields: theoreticians, anthropologists etc. for many centuries, for different and various reasons. Robert Young in his *Colonial Desire,* gives a detailed summary of the history of 'hybridity' and how it finally came to be discussed in literary post-colonial theory.
Today, there are theoreticians who specialize on hybridity. Although hybridity is a sub-title in post-colonial studies and many theoreticians have something to say about it, Homi K. Bhabha is the first person that comes to mind. Although some academics and theoreticians do not share all of his ideas on this particular subject, he is still the leading person in the field. For Bhabha, hybridity occurs at a moment of colonial contact and he sees it as a positive attribute not an indication of corruption. He elucidates hybridity in 'Signs Taken for Wonders':

> Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name of the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal… Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. (112)

For Bhabha hybridity unsettles the invader-colonizer discourse and allows a means for the colonized to express himself. He argues that hybridity is "the most common and

effective form of subversive opposition since it displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (qtd. Ashcroft et al. 9).

The two novels that will be studied, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Namesake* have characters that embody hybrid identities. The two main characters Karim Amir of *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Gogol Ganguli of *The Namesake* are in- between identities and cultures, trying to define themselves; a task quite difficult, as even the theoreticians cannot come to a definite conclusion about this shifting, fluid matter. Alongside these two main characters, the hybridity of some other characters in these novels will be discussed here, their experiences will be compared and their common points will be emphasized. Although like many other things in today's world, even definitions are continuously moving, evolving, changing, and shifting. The parameters are changing by the minute in all walks of life. Nothing is definite, just like the situation of being a 'hybrid'.

CHAPTER III

'EX ORIENT LUX' BUT STILL A BLACK

3.1. KARIM AMIR AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

The first few sentences of the novel probably are the best that describe Karim's situation in general and probably the most quoted sentences from this novel. Karim, the narrator-protagonist of the novel, introduces himself to the reader as:

> … 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... It is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not… (3)

We understand right at the beginning that he is aware of his awkwardness, his 'in-betweenness', a term used also by Hanif Kureishi himself. He is an Englishman, but not exactly, he is 'almost' one. He is the son of an Indian man, Haroon Amir and an English woman, Margaret. They meet and get married in London where, well off Haroon from India comes to study for a degree and Margaret is only "… a pretty working-class girl from the suburbs… " (25). This is why Karim is an 'odd mixture of continents' (Europe and South Asia) 'and blood' (Indian and English). We can say that this mixture makes him a biological hybrid as well as a cultural one. In *Colonial Desire* Robert J.C. Young explains how the term came to be used for cultural instances: "In the nineteenth century it was used to refer to a physiological phenomenon; in the twentieth century it has been reactivated to describe a cultural one" (5). So, this explanation can be fully applied to Karim as he is both a biological and a cultural hybrid.

Karim Amir is a teenager from the suburbs, half English half Indian, has a name that does not sound English and a skin darker than those born to the sun forsaken England. With these qualities on his back, his struggle is more difficult compared to his white peers. Karim is desperately searching for a role model. Obviously, this will not be his father because Karim sees his father as a loser. Haroon Amir stepped down where he came from. His father is from a well off Bombay home where "He'd never cooked before, never washed up, never cleaned his own shoes and made a bed. Servants did that" (23). However, Haroon Amir cannot succeed in his mission to "…return to India a qualified and polished English gentleman lawyer and an accomplished ballroom dancer" (25). He ends up marrying a girl from the suburbs and working as a civil servant. As Töngür points out, Haroon is one of the first generation immigrants, like Anwar and Jeeta and "are still misfits and isolated from the mainstream life although they have been living in Britain for years" (91). This is why Haroon is not a good role model for Karim. So, he turns to Charlie.

Charlie, son of Haroon's lover Eva and a friend from school, is a few years older than Karim and he is from the suburbs as well. However he is a few steps above him on the social ladder. His family is better off financially and live quite a 'Bohemian' life. Charlie has a very strong character. He knows what to do with himself and his life; he just follows his gut feeling to reach his goal and his mother, Eva is a great support for his ambitions. This makes him different from anyone else around Karim and he looks up to Charlie. The first time Karim arrives at Charlie's with his father, Karim is dressed "like a pearly queen" (16). He has a very colourful, hippie like outfit. He is probably very 'Oriental' for a Westerner's taste. Although Eva praises the way Karim is dressed, Charlie warns him in a brotherly tone and advises him to wear less. Karim, immediately throws things off from his clothing. He says; "I, who wanted only to be like Charlie-as clever, as cool in every part of my soul- tattooed his words onto my brain. Levi's with

an open-necked shirt, maybe in a very modest pink or purple. I would never go out in anything else for the rest of my life" (17).

The example given above shows how much he adores Charlie, how much he looks up to him as a role model. But is this only because he needs someone's advice, a role model? He obviously feels 'lesser' than Charlie. Charlie is a bit older than him, more experienced, and has more opportunities than him in many ways. Karim is English, like Charlie, but Charlie has a more English name, a more English colour and maybe a more English family life. All of which Karim lacks. As Loomba summarizes Fanon's views, which might explain what is really behind Karim's motives for mimicking Charlie; "The black person attempts to cope by adopting white masks that will somehow make the fact of his blackness vanish" (145). Unconsciously, or partially consciously he is aware of his limits. He needs to mimic or imitate to exist in a society where the norms are set by the white men.

Karim does not only want to be *like* Charlie. He wants to *be* him, to take his place. Fanon believes every native dreams himself in the place of the settler, at least once a day (qtd. In Bhabha 44). And the settler is aware of this desire. In certain cases it is acceptable that the natives are like the invaders, for the convenience of the latter. In this case, Charlie is probably oblivious of this. Either because he does not care, or because he is proud of his stance. However we understand that Karim is full of this desire. He is not ashamed to admit this:

> And Charlie? My love for him was unusual as love goes: it was not generous. I admired him more than anyone but I didn't wish him well. It was that I preferred him to me and wanted *to be him* [emphasis added]. I coveted his face, talent, style. I wanted to wake up with them all transferred to me. (15)

According to Bhabha, colonial desire is enunciated according to the place of the Other and that "the phantasmic space of possession that no one subject can singly or fixedly occupy and therefore permits the dream of the inversion of roles" (44). Susie Thomas, on the other hand, explains this desire as "more than simple envy of the popular boy; it is part of Karim's unacknowledged loathing of his Pakistani self. Once Karim stops hating himself, he falls out of love fast and completely. . ." (79). This explains very well why Karim dreams of becoming Charlie, himself and occupying his world.

At the beginning of the novel, Karim seems to be happy about what he is. He knows he is 'in between' but he feels more English more than anything else. For instance, in the television adaptation of the novel ". . . Karim declares that he's not black, he's beige" (Kaleta 231).His nickname is 'Creamy' and even this nickname, as Buchannan says, "enables him to pass for something other than a Pakistani. . .". We know that he cannot even speak Urdu. When Changez, uncle Anwar's son-in-law, arrives from India and a party is given in his honour, Karim cannot follow "exactly what was said" (81). His Englishness is obvious from his daily habits as well. When he says "I loved drinking tea and I loved cycling. I would bike to the tea shop in the High Street and see what blends they had" (62), we can picture a typical English person.

As Karim opens himself to the world as a part of his growing experience and comes out of his older territory; that is, where he was brought up, he starts meeting new people, starts experiencing new reactions to his own existence, his once self-declared identity. Once out of his cocoon, his difference, which was a normal thing so far, starts being thrown at his face as a disturbing, diminutive fact. Maybe the earliest example of this in the novel is the short conversation that takes place between the father of his girlfriend Helen and Karim. He is at her house to pay her a visit, however greeted by the unfriendly father who says:

> ‘you can’t see my daughter again’ said Hairy Back. ‘She doesn’t go out with boys. Or with wogs.
> ‘Oh well’
> ‘Got it?’
> ‘Yeah’ I said sullenly.
> ‘We don’t want you blackies coming to the house.’
> ‘Have there been many?’
> ‘Many what, you little coon?’
> ‘Blackies.’
> ‘Where?’
> ‘Coming to the house.’ (40)

Karim is half Indian, which probably gives his skin a different glow. However he feels the insult, as this man is not simply stating a fact about the colour of his skin but trying to insult him, degrade him and make him feel lesser. Stuart Hall explains this usage while talking about the shifting cultural politics and its reflections in Britain:

> The term ‘Black’ was coined as a way of referencing the common experience and marginalization in Britain and came to provide the organizing category of a new politics of resistance, amongst groups and communities with, in fact, very different histories, traditions and ethnic identities (quoted in Young 22).

Another instance where his Indianness is pushed into his face is when he starts acting. His first time ever acting part is Mowgli from Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*. According to Moore-Gilbert, Kureishi’s fiction engages extensively with Kipling and he intends to “discredit Kipling” (124). Rushdie also sees the “racial bigotry” (74) and “his belief that India can never stand alone” in Kipling’s writings, and yet adds that “there is enough truth in these [Kipling’s] stories to make them impossible to ignore” (80). Thus,

Karim feels so excited about his new role and works really hard to prove himself. The first problem occurs when he is asked to cover his almost naked body with a make-up material resembling 'brown muck' (146). He does not feel comfortable about it but eventually comes to accept it as a part of his role. The second blow comes when he is asked to sound like 'a Bengali', be more authentic. He is invited to 'mimic' in order to be 'authentic'. Until this conversation with the director, Karim seems to be unaware of his position, the reason behind his existence in the group.

'A word about the accent Karim. I think it should be an authentic accent.'

'What d'you mean authentic?'

'Where was our Mowgli born?'

'India.'

'Yes. Not Orpington. What accent do they have in India?'

'Indian accents.'

'Ten out of ten.'

'No, Jeremy. Please, no.'

'Karim, you have been cast for *authenticity* and not for experience.' (emphasis added) (147)

He realizes that he is given this part just because of his genetic inheritance, his half Indian side. However, he is still not as Indian as necessary and has to cover himself with brown paint. He does not sound Indian either. He sounds very suburban, as later on his girl friend, Eleanor will remind him. Kureishi's choice of this particular play by Kipling and giving the role of Mowgli to Karim is quite significant because once again Karim has to negotiate between two things. Moore-Gilbert explains this significant situation as follows:

> Just as Mowgli must negotiate between his identities as man and wolf-cub, so Karim is torn between different cultural identifications and, like Mowgli, he is in a process of maturation which involves choices between conformity to moral law and the promptings of nature. (125)

He is supposed to be the 'black man' he is not. But this is what the white men see when they look at him. Franz Fanon, in the introduction to his *Black Skin, White Masks* expresses his painful feelings about his own being, under the white man's gaze:

> I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema… I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, racial defects… I took myself far off from my own presence… What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? (quoted in Bhabha 42)

This is how Karim feels or made to feel by the director of the theatre Shadwell and the rest of the cast. Shadwell knows very well that he can use authenticity to attract audience and make profit out of this. He says Karim was chosen for his colour and accent (ironically still not 'authentic enough'), not for his talent. Karim's father Haroon has turned out to be quite useful with his 'authenticity' for Eva to climb up the social ladder. A friend of Eva, Shadwell sees how it works with Haroon, how he becomes someone who can make money just by being from 'India' and uses Karim for his own success story. On the other hand, Shadwell may also consciously or subconsciously be reminding Karim of his true place, that of his 'subjectivity' as an Indian, to the white men. After all, colonization process did not only change the identities of the colonized but also left traces on the identities of the colonizer as well. As Bhabha denotes, colonization is a two sided experience. Colonisation process, while belittling the

colonized, has certainly and falsely boosted the ego of the colonizer. Thus, his choice of *The Jungle Book* by Kipling, also becomes significant.

The rest of the cast sit and watch quietly as Karim struggles to come out of this insulting situation. He seeks their support, especially those that claim to have a political stand saying that this was a 'political matter' to him (147). They see him as a boy from the crowded streets of an Indian city who can switch to being 'authentic' with the click of his fingers. They ignore the fact that he was born in England and that his mother is English and as a result, his 'mother-tongue' is English. They ignore his hybridity but see him as what they need him to be, for their own needs and conveniences.

Karim's bisexuality, his going between making love and fantasizing men and women can also be seen as a significant sign of his hybridity. He cannot decide which part he likes the most. As Rita Felski notes ". . . he exhibits no anxiety or guilt as he embarks on a series of affairs with men and women" (quoted in Thomas 76). He is actually happy with either sex, as he is content with being half English half Indian. He opts for whatever suits him at a particular moment. Here is how he is comfortable with his bisexuality:

> I was unusual, I knew, the way I wanted to sleep with boys as well as girls. I liked strong bodies and the backs of boys' necks. I liked being handled by men… But I liked cunts and breasts, all of women's softness, long smooth legs and the way women dressed. I felt it would be heart breaking to have to choose one or the other… When I did think about it I considered myself lucky that I could go to parties and go home with anyone from the either sex… (55)

Moore-Gilbert reads the usage of both homosexual and bisexual identities in Kureishi's work in general differently, thus carrying Karim's bisexuality to a different level. He says " . . . the thematic of homo and bi-sexuality which run through Kureishi's oeuvre

do not simply problematize dominant discourses of 'normal' and 'perverse' sexuality, but of national belonging too" (199). Indeed Karim's moving between male and female partners and English and Indian traits show resemblance.

And another memorable instance in Karim's journey to his self identification, reminds him of his difference, his hybridity, however in a diminishing tone. His girl friend Eleanor makes a point of his actual place:

> Eleanor said my accent was cute.
> 'What accent?' I managed to say.
> 'The way you talk. It's great.'
> She looked at me impatiently, as if I were playing some ridiculous game, until she saw I was serious.
> 'You've got a street voice, Karim. You are from south London- so that's how you speak. It's like cockney, only not so raw. It is not unusual. It's different to my voice, of course' (178).

Her arrogance is so obvious and this deeply hurts Karim. To sort this problem and close the gap between them, the only thing he can do is to mimic, to imitate. But , this mimicry would only serve as a camouflage to his 'immigrant suburban' self. He says "At that moment I resolved to lose my accent: whatever it was, it would go. I would speak *like her*" (emphasis added) (178).

All these add up and eventually make Karim almost regret that he had left his safe suburban life where he lived happily. After being forced to become what he is not- an authentic Indian Mowgli- he wants to go "... back to South London, where I belonged, out of which I had wrongly and arrogantly stepped" (148).

Although physical and explicit colonization of countries do not exist anymore- that is, as we know it, i.e. continents, countries are not invaded by military force, the reflections of colonization times are still obviously felt on both sides; the colonizer and the colonized. It is as if the experiences of one nation is inscribed in the whole nation's genes and passed down from generation to generation. Loomba explains this phenomenon, taking the situation of the African slaves as her starting point:

> The devaluation of African slaves still haunts their descendants in metropolitan societies, the inequities of colonial rule still structure wages and opportunities for migrants from once colonized countries or communities, the racial stereotypes . . . still circulate, and contemporary global imbalances are built upon those inequities that were consolidated during the colonial era. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past (129).

Right from the beginning of his story, we feel Karim's hybridity, how his sense of identity fluctuates. He calls himself English and mostly feels English, but sometimes accepts his Indianness although his father Haroon doesn't try to put anything Indian in neither of his sons. Early in the novel at one point he says "At one time I really wanted to be the first Indian centre forward to play for England…" (43). Probably the only thing Indian in their daily lives is the Indian 'kebabs and chapattis so greasy' (3) Haroon brought home on his way from work. He has an Indian name and surname but this probably does not disturb him nor does he feel unnatural. Aunt Jeeta and uncle Anwar and Jamila are probably the only Indian people around him. Other than these, like everyone around him he goes to a local school, cuts classes, listens to Pink Floyd and Rolling Stones , throws light bulbs to 'Indian man' after football matches (44) just like his white peers, and dreams of escaping the suburbs. When he actually gets out of the suburbs, his difference is more pronounced and he becomes more conscious of himself, that is, his genetic inheritance. While searching for himself, trying to identify

himself, Karim realizes that his hybridity is more than having a darker hue and a funny name. All these traits have other meanings, culturally, socially, economically. His in-betweenness probably makes his journey a more difficult one, like the colonized peoples' ongoing, universal struggle for freedom and search for their own, long lost 'authentic' identities.

3.1.1. THE PROBLEMS KARIM FACES AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

Karim is probably one of the best portrayals of a hybrid character among post-colonial writings. Although in the post-colonial context, hybridity is generally seen as a cultural matter, in this case he is a genetic hybrid as well as a cultural one. Despite the way he looks, he feels more English than Indian and he is aware of his mixed situation. It is not difficult for him to switch from one side of his identity to the next. He is English while cycling and enjoying his tea or acting like a hooligan after watching a football match with Uncle Ted and an Indian while savouring the delicious food cooked by his aunt Jeeta or imagining "to be the first Indian centre-forward to play for England. . . " (43). As a result of his skin colour and his Indian name, he is different from the other people around him. His mother's sister Jean and her husband Ted call Karim's father Haroon, 'Harry' to avoid questions asked by people outside the family and avoid discrimination. His little brother Amar "four years younger. . . called himself Allie to avoid racial trouble" (19). Allie probably learns this method from his aunt and uncle. The imitation here occurs by changing the Indian names, to sound more English.

Karim is a good and suitable example for the description of hybridity which is, in the post-colonial literary context usually described as strength, rather than something to be ashamed of or a defect (Ashcroft et al. 183). Thus, Karim is a typical "hybrid insider" as described by Ruvani Ranasinha, and he observes that all Kureishi's ". . . British-born generation occupies a different position on the insider/outsider spectrum. . ." and ". . . his British Asian and 'mixed race' protagonists are described as 'in-betweens'" (13). Karim is happy to be half Indian and half English as well as a bisexual, going between girls and boys. But, of course, it is not always easy to be an Indian in England. However, he does not completely belong to England. Only half of him can legitimately claim to be Indian.

Apart from Karim's self image, we know how he is seen by his family, especially his

mother's side. Unlike his father and brother, he keeps his given name. But still his Uncle Ted or Aunt Jean, for example never see him, or the other members of the Amir family for that matter, as Indians. After seeing a football match together and acting like hooligans, Ted shows Karim the ugly and old Victorian houses through the window of the train and says "That's where the niggers live. Them blacks" (43), not thinking one minute that Karim is also half black, the son of an immigrant. His mother also sees him as English, ignoring his Indian genes he had inherited from his father. During a conversation that takes place between Karim and his mother Margaret, at the foyer of the theatre where he acts and impersonates an Indian immigrant, his mother tries to convince him that he is an Englishman more than anything else.

> . . .
> 'But you are not Indian. You've never been to India. . . '
> . . .
> 'What about me?' Mum said. 'Who gave birth to you? You're an Englishman, I'm glad to say.' (232)

Other than these few instances, almost always he is seen as an Indian, sometimes mistakenly a Paki or for the racist eye simply a 'black'. When he is a part of the crowd and people around him do not know him personally, his Indianness seems to be working against him. In the earlier chapter we have seen how his girlfriend Helen's father treated him just because he was 'black' (40).

In a society where racial discrimination was probably at its heights in the seventies, a racially mixed person is usually at a disadvantageous position. Starting from his days in the suburbs, he realizes how people are attracted to the 'Oriental', 'Authentic'. When his father receives all that attention from such important people just because he is Indian, he also decides to use his identity to achieve things. The first night he follows

his father to Eva's for one of his appearances, where Haroon shares his wisdom and does yoga and chanting with people, Karim is dressed quite hippie like, but he also wears an Indian waistcoat. And when Eva, who is wearing a kaftan and "pumping out a plume of Oriental aroma", meets him at the door and says "Karim Amir, You are so exotic, so original! It is such a contribution" (9), Karim is once more justified in believing that it is good to be 'authentic'. But Karim is not 'authentic' or 'original', he simply mimics to be so. He is simply 'repeating' the oriental stereotype rather than 're-presenting' it (Bhabha 88). Charlie is another person fascinated by Karim's father's meditation, chanting and his wisdom, and when he asks Karim if he does those things too, Karim lies and says 'yes' to impress Charlie (14). So, we see him deliberately using his Indian side to attract people, draw attention and achieve things.

During his days in the suburbs, he uses his Indianness very naively to achieve things like attaining Charlie's love. But when he is in London, things change dramatically. Away from his family, who always saw him as an Englishman and denied his Indianness, he is seen as an Indian and in a way denied his Englishness. However, he is not Indian enough to begin with and strangely, he has to mimic an Indian.

As discussed in the previous chapter, he was included in Shadwell's cast for *The Jungle Book* because of his "authenticity and not for experience" (147). Thus, his 'authenticity' opens new doors for him. Shadwell makes it clear that there is no way he would be there if it weren't for his skin colour and his (non-existent) Indian accent. He has to work on his Indian accent, mimic/imitate the way an Indian immigrant would speak and wipe out the suburban accent. He finds it difficult and insulting in a way and says that "it is a political matter" (147) for him. At this point, we see that it is a political matter for Shadwell as well. As Moore-Gilbert notes "It is Shadwell, not Kipling, who is responsible for Karim's demeaning mock-Indian accent and the director's choice that Karim go on stage looking 'like a Black and White Minstrel'" (125). In the end he has

to give up and do the accent and wear the muck which makes his father and Jamila angry.

This is not the only time his seeming 'authenticity' draws attention. A very important director, Matthew Pyke watches him as Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* and offers him a job at his own company. Now that he has experience, one might think he gets this offer for his talent or experience as an actor. The first person to point out that it is not so is Boyd, another actor from Shadwell's company. Boyd unravels the situation and says "If I weren't white and middle class, I'd have been in Pyke's show now. Obviously mere talent gets you nowhere these days. Only the disadvantaged will succeed in the seventies' England" (165). Here Boyd sees Karim as the marginalized, outcast immigrant at a disadvantageous position; he is the Other and actually does not deserve what he is offered. It is exactly what is happening, Karim is simply seen as an Indian immigrant from India who knows the streets of Calcutta, whose favourite dish is a kebab made by his Indian aunt back in India. His Englishness disappears. He becomes the "oriental stereotype" and like any other immigrant "confronted with its difference, its Other" (Bhabha 46).

When at Pyke's theatre, everyone in the cast is asked to choose a character among people they know and present it to Pyke and to the others in the cast, Karim opts for Charlie. However Pyke discourages him immediately saying, "We need someone from your own background. . . . Someone Black" (170). His background instantly becomes that of an Indian, with no credit for his Englishness. Just like Shadwell before him, Pyke also sees the Indian in Karim and wants to advertise that, knowing authenticity pays, not his acting. Hence, Karim has his second role for being an Indian as he is seen as "The racial 'Other'" and becomes "one more niche object of consumption by the liberal centre" (Moore-Gilbert 138).

Although Karim is "notoriously unconcerned about his ethnic background" as argued by Jörg Helbig (quoted in Moore-Gilbert 201), his career seems to develop around his being black and coming from a marginalized group of people. The part he is offered in a soap opera TV series, is acting the "rebellious student son of an Indian shopkeeper" (259). Once again he gets the part for his Indianness. In all these instances, he is caged in his skin colour and not allowed to come out as himself, a hybrid. As Chambers discusses "Subordinate subjects have invariably been ordained to the stereotyped immobilism of an essential 'authenticity', in which they are expected to play out roles, designated for them by others . . . forever" (38). Karim's designated role is to be the 'authentic Indian' as inscribed in the minds of the Westerners. He is continuously asked to mimic an authentic Indian, as if reminding him of his true place within the society. Ranasinha observes that "Karim's ethnic identity is also partly constructed for him. . . . [to] mirror the way society attempts to define racialized minorities in terms of reductive identities" (70).

In all these instances mentioned above, Karim is requested to switch from being one thing to the next. Within the colonial and post-colonial culture, natives are almost always encouraged to be like the authority, to mimic it, which is usually the West. Here, Karim is inspired to mimic his so far devalued part. Genetically or culturally, hybridization is always seen as bringing two different parts together to make something new. But as Young illustrates it in *Colonial Desire*:

> Hybridization can also consist of forcing of a single entity into two or more parts, a severing of a single object into two, turning sameness into difference. . . . Hybridity thus makes sameness into difference, but in a way it makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply the different. (24-25)

Thus, Karim is simply suffering a conflictual problem, an ambivalence, a "bizarre binate operation" (Young 25) which arises from his hybridity. Although this bizarre situation is granting him an advance in his acting career, he is actually being torn in two in an agonizing way.

He finds himself a place in the great London of his dreams not for being Karim Amir "the odd mixture of continents and blood" (3) half English and half Indian, a hybrid, something in between, but for being an Indian man with a dark skin and a genetic predisposition to mimic Indian accent. No one yet sees him as a whole: he is either an Englishman, his genetic inheritance disregarded or an Indian, to fulfill the colonialist image of the immigrant.

3.1.2. THE END OF KARIM'S JOURNEY: HYBRIDITY

Some critics have considered *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a *Bildungsroman*, some as a picaresque and some as a formation novel "which follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, in a troubled quest for identity" (Thomas 86). Moore-Gilbert located the novel in "'the condition of England' genre" (110) while mentioning other genres, i.e. "Great Immigrant Novel" (108). Whatever genre Kureishi might have had in mind while writing Karim's story, *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a novel about a 17 year old boy's struggle to establish his unique identity in the world of the white man. We read Karim Amir's story starting from his teenage years in the suburbs of London, then we cross the Atlantic with him to the U.S and follow him back to London when he is in his early twenties. All the events that he experience make him what he is, shape his identity, whether he is aware of this or not. His unease, his desire to go out and do things is "because things were so gloomy, so slow and heavy" (3) where he lived all his life, as he puts it. But this "funny kind of Englishman" (3) is looking for himself. Thus he sets sail.

Karim spends all his teenage years in the suburbs of London, living mostly an English way of life. His father Haroon has not much to do with his roots, other than his Indian dinners which he brings home on the way from work (3). Even Haroon's name is changed to 'Harry' for the convenience of the people around them. Karim's little brother Amar is Allie, who does his best to erase anything Indian in him, starting with his name. Thus the lack of what should be a part of him; his Indian side is probably causing the restlessness in him. He is looking for his other part to be a whole. He is searching for his true identity. Bhabha says in 'Interrogating Identity' "For identification, identity is never a priori, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality" (51). Though Karim sees himself an Englishman, he is still aware that there is another piece of him that he has to know better. There must be more than eating chapattis, looking darker than the regular

Englishman and having an oriental name to be an Indian. He probably feels this the strongest at Anwar's funeral:

> 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. Partly I blamed dad for this. . . . So, if I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to invent it. (213)

The realization of this 'lack' and acknowledging it to himself is very important for Karim's identity journey.

Loomba claims that "Colonial identities- on both sides of the divide-[meaning both the colonized and the colonizer] are unstable, agonized and in constant flux" (178). The unstablility and constant fluxation are certainly true for Karim. However he feels no obvious agony while moving from one side of him to the next, and also moving from one place to the other in physical sense. On the contrary, he is content with the situation:

> I was not too unhappy criss-crossing South London and the suburbs by bus, no one knowing where I was. Whenever someone- mum, dad, Ted- tried to locate me, I was always somewhere else, occasionally going to a lecture and then heading out to see Changez and Jamila. (94)

His agony is buried within, making him feel uneasy but what we see at the surface is that, his go betweens are without feeling any discomfort. Yet, it is true that his life is not fixed but fluid, just like his personality, his hybrid identity.

Towards the end of his story, thus his journey, while staying with Charlie in the U.S., Karim sees and makes us see what Charlie is made of. It is a point worth noting here because when Karim realizes what Charlie is all about, he makes a decision about the route he wants to follow. Thomas explains this awakening as follows; "Once Karim stops hating himself, he falls out of love [with Charlie] fast and completely" (79). After he breaks up with Pyke's company in New York, he decides to stay with Charlie for a while, until he makes a decision about his life. Charlie tries to convince him to stay in New York. Karim cannot make up his mind. He is in between staying with Charlie and going back to England. Eventually after witnessing Charlie's 'evening of sadomasochist sexual experience', Karim decides to leave for England. He sees that Charlie is all about degeneration. He realizes he had exaggerated Charlie in his head and finally finds the courage to walk away from him, even though Charlie offers him a job, a fat salary, travelling around the world and mixing "business with pleasure" (256). This awakening is similar to Haroon's shock when he comes to England and sees that the English are nothing like he has been told. Thus, finally the invader's mask falls off and the colonized finds himself brave enough to take off his own mask to reveal his true self; to meet his true self. The invaded, colonized self finds the true liberty when he sees the colonizer's true colours and not the truth he wanted the colonized to see.

When Karim goes back to London, he has "an important audition" (256) to take. His role will be the rebellious son of an Indian immigrant in the suburbs in a drama series "which would tangle the latest contemporary issues: they meant abortions and racist attacks, the stuff that people lived through but that never got on TV. . . . Millions watched those things" (259). So far, in his acting career Karim had to mimic the Indian he was not, basically to entertain. Both of the roles he acted so far actually make the audience laugh. Other than his dark skin, dark hair and his Indian name, he is an ordinary teenager from the suburbs. The directors he works with, both Shadwell and Pyke want to turn this authenticity into cash, reinforce the already existing racial

stereotypes in people's minds. That is why they urge Karim to be more 'authentic'. Different from his other roles as Indians, this new role will enable Karim to picture what really exists, not what the white men want to see and probably erase the fetishes the history has created in their 'invader' culture. With this role, he does not need to mimic but simply portray an immigrant as it is, neither as a victim, nor as a fetish object.

Throughout the novel Karim keeps commuting between the city and the suburbs. But when he comes back from the U.S. he has made up his mind about his place, his identity. At Anwar's funeral when he realizes that some part of him is missing, he is one step closer to finding his other part and as he embraces his Indianness and comes to terms with it, he becomes himself, a hybrid; he is neither the Englishman his mother and his aunt encourage him to be or the English people force him to be, nor the Indian man as Changez and Jamila want him to be. Schoene explains the problematic of Karim's hybrid identity as 'a radically deconstructive presence in a world obsessed with clear cut definitions of cultural or ethnic identity' (quoted in Moore-Gilbert 198). Yu-Cheng Lee again, agrees with this saying that Karim's hybridity gives him a chance to go beyond 'forces that endeavour to confine him within the policed borders of definition of his ethnic and cultural belonging [which are] carefully mapped out for him'(quoted in Moore-Gilbert 198). Although Moore-Gilbert considers the novel "open ended" (144) and Buchannan sees Karim's situation at the end of the novel "no clearer" (54), among all these 'borders' and 'definitions' provided for him by the society in general and his friends and family, Karim manages to find his own 'Third Space" somewhere in between the identities he is being imposed to assume and embraces his hybridity.

OTHER HYBRID CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

3.1.3. HAROON AMIR AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

Haroon Amir, the Buddha of suburbia himself and the namesake of the novel, is Karim's father. He is a middle aged, first generation Indian immigrant coming from a rich Bombay family. Haroon is the son of a doctor, one of the twelve children in the Amir household, and he is "sent to England by his family to be educated" (24).

Although the narrator of the novel, Karim does not talk much about his father's life in his country of origin, it is not very difficult to imagine Haroon's experiences in the colonial India. From the few things he relates to the reader we can conclude that Haroon's first encounter with the English was not in England but in India, during the colonial era. Haroon, like any other prosperous Indian in the colonial India, is probably educated in English literature better than any English person would be. And when Haroon arrives in England as a student, he frequents the pubs and there tries to discuss Lord Byron with the English, wrongly assuming that all the English would certainly have read him and be educated enough to discuss his work (24). As Boehmer explains "By the early twentieth century, students across the empire were being instructed as to the world- excellence of English literature and Western systems of rationality, and the deficiencies of their own" (170). So, Haroon thinks, if an ordinary Indian from a colony reads and understands Byron, so would Byron's fellow countrymen in England.

The literary ignorance of the ordinary English is only one of the things Haroon is shocked about. It does not take him long to see that the British or the British way of life that they were told and required to mimic (even in India), had nothing to do with the real life in Britain and the "deficiencies" they were attributed as Indians applied to the British as well. In the following paragraph, Karim gives us a summary of Haroon's disappointment and shock when he encounters life in Britain:

> London, the old Kent Road, was a freezing shock to both of them [Haroon and Anwar]. It was wet and foggy; people called you 'sunny Jim'; there was never enough to eat, and dad never took to dripping on toast. 'Nose drippings more like,' he'd say, pushing away the staple diet of the working class. 'I thought it would be roast beef and Yorkshire pudding all the way.' . . . Dad was amazed and heartened by the sight of the British in England, though. He'd never seen the English in poverty, as roadsweepers, dustmen, shopkeepers and barmen. He'd never seen an Englishman stuffing bread into his mouth with his fingers, and no one had told him the English didn't wash regularly because the water was so cold- if they had water at all. (24)

When Haroon sees how the ordinary British live; sweeping streets and eating a poor diet with their fingers, he is "amazed and heartened". It is almost possible to see him smile at the way the English live. The mimicry he was imposed back in India, actually turns out to be a mockery, Bhabha explains in his theory of mimicry (86), as the authority "repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce" (85).

After an "aristocratic" (24) life in India, Haroon ends up in the suburbs, without a university diploma, married to a working class Englishwoman, with two sons and working as a civil servant for 3 £ a week, commuting on the train like any other lower middle class English person (26). No matter how English he tries to be, or how English he leads his life, and despite the briefcase and umbrella he carries to work (29), he is not English enough to receive a promotion at work. Buchannan sees this situation as an example of "England's failure to change its very narrow definitions of national identity" not as Haroon's failure to assimilate (66). Haroon hopelessly admits this situation to his childhood friend Anwar: "The whites will never promote us . . . Not an Indian while there is a white man on the earth" (27). While trying to fit in and mimicking those establishing the rules, Haroon becomes a hybrid character, a small Indian man wearing

a tie and polished shoes**.** Karim gives us a detailed account of Haroon's meticulous preparations for the working week ahead:

> Dad polished his shoes, about ten pairs, with patience and care, every Sunday morning. Then he brushed his suits, chose his shirts for the week- one day pink, the next blue, the next lilac and so on- selected his cufflinks, and arranged his ties, of which there were at least a hundred. (47)

This is quite impressive for a man who had never cleaned a shoe in his life back in India. It is a good example to show us what an effort he makes to blend in with the West. Yet, none of these seem to work to bring him a promotion and he is still seen simply as an immigrant, with a "camel parked outside" (12).

Haroon's private life has very hybrid qualities as well. Although he is married to an Englishwoman, Margaret, leading a very typical lower middle class English life in the suburbs and working as a civil servant for the 'empire', as Karim tells us, this little Indian man has strict rules at home:

> Dad had firm ideas about the division of labour between men and women. Both my parents worked: Mum had got a job in a shoe shop in the High Street to finance Allie, who had decided to become a ballet dancer and had to go to an expensive private school. But mum did all the housework and the cooking. At lunchtime she shopped and every evening she prepared the meal. After this she watched television until ten-thirty. (19-20)

Haroon accepts Englishness where it suits him but where things obligate him to do more than what he is used to or prepared to do, he sets his boundaries and reverts back to being an Indian. We know that during his days in India Haroon "never cooked. . . never

washed up, never cleaned his own shoes or made a bed. Servants did that" (23). He stays loyal to Indian cuisine as well. Though Margaret cooks every day after work, probably for her two sons and herself, Haroon brings his own Indian dinner "a packet of kebabs and chapattis so greasy their paper wrapper had disintegrated" (3).

Stuck in this unforeseen life forever Haroon Amir looks away from home to enhance his ordinary life and meets Eva "at a 'writing for pleasure' class in an upstairs room at the King's Head in Bromley High Street. . ." (7). So, he is not a typical Indian presumed by the Western mind, someone who comes to England for money. He is more intellectual, trying to develop himself. He is interested in Eastern philosophy (26) and wishes to share his ideas with likeminded people. Or it might be simply another attempt to mimic the English and find his proper position in the society.

Eva convinces Haroon to do yoga and share his knowledge with her circle of friends. It is true that Haroon is interested in Eastern philosophy, yoga, etc. but Eva is aware of the fact that his being an Indian would make him more reliable and more plausible while sharing his self-taught wisdom. After all, do not Indians do yoga and have their centuries old Eastern wisdom, don't they chant and say wise things? But ironically, Haroon comes from a Muslim family and most probably he was taught the Muslim way of praying instead of the Buddhist way of chanting. However, the Westerners are used to stereotype identities, readily fethishize and accept Haroon's self-created Buddhism as 'authentic'. Schoene contends that "Haroon's Indianness is as inauthentic as Charlie's working-class stereotype. Haroon starts off as the mimic Englishman and, when this fails, he becomes a mimic Indian" (quoted in Buchannan 66). Another ironical point here is that, he is into Chinese philosophy reading Lieh Tzu, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu (26). He is a Muslim Indian practicing Chinese Buddhism. This is a very hybrid quality of Haroon as well.

When going to Eva's for the first of his appearances, Haroon wears "a black polo-necked sweater, a black imitation leather jacket and grey Marks and Spencer cords" (6). Eva lives in a better area of the town, and Haroon anticipates that people of some importance will be there to watch and judge him, not only regarding his performance they came to watch but also other things; from his accent to the way he is dressed. Thus, he chooses casual, neutral and inevitably Western clothes. But later on, we see Haroon wearing more Oriental clothes, like a "long silk shirt embroidered around the neck with dragons. . . . baggy trousers and sandals" (29). This happens as a result of gaining confidence in himself and the encouragement of Eva in an attempt to make him look more 'authentic'. Ball sees this ethnicity occurring at "the level not of identity but of artifice and image" thus making Haroon a "faux Indian" (quoted in Buchannan 66).
Eventually Haroon, with the help of Eva, manages to create a circle of believers and followers among his "white admirers", with his wisdom and "authenticity" but as Moore-Gilbert reflects, these are actually the only people to follow him. People who have known him for a long time, i.e. ". . . Karim and Jamila both see Haroon as a fake and his teaching as a stratagem for the possession of Eva, domination of Uncle Ted and escape from work and family responsibilities" (123). While Haroon's fake authenticity captivates some, he cannot manage to take hold of everybody around him, especially people who know him before he was the Buddha.

No matter how good he speaks English or how well he is dressed, that is; how good he mimics the colonizer, Haroon is not good enough and he cannot escape the sharp criticism of his spectators. The white people around him still see only the immigrant. While talking to a woman about philosophy at the meeting at Eva's house, Karim hears two men talk about his father:

> 'Why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?'

'He is going to give us a demonstration of the mystic arts!'

'And has he got his camel parked outside?'

'No, he came on a magic carpet.'

'Cyril Lord[1] or Debenhams[2]?' (12)

Haroon spends years to be like the English, to impress them. While a student, spending most of his time and money drinking, he wears a "silk bow tie and a green waistcoat" (26) to the pub. Probably, almost all the English at the pub are dressed casually and they look at him as if he were mad. But he wears those probably because, this is what he is told that the English wore to the pubs. Haroon also carries a tiny dictionary in his pocket and makes an effort to learn an English word every day. He explains this to Karim saying; "You never know when you might need a heavyweight word to impress an Englishman" (28). He also spends years to sound like the English, to erase his Indian accent, until one day he realizes that his Indian accent would be more of use while preaching the prominent suburbanites the Eastern wisdom and he starts "exaggerating his Indian accent" (21). Haroon basically makes use of "the middle class taste for India and exoticism" that marks the seventies England (Ranasinha 63), with Eva's encouragement.

When Karim catches his father making love to Eva and screaming "Oh God, oh my God, oh my God" he thinks of these as "the wailing of Christian curses from the mouth of a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" (16). This shows how mixed up Haroon is, or seems. Haroon's religious identity is as mixed up as his personality. His hybridity is obvious here as well. Thus we see a man with a Muslim upbringing, married to a Christian woman from the suburbs and cursing like a Christian while making love to his lover, after yoga and talks on Buddhism.

[1] A famous British carpet manufacturer in the 1960s.

[2] British retailer operating under a department store format in the U.K.

When he meets Eva, the woman who helps him to escape the suburban trap, Haroon begins his transformation. Since his arrival in Britain, and probably even before that, he continuously tries to mimic the white people around him. Fanon says: "The black person attempts to cope by adopting white masks that will somehow make the fact of his blackness vanish. This is a precarious process" (quoted in Loomba 145). On the one hand he takes care of the way he is dressed, tries to improve his English and his accent, commutes to work just like the other English and hopes for a promotion and on the other, he still refuses to participate in any household chores and although his wife Margaret cooks every night he continues to eat his Indian kebabs. Although he sounds sure when he says "I have lived in the West for most of my life and I will die here, yet I remain to all intent and purposes an Indian man. I will never be anything but an Indian" (263), to some journalists who come to have an interview with Eva, he can neither be completely English nor completely Indian. The life he leads, the situations he encounters make him what he is. Eventually neither his efforts to become a proper Englishman nor his reversal to his Indian self pay off and all in all, Haroon Amir becomes a man in between things, a hybrid identity.

3.1.4. JAMILA AND CHANGEZ AS HYBRID CHARACTERS

Jamila is one of the main characters in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. She is however the most important female character as she has so much to say to the reader about the situation of the second generation female immigrants in England in the seventies. Jamila is the same age as Karim, and they are childhood friends. She is the only child and daughter of Anwar, Haroon's childhood friend from Bombay, and Jeeta, a princess from India. Jamila comes from a typical immigrant Indian family and with the way she looks she is just a typical Indian girl.

Karim gives us a physical description of her:

> . . . she was small and thin with large brown eyes, a tiny nose and little wire glasses. Her hair was dark and long again. . . . She was forceful and enthusiastic, Jamila. She always seemed to be leaning forward, arguing, persuading. She had a dark moustache, too, which for a long time was more impressive than my own. (53)

So, physically she is very Indian. Just like Karim, she is mistaken for a 'Paki' (53) but unlike Karim she does not put up with insults to her heritage. On one occasion she attacks a cyclist abusing her and Karim for their race in the middle of the street (53). Ranasinha describes her as "a committed feminist and anti-racist" (61). This Indian girl with a Muslim family background is very different from the other second generation immigrants, with the liberties she has. Karim and Jamila are not only childhood friends but they are also lovers. They casually make love wherever suitable, even "in public toilets" (52) but only when Jamila initiates it. In sexual matters she is probably as liberated as a white English girl, i.e. Helen or Eleanor, if not more.

She is different from her peers, in general. This is due to the outstanding education she receives in the hands of a missionary, in the middle of London. While her parents are busy making their fortune at the Paradise Stores "a dusty place with a high, ornate and flaking ceiling" (50), a grocery store under their house, a certain Miss Cutmore, a librarian at the library next door to the shop and once a missionary in Africa, takes care of Jamila after school; offers her tea and encourages her to read French writers like Baudelaire, Colette and Radiguet, listen to classical music and Billie Holliday (52). Although the word 'mission' might recall going to foreign countries to spread a certain religion and is most commonly used for Christian missions, according to Cambridge Dictionaries Online it is also "any work that someone believes it is their duty to do". Moore-Gilbert sees Miss Cutmore as a representative of "the mission of social inclusiveness" (119). With her encouragement and help, Jamila becomes a distinct person. One day Miss Cutmore leaves South London and this makes Jamila feel like an orphan. She now thinks Miss Cutmore "really wanted to eradicate everything that was foreign in her" (53), just like a missionary would do, by teaching her how to be more European. Here we see that Jamila is aware of her strange position, that she is different in her environment, she is foreign. She has all these European ideas in her head and Ravel echoing in her ears and she is still seen as a 'Paki', in the eyes of the white people.

The European education she receives with the help of Miss Cutmore, takes her further than her peers, but without her guide she feels lost. In her guide's absence she remembers who she is, an Indian, and feels anger towards Miss Cutmore saying she has colonized her (53). Here we see a direct reference to the colonization of indigenous people, what the 'well meaning' missionaries did to them and how they eventually created hybrid identities. The aim of a missionary is to completely assimilate. Missionaries, no matter what they preached or whatever religion, thought their ways were the best and tried to erase and diminish what their target people believed in. So, in

certain cases the resulting hybridity makes the lives of the indigenous people even more difficult, as the set of values they have to live with are different from what they are taught by the missionaries. However, this is not the case for Jamila. Later in the novel we see how she sheds this feeling of 'being colonized' and how her hybridity becomes her strength. Töngür argues that Jamila differs from the other characters in the novel with her "struggle against patriarchal and social challenges" and she neither refuses British or Pakistani cultures nor aims to acculturate; finally reaching equilibrium between her own "cultural values and those of the British society" (101).

Her father Anwar one day realizes his daughter's strangeness and thinking that she is "meeting boys at the karate classes and long runs through the city" (57), decides that it is time for Jamila to get married. Until this, she has a very quiet life; she helps her parents at the shop, reads extensively, exercises every morning, makes love to Karim here and there (55), not once thinking of getting married. Anwar contacts his brother in India, asking him to find a suitable husband for his only daughter. The candidate is a thirty year old man asking for books and an overcoat for his dowry (57). Jamila refuses this and her father goes mad and starts a hunger strike until Jamila accepts to marry the man he had chosen for her. Jamila is helpless and asks Karim to try and help her. The two go to visit Anwar on his 'death bed' and Karim tries to persuade him to give up the strike:

> '. . . You'll cop it boss, if you don't eat your grub like everyone else.'
> 'I won't eat. I will die. If Gandhi could shove out the English from India by not eating, I can get my family to obey me by exactly the same.'
> 'What do you want her to do?'
> 'To marry the boy I have selected with my brother.'
> 'But it's old fashioned, Uncle, out of date.'. . . 'No one does that kind of thing now. They just marry the person they're into, if they bother to get married at all.'

. . .

‘That is not our way, boy. Our way is firm. She must do what I say or I will die. She will kill me.’(60)

Having read so much and with a head full of ideas ahead of her time, let alone the ideas of an ageing Muslim Indian immigrant for a father, Jamila suffers greatly. Nahem Yousaf argues that “ This imposition of male power compromises Jamila’s integrity” (quoted in Buchannan 43). She loves her parents but cannot get herself to marry an Indian man she had never seen in her life. At this point we also learn that her father Anwar hurts his wife Jeeta as well (58). Because of this domestic violence issue, Jamila thinks her father might hurt Jeeta, for Jamila’s insubordination. This is not a simple situation that can be explained by Anwar’s Muslim identity or his being an Indian. All of a sudden, Anwar sees his daughter, this girl that has turned into a stranger, as an image of “national values” and a guardian of his legacy (Boehmer 225). As Anwar realizes that his wife is capable of running the house and the store practically by herself, ignoring his advice and turning Paradise Stores from a derelict place into a ‘thriving business’ and that her ‘energy and determination’ is physically evident (Thomas 78) and that his only daughter is leading her own life under his roof, he goes hysterical and takes extreme measures to exercise his authority on the womenfolk of his territory. In the part of the novel with Anwar’s hysterical attitude, we find Jeeta and Jamila silently communicating. Yousaf further argues that “In Jamila and her mother we have two very strong women who are conscious of the roles assigned to them within a traditional working class family unit. . . they choose to uphold a patriarchal structure that they know to be crumbling” (quoted in Buchannan 43). Ania Loomba shows us the colonial connections of patriarchal pressure in the domestic life:

Colonialism intensified patriarchal relations in colonized lands, often because native men, increasingly disenfranchised and excluded from the public sphere,

> became more tyrannical at home. They seized upon the home and the women as emblems of their culture and nationality. The outside world could be Westernized but all was not lost if the domestic space retained its cultural purity. (168)

Although Anwar and Jamila's fight does not take place on the 'colonized lands', i.e. in India, we know that he lives according to the 'ways' of his ancestral land. He is physically in England and won't go back to India, no matter how much he misses his home country but as Haroon says at one point for himself and his friend Anwar, they "return to an imagined India" and hold on to the old ways as if they are actually there.
Finally, Jamila agrees to marry Changez to save her mother Jeeta from Anwar's revenge. Thomas explains Jamila's submission to her father's will as follows; "Jamila outwits her father's attempt at patriarchal control, with her 'rebellion against rebellion' and arranges the marriage to suit her" (78). This dark haired, dark skinned Indian girl who reads Baudelaire and listens to classical music has to marry an Indian Muslim she knows nothing about.

The marriage of Jamila and Changez, from the way things look to an outsider, conform to what is expected from a Muslim, Indian couple. Their marriage is arranged between families, Jamila pays a dowry to her husband (books and an overcoat), and the couple works at their parent's store. Next there will be grandchildren and the son in law will take over the running of the shop.

However, when we consider her hybrid identity, we easily see that Jamila's marriage will not be a typical one either. It could only be as hybrid as herself. Anwar rents a flat nearby for the newly-wed couple. They decorate it with basic second hand furniture (95). From the first day on Jamila refuses to sleep with Changez. They have separate rooms and she never cooks, she supports Changez with the money she makes working at Paradise Stores (98). She continues to read her books in her own room on her own

bed, under the envious gaze of her Indian husband who spends his whole time on his camp bed, reading and dreaming of their corporal reunion as a married couple (97). Thus Jamila's marriage is as fluid as herself, in between cultures and continents.

As a result of her intellectual capacity and the discrimination she has to put up with all her life, Jamila becomes politically active as well and moves into a commune somewhere in Peckham, following the death of her father (214). Alongside the fore mentioned French ones, Jamila, after Miss Cutmore leaves, starts reading writers from America and Africa, which cause her to be politically –not sexually- more active, and Gilroy argues that black British "culture does not develop along ethnically absolute lines but in complex, dynamic patterns of syncretism in which new definitions of what it means to be black emerge from raw materials provided by black populations elsewhere in the diaspora" (quoted in Ranasinha 68). Thus, as a result, at this commune Jamila is "immersed in all aspects of life and political struggles in contemporary Britain" (Ranasinha 69). The commune life becomes more than growing vegetables in the garden. Moore-Gilbert calls it a "rainbow coalition" bringing people with different interests together (133). They participate in social and political activities, join marches against racism (225).

However, we know that Jamila does not start these activities at the commune; as Susie Thomas notes she is "a woman who seeks political solutions" (78) and she is politically active and conscious. She takes notice of the racist events taking place in her neighborhood (56), wants to take action and helps at a Black Women's Centre (182). Where Bhabha explains Fanon's views about the Algerian revolution and the hybridity of Algerian people, he says: "the liberatory 'people' who initiate the productive instability of revolutionary cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity" (38). Here we see Jamila as a representative of the black community, trying to instill a change through political activities, thus illuminating once more the hybridity of

her identity. The commune life becomes a larger place of manifestation of Jamila's 'Third Space' where she has to confirm neither to Indianness nor to Englishness. According to Thomas, she is a woman who "does not want to ditch her ethnic identity altogether" and is described as "'an Indian women' living 'a useful life in white England'" (72). Her ethnicity has a different meaning altogether. About this issue Moore-Gilbert thinks that ". . . for Jamila, ethnicity is not an absolute and indivisible attribute to be defended at all costs, but constitutes the basis of mobilisation towards determinate ends, the achievement of which will , by inference, depoliticise ethnicity altogether" (133).

At this commune, Jamila starts sleeping with a white man, Simon and she gets pregnant by him. This baby is a communal baby, as Changez puts it, "Belonging to the entire family of friends" (231). Later when Simon goes away to America for a long visit, a woman called Joanna moves in and as Changez tells Karim, Jamila and Joanna get very intimate during Simon's absence (273). So, just like Karim, Jamila's love and sexuality are also in between, she is neither this nor that. She is sometimes a heterosexual, sometimes a lesbian. She feels comfortable with both. Changez says: "Jammie loves two people. It's simple to grasp. She loves Simon, but he's not here. She loves Joanna, and Joanna is here" (273).

Almost at the same time the narrator introduces us to Jamila, we meet Changez as well. Changez, the man to marry Jamila, comes all the way from India. He is chosen for Jamila, by her uncle in India. Changez comes from a wealthy family in Bombay where "there are servants, chauffeurs" (215). For a dowry Changez asks for "a warm winter overcoat from Moss Bros., a colour television and an edition of the complete works of Conan Doyle" (57). So, Changez is not an illiterate Indian villager. He is probably educated in English schools and heard many stories about England. He knows, either from books or from people who have been to London that London is very cold, hence

the demand for an overcoat. Obviously Changez is well read and considers books to be very valuable, so he demands books as part of his dowry. He is especially fond of detective stories. Changez also knows about the book shops in Charing Cross and wants Karim to take him there. Thus, we can see that his first experience with the English culture has taken place in India, long before he set foot in England. From Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's illustration of the occurrence of hybridization in post colonial societies, we can have a better grasp of Changez's stance:

> Hybridity occurs in the post-colonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler-invaders disposes indigenous peoples and force them to 'assimilate' to new social patterns. It may also occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan societies and from other imperial areas of influence (e.g. indentured labourers from India and China) continue to produce complex cultural palimpsest with the post- colonized world. (183)

In the case of Changez, his hybridity starts back in India-just like Haroon- and he becomes more mixed and hybrid throughout his life in England.

Changez is chosen as the 'authentic' Muslim husband for Jamila. But he is not Anwar's 'authentic' dream groom; young and strong enough to take care of Paradise Stores and give Anwar many grandchildren. With his love for detective stories, laziness and the crippled arm, which no one knew of before his arrival, Changez cripples Anwar's dreams as well.

To begin with, Changez is a very naïve character, he only thinks of sleeping with his own wife, unlike the black man stereotyped by the West, who dreams of sleeping with

many white women. Unlike Haroon, who one day at a party, drunkenly admits to the Mayor that "We little Indians love plump white women with fleshy thighs" (207), Changez has no such fantasies about Western, white women. Changez does not comply with the typical Oriental image, full of "sexual promiscuity" (Loomba 107) drawn by the West. When he meets Jamila, he instantly falls in love with her and although he makes love to a prostitute from time to time, he remains in love with her. Later on when Changez finds out about Haroon's betrayal to his wife and his wife Jamila continues to refuse his conjugal rights, he thinks that whole England has become "sexually insane". He suggests that both Haroon and Karim spend some time in a remote village in India (97). He also hopes that one day Jamila will sleep with him and they will be husband and wife. What turns this otherwise innocent Muslim man into a sex hungry man, all of a sudden, is the books of Harold Robins brought to him by Karim. He starts looking for sexual opportunities and ends up sleeping with an Asian prostitute, Shinko, trying new positions with her each time they meet (106). He finds this arrangement normal, and does not think he is betraying his wife. After all he is a man and he needs things. He says to Karim, "Karim, all my entire problems are solved! I can love my wife in the usual way and I can love Shinko in the unusual way!" (101). Hence we see here that Changez is aware of the 'unusualness' of the situation. Yet he feels the necessity of justifying himself to Karim, who is the only person in the know of Changez's adultery. Here, he is actually mimicking the life in Robins' books he is reading. The characters in the Harold Robins novels that Changez reads and the people around him, i.e. Haroon, and probably the rest of England get away with such things. And this becomes an excuse for Changez to fulfill his sexual needs and 'solve his problems' without feeling any remorse and thinking he is committing a sin.

His betrayal goes unmentioned. He does not feel guilty about it. But when he sees Karim and Jamila on her bed sleeping naked next to each other, he accuses Jamila of "adultery, incest, betrayal, whoredom, deceit, lesbianism, husband-hatred, frigidity, lying and callousness as well as the usual things" (134). All these things are too much,

too confusing for a traditional Muslim at heart (134).In Changez's Muslim heart, betrayal is not acceptable although he is betraying his wife. Whoredom is despicable but he loves a whore "in the unusual way". Or lying is also a sin but he is lying to everyone while going out to meet Shinko. He is in between the teachings of the Koran and the newly discovered liberties and pleasures of the West. Despite his Muslim heart, which makes him guilty for causing, though indirectly, Anwar's death, he drinks beer on Anwar's funeral day (214). He can neither erase these things and let himself indulge in these pleasures of the West, nor remain true to his upbringing and turn his back to this 'insanity'. As Changez's name suggests (the name ironically resonates 'changes'), he becomes "increasingly open to the new roles and identities which are trust upon him" (Moore-Gilbert 128). As a result of the mimicry or the hybridity of his situation, Changez finds himself in a very ambivalent situation. He is in between two cultures and he promptly becomes another hybrid created by the colonizer's norms.

Although most of Changez's confusion revolves around his "sexual life", as we have seen above, his national identity is another point he seems to be struggling about. Changez does not reject his roots. But he seems to be confused, or in between two cultures, between Englishness and Indianness. When, after her father's death, Jamila decides to leave the flat and her job at the Paradise Stores, to live in a commune, Changez has two options; he can stay at the flat and pay the rent, make his own living or go back to India, to his family in Bombay. He finds this solution "too Western" (215) and wants to stay with Jamila wherever she goes. So once again we see him somewhere in between, and confused about all these Western things. He is all for the West, likes the liberties, enjoys the plenty, urges his own people to assimilate but when things get rough, he moves back into his Indianness where things are more stable and secure and always on his side. Here as well his hybridity is obvious and it obviously confuses him to a great extend, accentuating his ambivalence.

Another instance in the novel where we see Changez going between places is when, after a long time Karim and Changez meet and Changez tells Karim about the things that have been happening with his in-laws. Changez blames Karim for deserting them and requests him not to leave his "own people behind"(136). Here, he feels a connectedness, a special link with Karim, Anwar, Jeeta and the rest of the people. There is a common history between them, not dating back to their arrival in England but even further, all the way to India. However, later we see Changez talking about his own people in England and here he has a different tone:

> 'Look at that low-class person' he'd say, in a loud voice, stopping and pointing out one of his fellow countrymen- perhaps a waiter hurrying to work or an old man ambling to the day centre, or especially a group of Sikhs going to visit their accountant. 'Yes, they have souls, but the reason there is this bad racialism is because they are so dirty, so rough looking, so bad mannered. And they are wearing such strange clothes for the Englishman, turbans and all. To be accepted, they must take up the English ways and forget their filthy villages! They must decide to be either here or there. Look how much here I am! And why doesn't that bugger over there look the Englishman in the eye! No wonder the Englishman will hit him!'. (210)

Ranasinha says that with Changez's attitude Kureishi "shows that upper-class Indians, like Changez, can feel little solidarity with poor immigrants from India. . ." (74). He urges his fellow countrymen to look like the English, embrace their ways and lose their authenticity, in other words to imitate the ways of the English by mimicry. He blames them for being both 'here and there', half Indian or Paki and half English, that is for being 'hybrids'. He sees himself completely 'Anglicized'. After watching Pyke's play where Karim impersonates a newly arrived Indian immigrant Tariq, a character actually based on Changez himself, he fails to recognize the characteristics of himself in Tariq.

This could be read as Changez's complete Anglicanization. This process of 'Anglicization' has obviously started much earlier than his arrival in the West, in India where he received a Western education which belittled his own culture and values and praised and glorified the Western values (Boehmer 170). However Changez is not aware as yet, that it is impossible to be 'English'. Unlike Jamila, Changez is not able to or capable of finding his own voice and creating his third space. Thus he remains to be only a 'mimic man' and the best he will be is a 'hybrid', just like all others that have arrived there before him.

CHAPTER IV

THE ABCDS OF LIFE IN THE U.S.A.

4.1. GOGOL GANGULI AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

While Hanif Kureishi uses the term 'in between' for his hybrid characters, Jhumpa Lahiri herself, once in an interview said that the children of immigrants who had strong ties to their country of origin "feel neither one thing nor the other" (quoted in Friedman). *The Namesake* explores the story of Gogol as a second generation Bengali born in the U.S. with hybrid characteristics, which will be explored in this section. Gogol Ganguli is an American Indian, born to a Bengali couple towards the end of 1960s. His father Ashoke Ganguli comes to U.S. to study at MIT and get his PhD in engineering. He goes back to India to get himself a wife and comes back married with his wife Ashima. About a year and a half after their marriage, Gogol is born.

Starting from his birth, Gogol's life is full of accidental events that change the course of his life, shape him and his identity. Although his private and family life is very Indian, he inevitably has to live an American life outside this secluded space, a fact that is the reason of his hybridity. However, Gogol "the child of immigrants, does not feel dislocated, because he is at home in America" (Friedman 114).

He is born in a typical American hospital where his mother lies in a room "alone, cut off by curtains from the three other women in the room" (3). Ashima feels lonely, because she has none of the members of her family with her. If she were in India, things would be different and her baby would be born at her parents' house surrounded by people taking care of her or things to be done, not in a place where people come "either to suffer or to die" (4). Thus right from the beginning, Gogol is not where he is supposed to be; at his grandparents' house instead of a hospital, and he is not born the way he is meant to be; surrounded by family members instead of nurses, doctors and strangers. These are very heart breaking and depressing facts for Ashima and "she can't help but pity" (25) Gogol, as he has arrived to this world in such deprived circumstances. But

not all is so bad about being born in America. Gogol has couple of Bengali family friends of his parents, for visitors and they all bring him presents one of which makes Ashoke say "Luck boy, . . . Only hours old and already the owner of books" (24). This is so different from the childhood both Ashima and Ashoke have lived.

Right before they are ready to leave the hospital, Ashima and Ashoke are asked to give a formal name to their child, to complete the paper work. Despite their great effort to explain the Bengali way, which requires the newborn to be named by an elder from the family and that a letter to tell them this name has not yet arrived, the hospital officials insist on a name to be given to the child immediately. Involuntarily, they name him after Ashoke's favourite Russian writer's last name, Gogol. However they intend to keep it as their son's pet name to be used by family members and give him his proper name when the long awaited letter, bearing the baby's name arrives from India. The letter is somewhere *in-between* U.S and India. Hereby, Gogol is named the American way, that is, immediately after his birth. More important than Gogol's being named the American way, is the significance of his name. He is a boy born to *Bengali* parents in *America*. However, the name he is given is neither American nor Bengali, but Russian. Actually, it is not even a name but a last name. So, the whole naming story is quite interesting and an important marker of his hybridity.

Once out of the hospital, baby Gogol and his mother Ashima start a very secluded life. Gogol sleeps listening to Bengali songs in a house filled with the smell of samosas and other Indian food (35). He grows up eating Indian food made with American ingredients because the necessary ingredients are not available in the U.S, thus creating 'hybrid' meals (38). Things are only "half true" (25) as Ashima complains and she feels the worst when they have to celebrate Gogol's annaprasan[3]. This ceremony is supposed to take place in the presence of close family members and the first solid food the baby is to

[3] A Hindu rite-of-passage ritual that marks and infant's first intake of food other than milk.

taste is rice, "the Bengali staff of life". This is supposed to be given to the baby by his uncle or grandfather but none of these people are present at Gogol's annaprasan. So, "They ask Dilip Nandi [a close family friend] to play the part of Ashima's brother, to hold the child and feed him rice" (38-39). The service plates are also melamine whereas they should be some sort of metal. Nothing is truly Indian or authentic. They are make-believe, only substitutes for what they are supposed to be. Gogol is in between two cultures right from the first days of his life.

As Gogol grows older, he gets to know American way of living and is introduced to another culture and language by his parents alongside his Indian education at home. When he turns four, he starts a nursery for three days a week where he finger-paints and learns the English Alphabet (50). When the family has enough money to purchase a house they move to the suburbs, to "67 Pemberton Road" where the neighbours are all Americans (51). Gogol's mother Ashima is pregnant with her second child and because she is not fit to go outdoors, Gogol spends a lot of time indoors with his mother. These days are spent going over photo albums in an effort to teach the now almost six- year old Gogol names of family members back in India and other important things for his cultural education. His mother

> teaches him to memorise a four-line children's poem by Tagore, and the names of the deities adorning the ten handed goddess Durga during pujo . . . and before nodding off she switches the television to Channel 2, and tells Gogol to watch *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company,* in order to keep up with the English he uses at nursery school. (54)

Thus, he learns the American way of living, gets to know their culture and becomes fluent in their language by attending the nursery or watching television, and the Bengali way through his mother's unceasing efforts. When Gogol is at the third grade, he is sent

to “Bengali language and culture lessons every other Saturday” where he is “taught to read and write in his ancestral alphabet . . . and read handouts written in English about the Bengali Renaissance, and the revolutionary exploits of Subhas Chandra Bose” (66). He goes between one culture to the other effortlessly, not yet questioning things. These lessons do not interest or disturb him per se, but he prefers to attend to drawing classes instead (66). Friedman asserts that the “children of immigrants do not always feel closely tied to their country of origin. . . They move fluidly between the private sphere of their Indian home life and the public sphere of their American experience” (115) thus experiencing their hybridity effortlessly.

Gogol Ganguli has to start his formal education and his name poses a problem for the second time. As this will be his first intercourse with the outside world and with others for the first time, officially, he has to confirm to the Bengali ways and have a second name to be used by strangers, outside his circle of family and close friend. His parents choose the name ‘Nikhil’ for Gogol, but he does not want it. He does not respond to this name, insists on keeping Gogol as his one and only name. This is the first time he makes a manifestation about who he is. He does not understand the Bengali tradition which requires him to use his pet name (in his case Gogol) at home and leave his formal name (Nikhil) outside the house. This is like taking the outdoor shoes off at the door upon arriving home, only to wear another pair of shoes or slippers exclusively for the indoor use. He chooses the Americans' way, who do not take their shoes off at home to wear slippers but stay in the same footwear all the time. The tradition of taking shoes outside the house is used as a metaphor later on in the novel when Gogol, for the first time comes to his parents’ house with his American girlfriend Maxine and both him and Maxine do not take their shoes off at the door. Gogol “walks in with his shoes on instead of changing into a pair of flip-flops that his parents keep in the hall closet” (146). Although this is a normal practice for Maxine and she thinks nothing of it, this is a conscious act of Gogol to show his parents his choice of identity.

He makes the biggest declaration about his identity, in the face of his family by changing his name. He comes to hate his name so much that when he turns 18, he decides to change it, officially. Shariff points out that "Adolescence is commonly known as a time of peer identification. Situational and cognitive factors during adolescence create a disconnect and shift in the identification with an ethnic name" (462). Thus, Gogol chooses the name his parents wanted to call him outside home when he first started his formal education, Nikhil, as his formal name. At the end of the day, this name sounds more American, it is easy to pronounce and can be anglicized as 'Nick". Shariff elaborates on Slavoj Žižek's explanation on the difference between the Imaginary and the Symbolic to show us the difference between how we see ourselves and how others observe us. "In Imaginary identification, we imitate the Other at the level of resemblance, therefore identifying ourselves with the image of the Other. This is precisely why South Asians identify more with an anglicized nickname" (462). This generalization on South Asians applies to Gogol as well.

Although his parents do not completely agree with his decision, his father says "In America anything is possible. Do as you wish" (100). Thus right before he starts college he becomes a new person. With this new name, he is more American, more self confident. After he has his new name, he feels that "it's easier to ignore his parents, to tune out their concerns and pleas" (105). His name given to him by his Bengali parents is a symbol of everything he despises. Thus by getting rid of his name, he hopes to erase everything Indian in him and become more Western "purposefully and studiously" (Kuortti 208). According to Žižek, who basis his ideas on Lacan "A decision to change our name, in effect, is our effort to resemble our I(O) or ego-ideal" (quoted in Shariff 461). Gogol's ideal is being someone with no traces to Indianness. This is the most important and conscious act of mimicry in Gogol's life. Although he is very impressed with the results of his innocent mimicry, he is yet to experience his ambivalence. Based on his research on second generation South Asians in Canada, Shariff notes that "Many

South Asians experience similar dissonant and conflicting feelings associated with their nicknames and the accompanying new identity that comes with trying to negotiate multiple identities that are highly dependent on situational factors" and that, they usually strive to identify themselves in connection of their family and the two unique cultures, starting in adolescence way into adulthood (462).

At school, where he learns numbers and the English alphabet, Gogol is also required to pledge allegiance to the American flag (60). But when he is at home he goes back to being a Bengali and especially the weekends are almost always the same, spent with his parents' close friends:

> . . . thirty- odd people in a three bedroom suburban house, the children watching television or playing board games in a basement, the parents eating and conversing in Bengali their children don't speak among themselves. . . . [children] eating watered-down curry off paper plates, sometimes pizza or Chinese ordered especially for the kids (63).

These gatherings are quite frequent in *The Namesake*, throughout the novel. The Bengali people gather for birthdays, for durga pujos[4] or weddings. The community is so large that they sometimes have to rent large halls in schools or churches (64). It becomes a necessity for the people living in the diaspora to get together. As Shamita Das Dasgupta notes "As Indians have moved to the United States, they have brought with them many of the cultural prescriptions . . . from their home country. These immigrants work hard to recreate a sense of Indian community in the United States, and often attempt to construct an Indian community based on their notions of what it means to be a good Indian" (quoted in Ladha 5). Friedman sees the immigrants' homes as "a

[4] A Hindu festival dedicated to deity Durga

place where India is created, albeit in a diluted form" (115). Homi Bhabha, in "Dissemination" explains the gatherings of immigrants from his own experience:

> I have lived that moment of scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering. Gathering of exiles and émigrés and refugees; gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; . . . gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in the ritual of revival; gathering the present. (139)

The Ganguli family is very keen on these gatherings as well, mostly initiating or organizing them for some of the reasons listed above by Bhabha. They are all in the U.S to gather degrees, speak in their mother tongue in these gatherings, etc. Especially Gogol's mother is very conscious of her roots and as well as trying very hard not to lose her connection with her past and her identity, she is also trying to bring up her children as good Bengalis. But it is very difficult to stay immune to the American life around them. Just like most of the Bengali people around them, they try to adapt to certain things, at least for their children's sake, if not as a result of their children's demands. The following excerpt shows us to what extent the Gangulis have attuned to their new home country:

> And yet to a casual observer the Gangulis, apart from the name on their mailbox, apart from the issues of *India Abroad* and *Sangbad Bichitra* that are delivered there, appear no different from their neighbours. Their garage, like every other, contains shovels and pruning shears and a sled. They purchase a barbecue for tandoori on the porch in summer. . . . They learn to roast turkey albeit rubbed with

> garlic and cumin and cayenne at Thanksgiving, to nail a wreath to their door in December, to wrap woolen scarves around snowmen, to colour boiled eggs violet and pink at Easter and hide them around the house. For the sake of Gogol and Sonia they celebrate, with progressively increasing fanfare, the birth of Christ, an event the children look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati. . . . where they are required to throw marigold petals to a cardboard effigy of a goddess and eat bland vegetarian food. It can't compare to Christmas, when they hang stockings on the fireplace mantel, and set out cookies and milk for Santa Claus, and receive heaps of presents, and stay home from school. (64-65)

It is worth noting how the Gangulis, and actually all the other Bengalis in America, consciously or unconsciously create hybrid things around them by employing mimicry. Salman Akthar notes that:

> Immigration from one country to other is a complex psychosocial process with lasting effects on an individual's identity. The dynamic shifts resulting from an admixture of 'culture shock' and mourning over the losses inherent in migration, gradually give way to psychostructural change and the emergence of a hybrid identity. (quoted in Shariff 459)

Although what Akhtar says goes directly to the immigrants themselves, it is certainly true for the second generation immigrants as well. The families are most probably making an effort to integrate to the host society for their kids' sake. At this point, it should be mentioned what Friedman has to say about the children of immigrants, especially in Lahiri's novels. Friedman expands Cox's claim that says, children are judgment-free thus "act as translator between American culture and Indian culture", she says that the children are "the conduits of change, importing American culture into their Indian homes and creating a kind of métissage that does not threaten their ethnic or

cultural identity, but that enriches their experience" (116). Thus, nothing turns out completely American or Indian.

Gogol also develops an American palate, especially after his formal schooling starts. Although Ashima cooks Indian food for them to be eaten at home, she agrees to cook an 'American dinner' once a week and he is allowed to buy items at the supermarket for his own consumption (65). Food is a very essential thing in the Ganguli household. Gogol's mother is continuously cooking, either for her family's consumption or for entertaining friends. Tamara Bhalla explains Ashima's avid cooking and food as follows: "Food provides a connection to the homeland of India and a way to both temper and underscore her displacement in the West" (119). Food also appears as a metaphor for Gogol's choice of identity, in a few different instances. We always see him prefer the American food, American way of eating, etc. For example, for his birthday he invites his friends from school and they eat pizza and an American style frosted cake, ice cream, etc. For the family birthday, when tens of people are invited Ashima cooks "lamb curry with lots of potatoes, luchis, thick channa dal with swollen brown raisins, pineapple chutney, sandeshes moulded out of saffron-tinted ricotta cheese" (72). When Gogol is at college, he has a girlfriend called Ruth, and she invites him to stay at her father's farm house. Gogol imagines himself "waking up to eggs frying in a skillet" and cannot even imagine Ruth in Pemberton Road "eating his mother's food" (115). Later on, he brings his girlfriend Maxine Ratliff, for the first time to his parents' home, and when he sees the lunch prepared for his mother, "too rich for the weather" he feels embarrassed (148). The following piece shows how he despises his mother's Indian style entertaining:

> Along with the samosas, there are breaded chicken cutlets, chickpeas with tamarind sauce, lamb biryani, chutney made with tomatoes from the garden. It is a meal he knows it has taken his mother over a day to prepare, and yet the amount

> of effort embarrasses him. The water glasses are already filled, plates and forks and paper napkins set on the dining room table they use only for special occasions, with uncomfortable high-backed chairs and seats upholstered in gold velvet. (148)

This is completely different from the dinner Maxine has invited him to, from the contents of the menu to the environment in general:

> Maxine lights a pair of candles. Gerald [Maxine's father] tops of the wine. Lydia [Maxine's mother] serves the food on broad white plates: a thin piece of steak rolled into a bundle and tied with string, sitting in a pool of dark sauce, the green beans boiled so that they are still crisp, a bowl of small, round, roasted red potatoes is passed around and afterward a salad. (133)

Gogol talks of this dinner environment very fondly and obviously he prefers it to his mother's cooking. His refusal to accept this kind of eating shows his unwillingness to be like his parents. While his parents eat nothing but Indian food, Maxine and her family eat international dishes, i.e. bouillabaisse[5] or osso bucco[6]. He likes the food and the way Maxine and her family live their lives, simple, carefree yet efficient and tasty. With food as metaphor, we see Gogol more inclined to American cuisine, thus the American way of living.

ABCD is a term coined to Indian (South Asian) diaspora in the Unites States, meaning "American Born Confused Deshi". Here Deshi means Indian and desh India, in other words home "But Gogol never thinks of India as desh. He thinks of it as Americans do, as India" (118). Gogol does not consider himself an Indian. He sees himself American, for he is born in America, educated in America, pledging allegiance to the American flag and he holds an American passport. While he is a student at university, a cousin of him from India comes to the U.S as a presenter in a panel, where they talk about Indian

[5] A classic French shellfish and fish stew.
[6] An Italian dish made with veal shanks, carrots, onions, celery, garlic, etc.

novels written in English and ABCDs. Gogol attends the panel because his mother obliges him. A sociologist at the panel declares that "ABCDs are unable to answer the question 'Where are you from'" (118). This is actually a foreshadow for what Gogol is to experience later on. When Gogol is at Maxine's parents' lake house celebrating his birthday, an elderly lady invited to the celebration asks him at what age he immigrated to the U.S. Gogol answers: "I'm from Boston" but the woman insists on finding something irrevocably Indian in him and says he probably never gets sick during his visits to India like Americans do, because he is Indian. Gogol keeps explaining to the woman, at the same time feeling quite annoyed, that he is just like them. But as the panelist declared, he cannot say he is 'American'. When Lydia comes to his rescue, although she says "Pamela, Nick's [Gogol] American", the expression on her face shows Gogol, after all these months of acquaintance she is not very sure. The first time Gogol was introduced to Maxine's parents they feel "at once satisfied and intrigued by his background, by his years at Yale and Colombia, his career as an architect, his Mediterranean looks" (134). Obviously he is not like stereotypical Indian inscribed in the Western minds. They are intrigued; an instance of ambivalence on the Westerners' part. At another instance when Gogol tells Maxine that her mother still wears a sari and a bindi[7] and cooks Indian meals, Maxine is surprised and she says "But you are so different. I would never have thought that" (138).This declaration does not make him feel insulted but he feels her 'Othering' all the same. Ania Loomba notes how Bhabha thinks that "colonial identities are always a matter of flux and agony" (176). In the following piece where Bhabha elaborates on Fanon's image of *Black Skin/ White Masks* we can see Gogol's situation:

> [black skin/white masks is] a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least in two places at once which makes it impossible for the devalued, insatiable evolué (an abandonment neurotic, Fanon claims) to accept the coloniser's invitation to

[7] A forehead decoration which has multiple meanings and worn in South Asia.

> identity: 'You're a doctor, a writer, a student, you're different, you're one of us'. It is precisely in that ambivalent use of 'different'- to be different from those that are different makes you the same- that the Unconscious speaks of the form of Otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement. It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonised Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness- the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes. (quoted in Loomba 176-177)

Gogol is accepted in the Ratliff family because he is "so different"; he is an architect from Yale, enjoying wine and the food other than what his Bengali mother cooks. He does not conform to the colonist's image of a stereotypical Indian. He could be anything but Indian. As Lydia says to Gogol when they first meet: "You could be Italian" (134). Fanon explains the acceptance of the black person on the white men's part, from his own experience in France. He writes in *Black Skin, White Masks*

> . . . the white man agrees to give his sister to the black- but on one condition: You have nothing in common with real Negroes. You are not black, you are "extremely brown." This procedure is quite familiar to coloured students in France. Society refuses to consider them genuine Negroes. The Negro is a savage, whereas the student is civilized." (50).

All these instances he experiences with the Ratliffs, somehow widens the distance between the life he is yearning to live and the life he comes from and awakens him to the other part of his identity, his Indian background.

After Gogol's father's sudden death the distance between Gogol and Maxine gradually increases and they split up. Ashoke's death is like a turning point in Gogol's life and his personality. He becomes more and more attached to the remaining members of his family and also his past. When his mother insists he meets a Bengali friend's daughter, whom Gogol knows from his childhood days and who knows him as Gogol, he agrees to it and their unforeseen friendship results in a marriage. Gogol gives in to everything he has ever despised. He marries a Bengali woman, Moushumi and has an Indian wedding, all organized by their respective families. Both Gogol and Moushumi have a lot in common; they despise their culture, never wish to marry an Indian, they are mistaken for Greeks, Egyptians or Mexicans (212), both of them are disappointed with their earlier love affairs with Westerners. Moushumi has hybrid characteristics as well. This is most probably what attracts them to each other at the beginning. According to Bhalla "Gogol and Moushumi function as cultural correctives for one another, remedying not only their heart break, but also feelings of ethnic alienation that their forays into interracial romance produced" (116). Despite willing to have an American way of living, away from all things Indian, Gogol ends up marrying an Indian woman. He cannot completely leave behind things he has been running away from. Even his marriage to Moushumi is another indicator of his hybridity.

4.1.1. THE PROBLEMS GOGOL FACES AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

Even though discrimination towards first generation Indians or second generation Indians in the U.S. was not as bad as it were in Britain, the people of the Indian community still had their share of demarcation. The Ganguli family is among many others that arrived to the U.S. easily, thanks to the 1965 Immigration Law. According to American National Archives, also known as 'The Hart-Cellar Act', the 1965 Immigration Law "abolished the national origins quota system that had structured American immigration policy since the 1920s, replacing it with a preference system that focused on immigrants' skills and family relationships with citizens or residents of the U.S." As of the 1920s the U.S. had strict quotes for the immigrants, sometimes to avoid the immigration of criminals or illiterate people, or sometimes Jews or extreme Catholics. Although these harsh immigration rules did not stop immigrants or refugees from entering the country, they caused the public to have reservations for the immigrants in general. Thus the new act encouraged a more refined immigrant profile to come to the U.S. allowing the newcomers to have a privileged start.

The South Asian's relatively better position in America is due to the fact that most Indian immigrants are intellectuals rather than indentured labourers. Because India was an ex-colony of Britain, the immigrants were already familiar with Western life and norms to a certain extend which allowed them to assimilate somewhat easier and faster. Another reason can be the historical relationship; Americans were not colonizers in India thus the apparent prejudices towards South Asians in Britain, didn't exist there. This is so, especially in the second half of the twentieth century.

The problems Gogol faces throughout his life- we know about his life from the moment he is born- are different from those of Karim. Judith Caesar says that Gogol's story can be read simply as "another account of the difficulties of a first-generation American

trying to “find himself”. . . [and] It may seem merely unexamined documentation of the confusion of its main character, a confusion which itself has become a bit of a cliché.” She continues saying that Gogol’s story

> is much more clearly an elucidation of the causes and the meaning of that confusion, which comes not only from having a multiple cultural identity, but from some of the ways in which people in modern American society tend to view identity. (103)

Thus Gogol’s problems do not stem only from his multiple cultural identities, but also from the way the American society sees identity and how individuals identify with, as William James argues, “with material self, one’s surroundings, clothing, food and possessions, and the social self, the loves and friendships that surround us”. (quoted in Caesare 104) For Caesare, this is Gogol primary problem. (104) In the same line as Caesare, Friedman also observes something other than ‘only assimilation’ at the heart of immigrant fiction and says that:

> Instead of shedding the trappings of the home culture and throwing himself headlong into the work of Americanizing, the protagonist of the contemporary immigrant novel- whether an immigrant or a child born to immigrants- is more concerned with his dual identity as it manifests itself in America and in the shrinking global community. (112)

Based on his first hand experience and awareness of the fact that a good education will open many doors to an immigrant and will grant him a relatively easier life as an immigrant, Ashoke Ganguli wants his son Gogol to follow the tradition and “expect him to be, if not an engineer, then a doctor, a lawyer, an economist at the very least. These are the fields that brought them to America. . . the professions that have earned them

security and respect" (105). Gogol does not follow his father's advice and in an attempt to rebel and move away from his ancestral ways, he chooses a completely different profession and studies architecture in Yale.

Because the Ganguli family is well educated, speak good English well and they live in the suburbs where all other residents are Americans, they are not subjected to racial discrimination so badly. Only a small incident happens during Gogol's childhood which makes him very angry. Gogol and his father write "GANGULI" on their mailbox, in gold letters. And a day after the Halloween they find that the letters have been removed and the remaining ones spell "GANG, with the word GREEN scrawled in pencil following it" (67). Although his father only thinks of this incident as boys' fun, Gogol's "ears burn at the sight, and he runs back into the house, sickened, certain of the insult his father will feel"(67). He is old enough to comprehend that the insult is not meant for him or Sonia but for his parents. For example, when they are out shopping, people in the shops converse with Gogol and Sonia, rather than their parents, probably thinking they are not fluent enough in English. This shows us how easily the second generation immigrants are accepted and that neither Sonia nor Gogol faces racial discrimination, as perse.

In his childhood, he has many problems with his name. At school, children tease him by calling him "Giggle" or "Gargle"(67). And when he is at high school, his English teacher Mr. Lawson assigns the class Nikolai Gogol's 'The Overcoat'. Gogol feels very embarrassed when his teacher starts talking about the eccentricities of his namesake and when his classmates complain about the difficulty of the piece they have to read "he feels perversely responsible, as if his own work were being attacked" (92). So, in his school years, he has no memories of discrimination in relation to his Indian identity.
Gogol probably experiences more discrimination with his American girlfriend Maxine and her parents. The Ratliff family readily accepts Gogol and allows him to participate

in their lives. However, they ignore the fact that he is an Indian. Lydia, Maxine's mother thinks of him as an Italian in regard to his Mediterranean looks (134). Maxine herself says that he is so different from his Indian mother who cooks Indian food every day, wearing a bindi and a sari (138). Although Gogol has always despised everything Indian, all these remarks disturb him and he feels an insult directed, not necessarily to himself but to his parents.

At the birthday celebration organized by the Ratliffs at their lake house, Gogol once again feels the shifty grounds regarding his identity. Pamela, an elderly lady thinks of him as an Indian and cannot bring herself to see him as an American, who would get sick the moment he landed in India. He tries to explain to her that they get sick all the time, have to have shots and that his parents "devote the better part of a suitcase to medicine" (157). None of his arguments are enough to change Pamela's mind about Gogol's heritage. According to Song, Pamela's carefree racism shows us the uncertainty of the white people feel towards the children of even the most privileged immigrants. Song says, "No matter how much they [the children of the immigrants] might wish to belong, they are marked as outsiders, a shadow of doubt that brings into slightly sharper relief the contradiction Gogol embodies at such moments" (365).
Thus, Gogol is not accepted fully as an American and he openly despises his Indian heritage, and all this brings out his hybridity. He is actually only a typical member of his generation, as Eric Liu (former speech writer for Clinton) explains in his memoire

The Accidental Asian:

> They [young Asians of his generation] are uniformly privileged and well educated; little makes them different from their professional white peers; race is only a residual concern for them. . . being perceived as Americans is more important than whatever attenuated ties they may have to the Asian countries from which their forebears may have departed. . . (quoted in Song 353)

He is not accepted as an ordinary American but applauded as "an exemplary representative of the Asian children of post-1965 immigrants of professional background" (Song 355). No matter how American he feels, this is not enough to make him a Westerner. He realizes that he cannot "shed the blackness he has learnt to devalue" (Loomba 176).

Apart from these incidents taking place in America, we are given a picture of the difficulties he faces when he is visiting India with his parents. Apart from the first trip he made to India with his parents when he was a baby, he never wants to go back there. Especially the long visit they have to do during Ashoke's sabbatical is an enormous burden for both Gogol and Sonia. They have to remember too many names, names of relatives they don't feel close to, sleep in the same room and on the same bed with their parents, eat plates of food they don't really like and wash their hair by pouring water with tin cups, instead of under running water (82). He does not feel a part of the life they are supposed to belong, though part time. Both Gogol and Sonia "stand out in their bright, expensive sneakers, American haircuts, backpacks slung over one shoulder" (82). They are different from the things they are partly, a part of. During a trip to Agra "when young boys approach to sell postcards or marble trinkets, Gogol and Sonia are forced to say, 'English, please'" (84). He is different even where he is supposed to be the same. He is simply a tourist on his ancestral lands.

Gogol is not accepted fully as American in America, and when he is in India he is not fully Indian. He has to switch from one identity to the next. Caesare claims that Gogol assumes several identities in the course of the novel, usually conjoined with a romantic affair, and this is partly the reason for his pain, "because he passively accepts them one after the other . . . confusing a series of material and social selves for who he is" (106). She also thinks that "Gogol's unhappiness may not come from the problems of being bi-cultural, precisely, but from his own limited self-understand and his rational impulse to

see alternative selves as binary and mutually exclusive" (119).Thus Gogol's problems are not only caused by his coming and goings between Indianness and Americanness but also his material and social selves. He is like a curious thing to either culture. Thus, as result of these experiences, he becomes a 'neither /nor' person, someone uncomfortably occupying a "Third Space" in his ambivalence.

4.1.2. THE END OF GOGOL'S JOURNEY; HYBRIDITY

Gogol is born to an Indian couple on the American continent. The fact that he is born in The U.S, automatically brings him an American passport. He is educated just like any other ordinary American citizen, be it white or black, Muslim or Christian. But this passport does not automatically grant him an American identity. For quite a long time, actually, the whole time he has to live with his family until his college years, he is brought up just like any other Indian child. Gogol's mother is a woman trying to stay as true as possible to her Indian background, his father reads Indian papers and walks around in the house in drawstring pyjamas, and on the weekends they meet other Indian families which are actually substitutes for aunts and uncles. All important Hindi festivals are observed and at home they speak Bengali to each other.

Living a dual life does not go well with Gogol. He finds it difficult and wants to be able to live only the American way. He does not want to be a 'hybrid'; embodying traces of Indianness and Americanness at the same time and forming a completely new identity, occupying a unique 'Third Space'. He somehow wants to turn his back to his heritage and become like the others. Thus, his hybrid situation becomes a burden for him and a source of some kind of pressure and as Caesare puts it "unnecessary unhappiness" (103).

Gogol's biggest problem is his name. Commenting on Mira Nair's film version of *The Namesake*, Shariff notes that "The disavowal of Gogol's own name is used as an extended metaphor throughout the film to explore larger issues of integration, assimilation and cultural identity" (460). Gogol associates it with his Indianness, something that stands out, different and bizarre. When he is old enough he changes it to something that sounds more American, to 'Nikhil'. Caesare says that "Gogol rejects the name, and with it, the transcultural identity that his father tried to give him. Although Nikhil is an Indian name, it enables him to try on a sophisticated identity he thinks he

wants, sexy, cool, 'normal'" (110). He feels different immediately, assuming that the way people treat him will change and that he will become a new person, automatically. By changing his name, he hopes to erase Indianness from his identity, yet, essentially he remains the same.

It is difficult for him to accept his given identity as it is, and call himself an Indian. It is not easy either, calling one's self American, as suggested by one of the panelists in the ABCD conference Gogol attends at one point when he is at college; ""Teleologically speaking, ABCDs are unable to answer the question 'Where are you from?'"" (118). This is actually true for Gogol as we see later in the novel, making the appearance of this part a foreshadowing event. When his American identity is openly questioned, he cannot simply say that he *is* American. He says he is from Boston and that he was born in America, but he cannot bring himself to say that he is an American (157). At the same time he cannot agree with this woman who says "But you are Indian" (157). He is simply lost for words. He probably feels lost himself, somewhere between America and India -like the letter that never arrived, bearing his name- not knowing who he is. Bhabha's explanation of identity in 'Interrogating Identity' prevails for Gogol as well: ". . . identity is never an a priori, or a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality" (51).

Although he cannot easily say that he is an American, he considers himself nothing but American. Friedman shows how Gogol, though not explicitly, always considers himself one, from a conversation he has with Ruth. Friedman observes that:

> That Gogol should feel bland is a striking detail- he does not see himself as an American outsider, one who has a unique immigrant background and who is an ethnic minority in America, but rather, he sees himself as a "bland" American suburbanite, while the Yankee Ruth is rendered as the "minority". (120)

The two American girlfriends he has after he becomes Nikhil vindicate his actions. He is more self confident, more American with this name. But, none of these relationships have a happy ending; the name does not grant him true Americanness. He actually remains Gogol deep inside. After his father's death, Gogol becomes more introvert and dotes upon his mother. This incidence also makes him realize the indifference of Maxine, his last American girlfriend before his marriage, to his Indian side and how she ignores things that matter to him. He comes to feel closer to his roots. Friedman observes that Gogol's

> return to his family and to Bengali rituals serves to reinstate for Gogol the importance of his ethnic difference, and he loses interest in Maxine. His return to his parents' house in Massachusetts is a physical and a metaphoric return to his Indian roots; it is the first time in the novel that Gogol acknowledges that he is Indian and not simply another American suburban boy. (121)

Moushumi is a Bengali woman Gogol knows from their childhood years and she carries hybrid characteristics like him. Their denial of Indianness and yearning for another identity makes them very similar and brings them together.

His relationship and marriage to Moushumi looks like a second chance given to Indianness. However, it is the marriage of two hybrid identities in an in between way. So, it can be reviewed as Gogol's coming to terms with his hybridity. Although Moushumi is not a typical Indian woman, they meet with their families' initiative, so their marriage feels like an arranged marriage, the traditional Indian way. They have an Indian marriage, though the marriage itself has hybrid qualities. At the wedding there are people who know him as Gogol and some who know him as Nikhil. In this relationship, his past and present come together. In this new phase of his life, Gogol accepts things as they are and it is his acceptance of his in between situation.

In “Interrogating Identity” what Bhabha has to say for identity goes true for Gogol’s problematic as well:

> . . . the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy- it is always a production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image. . . Identification . . . is always the return of an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting in the Other place from which it comes. (45)

Ceasare sees the final pages of the book where Gogol sits in his room to, finally, read Nikholai Gogol’s “The Overcoat” as the part where he comes to terms with his hybridity:

> He reads this while a celebration of multiplicity and hybridity is taking place downstairs, a Christmas and a going-away party for Ashima, attended by her Bengali American friends who have made a Christian holiday now part of their own family tradition even though they are not Christians. It seems an emblem of the potential for a continuous blended and fluid identity that Gogol may be now ready to accept about himself. (118)

The death of his father is like a defining moment in Gogol’s life and it causes a kind of awakening for him. Soon after the loss of his father, he is married but only to lose his wife. So, one blow after the other arriving unannounced shifts the grounds beneath his feet. As Dalton-Brown says characters in Lahiri’s novel come to see life “as an accident waiting to happen, as always susceptible to damage, dislocation, disconnection” which gives one a certain liberation and break from social traditions (333). Song, still sees Gogol “as a person, out of place, dislocated, directionless” (366). Yet, as a result of all these experiences Gogol reaches a passive acceptance of the meeting of his pre-given Indianness to his Americanness, that is, he comes to terms with the natural outcome of his situation, his hybridity.

4.2. OTHER HYBRID CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

4.2.1. ASHOKE GANGULI AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

Ashoke Ganguli is the son of a middle class Bengali man. He lives with his many sisters and brothers in a three story house in Alipore. He is very fond of books. When he is 22 and a student at B.E. College he has a train accident which nearly costs him his life. But before this accident, a man with whom he shares the same compartment, advises him to "see as much of the world" as he can (16). This Indian man is killed during the accident and Ashoke survives by chance, by a rescuer who sees the Nikholai Gogol book Ashoke has been reading, move in his hands (18). This accident changes his life and when he heals completely, he makes applications in discreet to study abroad. He starts a new life in Massachusetts as a PhD. candidate in engineering, at MIT. Ashoke arrives to the U.S. after the 1965 Immigration Law and he is a member of a diaspora described as 'a third kind of diaspora' by Fludernik, which is made up of immigrants with professional motives, rather than political or colonial motives (quoted in Heinze 193). This fact makes his life and the lives of many South Asian immigrants much easier and their integration to their host country much smoother.

Ashoke Ganguli is a well educated Indian boy. Friedman notes that "The Ganguli men occupy a long-standing position of privilege in India, one that allows them the pleasures of reading foreign literatures, travel across India and to points abroad, and foreign study" (119). We are told that he is well read and "As a teenager he had gone through all of Dickens. He read newer authors as well, Graham Greene and Somerset Maugham, all purchased from his favourite stall . . ." (12). Obviously he is educated within the colonial British system, as we know that he is a student at B.E College[8]. His grandfather is a university professor of European literature, thus Ashoke knows all about Russian literature as well. Friedman notes that Ashoke's "love of foreign literature is a legacy of British colonial rule" (119), showing once again his educational and cultural background. So, his first contact with the Western culture takes place, way before he

[8] Today's Bengal Engineering College. It was Bishop's College in the British Raj.

sets foot in America. His colonial education is probably the reason why Ashoke wears suits and uses fountain pens even in America, while American professors, i.e. his landlord Alan wears "a pair of threadbare trousers, a fringed suede jacket and rubber flip-flops" (31). He was educated in a system which continuously emphasized "the deficiencies" of his own culture (Boehmer 170). It takes him many years to relax and shift to the comforts of the modern world.

Ashoke is a typical Indian immigrant. He stays true to his Indian identity as much as he can but adapts to the way of life around him. According to the Bengali tradition, everybody has to have two names. One of them is a pet name, to be used by family members at home and an official one to be used outside home by other people. Following is the excerpt from the novel that tells us about this custom:

> . . . there are always pet names to tide one over: a practice of Bengali nomenclature grants, to every single person, two names. In Bengali the word for pet name is daknam, meaning, literally, the name by which one is called, by friends, family, and other intimates, at home and in other private, unguarded moments. Pet names are a persistent remnant of childhood, a reminder that life is not always so serious, so formal, so complicated. They are a reminder, too, that one is not all things to all people. They all have pet names. Ashima's pet name is Monu, Ashoke is Mithu. . . . (26)

So, just like his official and pet names, Ashoke has two different lives; he is one person at home and another outside, mainly at the university. According to Caesare, Ashoke has two sides to him, "a material self of familiar rituals, places and foods and social self in his relationships with other Bengali families, both of which have formed a buffer for him, allowing him to live as a complex human being in a country which still seems to feel foreign to him" (112). He is very careful about the way he is dressed outside home. When he comes home from the university, he changes into his drawstring pyjamas and dedicates one hour every Sunday to polishing "his three pairs of shoes", sitting crossed leg on the floor (10). When he is at home he is dressed the Bengali way and he eats with

his hands, the Indian food his wife Ashima cooks every day. They meet their Indian friends and converse in their native tongue. But when he is outside, he goes on wearing tailor made shirts and trousers, a tie and a wrist watch and he uses fountain pens. He is like two different people; Mithu, in drawstring pajamas, eating Indian food with his hands and Ashoke wearing a suit and a tie. The Bengali tradition of having two names seems to extend to Ashoke's daily life as well, in his attempt to adapt to his newly adopted homeland, giving him hybrid qualities.

Caesare interprets the Bengali tradition of having two names, as Ashoke's urge to teach his son how to cope with the complexity of identity. According to Caesare, having a good name and a pet name "will emblem him [Gogol] the knowledge that he is at least two people. . . Perhaps he [Ashoke] also wishes to convey the idea that identity is multiple and many faceted, like reality. It is not one thing or another, but simultaneity, as his own life has been" (108). However, whether Ashoke actually wanted to help his son to understand the duality of identity or simply wanted to follow Bengali traditions, the whole naming story, other than being the core of the novel, is the cause of impassible walls between the father and the son.

As he settles in America, with the birth of his two children, Gogol and Sonia, both Ashoke and his wife change their Indian ways to more Americanized ones. They are the only Indian family in their suburban neighbourhood. The name spelled on the mail box and the daily Indian newspapers they receive are the only things that stand out. However, they have almost everything their American neighbours have in their garage, i.e. pruning shears, shovels, etc. They celebrate Christmas, paint eggs for Easter and have turkey for Thanksgiving. They also celebrate Indian holidays, as authentically as possible (64). Ashoke gives in to such American things for the sake of his children.

But these American holidays and celebrations are not the only things they observe and change, as the years go by. The mimicry is more pronounced in general. Now that Ashoke is a tenured professor, he dresses differently as well. Although his wife stays faithful to her sandals and saris Ashoke "learns to buy ready-made" and "He trades in

fountain pens for ballpoints, Wilkinson blades and his boar bristled shaving brush for Bic razors bought six in a pack. . . stops wearing jackets and ties to university. . . stops wearing a wristwatch. . . "(65).

Ashoke still tries to remain true to his own culture and is determined to teach his kids the Bengali ways. The whole family drives to Cambridge "when there is the Apu trilogy[9]. . . or when there is a Kathakali dance performance or a sitar recital. . . "(65). He also wants his children to take off their shoes before entering the house and eat with their hands instead of a fork (75). Ashoke does not want his children to grow like Americans, estranged to the culture they come from. There are also frequent gatherings with friends. Ashoke organizes his whole family and they drive to the house of another Bengali friend (62) or meet in halls underneath churches or in schools, for Indian religious ceremonies or for a celebration within the community (64). These gatherings are essential for Ashoke and other Indians like him, not only because they want their children to grow up aware of their heritage but also because, as Stuart Hall defines it, they serve as a yearning for "a sort of collective "one true self" … which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (quoted in Loomba 181)

Although Ashoke lives thousands of miles away from his parents, he always thinks of them. When he is a student at MIT, he has a very meager wage but he still puts some money aside to send home (10). In later years, upon finding out about his father's death, he locks himself in the bathroom and shaves off his hair completely to show his grief, as it is "a Bengali son's duty to shave his head in the wake of a parent's death" (179).

Ashoke makes every effort to provide his family the necessities and even the luxuries with his professor income. They also have trips to India whenever they can. Although his children don't like these trips and each time have a culture shock, both Ashoke and his wife "miraculously" adapt to the new environment around them. Just as they change into house shoes upon entering home, they change into other personalities upon arriving

[9] A trilogy with many national and international awards, consisting of three Bengali films directed by Satyajit Ray.

at Dum Dum Airport. Gogol's observation of his parents upon arriving India, tells us how Ashoke and his wife change from one identity to the other:

> Ashima, now Monu, weeps with relief, and Ashoke now Mithu, kisses his brother on both cheeks, holds their hands in his hands. . . . Within minutes, before their eyes Ashoke and Ashima slip into bolder, less complicated versions of themselves, their voices louder, their smiles wider, revealing a confidence Gogol and Sonia never see on Pemberton road (81-82).

Song believes, Ashoke, among all the characters portrayed in the novel, is the only person, truly tranquil with his position in life. He says "He [Ashoke] is also luckier than the other characters because he was able to choose the course of his own life rather than having to follow the path that was laid out for him" (362). Unlike his son, Ashoke is able to make his own decisions.

Despite all those years of foreign education and then a life in a completely different culture cannot take Ashoke away from his roots. He belongs to India, with his heart, as well as other things, but also to America where he has other things that belong to him and things that he belongs to. Ashoke is never in a struggle to draw borders around himself but flows comfortably between languages, lives, cultures, etc. The mimicry he utilizes is simply a way of adaptation to his new environment. He neither refuses his heritage nor abandons himself completely to his newfound homeland. The 'buffer' zone he has created becomes his 'Third Space' allowing him to exist as he wishes.

According to Caesare, Ashok Ganguli embodies more than two continents but "His world is not just India and America but the Europe of the authors he reads, his time both the twentieth and the nineteenth centuries" (106). This makes Ashoke someone in between places, lives, cultures and even time. He is a fluid identity, flowing from one place to another. In a way, immigrants from post-colonial societies have to be this way, because if they aren't able to flow between things, if they are anchored in one place, they could easily break, fall apart.

4.2.2. MOUSHUMI AS A HYBRID CHARACTER

Moushumi is one of the central characters in *The Namesake* and also the character with the most hybrid qualities. She is the daughter of Mazoomdar family who are friends with Gangulis. This is how Gogol and Moushumi know each other. They are not really friends, even though there is only one year of difference between them, they have "nothing to say to each other" (73). During their childhood years they get together when their parents meet, but they don't talk to each other much or participate in games. Moushumi prefers to be on her own and read English classics, wearing her "glasses with maroon plastic frames" while the other children, including Gogol watch *The Love Boat* on television (73).

Moushumi and her parents come to Massachusetts from England when she is a child. So she carries the traits of another culture to America, on top of her Indian heritage. Thus this fact makes Moushumi herself an immigrant, and Friedman thinks that "her insecurities and feelings of alienation stem from this fact" (123). She is a true hybrid embodying three continents. As she speaks to Gogol after they make love for the first time, we learn about her childhood years in England:

> She speaks with nostalgia of the years her family had spent in England, living at first in London, which she barely remembers, and then in a brick semidetached house in Croydon, with rosebushes in front. She describes the narrow house, the gas fireplaces, the dank odor of the bathrooms, eating Weetabix and hot milk for breakfast, wearing a uniform to school. (212)

Although she is born in the West and educated in British or American schools, she cannot escape the faith awaiting every Indian woman. When she is only five years old, her relatives ask her whether she will wear a yellow or a red sari for her wedding (213). When she is only an adolescent, people come to her parents' house to ask for her hand in marriage or her grandmother shows Moushumi the jewelry she will be given when she gets married. All these things make her vow never to marry a Bengali man (213). Yet, she receives a good education, learns how to play the piano, etc. Sonia Ladha

examines the situations of second generation of immigrant women from India to the U.S. and comes to the conclusion that there are different reasons behind a family's support for the education of the womenfolk. As a result of what she calls "The philosophy of patrofocality", their education is encouraged either to make them better wives and mothers or to meet the demand to provide educated wives for the educated men (6). This explanation reveals the reason for the good education Moushumi receives. In her case though, she is encouraged for a better education for a better match to an educated man.

Just like Gogol, she tries to run away from her parents, as far as possible. But this running away is not necessarily a physical one. It is also a cultural or a social escape. Thus, she studies something completely different at university, disregarding her family's wishes. Her choice of subject at university, actually loads another culture on her already hybrid life. She studies at Brown, doing a double major; one in chemistry and one, secretly, in French:

> . . . immersing herself in a third language, a third culture, had been her refuge- she approached French, unlike things American or Indian, without guilt or misgiving, or expectation of any kind. It was easier to turn her back on the two countries that could claim her in favor of one that had no claim whatsoever. (214)

Moushumi does not really belong to any culture in particular, making her in a way 'homeless', suggesting 'a lack of deeper connection' in Dalton-Brown's words. She doesn't see this 'lack' as negative, on the contrary claims that it provides a "state of potential freedom" (336). Moushumi creates this state of freedom for herself consciously. Friedman calls her a "global migrant" (123) "not content to assimilate to any cultural norm" (122).

Moushumi's education in French is her ticket for her grand escapade. She moves to Paris, away from both of the cultures that claim her, to immerse herself in a new one. However, it is not possible to erase the traces of things she denies. Thus, Moushumi

creates her own 'Third Space', as Bhabha calls it, accentuating her 'hybridity'. Her actual desire is to be "a true cosmopolite" and at the end of the novel we find her rejecting her family any community values and "American pluralism for European urbanity, exile and expatriate life" (Friedman 123). Just like Gogol, she re-invents herself and feels more at home with her new self; that is by being neither Indian, nor American but something completely different; French. She blends in perfectly, and starts living a life she had always dreamed of (214). When she starts teaching in NYU, her students think she is French or half-French which makes her feel flattered (253).

Moushumi's mother talks her into meeting Gogol, thinking that she is alone in New York and needs a friend. And Gogol's Indian identity is a bonus, after Moushumi's disappointment with her American fiancée. She knows it is a set up but to stop her mother's nagging, Moushumi agrees to meet Gogol. They meet in a bar where there is Jazz music and she does not look anything like Gogol remembers her from their childhood years:

> She has a slender face, pleasingly feline features, spare, straight brows. Her eyes are heavy-lidded and boldly lined on the top lids, in the manner of 1960s movie stars. Her hair is middle-parted gathered into a chignon, and she wears stylishly narrow tortoiseshell glasses. A gray wool skirt and a thin blue sweater cling suggestively to her sides. Opaque black tights cover her calves. (193)

This young woman smokes, drinks wine at lunch (202) and cooks Coq au Vin[10] for Gogol, referring to a cookbook (208). She is mimicking things from whatever culture she prefers, building her own personality. However she oils her hair between shampoos, like a typical Indian woman (211). Obviously she is neither the typical Indian woman her family tries to create nor the stereotypical Indian woman the American society has in mind. Moushumi is her hybrid self, a blend of things she chooses to embody and the things she cannot possibly shake off.

[10] A classic French chicken stewed recipe with bacon, mushrooms, and pearl onions.

Despite Moushumi's and Gogol's protests, they finally have a typical Indian wedding, with Indian food and easy parking for three hundred guests. However we know that:

> They would have preferred the sort of venues their American friends choose, the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens or the Metropolitan Club or the Boat House in Central Park. They would have preferred a sit-down dinner, jazz played during the reception, black-and-white photographs, keeping things small. (219)

So, Moushumi's wedding ceremony turns into a hybrid one as well. It is an Indian wedding, in a big hotel where Moushumi and her husband-to-be have to sleep in separate rooms even though they actually live together. Moushumi has to behave "chastely" and stay in a room next to her parents. According to Indian traditions, they are supposed to throw rice "into a pyre that they are forbidden by the management of the hotel to ignite" (222). There is a Brahmin priest as well, a friend of Moushumi's parents. Alongside the Indian food, there is wine, after a sari and about "twenty pounds of gold on her" (222) later on, Moushumi changes into a "gown with spaghetti straps", instead of a "salwar kameeze", exposing her bronze, slim and shimmering shoulders (223). Both families, Mazoomdars and Gangulis do their best to make the wedding as 'authentic' as possible, so the wedding consists of many Indian essentials for a proper ceremony, but they have to 'negotiate' certain things to actualize it. Hence, in the final analysis, the wedding ceremony is neither completely an American nor a real Indian one. It is in between what the families wish and what they can obtain in America, hybrid as a result of negotiations, just like the wedding couple Moushumi and Gogol.

Now legally a couple, Gogol transfers his money to her account and they have check books "with both their names printed in the corner" (229) but still Moushumi does not take her husband's surname thinking:

> Mazoomdar is already a mouthful. With a hyphenated surname, she would no longer fit into the window of a business envelope. Besides, by now she has begun to publish under Moushumi Mazoomdar, the name printed on the top of footnoted articles on French feminist theory (227)

According to Caesare, Moushumi is "most concerned with not being swallowed up by the identity of being a married woman, which she associates with her mother's helplessness and dependency" (116). In the same context Caesare also notes that like Gogol "her sense of herself seems to come more from refusing identities rather than trying to form one for herself" (116).

After the marriage, they throw parties but these are nothing like the gatherings their parents had organized. Moushumi is mimicking her close American friends Astrid and Donald- who are also close friends with his ex fiancé Graham- at the gatherings they organize. A few friends are invited and they are served bread, salami and cheese with martini (228). Using her studies as an excuse, she spends a lot of time on her own, secretly meeting friends in So-Ho or dining on her own or sipping wine at a bar. The feeling of independence is necessary for her and for this reason "along with the Sanskrit vows she'd repeated at her wedding, she'd privately vowed that she'd never grow fully dependent on her husband. . . " (247).

Bhalla reads Moushumi and Gogol's 'narrative arc' as a "trope of choice and development" and the failure of their relationship as "the triumph of Western individuality and the transcendence of ethnic obligation" (115-116). They get together when they are both recovering from unsuccessful relationships with white lovers, thus their union "is founded on a shared desire to remedy their cultural displacement" (116)

Moushumi is a blend of French, American and Indian. She doesn't want anything to do with Indianness and her husband reminds her of "the very life she had resisted, had struggled so mightily to leave behind" (250). She actually imagines herself with someone different, other than Gogol. Friedman observes in Moushumi that "In her self-fashioning, an Indian mate is something that would reaffirm her identity as an Indian American, not as an international cosmopolite" and her marriage to Gogol ". . . conflicts with her own expectations" (122). Moushumi cheats on Gogol with a white man, Dimitri, and this marks the end of their relationship and marriage. The appearance of a white man as the rescuer of Moushumi from her doomed marriage reminds Bhalla of

"what Gayatri Spivak identifies as the familiar narrative structure whereby the white man rescues the brown woman from the stultifying and rigid expectations of the brown man" (118). Moushumi's attraction to white men can be seen as a means of cultural rebellion. When she leaves Gogol, who represents everything she despises, she ends up with a white man, the symbol of what Spivak calls 'the rescuer of brown woman'. Tejinder Kaur reads Moushumi's decision to leave Gogol as "her independence from cultural obligations" (quoted in Bhalla 117). Similarly Robin Field interprets it as a sign of "Moushumi's global identity, forged by personal choice rather than national or ethnic affiliation" (quoted in Bhalla 117).

Her self-assumed choice, the Frenchness "fits in perfectly yet remains slightly novel" (233). When she is with her American friends, her Americanness is in question as "the approval of these people means something to her" (238). All these données show Moushumi's in betweenness. However, she does not carry her hybridity as a burden but it is something that allows her to expand and fulfill herself. Her 'third space' gives her more space to move about and be a unique identity.

Moushumi, as an important character in *The Namesake*, embodies what Cox sees in other second generation characters in the novel, that" . . . [they] are not only observers and translators of two worlds that encounter each other on American soil but also are conduits of change. . . creating a kind of mestissage . . . that enriches their experience" (quoted in Friedman 116).

CHAPTER V

HYBRIDITY ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC

5.1. ALMOST THE SAME BUT NOT WHITE

Gogol Ganguli and Karim Amir live in different continents, two different cultures and there is around a fifteen year gap between the two. Both Gogol and Karim more or less live in the same era, at least they are the same generation. Karim Amir of *The Buddha of Suburbia* is seventeen years old when the novel opens and as one of the actors in Shadwell's cast says "Only the disadvantaged will succeed in the seventies' England" (165) we know that the story takes place in the seventies. In *The Namesake*, the opening chapter's title in which we read about Gogol's birth is "1968" (1). So, the world around them is not very different.

These are not the only apparent differences between the two leading characters of these novels. Their backgrounds and the genetic inheritance are also quite different. Karim's father is from a wealthy, Muslim family from Bombay. Haroon Amir receives a colonial education in India and finally sent to England to receive a university degree. Thus he starts his adventures in the U.K with what Fludernik calls "colonial motives" (quoted in Heinze 193). Once in the U.K. he never goes back to India.

On the other hand, Gogol's father Ashoke is from a middle class Hindu family. He also receives his education in the colonial India, excelling in English alongside engineering. In Ashoke's case, he decides himself to go and study in the U.S.A. and becomes a professional member of his diaspora. Ashoke visits his ancestral country with his new family, as often as he can.

This brief reminder about Gogol's and Karim's backgrounds is necessary, as their genetic and cultural heritage, inevitably determined by their fathers, are important données in the process of constructing their identities.

Although he is a mixed heritage, Karim does not mention his Indian heritage and considers himself an Englishman. This is because his father has not much to do with his Indianness. He does not know much about his Indian heritage in general. These are

probably the reasons why he considers himself to be an Englishman. Thus, the problems that he faces are extraneous as there is a lot of discrimination and racism around Karim. Kamir may feel like an Englishman, but to the outsider he is simply ‘black’. His skin colour is dark, he has black hair and his name does not sound English at all. So, he cannot escape racial discrimination other black people experience every day. Racism in Europe is nothing new and it is sometimes a state policy. Immigrants are sometimes welcomed to the West, when there is a shortage of labour, but in times of economic stress their services are forgotten and racism becomes a normal practice. The British National Archives gives us a brief summary of the situation in postwar and the sixties’ Britain:

> There was, and still is, a minority of hardcore racists, with policies based on the idea of 'keeping Britain white' and banning all immigration. . . It is also true that black and Asian immigrants faced various degrees of hostility and racial prejudice in postwar Britain. Surveys conducted in the mid 1960s, for example, revealed that four out of five British people felt that 'too many immigrants had been let into the country'.
>
> . . . the flashpoints in Britain during the past 50 years have largely been confined to poor areas where local white and black communities compete for scarce jobs and housing.

The information given above shows us what Karim has to deal with. However, the tone of the above text is much milder than what is described in Kureishi’s novel. The father of his girlfriend Helen calls him a wog (40) or people on the streets shout at him saying “Eat shit, Pakis” (53).

The experience Karim has with Shadwell and Pyke brings to mind the question asked by a black British film maker, Isaac Julien: “Is one really black enough? And who is black enough anyway?” (quoted in Chambers 67). Both of the theatre directors Karim works with use his skin colour and the non-existing, but acquired Indian accent for

economic gain, not giving a chance to his other individual qualities. They want him to be 'authentic' or 'Indian', qualities he does not have. They encourage him to mimic. So, on one side he is scolded for being a wog on the other he is told of, for not being wog enough to be a good actor. Hence, here we see how, in Stuart Hall's terms, Karim is subjected to "fetishization" and "objectification" when he is in London and "negative figuration" (223) when he is in the suburbs.

Karim finds it difficult to realize his hybridity and accept it as it is, because there is something that lacks in him. That is, there is nothing Indian in his life, other than what one can see and his friend/lover Jamila and Jeeta's Indian cooking. At one point he realizes this; at Anwar's funeral he admits that he feels "incomplete" when he says "as if half of me were missing" (212). This lack, this missing part in him, is the greatest reason for his perplexity, his ambivalence regarding his identity.

Gogol Ganguli also considers himself American, although he cannot say it openly. In the United States, racism is also an important problem. Throughout the country's history, there has been hatred towards the outsiders, those different from the original settlers; the blacks, the Far Easterners, the Middle Easterners, etc. But Gogol and his family are not subjected to racist activity or hard core discrimination per se. This is because they live in a relatively good area, where all other neighbours are "Americans. Shoes are worn inside, trays of cat litter are placed in the kitchens. . ." (51). South Asians (Indians) of Ashoke's generation were among the brainy immigrants, encouraged and welcomed by the newly established immigration laws.

Thus, unlike Karim, Gogol does not suffer from discrimination as a result of his ethnic heritage. This does not mean that he is not subjected to stereotyping. The scene where Gogol is left speechless in front of Pamela, questioning his 'true identity' is an example to how this stereotyping occurs in everyday life. She keeps pointing out his Indianness, saying "But you're an Indian" (157). Here, Gogol gets his share of "fetishization, objectification" (Hall 223). But Gogol considers himself American more than anything. Although his parents do their best to teach him and his sister the

Indian ways, Gogol does not want to have anything to do with Indians or anything to do with Indianness. Thus, unlike Karim, Gogol is not ignorant of his racial heritage; he speaks and understands Bengali, celebrates Indian religious days. On the contrary, for him, there is too much emphasis on Indianness in his life, more than he can cope with. His hybridity becomes his burden.

Friedman reads *The Namesake* as a 'travel narrative' and sees Gogol as a tourist. She says:

> Gogol's sense of tourism emerges from his navigation of multiple cultures at once: his parental home, his American public sphere, his distant land of origin, the upper class he ascends to as he moves from his Ivy League school to his adult life. . . [and that] Gogol is constantly travelling, whether it be from his home to college, from Boston to New York, or from America to India; he also travels the terrain of a few failed romances and one doomed marriage. . . (116)

The same could be said for Karim as well, although no one has ever read the novel this way. Throughout his story we see Karim travelling between the suburbs and the city, male lovers to female ones, from England to the U.S..

Both of these characters are in search for their identities, like any ordinary person. They both try to 'fix' themselves an identity and be a whole. Chambers claims that one can never be a whole, a "full identity". The idea of feeling complete is simply an outcome of one's imagination, "a fiction" (25). This imagination in search for their identities makes them remain in between the données they have, causing them to be hybrid identities, occupying a "Third space". But what makes them different is the struggle they have in relation to the society they are born to, with the racial heritage that they carry along. As Jacques S. Alexis asks "Can one, in effect, strip a human being of all his antecedents, of all the unconditioned reflexes born of the conditioned reflexes transmitted by heredity? A human being cannot be the son of no man, the past and history cannot be denied . . ." (195). Thus both Gogol and Karim, with the Indian heritage passed onto them by their families, face many problems while journeying

through their search for an identity (Chambers 25). As Ceasare says, when a person is raised amongst different cultures and subcultures, gets stuck with the question ""which am I?" rather than realizing that he is both and none of them" (108), his situation becomes more challenging while trying to make sense of who he is. This is how both Karim and Gogol get stuck with being 'English' or 'American' and miss the opportunity to expand into a 'third space'.

5.2. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN HYBRIDITY

Both Jamila and Moushumi embody hybrid characteristics in the novels studied. Their hybridity somehow comes out differently. Different from the male characters with hybrid qualities in their respective novels, they also have to deal with gender roles assigned to them by their Indian culture. Both Jamila and Moushumi break the chains and go beyond the borders defined by their cultures and societies with the help of the education they receive and unlike the male characters they draw their own path and decide for their destinies.

Jamila does not get much support from her family concerning her education. Neither her father nor her mother show much interest in her academic life or development as an individual. However, things work for Jamila and she receives a unique education with the help of Miss Cutmore, she gets to read and understand important French writers, listen to classical music and jazz, which all help to bring out the potential in Jamila. Although at the beginning Jamila thinks that Cutmore has colonized her, meaning she has somehow used Jamila for her own interests, Karim reminds her that she would not even know the meaning of 'colony' if Cutmore didn't help her out (53). Thus her hybridity becomes more pronounced and diverse than that of Karim, for example. However, Jamila does not suffer between her Indianness and British identity like Karim does.

The way Miss Cutmore contributes to Jamila's education is not the same way the colonizers approached the education of the indigenous peoples of the lands they colonized. What Thomas Macaulay preaches about education in India in the mid 1800s exposes the general approach towards the education of the colonized people. Karim's father Haroon and, Gogol's father Ashoke and mother Ashima as well as Moushumi's parents in *The Namesake*, are all products of this kind of education. Thus Macaulay says:

> It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be

> interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. . . . (430)

So, Jamila is not colonized at all, as she claims. The ideas and ideals Miss Cutmore introduces to Jamila, the type of music, etc. all of these give her a new means of self-expression and enable her to create her own space; neither Indian, nor British but a completely different one, one that opens up a 'Third Space' and give her '*inter-national'* qualities. After Cutmore's initiation, Jamila continues to educate herself and discovers writers of other continents, i.e. Malcolm X, Fanon, etc. Her education causes the gap between her acquired Anglicanization and her inherited Indianness to deepen. However, at the same time, it provides Jamila with the means to create a third space for herself, and in 'Commitment to Theory' Bhabha says that

> . . . [the] recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*-national culture, based not on the exoticism or multi-culturalism of the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and the articulation of culture's *hybridity.* (38)

The same thing can be said for Moushumi as well. Unlike Jamila, she receives her good education with the help and support of her family. They wish Moushumi to follow her father's path and study chemistry. This could very well be for her own good, or for the sake of following the tradition of successful Indians in the U.S., or for a completely different reason as Ladha claims; either to make her a better wife or mother or to make her a better match for an educated man (6). Her good education is actually supposed to make her more presentable when she is to get married. However she manages to use this in her favour and just like Jamila, she goes beyond what is provided for her and improves herself as a person, with the help of education. The double major she does in French is her rebellion as well as the ticket to her own spot, her 'Third Space'. This is how she expresses herself; in a language neither English, nor Hindi, but a completely new one. Her already hybrid identity becomes richer and the space in which she can

move becomes wider. This does not only help her to escape her anticipated, traditional end but also gives her an opportunity to speak her own language.

While the two female characters resemble a lot, at the point of using their education (self or formal) for their escape from traditional and cultural pressures and opening up new spaces for themselves, there is a fundamental difference between Jamila and Moushumi. While Jamila is constantly abused for being an Indian in the country she lives, she still holds on to her roots and identity without any contempt, becomes politically conscious and active to defend the rights of immigrants in general, Moushumi, although she is readily accepted in the culture she resides, loathes her Indian identity. Jamila tries to cope with the discrimination towards her identity by educating herself, helping other people in distress and acting with other like minded people regardless of their heritage or race, i.e. she works at a Black Women's Centre (182) or marches at rallies against fascists with her friends from the commune (225). On the other hand, Moushumi's contempt for her Indianness makes her look for another identity. She wants to be anything other than an Indian. This could be a result of the emphasis their respective families put on their cultural heritage. While Jamila never visited India and met any of her relatives or even never socialized with the Indian community, Moushumi and her family visited their ancestral lands frequently and they were always a part of the Indian community wherever they lived in the U.S. This fact alone might be the reason why Moushumi is so reactive to her Indian background.

In the final analysis, both Jamila and Moushumi are hybrid characters who are capable of deciding for their own destinies. Although being second generation Indian women on either side of the Atlantic makes their struggle relatively harder than their male counterparts, with the help of the education they receive, they manage to turn the tables to their advantage and manage to exist in an alternative 'third space' they create.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In almost all novels written by diaspora writers, it is possible to find elements of hybridity. Especially writers, who are themselves the children of immigrants, include experiences of immigrants in their stories. In this thesis, a novel by Hanif Kureishi and another by Jhumpa Lahiri is chosen specifically as both of them are diaspora writers and are hybrids themselves, one from Britain, the latter from the U.S.A.

Hybrid characteristics of the first and second generation of immigrants are not being studied for the first time. The theory of hybridity is not very new either, although quite recent. In this thesis the experiences of hybrid characters from two different countries are brought together. All characters studied in this thesis have Indian heritage. While in *The Buddha of Suburbia* the characters have a historical and cultural connection with the colonizer England, in *The Namesake* such a connection does not exist, that is, America was never an official colonizer of India in any sense. Thus the American people in general do not see the Indian immigrants with the same eyes as the British do, as a result of this historical fact. In both of the novels the individual experiences of the first generation and the second generation immigrants are studied in detail. Although the characters studied do not live in the same country and exactly in the same years, they face same or at least similar problems related to their hybridity. This fact makes it interesting to study these characters from the same perspective. They are in search for their identities in a culture they do not completely belong, but desperately want to be a part of. This struggle for existence causes them to use different methods. But all of them find means to come to terms with their hybrid situations, usually by the utilization of 'mimicry'.

In the case of the first generation immigrants, Haroon Amir from *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Ashoke Ganguli from *The Namesake*, experience different problems compared to their children. Since they both have a colonial educational background, a system designed by the British, as suggested by Lord Macaulay and other like minded

politicians of the time, attempting to create a class of educated translators, with English taste and opinions in order to mediate between them and the masses (Ashcroft et. al. 430). As a result, the indigenous people excel in English and learn about their own deficiencies (Boehmer 170). The Anglicanization is achieved by use of 'mimicry', however the Western culture or set of values, etc. are not internalized to serve the purposes of the colonizers. Thus their hybridity starts long before they migrate to the colonizing country. As Bhabha claims ambivalence comes as a result of mimicry (86) and both Haroon's and Ashoke's ambivalence is different from that of the second generation because their mimicry is a long standing one. Long before their arrival in the West they were already 'Anglicized' so they could function in a new environment.

Although in both of the novels the experiences of Haroon and Ashoke are given in detail, they also serve to reflect the background for the hybridity of their children. Neither Karim Amir of *The Buddha of Suburbia* nor Gogol Ganguli of *The Namesake* actually has a problem with their nationalities, with 'where' they belong. But this is where the problem occurs. One's nationality does not automatically prove one's identity as seen by the outsiders. Karim considers himself English and Gogol, American. However, these titles are not easy to obtain. Karim has no alternative to his Englishness, due to coming from a mix race family where his Indian father denies his children of their racial heritage. In his case, this is the reason for his ambivalence since his father never gives him the necessary input about his Indianness. His hybridity becomes a problem as a result of the racism, prejudice and stereotyping of the English community. However what he naturally, instinctively believes all his life; his Englishness, is seen simply as 'mimickery' by the white population, in general. And ironically, he is asked to mimic Indianness.

Gogol does not have the lack Karim has. Where Karim feels "incomplete" and as if half of him were missing (212) because he has no memories of and no connection whatsoever with his ancestral culture, Gogol is complete with a set of Indian parents and substitute aunts and uncles, frequent visits to his ancestral country. The Gangulis

create a small India in America an "Imaginary Homeland" as Rushdie names it. Thus different from Karim, Gogol's mimicry occurs as a way of escaping the extreme emphasis on Indianness. Again, unlike Karim, Gogol's main problem about his identity is not triggered or accentuated because of the society in general. His biggest act of mimicry manifests itself as his name changes from Gogol to Nikhil. He feels more Americanized, more normal instantly. His ambivalence occurs later. This time he goes between his life as Gogol and his life as Nikhil. He is still in-between two things, "incomplete and virtual" for Bhabha (86) and not a whole; a state nobody can achieve anyway, according to Chambers (25). Far from being an American, Gogol is an American Born Confused Deshi.

The danger of mimicry is it's being like a knife that 'cuts both ways'. This assertion is true for colonial practices in general. As the colonizer asks the colonized to imitate, at the same time it wants to keep the colonized subject within certain borders; borders that will not challenge its own authority and power. Boehmer explains this dichotomy as follows: "One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it both needs to 'civilise' its 'others', and to fix them into perpetual 'otherness' " (173). In "Of Mimicry and Man" Bhabha mentions 'Charles Grant, a British politician influential in matters concerning India, who wants to introduce a religious reform in India via doctrines of Christianity but at the same time he fears that the Indians "might become turbulent for liberty". So he suggests a 'partial reform', an empty imitation on the colonized subject's part (87). As this example shows, this attitude becomes the source of ambivalence on the colonizer's part. Bhabha explains the resulting irony as follows:

> The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/ recognition of the colonial object. (88)

Another important feature of the source of ambivalence is the concept of 'fixity', which is in Bhabha's terminology described as:

> . . . rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype . . . is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always in place, already known and something that must be anxiously repeated. . . .(66)

In this definition, the colonizer's insistence of his subject's 'authenticity' can be seen in both novels. There are instances where the colonial subjects are viewed as stereotypical immigrants; and are invited to be their 'authentic selves'. For instance; in Karim's situation, it happens during his acting career with both of the theatre directors he works with. They ask him to be 'an authentic Indian', sound and act Indian. On the other hand, Karim is supposed to be English, to be able to take a part in the cast in the first place. Gogol is applauded for being like the rest of the community; eating, talking, behaving, dressed and educated like a Westerner, although the very same people cannot understand why he still needs vaccination like an American going to India. Both of these characters are seen as stereotypical immigrants, as 'others' and at the same time as 'one of them'. The colonizer has to keep repeating 'what is already known' to remind both himself and its subject of their respective places and at the same time ask the subject to improve himself, to mimic and imitate-only to a certain extent (Bhabha 87). The Western ambivalence occurs at the point that it asks the colonized subject to remain 'authentic', not to change and at the same time to 'mimic' the Western ways.

The issues of the female hybrid characters are actually more remarkable. However, in this thesis there has been no attempt to study their situations from a feminist perspective. That would require another study, as the feminist perspective was not in the scope of this thesis, although there has been some mentioning of it in the parts where Jamila and Moushumi were studied. Like the other hybrid characters the leading female characters in both novels; Jamila from *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Moushumi from *The Namesake* are dedicated a section each within the main body of the thesis to study their individual situations concerning their hybridity. Both Jamila and Moushumi seek to avoid their destiny by educating themselves. In Jamila's case, the education is not

necessarily an official one, but a self- fulfilling, self education. Moushumi on the other hand uses her mainstream education as a means to escape from her Indian self. Despite this difference, they create their own space, in which they can voice their individual existences or in Bhabha's terminology a 'Third Space', with the help of the Western way of thinking and education. No matter how different or similar the way they achieve their Third Space is, they acquire their Third Space by using the power education provides them with and using it against the system to debilitate it. Thus the Western education gives them an opportunity to escape the assigned role as Indian women.

This thesis aimed to show how individuals in the countries they immigrated or they were born as the children of immigrants find means to survive and establish their identities. In individual chapters the experiences of these characters are explained in detail. Mimicry enables them to blend in with the rest of the society they need to be a part of. In the case of the characters that have been studied in this thesis their mimicry sometimes emerges as celebrating the holidays of the others or choosing names that sound like the other's, or educating themselves in the other's system to better argue their own points.

Thus, the hybrid characters studied in this thesis, through mimicry find a way to exist in their respective societies, even if it requires a 'struggle'. This use of mimicry is sometimes "intuitively and innately" done, i.e. as in the case of Karim, at other times "purposefully and studiously", i.e. like Changez (Kuortti 208). In either way they manage to exist and come to terms with their situation.

Within the scope of this thesis only this much could be covered. However, studying the hybridity of Jamila and Moushumi from a feminist perspective, as mentioned earlier, could be interesting. Gayatri C. Spivak, Chandra T. Mohanty, Sara Suleri are among the famous post-colonial feminist writers and their theories could be utilized to study the hybrid situations of these characters. And in such a study, Gogol's mother Ashima Ganguli from *The Namesake* could be involved as well, as a representative of first

generation female immigrants. It would be interesting to see how gender effects one's hybridity in relation to one's family and the society in general.

It would also be interesting to study how mimicry takes place in today's virtual world, where the point of intersection is not thousands of kilometers away from one's own culture. Through media and technology, people are encouraged to mimic different ways of living or thinking. This mimicry creates hybridized people, thus everybody becomes hybrid, unconsciously, in an effort to be like the other which is supposedly better.

Finally, we see that the first generation immigrant's experiences are different from that of the second generation. Through the stories of two first generation Indian immigrant male characters, we witness their attempts to come to terms with their hybridity and succeed in their respective environments. In order to survive they have to resort to mimicry with a more urgent instinct, i.e. finding a well-paid, respectable job, providing for their families, etc. On the other hand, the struggle of the second generation immigrants, the children of the above mentioned people, is more involved in overcoming the barriers of stereotypical perceptions and erasing the awry beliefs of the society they lived in. Obviously, their strife is not as demanding as their fathers. Lastly, the situation of the second generation female characters is still more diverse than that of their male peers. Alongside what the male characters have to deal with, female characters have to go through other means of struggle, in coming to terms with their hybrid identities and finding their own voices. Eventually they are able to refuse the conventional roles assigned to them and to create a 'Third Space' which enables them to express themselves and question the system they find themselves in.

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APPENDIX

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : ONMUŞ

Adı : SELİME

Bölümü : İNGİLİZ EDEBİYATI

TEZİN ADI : HYBRID IDENTITIES IN *THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA* BY HANIF KUREISHI AND *THE NAMESAKE* BY JHUMPA LAHIRI

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: