

CHAPTER III
THE EFFORTS OF KARIM AND HAROON IN THEIR SEARCH FOR
IDENTITIES

The effects of colonialism can still be felt today. These effects can be felt on many different levels of life and culture in most part of the ex-colonized countries and also the mother country, England. One of these effects is identity crisis. During colonization period, a person's reality has been shaped by political and cultural history of hybridization and victimization. Since identity plays an important role in human life; therefore, identity becomes a need for everyone especially for a person who experienced colonialism.

The buddha of suburbia focuses on two characters whose reality has been shaped by discrimination and cultural history of hybridization. In addition, it is about their journey toward self-awareness to reach identity. The question of the racial identity of Karim and Harroon becomes a central question posed as they undergo changing from their Indian ancestry to their desired identity as Englishmen. Thus, it

can be seen that both Karim and Haroon's question of identity is more racially oriented than religious. Through this chapter, the thesis writer tries to *analyse* both Karim's and Haroon's efforts in their search for identity.

3.1. Haroon's Efforts in Searching for Identity

One of the main male characters in Hanif Kureishi's *The buddha of suburbia* is Haroon Amir. Haroon is a middle-aged pure Indian. He is the father of two sons, Karim Amir and Allie Amir. The setting of time in the novel takes place in the 1970s when it was a period after the surge of immigrants to England from the 1950s and 60s from the ex-colonized countries such as West Indies, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These immigrants came in search for a better life in a thriving economy, for the hope of finding employment and success through the superior education system. In addition, it is also purely for the prestige that is automatically attached onto them for living in the mother country, especially in London, Birmingham and Bradford. (*England, the immigrant experience, and 'the buddha of suburbia' and 'the black album' by hanif kureishi*). Haroon's family also had the same hope when they sent their son to England. Dad [Haroon] was sent to England by his family to be educated . . . Like Gandhi and Jinnah before him, Dad would return to India a qualified and polished English gentleman lawyer and an accomplished ballroom dancer (Kureishi, 1991, p. 24). In India, Haroon's family can be considered as an upper class Indian. His father was a doctor with twelve children and a wife. His family has many servants, and they did all the daily housework. Haroon "never cooked before, never washed up, never cleaned his own shoes or made a **bed**" (p. 23) even he can hardly remember his 'kitchen' in Bombay. Even Haroon's wife, Margaret, thinks that his family is "higher than the Churchills" that he "went to school in a horse-drawn carriage" (p. 24). From Margaret's statement, it is clear that Haroon's status is higher than her own. She tells everyone about this because she wants to ensure everybody that his husband is not the same with the peasants from India that came to England and also that actually she marries an upper class Indian as everyone assume that the

Indian is considered as lower class. In here, Margaret is the representative of the typical English society. *That is why it can be said that Haroon is different from other* Indian who came along to England in the 1950s and 1960s. Haroon's family hopes that he will come home as "a qualified and polished English gentleman lawyer" just like "Gandhi and Jinnah". The idea of going to England and being educated in the western style and living among Westerners assume a great deal about the future of Haroon. From this quotation the assumption is clearly to do with upward-mobility in society, both in England and the home country, India.

As an upper class, his family life was much influenced by English 's lifestyle. In his childhood, Haroon usually played cricket and also tennis on his "family court" with Anwar, his best friend since the age of five. Since he comes from a rich family therefore he can get an education. Yet, the education is conducted under the colonizer's influence. By the influence of his education, Haroon becomes an Englishman somewhat although he is a pure Indian. Haroon's condition can be the example of Thomas Macaulay's saying about the goals of English colonial imperialism: "We must 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, words and intellect." (*British education in india*). Haroon is a perfect example of how the goal of British colonization is achieved. Thus, Haroon cannot be said that he has Indian heritage as his own personality because of his education, he is in the state of 'limbo' (Djundjung, 2001, p. 1) as he has the physical look as an Indian but as for his manner, taste, and thought he is an Englishman. Haroon never feels different from other Indians in his home country for he thinks that he is pure Indian. In addition, he also does not feel different **from** other Englishmen because he thinks that he will be treated equally as an Englishman after his arrival in England.

The immigrants who first came to Britain were ambitious, and also naive as to the hardships and difficulties to be endured in city life. Haroon also experiences this condition. Therefore, when Haroon first arrived in England, he was shocked with the reality he faced.

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 [Haroon] never took to dripping on toast ... ‘I [Haroon] 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. And when Dad tried to discuss Byron in local pubs no one warned him that not every Englishman could read or that they didn’t necessarily want tutoring by an Indian on the poetry of a **pervert** and a madman (Kureishi, 1991, p. 24).

From the quotation above, it is clear during his education in India, Haroon only gets the subject about the life and the ideologies of the privileged class. The education given during post-colonial period ignores the life and the ideologies of the working class which is the majority in England. By seeing the system of education in India, it can be understood that Haroon becomes *so* shocked about the realities he saw after his arrival in England. He sees that his expectation about England is not the same with the realities he faced, and that condition creates a very big gap between the expectation and the realities.

As a pure Indian, people do not fully accept him in the society. People treat him differently as a coloured person. He gets different treatments in his job and also in his daily life. The treatment can be **seen** in his conversation with Anwar when **he** asks him about his job. “The whites will never promote us,” Dad [Haroon] said. “Not an Indian while there is a white man left **on** the earth. You don’t have to deal with them – they still think they have an Empire. . .” (Kureishi, 1991, p. 27).

Haroon is still in his position he got since he first worked as “a clerk in the Civil Service **for** £ 3 a week”. He never gets promotion because **of** his being an Indian and it is because the English white society still cannot forget the colonization **of** English

towards India. His condition shows the reality that the white English treat him differently because seeing his education and his living style in India, his job is considered as a low class job. Although he is not regarded as equal, he **is** still eager to impress them.

And he [Haroon] always carried a tiny blue dictionary with him, the size of a matchbox, making sure *to* learn a new word every day. At the weekends I'd test him on the meaning of analeptic, fiutescent, polycephalus and orgulous. He'd **look** at me [Karim] and say, "You never know when you might need a heavyweight word to impress an Englishman" (p. 28).

The quotation above shows his desire to be accepted equally as an Englishman. In addition, it is also the proof that there are different treatments towards immigrants especially immigrants from the ex-colonized. The different treatments are given to all aspects of life like job, housing, health, and social welfare. Eventhough they could get a job, but they will never get higher position because the white will get it. The different treatments are mostly caused by the feeling of superiority that the white got during the post-colonial period (Oakland, 1995, p. 51).

The different treatments Haroon gets and the background he has causes him to get confused about his identity. Based on this condition, Haroon is eager to find an identity that will put him a certain position in the society. His eagerness is seen in one of his conversations with Anwar. "**Look**, Anwar, don't you ever feel you want to know yourself, That you are an enigma to yourself completely?" (p. 28). From this conversation, it can be seen that Haroon is eager in knowing his real identity. He was born as a pure Indian, but he was raised in an upper class Indian whose daily life was much influenced **by** the English. Therefore, he becomes an Indian with English manner and taste. His condition makes him higher than the common Indian and also from the working class in England; hence, the English especially from the upper class cannot accept him as part of Englishman. He cannot enter the same status as he **has** once in his home country. It is only English working class that can accept him although most people still see him as 'the other'. This condition changes Haroon's life.

His [Haroon's] life, once a cool river of balmy distraction, of beaches and cricket, of mocking the British, and dentists' chairs, was now a cage of umbrellas and steely regularity. It was all trains and shitting and the bursting of frozen pipes in January, and the lighting of coal fires at seven in the morning: the organization of love into suburban family life in a two-up-two-down semi-detached in South London. Life was thrashing him for being a child, an innocent who'd never had to do anything for himself (Kureishi, 1991, p. 26).

In searching for his identity, Haroon tries to imitate the way of life of the English. It is said that soon after he receives his monthly allowances from India, he visits "Bond Street to buy bow-ties, bottle-green waistcoats and tartan socks" (p. 25). He is not only imitating the way of dressing, but also the manners of the English. Early after his arrival in England and his failure to cope with the conditions he faced, Haroon often goes to the pub.

"Haroon is called to the Bar everyday – at twelve o'clock and five thirty . . . Dad defended himself 'I go to the pub to think.' . . . On Fridays and Saturdays they [Haroon and Anwar] went to dances and smooched blissfully to Glenn Miller and Count Basie and Louis Armstrong" (Kureishi, 1991, p. 25)

Going to pub is one of the habits of British, hence, it is considered as the habit of the "lower class" (p. 46). As he cannot be accepted by the upper class English, he cannot enter the private club that the privileged class usually go. Since it is only the working class that is opened for him; soon Haroon has the habit of the working class. It is true that in Britain, pubbing is usually done by foremen and dockworkers. In *Contemporary British Society*, it is said that more than thirty percents of dockworkers spend their leisure time by visiting pub and more than fifty two percents of foremen also visit pub for leisure time (Abercrombie & Warde, 1993, p. 160). Therefore, Haroon's habit by often visiting pub can be said as one of his ways of imitating to cope with his condition to be accepted as an Englishman in the society. By imitating the way of life of the English, it is said that Haroon is doing 'mimicry' as Homi K

Bhabha wrote in his paper 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', that the colonial situation creates a condition which resulted in the image of the colonized as 'a reformed, recognizable other' (Bhabha, 1999, p. 468). It means that Haroon as the colonized becomes "the adoption of the mirror as one figure" he takes the English as his mirror in his effort to be accepted in the society as Britain is the colonizer of his home country, India.

The other way in his efforts to be accepted as an Englishman is marrying a white English woman. It is in the pub that Haroon meets Margaret, his wife, as mentioned in the novel: That is where Dad [Karim] first laid eyes and hands on a pretty working-class girl from suburbs called Margaret (Kureishi, 1991, p. 27). It is said that a mixed marriage is the extreme expression of the unconscious leap of Haroon in searching his real identity. Haroon only sees English woman as his wife because of the way he thinks as a 'hybrid'. Thus, it can be said that unconsciously Haroon marries Margaret because in his mind he thinks by marrying a white English woman, he may adapt the way of living in England. By marrying Margaret, there is hope that he can be treated equally. He does not realize that marrying a white English woman will not solve his problem because although he already married to Margaret, he still cannot be the 'self'. Since his marriage with Margaret, Haroon keeps his way of imitating English manner. Every time he goes to his office, he will bring "a briefcase and umbrella" like other Civil Servant employees (p. 29). In addition, if he wears clothes outside English style, Margaret will feel unhappy like what Karim says about his father's way of wearing clothes: "If mum [Margaret] caught him going out like that she would have called the police" (p. 29). By seeing his condition, it can be seen that becoming a real Englishman is not only Haroon's desire, but it also belongs to Margaret as she also wants her husband to be a perfect Englishman for she does not want everyone to see Haroon as an Indian. It is also based on his wife's eagerness that Haroon tries to find a place in the society and also to be accepted by the society.

Becoming a 'guru' is his final way in searching his identity to be accepted by the society. After his unsuccessful imitation to be an Englishman, Haroon feels tired to imitate other, he starts to think of another way. In his search for identity, he starts to

turn to “Lieh Tzu, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu” because he fails in “trying to be more of an Englishman” (p. 21). In addition, he feels that the English culture has begun to eat up his Eastern culture although he never really embraced himself. As his son, Karim, said that his father reads them eagerly as if they’d never been read before, as if they’d been writing exclusively for him” (p. 26). The changing in Haroon’s habit is influenced by his character and personality as Anwar, who also received different treatments, does not feel eager to gain position in the society. Anwar just accepts the treatment without any effort to struggle. One of his personality is his wisdom as can be seen in his way of responding Karim and Jamila, Anwar’s daughter, one evening when they wake him.

“I [Haroon] believe happiness is only possible if you follow your feeling, your intuition, your real desires. Only unhappiness is gained by acting in accordance with duty, or obligation, or guilt, or the desire to please others. You must accept happiness when you can, not selfishly, but remembering you are a part of the world, of others, not separate them. Should people pursue their own happiness at the expense of others? Or should they be unhappy so others can be happy? There’s no one who hasn’t had to confront this problem”(p. 76).

When he says, “happiness is only possible if you follow your feeling, your intuition, your real desires” it is clear that Haroon is unhappy with his life and his marriage because he feels that he cannot get happiness from his marriage with Margaret. However, he still continues his life and marriage because he feels that he has the responsibility not only to his family both as husband and father, but also to his race as being an Indian. At this point, it can be seen that Haroon is in the middle of his confusion whether he has to “pursue their own happiness at the expense of others” or he has to sacrifice his **own** happiness so “others can be happy”. Haroon, finally, takes the first one because he feels that he cannot continue his life unhappily. By then, he decides **to** reach his happiness although as the consequence he has to sacrifice his marriage with Margaret and leave her.

However, people around Haroon such as Anwar and Margaret do not think this new habit **of** Haroon as a good one. They laugh and insult him.

“What’s this bloody-fool thing you’re playing with now?” Dad [Haroon] promptly started up with, “Anwar, yaar, you don’t realize the great secrets I’m uncovering! **How** happy I feel now I’m understanding life at last!” Anwar interrupted, stabbing at Dad with his roll-up. “You bloody Chinese fool. How are you reading rubbish when **I’m** making money ... they [Anwar and Margaret] both had sympathy for Dad, and loved him, but *in* these moods love was mixed with pity, as if he were making some tragic mistake, like joining the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The more he talked of the Yin and Yang, cosmic consciousness, Chinese philosophy, and the following of the Way, the more lost Mum [Margaret] became. He seemed to be drifting away into outer space ... (p. 27)

It is clear that people around Haroon especially Anwar, who is also an Indian, think that Haroon is making a mistake for trying to be a different man. Anwar cannot see the different treatment Haroon will get by being more oriental because he thinks by being an Englishman, both of them still cannot be fully accepted, how by being an Indian itself, Haroon will get society’s attention. However, as mentioned before that Haroon has the quality **to** be ‘the budhha’, while Anwar, although he is also an Indian, does not have the thought like Haroon has, and for Margaret as she is coming from working class family, she also does not have that thought. Anwar is a person with business oriented only, he does **not** care about identity **or** problem both he and Haroon get after their arrival in England. As far as he can live properly and have enough money he does put any interest toward other things. For Margaret, it is hard for her to accept Haroon’s new thought because she had been satisfied with their living condition. Therefore, it is hard for both of them to receive Haroon’s new ways of thinking. Both Anwar and Margaret or Karim do not realize that, actually beneath all his “Chinese Bluster” there is Haroon’s loneliness and desire for internal advancement. He feels that he needs **to talk** to someone about the “China-thinghe

was learning” (p. 28). Ironically, until he meets Eva, Haroon’s lover, that he has someone to share his ‘China-thing’.

Becoming a ‘guru’ changes Haroon’s way of living and taste. One of his changes can be seen in his appearance. If he used to wear an English style like wearing “a black polo-neck seater, a black imitation-leather jacket and grey Marks and Spencer cords”, after he turns to be ‘the buddha’ he soon starts to wear the oriental style of clothing.

For under his car coat my father [Haroon] was wearing what looked like a large pair of pyjamas. On top was a long silk shirt embroidered around the neck with dragons. This fell over his chest and flew out at his stomach for a couple of miles before dropping down to his knees. Under this he had on baggy trousers and sandals. But the real crime, the reason for concealment under the hairy car coat, was the crimson waistcoat with gold and silver patterns that he wore over the shirt (p. 29).

Haroon does not only change his way of clothing, but he also takes the way of living in oriental style. He starts to practice yoga, even though he had never done it before in India. By changing his way of living and clothing, he feels more comfortable with his way of life because he starts to feel the happiness he tries to get since his arrival in England.

It cannot be said that he received no more different treatments after his becoming a ‘guru’. At the first time Haroon goes to Eva’s house, her friend insulted him as they joke that maybe Haroon “got his camel parked outside” or “he came on a magic carpet”. In addition, one of Eva’s friends says to her “Why has she [Eva] brought this brown Indian here? Aren’t we going to get pissed?” (p. 12). Nevertheless, becoming a ‘*guru*’, changes Haroon’s life into a better one.

On this day my father [Haroon] hurried home **from** work not in a gloomy mood. His mood was high, for him. I [Karim] could smell **the** train on **him** as he put his briefcase away behind the front door and took off his raincoat, chucking it over the bottom of the banisters. He grabbed my fleeing little

brother, Allie, and kissed him; he kissed my mother and me with enthusiasm, as if we'd recently been rescued from an earthquake (p. 3).

From this quotation, it is clear that since he starts to be 'the buddha', Haroon's feeling starts to be more cheerful. He begins to see the world with different 'eyes' for now he realizes "the great secrets I [Haroon] uncovering" and he feels happy for he is "understanding life at last" (p. 27). By becoming a 'guru' he also gets more respects from the society of the privileged, and he feels so happy because it is the first time he gets people's attention.

Eva turned to my father [Haroon] and bowed to him, Japanese fashion. "My good and deep friend Haroon here, he will sow us the way. The Path." ... Dad sat down at the end of the room. Everyone looked keenly and expectantly at him, though the two men near me glanced at each other as if they wanted to laugh. Dad spoke slowly and with confidence. The nervousness he'd shown earlier appeared to have disappeared. He seemed to know he had their attention and that they'd do as he asked. I [Karim] was sure he'd never done anything like this before. He [Haroon] was going to wing it (p. 13).

Actually, it is an irony for Haroon is accepted by the society because of his being oriental. By imitating and having the manner, tastes and thought of an Englishman, he cannot get the position or be accepted **by** the society. Then, he becomes an Indian himself and a 'guru' and he can be accepted by the society that once rejects him. It is Haroon's "discovery of Eastern philosophy" that helps him overcome his problem of identity. It is the condition of the white Englishmen that they hardly accept Haroon as part of them **for** he has the physical **look** of an Indian, but tastes and manners of **an** Englishman. This condition is confusing the Englishmen **of** how they have to interact and treat a person with a background like Haroon has. It is said that colonization creates a contradiction between the colonizer and the colonized. By 'returning' to his Indian heritage, now people around Haroon understand and know how to treat him **as** he fulfils the stereotyping **of** an Indian. Therefore, it can be said that the **more** he **is** trying to be more Englishman than the Englishman himself, the more people cannot

accept him and also the more he is unhappy with his condition. However, by being more oriental and creating a gap between the white and the Indian, Haroon can be accepted by the society both from privileged and working class

3.2. Karim's Efforts in Searching for Identity

Karim Amir is a young man, around 17 years old, and also the narrator in the novel. Similar to Haroon, Karim is also searching to find a certain place and identity in the society. Yet, different from Haroon. Karim as a young man faces more problems related to his youth and also problems with social acceptance in his search for identity. **As** the child of the first generation Indian immigrant, Karim has come to find himself living in a divided world, in a state of limbo between two cultures and two traditions. He is confused with his identity because of his Indian immigrant father, Haroon, and his white English mother, Margaret. He is the direct product of immigration and interracial marriage which resulted in creating "an almost chaotic jumble and confusion of feelings within him" (*England, the immigrant experience, and 'the buddha of suburbia' and 'the black album' by hanif kureishi*). At the beginning of the novel, when he describes himself, it can be seen that he is really unsure with his identity.

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care - Englishman I am (though not proud of it) . . . Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored (Kureishi, 1991, p. 3).

From this quotation, it is clear that Karim sees himself as "an Englishman born and bred" because as he was born and grown up in England, automatically he is an Englishman. However, he is seen by the other as "a funny kind of Englishman" because of the colonial concept of an Englishman. In the colonial concept, an Englishman should be white. As the second generation Indian immigrant he inherits

his father's coloured skin and his mother's white skin. As he does not match the colonial concept of an Englishman, he is then considered by the other Englishmen as "a funny kind of Englishman", a coloured Englishman.

Karim is the perfect example of what Bhabha said about 'hybridization'. As the child of an Indian father and a white English mother, he is 'hybrid' species from "two old histories", Indian and England. Karim does not belong to the definition of an Englishman who is supposed to be white. In addition, he also does not belong to the Indian culture because he was born, grown up in England, and has already adopted the British culture. Thus, Karim sees his condition as an "almost Englishman". Seeing his condition as a 'hybrid', Karim regards himself as "a new bred". In post-colonial concept, a person can be considered as an Englishman although he is black. His condition as "belonging nowhere" (p. 141) – either Indian or English – makes him to define himself as "a new bred". The condition as "having emerged from two old histories" cannot be acknowledged by the white English society which still has strong impression about colonial concept in their mind. As Karim says "The thing was, we [Karim and Jamila] were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it" (p. 53).

As he is rejected for his 'hybridized' cultures, Karim wants to be treated equally as an Englishman. In his confusion, Karim unconsciously starts to take the first step out of three stages of 'adopt', 'adapt' and 'adept'. At this condition he begins to find a figure that he wants to adopt in order to make him equal as the other young adult in England, and the character that he tries to adopt is Charlie Kay, later Charlie Hero because Karim sees Charlie as the typical of a young adult English. "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. I coveted his talents, face, style. I wanted to wake up with them all transferred to me" (p. 15). Here, it can be seen that **Karim** is anxious to be seen as equal by the other white for he wants to be just like Charlie. At this condition, Karim is in the state of adopting, he only adopts whatever Charlie **does** without considering the effects towards him. As Charlie is the *character* that **he wants** to be, it makes him do whatever Charlie does or say.

“You’ve got to wear less.” “Wear less, Charlie?” “Dress less. Yes” . . .
 “Levi’s, I suggest, with an open-necked shirt, maybe in pink *or* purple,
 and a thick brown belt. Forget the headband.” “Forget the headband?”
 “Forget it.” I ripped my headband off and tossed it across the floor. . . I
 who wanted only to be like Charlie – as clever, as cool in every part of my
 soul – tattooed his words on to 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 (p. 16-7).

From this quotation, it can be seen that Karim follows the advice given by Charlie. He wants to be like Charlie because he hopes that by turning into Charlie, he will be recognised by the other white as the same as Charlie, an Englishman. When Charlie changes into a different style, **Karim** also changes his to be the same with Charlie. In one of the occasions when Charlie changes his hair colour and Karim cannot recognise him he feels that he misses the newest style. “Why had he gone silver? Were we entering a new hair era that I’d completely failed to notice?” (p. 36-7). Therefore, from the examples above, it can be said that Karim is adopting Charlie, especially in Charlie’s appearance.

Moreover, it is not only Charlie’s appearance that Karim adopts from him, but also his tastes in music. For young people in Britain, music can be considered as an important element of youth culture. Music is part of a world of fashion, image and style, which together express identity and individuality (Christopher, 1999, p. 131). Charlie is just like the **other** young man, also **puts** some interest **in** music. Karim “who wanted only to be like Charlie” (Kureishi, 1991, p. 16), also tries **to** listen to the same kind **of** music like Charlie listen to. “I [Charlie] think it’s time you bathed **your** ears in something really nourishing, Karim”. He put on a record by the Pink Floyd called ummagumma. I forced myself to listen while Charlie sat opposite me (p. 14). From the quotation, it can be seen that Karim is trying to understand and to enjoy the kind of music that Charlie loves to hear. In his spare time Karim “listened to records all night” as he “favoured the tuneless: King Crimson, **Soft** Machine, Captain Beefheart, Frank Zappa and Wild Man Fisher” (p. 62). The names above that

Charlie, which later also “favoured” by Karim, are very popular among young adult *in England during the mid-1970*. The *music they play* is full of “anger at the complacency of an older generation” that all the frustration is put in their music (Christopher, 1999, p. 146). By imitating Charlie’s taste in music, Karim also hopes that he will be considered the same like Charlie.

As he tries to copy Charlie, it can be said that Karim becomes ‘a poor imitation’ like Homi K Bhabha said about ‘hybrid’ species because Karim only adopts without considering the effects to him. Karim’s condition as “a new bred” forces him to do mimicry (Bhabha, 1990, p. 468). It means that the “disavowal of difference turns the colonial subject into a misfit – a grotesque mimicry or ‘doubling’” (Bhabha, 1997, p. 45). Karim as a ‘hybrid’ species is “the colonial subject” that turns into a ‘mimic men’ in order to assimilate to his surrounding in searching for his identity.

However, Karim fails in adopting Charlie in order to be seen the same like him because although he is already adopting Charlie in everything, the white society still regards him as a coloured person.

“You [Karim] 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.”

“We don’t like it,” Hairy Back said “However many niggers there are, we don’t like it. We’re with Enoch. If you put one of your black ‘ands near **my** daughter *I’ll smash it with a ‘ammer! With a ‘ammer?*” (Kureishi, 1991, p. 40).

Here, it is clearly stated that Karim is seen as a coloured person although he has *already imitated whatever Charlie does*. **As** he also has a white English mother, Hairy Black still does not see him as an Englishman, he only sees him as an Indian because of the stereotyping of the white towards him. By being an Indian in England, it means a person cannot be seen equally to the other Englishmen since they consider this particular race as an inferior because **of** the history of colonization. Karim also inherits the blood of a pure white English and has already adopted the way of thinking of the English cannot be regarded as an Englishman. Therefore, he receives different treatment because of his “blackness”.

As he is judged by his colour, the treatment he received everyday does not only happen in his neighbourhood but also in his school.

I [Karim] was sick too of being affectionately called Shitface and Curryface, and **of** coming home covered in spit and snot and chalk and wood shavings . . . and the other kids liked to lock me and my friends in the storeroom and have us chant ‘Manchester United, Manchester United, we are the boot boys’ as they chisels to our throat and cut off our shoelaces . . . Fuck you, Charles Dickens, nothing’s changed. One kid tried to brand my arm with a red-hot lump of metal. Someone pissed over my shoes, and all my Dad [Haroon] thought about was me becoming a doctor. . . Everyday I considered myself lucky to get home from school without serious injury (p. 63).

School is a place for education and it does not see the race, colour, and background of the students. School is purely for the sake to educate people. However, the quotation above shows that school becomes a place where discrimination could happen. The discrimination Karim gets in the school is not only different treatment towards coloured people, but it has already become violence to the victim. Here, Karim becomes the victim of what is called the effects of the colonization where the feeling of superiority is still strong in the mind of the white eventhough British Empire had already been erased from this planet. In addition, the concept of colonization that the English society has is not only in the mind of the adult like Hairy Black, it had also

been planted in the mind of the young generation which does not experience the *colonial period*.

On the other side. Karim is also seen by the other Indian especially the ones from his home count?’ for being too western. When Karim first meet Changez, Jamila’s husband, it can be seen that Karim feels so different to him because of the different culture they share everyday. **As** Karim never regards himself as an Indian, he puts his position as an Englishman, and he sees Changez as a real Indian from his point of view as an Englishman.

The man walking towards England, towards our curious eyes, and towards the warm winter overcoat that I [Karim] held in my hands, was not Flaubert the writer, . . . Not-Flaubert was smaller than me, about the same size as Princess Jeeta . . . With his good hand he shoved a trolley loaded with two rotting suitcases, which were saved from instant disintegration only by string and fraying pyjama cord (p. 78).

This quotation strengthens Karim’s point of view in seeing Changez. When he describes Changez’s performance, he compares Changez’s physical look with Princess Jeeta which is a pure Indian because he feels that he is “an Englishman born and bred” (p. 3). As he feels that he is different from Changez, he does not want to be compared or seen as the same with Changez. His rejection can be seen when he takes Changez to see the city, he forces Changez to wear “a bobble-hat over his face in case the lads saw he was a Paki and imagined I [Karim] was one too” (p. 98). Here, it is clear that Karim feels he is different from Changez because he thinks that he is an Englishman and Changez is “a Paki”, and he does not want people to judge that he is also “a Paki”. Hence, Changez also *sees* Karim different from the other Indian. Changez refers Karim as the Englishman as reflected in one of his conversation with Karim “You’re a little English, with a yellowish face like the devil” (p. 184). This is how Changez sees Karim from his point of view as an Indian. Changez also feels that Karim’s attitudes are too western and he had already lost his Indian tradition as he criticizes him for being “very daring and non-conformist” (p. 97). Here, it can be seen that there is different thought between

Changez and Karim. As he disagrees with Karim's way of thinking for he thinks that Karim is too western for an Indian, that he should behave like an Indian.

As Karim feels the different treatments and the pressure from his surrounding, he starts to question his efforts in adopting Charlie. Since he is still regarded as a coloured person, he makes rebellion against the discrimination he received. Karim's realization of the rejection from the society brings him into the second step which is 'adapt'. At this stage, Karim sees sexual relationship as a way to express his rebellion. Having sex with more than one woman gives Karim a satisfied feeling. When he is having sexual relationship with Helen, a white girl he meets in a bar, he is satisfied because he can sleep with a white girl. Having a sexual relationship or just being with her gives Karim secure feeling as he says "when I was with someone like Helen, whom I didn't desire, the chances were they would **look** at me as she [Helen] was looking at me now" (p. 31-2). The society's recognition towards him is very important for Karim. As he always seen as a coloured person, the condition forces him to 'adapt' different ways since he fails in adopting Charlie as an Englishman. That is why when he is with Helen, there is a hope that he will be recognized as the same with her, an Englishman. His new effort in searching for identity is done through having sexual relationship with a white girl. This reason makes him have sex regularly with Helen in toilets, building sites, or wherever the opportunity rises. Besides having sexual relationship with white girl, he also has sex with Jamila and even to Charlie. Karim is not a homosexual, yet as he is in 'a state of limbo' that makes him angry with the treatment he received. In his anger, he sees sex as one of the ways to take revenge towards the treatments he received from the society.

Having sex is not his only way in his stage to 'adapt'. He sees acting as one of the ways to find a place in the society. His decision to be an actor might be influenced by his father. "Once, when I [Karim] was seven or eight, Dad told me he thought I should become an actor; it was a good life, he said and the proportion of work to money was high" (p. 23). His decision coincides with his movement to London. London, "historically the heart of the former British Empire" becomes the object of desire of persons who struggle to "move from margins to its centre" (*The*

of his/her-stories in hanif kureishi's the buddha of suburbia). As Karim is eager to be in the mainstream, he sees his move to London as his chance to get the best of all possible things that he can get somewhere outside the suburbs. London is so different from South London, where he used to live since his childhood. He feels that London is “a place so bright. fast and brilliant” (Kureishi, 1991, p. 126).

It is in London that Karim gets his first chance to have a role in a play. Hence, Karim is offered in the play directed by Shadwell, one of Eva's friends, because of his 'blackness' that he can get the role in the play. At the play, Karim is asked to have the role to be Mowgli. '*You're [Karim] just right for him,' he [Shadwell] continued. “In fact, you are Mowgli. You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry, and you'll be sweet but wholesome in the costume” (p. 142-43). Karim is chosen to take the role of Mowgli because of his being Indian. As half-Indian he inherits his father Indian's physical look such as “dark-skinned” and “small” which matched the characteristic of Mowgli.

Shadwell took me aside and said, “**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.” (p. 146-7)

From the conversation between Karim and Shadwell, it is clear that Karim can take part in the play not because of his talent or experience, but because of his “authenticity” as an Indian. As he has “Indian” in his blood, he is expected to have the physical look of an Indian, besides; he is also expected to speak the language of “Punjabi or Urdu” and have the “Indian accent” because Shadwell sees him as the

stereotype of an Indian. Karim who has already adopted the English manner and culture can speak **no** Indian and know nothing about his own language **for** he only knows “the dirty words” (p. 140). It is an irony that as the second generation Indian immigrant, Karim knows nothing about his home country and he never puts his feet in India.

The condition of Karim that knows nothing about **his** home country can be regarded as an ambivalence. He feels that he never has any feeling towards India, and it makes the other thinks it is *so* funny.

“Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!” he [Shadwell] went. He said, “What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to. If the pioneers from East India Company could see you [Karim]. What puzzlement there’d be. Everyone looks at you, I’m sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we’ll hear now from him. And you’re from Orpington (p. 141).

Here, it can be seen that as Karim has the physical look of an Indian, and he is expected to have the image of the colonized, India. In order to justify the colonization of a country or race, images need to be created so that the subjugation makes sense. These images become the identity of the colonized (Kortright, *Colonization and identity*). As India is the colonized country, certain images are created by the English to give this country an identity for the colonizer to justify colonization. One of the images, which is given by the English is exotic. Everything connected to India is exotic in the eyes of the English. The images given to India as the colonized create the stereotyping of India in the mind of the whites. Karim who knows nothing about India and behave like an Englishman **is** considered different with the image that the English have in their mind. When people see Karim, they **will** assume that Karim is a pure Indian that behaves like an Indian and knows everything about India. However, they know nothing that Karim is **from** “Orpington” and has the manner and taste of a real Englishman.

Although he is cast only for his “authenticity”, Karim still regards this opportunity as his way out of his problem. Later, the play succeeds and he **is** offered

another play by Pyke, a reputable director. It is through acting that he starts to take a stab at *his* final way of feeding his creative **impulses and** making sense of his conflicting emotions and cultures. Here, he writes about the process of making a character performance come alive:

With a beer and notebook on my desk, and concentrating for the first time since childhood on something that absorbed me, my thoughts raced: one idea pulled another behind it, like conjurer's handkerchiefs. I uncovered notions, connections, initiatives I didn't even know were present in my mind. I became more energetic and alive as I brushed in new colours and shades. I worked regularly and kept a journal; I saw that creation was an accretive process which couldn't be hurried, and which involved patience, and, primarily, love. I felt more solid myself, and not as if my mind were just a kind of cinema for myriad impressions and emotions to flicker through. This was worth doing, this had meaning, this added up the elements of my life (Kureishi, 1991, p. 217).

From this quotation, it is clear that Karim finds that through acting he starts to recognize something what he actually has. Since his childhood he never puts something serious in his life, but it is acting that leads him to realize that he can do something important, and it makes him "brushed in new colours and shades". The process in creating a character needs lots of time and "couldn't be hurried", that is what teaches him how to be more patient to overcome his problem in his life. **As** he realises that all he does in giving the best for his acting and his character he plays, the process gives him something meaningful that "added up the elements" of his life.

As he is also successful **in his** second performance which is directed by Pyke, famous director, Karim is offered **to** perform the play in America. It is acting that brings him to New York where he can see new things in his life. In New York, Karim sees different perspective of life. Charlie, now **is** living in New York says, "This country [America] gives me [Charlie] such optimism. People here believe you can do stuff" (p. 247). Here, in New York, Karim lives with Charlie and it makes him observe the way of living, the tastes and the attitudes Charlie had. Karim who

once idolizes him and regards him as a perfect example of a young adult Englishman: sees that Charlie's attitudes and his thoughts do not coincide with his anymore. "I realized I didn't love Charlie anymore. I didn't care either for or about him. He didn't interest me at all. I'd moved beyond him, discovering myself through what I rejected (p. 255). From this quotation, it is clear that Karim starts to realize that he does not want to copy Charlie anymore. He wants to be himself with everything in it. He has already discovered his confidence, talent in acting. The experiences he had in his searching for identity give him a secure position in the society. **As** Karim is now free from the shadow of Charlie, he is now in the third stage which is 'adept'. He does not choose either his Indian culture or English one, but he compromises with both cultures and lives with them. **As** he has already found a certain position in the society as a successful actor, he is very happy and satisfied with his condition although he still feels miserable at the same time: "And so I sat in the centre of this old city that I loved, which itself sat at the bottom of a tiny island. I was surrounded by people I loved, and I felt happy and miserable at the same time. I thought **of** what a mess everything had been, but that it wouldn't always be that way" (p. 284). From this quotation, it can be seen that Karim now feels satisfied for what he has done in the past and he does not regret it. The process of searching for identity needs time and Karim is on his way to achieve it.