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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

**The development of relationships in Hanif Kureishi's  
Buddha of Suburbia**

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# ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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## Zásady pro vypracování

Studentka se ve své bakalářské práci zaměří na hlavní témata, kterým se ve vybraných dílech věnuje pákistáncko-britský autor Hanif Kureishi. Teoretická část práce bude obsahovat kulturně-historickou charakteristiku období, která jsou zobrazena ve vybraných dílech a která představují různé fáze Kureishiho tvorby. Dále se autorka bude zabývat problematikou identity. V praktické části práce bude tyto teoretické poznatky studentka reflektovat ve vlastních analýzách vybraných primárních zdrojů a zaměří se zejména na vzájemné vztahy Kureishiho literárních hrdinů.

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## **Annotation**

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the development of relationships in Hanif Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Each chapter consists of a theoretical and practical part, where the individual topics are introduced, and the knowledge then applied to the characters in the novel. The first chapter focuses on the historical background of Great Britain, India and Pakistan, the mass migration that followed, and the subsequent settlement of the immigrants. The second chapter analyses identity, the position of individual within society, and the collectivist and individualistic patterns of behaviour. Lastly, the third chapter describes the different values in relationships, specifically values of marriage and family.

## **Key Words**

Partition of India, identity, collectivism, individualism, nuclear family. extended family, arranged marriage

## **Název**

Význam vztahů v díle Hanifa Kureishiho *Buddha z předměstí*

## **Anotace**

Účelem této práce je analyzovat vývoj vztahů v románu *Buddha z předměstí* Hanifa Kureishiho. Každá kapitola je složena z teoretické a praktické části, ve kterých jsou přiblíženy jednotlivá témata, ze kterých se poté aplikují poznatky na postavy románu. První kapitola se zaměřuje na historický kontext Velké Británie, Indie a Pákistánu, masovou vlnu migrace, která následovala, a následné usazování migrantů. Druhá kapitola analyzuje identitu, pozici jednotlivce vůči společnosti, a kolektivistické a individualistické vzorce chování. Poslední, třetí kapitola líčí různé hodnoty vztahů, a to zejména manželské a rodinné hodnoty.

## **Klíčová slova**

rozdělení Indie, identita, kolektivismus, individualismus, nukleární rodina, rozšířená rodina, dohodnutý sňatek

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## Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine the relationships between the characters in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and analyse their development throughout the story.

Hanif Kureishi is a writer, playwright, and screenwriter, who became one of the biggest contributors to the British contemporary literary scene. While born in England, Kureishi is of Pakistani descent, meaning that he had to face the conflict of two contrasting cultures. Much of his work is thus inspired from his own personal life and struggles. As Yousaf states, Kureishi's work helped bring representation of the ethnic minorities into spotlight, a topic which had been underrepresented when Kureishi started publishing.<sup>1</sup> One of the main themes used in his works is the issue of identity, whether national, ethnic, or sexual. He also showcases the ways his characters fit into the community. Kureishi has published novels, short stories, and screenplays, though the play *My Beautiful Launderette* and novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* continue to be his most famous works.

To fully understand the motives in Kureishi's novel, it is necessary to look at the historical background of both Great Britain and India after the end of World War 2. Only then will it be possible to comprehend the characters and their motivation. The first chapter will therefore focus on the Partition of India, the migration waves from the Indian peninsula to the UK and the lives of those who decided to permanently settle on the British Isles. This knowledge will then be applied to the characters of *The Buddha of Suburbia*; specifically, the first generation migrants.

The second chapter will then approach the issue of identity and its impact on the behaviour of the individual. As it is a complex topic, the chapter will focus on identity mainly from the perspective of sociology, discussing terms such as collectivism and individualism. The practical part of the chapter will then examine the identities of Haroon and Anwar, as they showcase a clear contrast.

Identity is an incredibly broad term used in many fields of study, such as psychology, sociology or anthropology, to name a few. It has also become increasingly popular in the mainstream literature in the last few decades. As such, it makes it exceedingly difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> Nahem Yousaf, "Hanif Kureishi and 'the brown man's burden'," *Critical Survey* 8, no. 1 (1996): 14. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41555965>



form a cohesive definition that could be unanimously agreed upon. The understanding of identity is also ultimately subjective, meaning that every person delving into the subject will come to their own conclusion. To complicate matters even further, other terms, such as self or personality, have been used alongside it, sometimes interchangeably, as they bear a close resemblance. To avoid any confusion, the terms self and personality are defined to properly differentiate them from what an identity is. Identity will then be explained more thoroughly in the second chapter.

The term self is incredibly ambiguous and can be interpreted in multiple ways. According to Leary and Tangney, the term self has been used to refer to the person as a whole, their personality, their inner mental presence acting as a conscious experiencer and an agent, or the person's feelings towards themselves.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of a definition though, they suggest using more specific terms, such as self-concept, or self-awareness to prevent any confusion. Kegan also labels the self similarly, though he further explains it as “the zone of mediation where meaning is made.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, the self is a core where matters such as feelings or experiences are received and then processed.

Personality is equally as hard to define. According to Burger, personality is a sum of internal processes, behaviours and traits which are constant, and which are particular to the individual.<sup>4</sup> These processes are influenced by outside interference, though the internal cognition is still more important.

The difference between these two terms is thus small, but still present. Morf and Mischel point out, that another factor, which may help in differentiating between them, is the field of study. The self is most prominently studied by cognitive and social psychology, whereas personality leans towards personality and behaviour psychology.<sup>5</sup> Though the line between personality and the self is hazy at best and thus wholly dependent on the researcher differentiating between them. That said, as both terms are very close in meaning, they do get

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<sup>2</sup> Mark L. Leary, June P. Tangney, “The Self as an Organizing Construct in the Behavioral and Social Sciences,” in *Handbook of Self and Identity*, 2nd ed., ed. Mark L. Leary, June P. Tangney (New York: The Guildford Press, 2012), 4–5. [https://books.google.cz/books?id=kGK-dfHpM4gC&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=kGK-dfHpM4gC&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>3</sup> Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), 3. [https://books.google.cz/books?id=SP3pJvqaBN4C&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=SP3pJvqaBN4C&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>4</sup> Jerry M. Burger, *Personality*, 10th ed. (Boston: Cengage, 2018), 4. [https://books.google.cz/books?id=5g9EDwAAQBAJ&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=5g9EDwAAQBAJ&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>5</sup> Carolyn C. Morf, Walter Mischel, “The Self as a Psycho-Social Dynamic Processing System: Towards a Converging Science of Selfhood,” in *Handbook of Self and Identity*, 2nd ed., ed. Mark L. Leary, June P. Tangney (New York: The Guildford Press, 2012), 25. [https://books.google.cz/books?id=kGK-dfHpM4gC&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=kGK-dfHpM4gC&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

used synonymously fairly often. Identity can also sometimes be used interchangeably, though its definition will be discussed further in the second chapter.

The last chapter will focus on family structure and relationship values. The term family will be explained and then further categorised into two main types: nuclear and extended. The term arranged marriage will also be discussed. The practical part will analyse and compare three distinct family units: Anwar, Jeeta and Jamila, Jamila and Changez, and Haroon and Margaret.

# 1. Britain and India after 1945

The end of World War 2 brought the decolonisation of the British Empire and its subsequent end. The Empire was greatly weakened by the war and its stability was in danger. To circumvent this, as stated by Childs, the Labour Party decided to promise the colonies higher financial support and improved prosperity, should they vote for them. With such a promise, however, came the question whether to prioritize the colonies with the potential to bring benefit to the mainland, or whether to contribute to all of them equally.<sup>6</sup> After the war, Britain was low on funds and so had to choose carefully where to invest its finances. At the same time, tensions rose in the colonies as they gained more political awareness and started opposing the British Government. As such, it was found more beneficial to allow the colonies their independence while at the same time forming and reforming the Commonwealth to retain the position of power. As stated by Halvorson, the term Commonwealth of Nations began to be used after the Indian independence and the establishment of the Indian Republic.<sup>7</sup> The idea of Commonwealth was to keep a connection between the former colonies and the UK with the right to continue developing independently.

One of the most prominent colonies to gain independence was India. India, or as it was also known, British Raj, was under the British rule since the reign of Queen Victoria. The dilemma of Indian independence had already been voiced before the war, with several Acts trying to provide more freedom and self-governance. Nevertheless, as stated by Childs, none of the Acts managed to lessen the tension between the British Government and the Indian National Congress lead by Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>8</sup> Protests, conflicts and riots started appearing more often. Bates states that the reasons why the situation so radically worsened after World War 2 were unemployment and famine.<sup>9</sup> Millions of people were starving, and Britain thus became the primary target for hatred and rage.

It has to be said though, that the British Government was not unconcerned with the situation. The question concerning the future of India was one of the dominating subjects in many Parliamentary debates. Many politicians, mostly imperialists, refused to even consider the

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<sup>6</sup> David Childs, *Britain since 1945*, unabridged republication (London: Routledge, 1992; 1993), 53.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Halvorson, *Commonwealth Responsibility and Cold War Solidarity* (Acton: ANU Press, 2019), 49. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvt6rjzk.7?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvt6rjzk.7?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

<sup>8</sup> Childs, *Britain since 1945*, 44.

<sup>9</sup> Crispin Bates, "The Hidden Story of Partition and its Legacies," *BBC*, March 3, 2011. [https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/partition1947\\_01.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/partition1947_01.shtml)

notion of giving India independence, while others advocated for complete independence. Amidst those that opposed it was also the Conservative Party leader Winston Churchill, who was at first resolutely against any type of change. According to Owen, his stance radically changed in April 1946, when he discovered what India would contribute to the Empire economically. After the revelation that India would not be of much benefit to Britain and that its separation would bring no significant loss, Churchill decided to support the notion of independence.<sup>10</sup> However, he still intended to execute it in such a way that would make India dependent on Britain.

To complicate the situation even further, India was divided between two main religions: Hinduism and Islam. The representatives of both sides had different ideas about the future of the country. The tension between these two groups had been rising for decades, with conflicts becoming more and more common, and often resulting in casualties. The reason for this was the difference in religion and customs. Hinduism and Islam are fundamentally different; Hinduism worships multiple Gods, whereas Islam serves only one God. Coupland also states that both religions would sometimes purposefully provoke the other. Hindus would sing more loudly for their processions when walking near a mosque, where it was strictly forbidden. On the other hand, Muslims would sacrifice a cow in their rituals, which is a sacred animal in Hinduism. On some occasions, festivals for each religion would happen on the same date, but would be drastically different, which would further increase the animosity between the two communities.<sup>11</sup> The relationship between both religions became more and more strained and the presence of British officers did not alleviate the problems.

One of the biggest supporters of separate India and Pakistan was Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Originally a lawyer from Bombay, he soon became the head of the Muslim League. As Cohen states, Jinnah labelled both religions as different nations, which could not coexist together.<sup>12</sup> This ideology was then taken even further. In the case India was given independence as a whole, Muslims would eventually become dominated by the Hindus as they were the minority at the time. Jinnah therefore resolutely refused any possibility of the foundation of a unified India and obstinately propagated the creation of India and Pakistan as separate states.

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<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Owen, "The Conservative Party and Indian Independence, 1945-1947," *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 2 (June 2003): 407. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3133516?seq=1>

<sup>11</sup> Reginald Coupland, *The Indian Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), 30. <https://archive.org/details/indianproblemrep009634mbp/mode/1up>

<sup>12</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2004), 28.

[https://books.google.cz/books?id=-78yjVyBQfC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.cz/books?id=-78yjVyBQfC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

This issue, whether to create one state or two, continued to be the leading topic in the British Government. Owen describes that Churchill was in favour of creating two separate states, which would weaken their power and thus increase the probability of them being more dependent on Britain.<sup>13</sup> This would allow Britain to retain certain power over the states and allow them to continue pursuing their interests. Dockter also adds that for Churchill, the creation of Pakistan would mean an open path to other Islamic nations.<sup>14</sup> Creating two new states would therefore appease both “nationalities” and stop Britain from displeasing either religious community.

Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Clement Atlee wanted to emancipate India for a long time and urged the Government to do so before the end of 1948. He was, however, unnerved by the National Congress and the Muslim League. According to Brookshire, Atlee wanted to “mediate an agreement among party leaders for protection of minorities, for arrangements with the princely states and for an independent Indian military.”<sup>15</sup> This was not successful, as the Muslim League resolutely rejected such an idea. What followed were several protests, which further escalated the conflict between Hindus and Muslims. As further added by Brookshire, one such protest happened in Calcutta and resulted in five thousand casualties.<sup>16</sup> It became clear that the only solution which could prevent the beginning of civil war was to create two fully separate states.

This officially happened on August 15, 1947. The British Government passed the Indian Independence Act of 1947, which officially declared India and Pakistan to be independent states and granted them the status of dominions. As stated by Owen, the passing of the Bill happened fairly quickly; only six weeks after Atlee brought up the partition to the Government.<sup>17</sup> However, this meant that there had been little time to adequately prepare everything for the transfer of power.

The independence gained by India and Pakistan was therefore far from victorious. According to Bates, the division into the two new states favoured India, as Pakistan acquired only 23% of the land and about 17.5% of the finances left over from the British Raj. What is more, India

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<sup>13</sup> Owen, “The Conservative Party,” 425.

<sup>14</sup> Waren Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 245.

<https://books.google.cz/books?id=NuKPDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>15</sup> Jerry H. Brookshire, *Clement Atlee* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 135.

<https://books.google.cz/books?id=Tn27AAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>16</sup> Brookshire, *Clement Atlee*, 135.

<sup>17</sup> Owen, “The Conservative Party,” 436.

kept the vast majority of factories and the overall production.<sup>18</sup> This meant that Pakistan had very little money and had to build everything anew, whereas India already had the necessary foundation for its newly gained independence.

Another disastrous consequence of the partition was the displacement of millions of people. Shortly after the partition, it was decided that the borders between the two countries would follow the religious communities. According to Coupland, Muslims occupied mainly the north, with 80% of them in Punjab, Sind and Bengal.<sup>19</sup> This was why it was decided that Pakistan would be located in the northern part of the former British Raj. That is not to say, however, that Muslims lived exclusively north. Muslim communities were distributed all over the country, albeit in smaller numbers. The same could be said for Hindus, as their communities could be found in the north as well. So, when the border was officially established, the minority groups in each state started feeling the loss of belonging.

The most affected region was Punjab, in which Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs all resided in and which was divided by the border between Pakistan and India. Dosanjh and Ghuman state that this impacted the lives of almost 15 million people.<sup>20</sup> Most of them lost their livelihoods and started feeling threatened by the other religious communities, even though they lived in the area their whole lives. In the end, the minorities were forced to move, lost basically everything they owned, and were subsequently given back very little.

The mass migration, along with the conflicts between India and Pakistan over the region of Kashmir therefore led many to migrate into other countries, including the UK. As Ashcroft and Bevir state, while anyone born in the Empire had the right to migrate to Britain, it was not until the passing of the British Nationality act of 1948 that it started happening in such numbers.<sup>21</sup> The Act redefined what the citizenship was for the colonies as well as the members of the Commonwealth. This meant that anyone born on the soil of either a colony or an independent state in the Commonwealth had the right to migrate to Britain, permanently live there, and even vote. Which means that according to Ashcroft and Bevir, “the 1948 Act opened the UK to the possibility of legally protected mass immigration from the

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<sup>18</sup> Bates, “The Hidden Story of Partition.”

<sup>19</sup> Coupland, *The Indian Problem*, 31.

<sup>20</sup> J. S. Dosanjh, Paul A. S. Ghuman, *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities* (Clevedon, Philadelphia, Toronto, Adelaide, Johannesburg: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1996), 10.

<sup>21</sup> Richard T. Ashcroft, Mark Bevir, *Multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 27. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvr7fcvv.5?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvr7fcvv.5?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

predominantly non-white countries of the “New” Commonwealth.”<sup>22</sup> Britain therefore became one of the sought-after lands for the migrants.

The migrants which came to Britain often shared a lot of similarities. Dosanjh and Ghuman emphasize, that many of the migrants were originally from the middle social class, and that they were unable to find work which was not manual.<sup>23</sup> They were also mainly men who needed to secure a good financial stability for themselves and their families. That is why it was not the whole families which travelled to Britain at first, but rather only the men capable of hard work. These men then usually worked for minimal wage, whose large percentage was then sent back to their families. Also, as stated by Ghuman, only a small percentage of migrants intended to stay in the UK permanently.<sup>24</sup> At first, they only aimed to make a decent amount of money and come back to India or Pakistan. It was the amount of prosperity and the improved welfare that managed to convince the majority of them to stay. Furthermore, as Ghuman also pointed out, the reality of having a member of the family working in the UK raised the respect the society had for the whole household.<sup>25</sup> The Family was economically stable, had their reputation raised and their children had more chances for better education. As a result of all these reasons, the migration to the UK became more and more profitable and irresistible.

In fact, the notion of migrating to the UK became so popular, that it started to concern the British Government. As Hampshire points out, by 1961 the numbers of arriving immigrant were estimated to reach up to half a million in a single year.<sup>26</sup> Britain therefore became a hotspot for immigrants: from the Indian subcontinent as well as the rest of the former colonies and dominions. As such, preventative measures had to be taken in order to preserve the equilibrium of citizens within the country. This led to the passing of The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, which set restriction to permanent stay in the UK. According to Hansen, this basically created a duality in citizenship for those born on British soil and those born in the colonies.<sup>27</sup> It therefore became exponentially harder for a citizen born in the

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<sup>22</sup> Ashcroft, Bevir, *Multiculturalism*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> Dosanjh, Ghuman, *Child-Rearing*, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Paul A. S. Ghuman, *Coping with two Cultures: British Asian and Indo-Canadian Adolescents* (Clevedon, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1994), 7.

<https://books.google.cz/books?id=3MIZKqIranYC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>25</sup> Ghuman, *Coping with two Cultures*, 5.

<sup>26</sup> James Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging: Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 68.

<sup>27</sup> Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post-war Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 123.

former colonies to permanently move to the UK. That said, as Hansen also states, immediate family members of those already with permanent citizenship, such as parents or children, were allowed entry with no conditions.<sup>28</sup> As such, many decided to travel to Britain to reunite with the rest of their families and settle permanently.

There is also the issue of settlement. The first waves of migrants, which, as stated above, consisted mainly of men, tended to settle in a close proximity to each other. Bloch contributes this to several factors; economic, ethnic, and racial.<sup>29</sup> They spent as little money as possible in order to send the majority of their earnings back to their families overseas. This meant renting and overcrowding cheap houses. Their shared cultural background also served to establish a connection between them. Furthermore, racial prejudice often left them with little choice but to cluster together. Later, when the migrants gained more stability and reunited with their families, such settlements would expand and transform into ethnic boroughs. According to Dosanjh and Ghuman, such boroughs were formed in the Midlands, Yorkshire, and Southall in London, which also became locally known as little Punjab.<sup>30</sup> This allowed the migrants to thrive in an otherwise racially adverse environment and keep their cultural and religious practices. At the same time, however, it further segregated them from the rest of the British citizens.

By the 1970s and early 1980s the segregation still prevailed. The country entered into an economic crisis, which astronomically raised unemployment rates. Nickell describes that among the main reasons were the rise in prices, tax increase, pressure by trade unions to raise wages, and legislation meant to protect employees.<sup>31</sup> This caused the tension within the county to skyrocket. Nickell also points out, that the unemployment rates were higher in non-white population.<sup>32</sup> The immigrants therefore fared much worse compared to the rest of the population. Kimber further adds that the ethnic groups predominantly worked manually, regardless of their education.<sup>33</sup> The difference in employment between ethnic and non-ethnic groups thus became imbalanced. Moreover, as Kimber further describes, the ethnic

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<sup>28</sup> Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post-war Britain*, 123.

<sup>29</sup> Alice Bloch, *The Migration and Settlement of Refugees in Britain* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 39.

<sup>30</sup> Dosanjh, Ghuman, *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Nickell, "Unemployment in Britain," in *The State of Working Britain*, ed. Paul Gregg, Jonathan Wadsworth, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 23–24.

[https://books.google.cz/books?id=C3ZDD7C2AlsC&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=C3ZDD7C2AlsC&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>32</sup> Nickell, "Unemployment in Britain," 16.

<sup>33</sup> Nick Kimber, "Race and Equality," in *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945*, ed. Pat Thane (London, New York: Continuum, 2010), 37.



communities continued to be segregated from the rest of the society.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, many members found work opportunities inside of such communities or chose to be self-employed.

Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* depicts 4 characters, which migrated to Britain at different times and for different reasons. These characters are Haroon, Anwar, Jeeta, and Changez. Haroon and Anwar migrated among the first waves around the 1950s, whereas Jeeta and Changez arrived later.

Unlike the masses from the Indian subcontinent heading to the UK, Haroon did not migrate for financial reasons. His father was a doctor and while it was never explicitly stated in the story, Haroon almost certainly belonged to the upper social class. This is supported by the fact that his father managed to support the family consisting of 12 children and had a house built for them, all the while employing servants to care for his and his family's needs. Furthermore, Haroon could not recall the look of the kitchen in the house, as he had no need to enter it. Margaret, Haroon's wife, even likened his family's status to be "higher than the Churchills".<sup>35</sup> This means that the family was financially and socially stable and did not need to think about monetary gain abroad. Instead, they sent Haroon to study law, which would further raise the family's prestige and secure his future. Furthermore, unlike those that came to Britain to earn money, Haroon was financially supported at first and did not need to worry about his basic necessities such as food or clothes.

It is also possible that Haroon was sent to Britain for safety reasons. The partition and the subsequent displacement heightened the tension between the whole populace, which could easily evolve into a physical conflict endangering anyone near regardless of their social status. By sending Haroon to Britain, his family thus ensured the survival of at least one of their members, who could then continue their bloodline. Karim never mentioned any such sense of danger, though it is possible that Haroon, as a naïve and young man, would not have been informed of this. Nevertheless, the primary reason for Haroon's departure was education.

There was, however, one aspect that Haroon had in common with the majority of migrants: the idea of temporary stay. Haroon was not supposed to permanently stay in Britain, but instead return to India as a "qualified and polished English gentleman lawyer".<sup>36</sup> He was supposed to study, gain experience and connections, and then return after a few years so he

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<sup>34</sup> Kimber, "Race and Equality," 37.

<sup>35</sup> Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1990), 24.

<sup>36</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 24.

could be of even more benefit to his family. Having a lawyer who studied in Britain would raise respect the family had in the community and further secure their comfortable lives. However, Haroon's actions ruined this plan and alienated him from his family in India.

Haroon arrived in Britain with overly high expectations. He pictured the ideal land of opportunities and riches, where the British were educated, intelligent and of the upper class. Instead, he was thrown into the reality of the freezing, foggy country, where the food was still being rationed after the war, and where not every Englishman was literate or had access to water.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, as he was of Indian origin, not many people wished to converse with him or be educated by him.

Together with Anwar, they stayed at Dr. Lal's dentist office, sleeping on the ground or in the chair. Gone were the servants, the luxury, and the mansion he grew up in. Now, Haroon lacked even a simple bed, sleeping with the sound of mice scurrying about. Furthermore, because Haroon did not need to work before, and because he was still financially supported by his family, he found little want to actually work. As Karim explained, "He'd never worked before and it didn't suit him now."<sup>38</sup> Even studying did not go well for him, as he would rather dress up and go to a bar to drink and flirt with women. After his family learned of his behaviour, they decided to financially cut him off. All contact between Haroon and his family overseas thus ceased. Not even the birth of Karim and Allie, Haroon's sons, was enough to reconcile them, as neither of them knew their relatives overseas. This could suggest that Haroon was disowned and forbidden from contacting his family again, as his actions would dishonour them as well as put them under a harsh scrutiny of their associates and neighbours.

Another possibility is that something happened to his family in India. Before he left, the altercations between Hindus and Muslims happened frequently.<sup>39</sup> Even after the Partition, the tension in the country remained high and fights were commonplace. While Haroon's family belonged to the upper social class, they could have still faced danger, or became the victims of street violence.

Nonetheless, whether for safety or other reasons, Haroon's family would not have had a problem in relocating to the UK if they decided to. This is especially true for his parents, as the Immigration Act of 1962 allowed any immediate relatives to settle with no conditions.

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<sup>37</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 23.

The fact, that they chose not to even if they had the option, and that Haroon lacked the resources to attempt even one visit to India, means that the family wished for the separation to be definite, and that Haroon had little control over the outcome. Though, it is debatable how much Haroon suffered from this, as he did not send his mother a single letter even before the separation took place.

No matter what happened, Haroon became socially and financially stranded in an environment posed against him. He was no longer in the upper social class, regardless of what he thought and wished for. Instead, he fell down the social ladder to the lower middle class. Now, in a juxtaposition, instead of playing tennis on the family court, or cricket with the servants, Haroon's son Karim and Anwar's daughter Jamila would "sneak away and play cricket with a broom and a tennis ball in the garden".<sup>40</sup> This puts a stark contrast between Haroon and Karim's childhood.

This is also further mirrored in the location Haroon settled in after marrying Margaret. Unlike the spacious mansion he grew up in Bombay, the house he shared with his family was small and in the suburbs of South London. "In the suburbs people rarely dreamed of striking out for happiness. It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the reward of dullness."<sup>41</sup> According to Karim, the life in the suburbs was rather simple and unambitious, favouring the community over personal growth. It was something neither he nor his father appreciated. On the contrary, the monotony of everyday life felt constraining. It was for this reason that both of them looked towards London. As the capital city, London was the home to the wealthy and the centre of the social life. In a sense, to Haroon it became another ideal to strive for. It was not until he relocated there, however, that he once again realised London was not all he thought it to be.

Haroon also managed to attain a job as a Civil Service clerk, though he was not very devoted to it, as he believed his effort and skills would be overlooked for his race.

"The whites will never promote us," Dad 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 when they don't have two pennies to rub together."<sup>42</sup>

Haroon's thoughts clearly show his growing contempt for the British mindset. Despite the continuous decay of power the Empire once had, its citizens still attained a sense of

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<sup>40</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* 28.

<sup>41</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 27.

superiority. Haroon understood that regardless of what he did, he would always be overlooked simply because of his origin. As such, he lay his passions into the philosophical. This caused frustration and later friction with Margaret and Anwar, as they both understood the value of money and wished to get themselves into a better standing.

Anwar, similarly to Haroon, grew up in India before the Partition. He was Haroon's neighbour, which indicates that he too, belonged to the upper social class. His childhood was nearly identical with Haroon's. They were both driven to school in rickshaws, and both enjoyed playing cricket and tennis. Anwar's high social standing was even further implied with the revelation of his marriage. Before he relocated to the UK, Anwar had married Jeeta, who held the title of princess. It is not stated whether her title was official, or whether it only held figurative meaning. In the story though, it served more as an element of irony. The title of princess connotes luxury, high standard of living and financial prosperity. Jeeta, on the other hand, started her life in Britain in a one room apartment in Brixton, which was situated right next to the railway.<sup>43</sup> Similarly to Haroon, this indicates the fall from high to lower social class.

Additionally, the fact that the wedding took place in northern Pakistan reveals several matters. Firstly, this confirms that Anwar and Jeeta were married after the Partition. Because Anwar migrated in the 1950s, the Partition must have been recent, which also meant heightened tension in both countries. Jeeta's brothers carried guns during the wedding, which may have been a precaution to a possible conflict arising due to the displacement and overall unease.

Secondly is the fact that Anwar, and his family probably chose Jeeta as a safety measure. Because Anwar and his family lived in Bombay, they most likely witnessed the growing violence and ostracization of people professing faiths other than Hinduism. And because they themselves were Muslims, they may have started feeling threatened. Finding a bride for Anwar in Pakistan, as a predominantly Islamic country, was therefore a safe option. It would create a connection to Jeeta's family, which could be used in case of imminent danger. Even if Anwar did not travel to Britain and Jeeta came to live in Bombay, the possibility to relocate to Pakistan would still be available and accomplished with more ease, than if Anwar wed a different woman.

Shortly after the marriage, Anwar left India with Haroon and came to the UK. Jeeta, on the other hand, remained in Pakistan for a while longer, as was typical for Indian and Pakistani

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<sup>43</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 26.

wives at the time. Anwar's reasoning for the relocation, much like Haroon's, involved further education. At the same time, though, he had responsibilities towards his wife, whom he had to support financially. Occasionally he would also have to help Haroon, who spent his money on frivolities.

Jeeta arrived in Britain some time after Anwar, despite having no interest in the land or the culture. Karim often teased her by asking who the Prime Minister was, as she had no idea nor the desire to learn. It was her duty as Anwar's wife, however, and as he had no intentions of returning, it left Jeeta with no choice but to follow him.

Together, they lived in one small room in Brixton at first. They had little wealth, unlike before leaving India and Pakistan. Only after Anwar won in the lottery had they managed to secure a better living in the form of a convenience shop.<sup>44</sup> It was through Jeeta's efforts though, that the shop managed to be successful in any way. The location of their shop was closer to London than Haroon's house in the suburbs, as well as poorer. This meant increased hostility and racial prejudice.

The name of the shop, Paradise Store, is another case of irony used in the story. The name itself suggests a luxurious place with only the highest quality products; essentially a place where everyone would like to purchase their groceries. The reality, however, was the exact opposite. The shop was small and cramped. As Karim described it, "Paradise Stores was a dusty place with a high, ornate and flaking ceiling."<sup>45</sup> It was the opposite of what the name promised.

By operating the shop, Anwar became self-employed. It is unclear whether he completed his education, or, like Haroon, abandoned it in pursuit of other endeavours. It is possible that he was unable to procure a higher position other than manual, as a consequence of the economic and racial situation of the time. Even if he managed to successfully graduate, the chances of him finding a suitable position in the field would be significantly lower than of his non-ethnic peers. Either way, due to his gambling, he was able to purchase the shop and thus secure a somewhat stable environment for his family.

The business was also symbolically tied to Anwar. As Karim observed, the state of the shop worsened as Anwar's health deteriorated.<sup>46</sup> It became run down and unprofitable, just as

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<sup>44</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 50.

<sup>46</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 170.

Anwar's mental and physical energy faded. The state of Paradise Store could have indicated the hardship of operating a business as an ethnic minority group. However, as Karim further pointed out, other shops with ethnic origin started appearing in the neighbourhood and doing financially well.<sup>47</sup> This means that it was Anwar, his decline, and his inability to adapt which caused the shop to suffer. It was only after his death that the shop became profitable again due to Jeeta's efforts and determination.

Changez was the last character to migrate to Britain. As he was already engaged to Jamila, there was no restriction on his arrival. Unlike Haroon and Anwar, Changez arrived to an already established community, where he had a place created especially for him. He was supposed to marry Jamila, start working in Anwar's shop, and sire children, thus continuing Anwar's bloodline. He did marry Jamila, though the marriage stayed unconsummated without any heirs. Due to his disability and unwillingness to subjugate himself to Anwar's authority, he also avoided any work in the store, only beginning to help Jeeta after Anwar's passing,

Changez also shares similarities with Haroon. When he first arrived, he was very naïve, seeing only the stereotypical image of Britain through books and hearsay. He was very eager to explore and asked Karim to take him to watch cricket and to visit Baker Street, the address of Sherlock Holmes.<sup>48</sup> He believed in the ideal world of British poshness and intellect, seeing it as something extraordinary and perfect. Throughout the story, Changez started increasingly questioning this view, as he realized it was far from the truth. He struggled with accepting it, though he did manage to acclimate and adapt to the real British life much more easily than Haroon and Anwar.

In conclusion, all four characters faced difficulties while trying to settle in a new environment. They all experienced racial prejudice, which made it difficult to secure a higher working position. The fall in social class status was also a prominent theme throughout the novel.

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<sup>47</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 170–171.

<sup>48</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 83.

## 2. Identity: Collective and Individual

Identity is an incredibly complex topic, which has been studied extensively and still continues to invite research and discussions by experts in multiple fields, such as sociology, psychology, or philosophy to name a few. Due to its complexity, it is impossible to create one concrete definition, which could be unanimously agreed upon. The perception of identity and what it entails is also ultimately subjective, which means that anyone delving into the topic will come to their own conclusions. An academic scholar in Philadelphia will have a different interpretation of identity as opposed to a stall merchant in New Delhi. To complicate matters further, different fields of study analysing identity focus on different aspects pertaining to it, sometimes even reaching contradictory conclusions. As such, the term identity is an amalgamation of knowledge and research from every field studying it.

However, while identity is hard to define, attempts in every discipline studying it have been made. Selby, for example, explained identity as how an individual sees themselves, what they display in front of others, and what the others think of the individual.<sup>49</sup> This essentially means that self-image as well as the portrayal shown to the outside is important for the formation of identity. Stryker and Burke, on the other hand, defined identity essentially as a part of self, which assigns meanings to roles the individuals then use in different situations.<sup>50</sup> The individuals can therefore have multiple identities, which appear to a varying degree depending on the context and the situation. Howard examined identity from the perspective of social psychology. She explained that identity is a cognitive schema, which is comprised of information about the inner self-understanding as well as the outer factors such as group dynamics or social standing among others.<sup>51</sup> In other words, identity is comprised of two main factors: the self-realisation and the categorization within the society.

Regardless of the definition or the field of study though, one question stays prevalent. Who am I? As Coulmas states, it is a question that has been asked since the dawn of philosophy and continues to be a leading topic in modern world as well.<sup>52</sup> This question represents the

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<sup>49</sup> Christine L. B. Selby, *Who am I? Understanding Identity and the Many Ways We Define Ourselves*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2022), 5.

[https://books.google.cz/books?id=VZFOEAAAQBAJ&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=VZFOEAAAQBAJ&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>50</sup> Sheldon Stryker, Peter J. Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (December 2000): 284. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2695840>

<sup>51</sup> Judith A. Howard, "Social Psychology of Identities," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, no. 1 (2000): 368. <https://pdodds.w3.uvm.edu/files/papers/others/2000/howard2000a.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Florian Coulmas, *Identity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 14. [https://books.google.cz/books?id=U5ygDwAAQBAJ&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=U5ygDwAAQBAJ&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

core of what identity is and is asked by scholars, researchers, and amateurs alike. McCall decided to modify the question, by asking, “Who am I not?”<sup>53</sup> By doing so, he narrowed the meaning of identity down and essentially created the opposite, so called “negative identity”.<sup>54</sup> Asking this question would reject the characteristics and categorisations that would create the identity, just like asking the first question would assign them.

As stated above, identity is a term comprised of multiple identities and categories, which are often interconnected with one another. Smith, for instance, defines these categories as familiar, territorial, class, religious, ethnic, and gender.<sup>55</sup> Each of these categories applies to every individual in numerous ways and to a various degree to form their identity, thus making them unique and different from each other. At the same time, every separate category, to which the individual belongs to, binds them into a collective, which shares certain characteristics. For example, a woman will identify and feel more connected to other women than other genders, as they share the same features. Lawler further adds to this by highlighting the importance of sameness and difference.<sup>56</sup> This means that every person is simultaneously unique and the same. Furthermore, according to Lawler, some identities may overlap and influence each other, while others stay mutually exclusive.<sup>57</sup> The woman may therefore identify as a mother as well, but she cannot label herself as a man at the same time. Similarly, a person cannot claim to be simultaneously alive and dead.

Another problematic of identity is the issue of change and sameness. According to Paranjpe, people retain a sense of consistency of their self while at the same time they are constantly changing.<sup>58</sup> A person changes throughout their whole life, as they gain and lose new identities and adapt to new environments. However, they also retain the sense of sameness, of being the same person they were in the past. This means that they feel as if their self remains constant regardless of time or circumstances. Paranjpe called this the identity paradox.<sup>59</sup> As they are

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<sup>53</sup> George J. McCall, “The Me and the Not-Me: Positive and Negative Poles of Identity,” in *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Peter J. Burke, Timothy J. Owens, Richard T. Serpe, and Peggy A. Thoits (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers:2003), 12.

[https://books.google.cz/books?id=ISGtoy7p9QIC&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=ISGtoy7p9QIC&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>54</sup> McCall, “The Me and the Not-Me,” 13.

<sup>55</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 4.

<sup>56</sup> Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press, 2008), 2.

[https://books.google.cz/books?id=Tzvu8ucextsC&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=Tzvu8ucextsC&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>57</sup> Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Anand C. Paranjpe, *Self and Identity in Modern Psychology and Indian Thought* (New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 92–93.

<sup>59</sup> Paranjpe, *Self and Identity*, 93.



two contradictory terms, they should not be applicable simultaneously. This is a problematic which continues to be discussed by philosophers searching for answers.

There are two main theories which stemmed from the research on identity: the identity theory and the social identity theory. Identity theory, according to Stryker and Burke, represents the meanings and its assigned roles as a part of the self.<sup>60</sup> This theory relies on self-categorization, which means that it is the person who decides which meanings get assigned to which role, that they will then behave accordingly to. For example, a woman who gave birth to a child, will self-categorize as a mother and thus start behaving as she thinks a mother would, relying on her observation and prior experience.

Social identity theory is in a way similar to identity theory. As Stets and Burke explain, social identity theory focuses on the categorisation and comparison of the self within a social group.<sup>61</sup> Unlike the identity theory, which focuses on the individual, social identity theory concentrates on the relation of the individual with outside social community. Stets and Burke further define these groups as in-groups and out-groups.<sup>62</sup> Those in the in-group share the same characteristics, traits, and factors such as time and place, whereas those in the out-group do not. The individual will then behave differently depending on which they see as the in-group and which as the out-group. To illustrate, the mother will recognize her family as her in-group and thus act more warmly than with the colleague at work. Additionally, an individual will have multiple in-groups, which may or may not intersect. Therefore, while her colleague is not a part of her family in-group, she may be a part of her work in-group. In-groups and out-groups also tend to generate disparity among each other.

The matter of in-groups and out-groups is also closely connected to collectivism and individualism. Triandis explains collectivism as a “social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives.”<sup>63</sup> These collectives share the same values, purpose, and traditions among others, and often express themselves as a singular unit. Polletta and Jasper gave a similar definition to collective identity, where they stated that it is a connection of an individual to a collective.<sup>64</sup> Collectivism and collective identity is therefore equivalent to each other. Triandis further adds, that in collectivist

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<sup>60</sup> Stryker, Burke, “The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory,” 286.

<sup>61</sup> Jan E. Stets, Peter J. Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 2000): 225. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2695870>

<sup>62</sup> Stets, Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory,” 225.

<sup>63</sup> Harry C. Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism* (New York, Abington: Routledge, 2018), 2.

<sup>64</sup> Francesca Polletta, James M. Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 285. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2678623>

structure, the ambitions, goals, and wishes of the individual can often get side-lined in favour of the progress of the whole collective.<sup>65</sup> The mentality of the collective therefore prioritizes the well-being of the group as a whole over the prosperity of the individual. The connection between the members of the collective is therefore well-established.

On the other end of the spectrum is individualism. It is the opposite of collectivism. According to Ball, individualism relies on the precedence of individual growth and self-interest.<sup>66</sup> This means that the goals and ambitions of the individuals are of more importance than that of the collective. Triandis also explains, that the individuals are more self-sufficient and consider themselves to be independent of the collectives.<sup>67</sup> The connection between the individuals is therefore weaker than in collectivist structures.

Both collectivism and individualism are terms used on a wider range, as they refer to a society, culture, or, more simplistically, countries. Therefore, some societies tend to be either more collectivist or individualist, though none are strictly one or the other. As Ghuman states, societies with traditionalist tendencies, such as those in South Asia, are most frequently collectivist in nature.<sup>68</sup> The communities experience tighter bonds and emphasize the structure as a whole. On the other hand, as Ghuman adds, Western societies, like Britain, are predominantly individualistic.<sup>69</sup> The focus is then on the individual and their goals.

On a more restricted, individualistic level, collectivism and individualism are called allocentrism and idiocentrism. Allocentrism, as Triandis describes, corresponds to collectivism, in that the individuals who are allocentric showcase collectivist tendencies.<sup>70</sup> This means that they identify themselves to be a part of the collective, with which they share certain characteristics, and prioritize the well-being of the collective over their own. To illustrate, a woman may for example wish to further her education, but the financial stability of her family, the collective, will not allow for it. The woman will thus submit to the needs of the collective over her wishes and forgo her ambitions.

Idiocentrism therefore aligns with individualistic tendencies. Thus, if the mother is idiocentric instead of allocentric, she would focus on her education despite the needs of her family.

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<sup>65</sup> Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Ball, "Individualism, Collectivism, and Economic Development," in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 573 (January 2001): 58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1049015>

<sup>67</sup> Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

<sup>68</sup> Ghuman, *Coping with two Cultures*, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Ghuman, *Coping with two Cultures*, 15.

<sup>70</sup> Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 5.

Additionally, Mio explains that because of the close relationship between these terms, they may often be used interchangeably.<sup>71</sup> This for example means that a person may be referred to as being allocentric or collectivist, with no change in the meaning. Additionally, every individual is a combination of allocentric and idiocentric. It is then dependent on the situation which tendency becomes dominant.

It is also not a rule that an allocentric individual will live in collectivist society, or that idiocentric individual will exist in individual society. Though, as Caldwell-Harris and Ayçiçeği state, individuals living in the society with opposite tendencies are more prone to mental health issues, such as depression.<sup>72</sup> Allocentrics therefore fare better in collectivist societies while idiocentrics prosper in individualistic societies.

*The Buddha of Suburbia* depicts two characters, who parallel each other in interesting ways. They are characters, who initially differed very little, but who slowly started to diversify only to become the opposites to each other at the end. The characters in question are Haroon and Anwar.

Both Haroon and Anwar, as was discussed in the previous chapter, were raised in India before the Partition took place. They therefore lived in the same historical period and shared the identical cultural background. They were also neighbours, and thus shared the same location. Another factor they had in common was their social class status. As stated in the first chapter, they both most likely belonged to the upper social class, which was for example evidenced by them being taken to school by rickshaws drawn by horses.<sup>73</sup> This also indicates that they had the same education. Furthermore, they were raised to practice Islam, which meant that they shared the same values and traditions associated with the religion as well.

This means that Haroon and Anwar essentially related themselves to be in the same in-groups and therefore shared the same out-groups as well. To give an example for better illustration; as they were both Muslim, that was their in-group, their out-groups being the other religions like the Hindus. The one difference between them was their family situation. They were not

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<sup>71</sup> Jeffrey Scott Mio, "Allocentrism vs. Idiocentrism," in *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences: Clinical, Applied and Cross-Cultural Research*, ed. Bernardo J. Carducci, Christopher S. Nave, Jeffrey S. Mio, and Ronald E. Riggio (Hoboken, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2020), 4:205.

<sup>72</sup> Cathrine Caldwell-Harris, Ayse Ayçiçeği, "When Personality and Culture Clash: The Psychological Distress of Allocentrics in Individualist Culture and Idiocentrics in Collectivist Culture," in *Transcultural Psychiatry* 43, no. 1 (October 2006): 355.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6705891\\_When\\_Personality\\_and\\_Culture\\_Clash\\_The\\_Psychological\\_Distress\\_of\\_Allocentrics\\_in\\_an\\_Individualist\\_Culture\\_and\\_Idiocentrics\\_in\\_a\\_Collectivist\\_Culture](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6705891_When_Personality_and_Culture_Clash_The_Psychological_Distress_of_Allocentrics_in_an_Individualist_Culture_and_Idiocentrics_in_a_Collectivist_Culture)

<sup>73</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 23.

related by blood and thus had a different set of parents. Though, as it is not known how close both families were to each other, it is not possible to say whether they formed one in-group, or whether they were completely separate units.

By sharing the same in-groups, they thus shared the same identities as well. This created a strong sense of camaraderie and closeness, causing them to become best friends. The bond between them lasted well into Karim's childhood. This is evidenced by Karim's thoughts, when he pondered: "Dad's friendship with Anwar was still essentially a jokey one, a cricket-, boxing-, athletics-, tennis-watching one."<sup>74</sup> For a long time, the relationship between Haroon and Anwar stayed light and happy as it had been during their childhood.

The first notable change between Haroon and Anwar happened, when Anwar married Jeeta. With the marriage, Anwar formed an in-group separate from Haroon, which created one of the first divisions between them. Anwar gained a new identity as a husband, albeit seemingly grudgingly, as Karim described him looking nervous at the wedding and with his departure to England occurring shortly after.<sup>75</sup> Haroon, on the other hand, remained unmarried while still in India.

The divergence between Haroon and Anwar started forming after their arrival in Britain. Unlike India or Pakistan, Britain was an individualistic nation. The pressure to conform to their families' needs and wishes therefore significantly lessened. Both men could thus think and act on their own desires without the necessity to prioritize their families.

Haroon adapted to this with more enthusiasm than Anwar did. He started attending various parties and dances, womanizing, and wasting money on alcohol. Anwar, while also joining Haroon from time to time, voiced his disagreement with the frequency of Haroon's escapades.<sup>76</sup> This is possibly because of Anwar's marriage, as his responsibilities as a husband dissuaded him from acting too much like Haroon.

Eventually, Haroon became infatuated with Margaret and married her. He stopped attending bars and tried to settle more into a domestic life. However, he struggled with adapting to it, as it impeded his own freedom. Haroon's life, as Karim stated, was a cage, forcing him to conform to the needs of the family once again over his own.<sup>77</sup> He also did not know, how to

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<sup>74</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 27.

<sup>75</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 26.

<sup>76</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 26.

properly take care of his young children, leaving this duty Margaret. Out of desperation, he turned to oriental authors, to try and find comfort in their writings. The more he became immersed in the philosophical, the more he felt detached from his family. Moreover, Haroon had little ambition in his professional life as well, which in turn meant less financial stability for his family. As Haroon said: “I don't care about money. There's always money. I must understand these secret things.”<sup>78</sup> His need for self-realization exceeded the responsibility to ensure the happiness and stability of his family.

Haroon's attitude created a rift in his relationship with Anwar. After Jeeta arrived in Britain, she and Anwar established a store and had a daughter. Since then, Anwar focused on the prosperity of his family and forewent anything which would benefit solely himself. In his mind, his goals and needs became his family's needs. Which was why it angered him to realize how Haroon had been acting. Anwar felt that, like himself, Haroon should prioritize his family over his own needs. Haroon, on the other hand, did not understand Anwar's mindset. This caused an argument to occur.

“You're only interested in toilet rolls, sardine tins, sanitary pads and turnips,” he [Haroon] told Anwar. “But there are many more things, *yaar*, In heaven and earth, than you damn well dream of in Penge.”

“I haven't got time to dream!” interrupted Anwar. “Nor should you be dreaming. Wake up! What about getting some promotion so Margaret can wear some nice clothes. You know what women are like, *yaar*.”<sup>79</sup>

This clash of opinions illustrates a key difference between both men. Because of Haroon's thirst of knowledge over his family's comfort, his mindset aligns with idiocentrism. Anwar, on the other hand, merged his personal objectives to be identical to that of his family, thus making him allocentric. This was the difference which disconnected their friendship.

Since this argument, communication between both men became strained. Neither respected the other's opinion nor tried to understand it. Haroon continued with his studies and tried to find anyone who was likeminded. Soon after, he met Eva Kay. She was the embodiment of everything Haroon wished to become; independent, desired, and knowledgeable. After he and Eva had started an affair, Haroon realized he could not manage both his relationship with Eva and his marriage with Margaret. His inner struggle to choose was the main theme of his character throughout the book and became a catalyst for Karim's life. Haroon struggled to decide because, as he said: “... I've been afraid of hurting Eva, of hurting Margaret, and most

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<sup>78</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 27.

<sup>79</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 27.

of hurting myself.”<sup>80</sup> The last part of his statement corresponds with his idiocentric tendencies. He wished to retain happiness for himself, even at the cost of his family’s. In the end, Haroon chose Eva, and therefore the freedom to discover his own self over the needs of his family. Karim struggled to understand his father’s decisions even before the divorce. He once asked Jamila: ““But shouldn't Dad restrain himself, you know, and think about us, his family? Put us first?”<sup>81</sup> He thought that Haroon should prioritize their family and showcase thus at least some degree of allocentrism.

Anwar, on the other hand, continued to embrace his allocentric tendencies. He decided on having Jamila marry so that their family could gain another member, which would be beneficent for the store. Jamila, raised in an individualistic country, did not share her father’s stance. She resembled Haroon in that she wished to broaden her knowledge and pursue her self-discovery, regardless of her family. Anwar demanded her obedience and went on a hunger strike. When Karim asked him why he would choose such drastic methods to force his daughter to conform to his wishes, he emphasized that it was ‘their way’.<sup>82</sup> This only further reaffirmed Anwar as an allocentric, as he used collective pronouns instead of saying the intentions were solely his.

The difference between Haroon and Anwar’s perspective is even more pronounced when Haroon gives Jamila his opinion on Anwar’s insistence she marry.

“I 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. ...”<sup>83</sup>

Haroon thought that conforming to other’s needs would only lead to dissatisfaction in life. For him, to enjoy a fulfilling life meant to prioritize himself and to act in accordance with his conscience, regardless of the opinion of others. This mentality was thus the complete opposite to Anwar, who disregarded the individual differences of each of his family members and tried to enforce the unification of opinion of the family as a whole.

Anwar succeeded and the marriage occurred, though only to his detriment. His health declined and the rest of his family scorned him for his actions. He soon discovered his redundancy, as no one from his family had a need of him. Anwar, being allocentric, took this

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<sup>80</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 89.

<sup>81</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 54–55.

<sup>82</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 60.

<sup>83</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 76.

hard. Furthermore, as he lived in an individualistic country, he found little support in his surroundings. Feeling segregated physically as well as mentally, Anwar fell into a depressive state. He thought that his only chance at recovery would be to return to India, where he would feel more accepted.<sup>84</sup> Jeeta refused, and so he was forced to conform to her. Anwar should have been able to return by himself, though he still likely thought in the terms of the collective, rather than his own personal desires.

Haroon and Anwar's friendship, once close and brotherly, completely deteriorated.

Dad had seriously fallen out with Anwar. They weren't speaking at all now. It was over the fact that Anwar thought Dad should never have left Mum. It was a corrupt thing to do. Have a mistress, Anwar said, and treat both women equally well, but never leave your wife. Anwar insisted that Eva was an immoral woman and that Dad had been seduced by the West, becoming as decadent and lacking in values as the rest of the society. He even listened to pop music, didn't he?

"He'll be eating pork pie next," Anwar said. Naturally, all this infuriated Dad, who accepted the decadence and corruption line - he started using the word 'immoral' all the time - but not with reference to himself.<sup>85</sup>

Neither man was able to overcome the difference with which they viewed life and were therefore unable to reconcile before Anwar's death. Anwar scorned Haroon for choosing his own happiness, taking thus precedence over his duty to his family. On the other hand, Haroon did not understand why Anwar's convictions were so deep-rooted, that he was unable to strive for his personal well-being at least once in his life. The discord between them grew to such degree, that Haroon refused to see Anwar before his passing.<sup>86</sup> Their relationship therefore dissolved based on the value they attributed to individual free will.

In conclusion, despite sharing almost the same identities and in-groups during childhood, Haroon and Anwar started becoming estranged due to the difference in their priorities. Haroon, as an idiocentric, learned to adapt to the individualistic Britain and established his happiness to take precedence over anyone else. Anwar, an allocentric, struggled to conform and after his family's rejection yearned to return to India and the comfort of its collectivist society.

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<sup>84</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 172.

<sup>85</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 211.

<sup>86</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 211.

### 3. Family and Relationship values

Relationships are the cornerstone of society. They start forming after birth, possibly even before, and are essential for growth and stability of the individual. Without the ability to form and sustain relationships, society would not be able to form and evolve as it had, and culture would stagnate. Relationships therefore lay the very foundation for society to thrive. And it is in a family that relationships start forming.

Family is a place where a child learns how to interact with others and form relationships. It is the starting point that ought to ensure that the child has the ability to connect and maintain the connections to others in their future. When it comes to defining what exactly a family is though, it starts to get more complicated. The most basic explanation is that a family is a unit consisting of married parents and their offspring. However simple, this definition does not cover every possibility of what a family might be. Not only that, but it is also an explanation most common in the Western part of the world. Nayar and Juvva describe family more thoroughly, as a basic social unit, which influences the development and behaviour of society and culture. Furthermore, according to them, family is the source of “human capital resources.”<sup>87</sup> These resources then supply the labour market, sustaining its operation and ensuring the prosperity of society. This further proves that family is essential for society to be properly functioning. Without it, the human resource would diminish, which would negatively affect the labour market and every field of work or study, and thus further cause a domino effect.

In the East, however, the definition changes. Patel explains that family is a unit made from at least three generations of male descendants, their wives, and their children. She further describes that the members of one family share the same living arrangements and eat from the same kitchen.<sup>88</sup> The term family is therefore seen differently in the Western and the Eastern part of the world. This difference is then further divided by the types of family arrangements and the frequency of their appearance.

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<sup>87</sup> Mahima Nayar, Srilatha Juvva, “Introduction,” in *The Contemporary Indian Family: Transitions and Diversity*, ed. B. Devi Prasad, Srilatha Juvva, and Mahima Nayar (Abington, New York: Routledge, 2020), 1.

<sup>88</sup> Tulsi Patel, “New faces of the Indian family in the 21st century,” in *The Contemporary Indian Family: Transitions and Diversity*, ed. B. Devi Prasad, Srilatha Juvva, and Mahima Nayar (Abington, New York: Routledge, 2020), 23.



Family can be divided into several types based on their size, the living arrangement of its members and their position in the household. The types further discussed will be the nuclear and extended family.

Perhaps one of the most basic and widespread types perceived is a nuclear family. This type is made simply of the parents and their children. Jackson explains that the traditional preconception of nuclear family in the past involved the male as the financial contributor and the female as the nurturer and carer.<sup>89</sup> This arrangement led to a patriarchal structure, meaning that the male made decisions impacting the whole unit. That is no longer the case as the economic, cultural, and social development made it possible for the structure of nuclear family to change. That is not to say that the nuclear family stayed static since its conception. According to Jackson, the nuclear family in Britain started appearing more after the industrialisation era.<sup>90</sup> Before that, the economic situation necessitated contribution from all members of the family, which meant that the type of family was often extended, rather than nuclear, connecting three or more generations together. The industrialisation era radically changed the economic situation and with it the family structure. The members that were financially contributing became more significant, whereas those that were not, were seen as a burden. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nuclear family developed its own norms and traditions, which were later taken to be the normal or classic case of what family was supposed to be. This assumption was majorly adopted by the Western side of the world.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of nuclear families started decreasing. Castells equates this to several factors, such as the rising participation in women in the workforce, the boom of sexual revolution and feminism, or the advancement of technologies.<sup>91</sup> The newfound outlook on the position of women, be it in the work or home environment, shook the established patriarchal structure. Marriages became strained as the couples struggled with communication and finding the time to rebalance the roles within the family.

The number of divorces also further led to the decrease of nuclear families. According to Castells, the rate of divorce in the UK went up by 104% between 1971 and 1990.<sup>92</sup> This means that in just 19 years, the number of divorces more than doubled. Moreover, as Castells

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<sup>89</sup> Stephen Jackson, *Britain's Population, Demographic Issues in Contemporary Society* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), 127. [https://books.google.cz/books?id=8RpfYpInZekC&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.cz/books?id=8RpfYpInZekC&hl=cs&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

<sup>90</sup> Jackson, *Britain's Population*, 127.

<sup>91</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 2nd ed. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2010), 193–195.

<sup>92</sup> Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 199.

further mentions, the number of marriages also declined over the same period of time.<sup>93</sup> The average age of the married couple started increasing as well. It became more common to either delay the marriage or forgo it altogether, the couple instead choosing to live in a companionship not bound by the law. In the wake of the crisis the nuclear family went through, other structures started emerging more often, such as single parent households. The emphasis on the collective well-being of the family shifted to focus more on the individual growth, which further contributed to the decline of nuclear family. Over the course of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of nuclear family became less popular. Instead, the family structure started to become more diversified, as its members started questioning their own roles within the family, their values, and preferences.

The other type of family relevant for this thesis is the extended or joint family. Stopes-Roe and Cochrane, similarly to Patel, explain that an extended family consists most commonly of 3 generations inhabiting the same household for a long period of time.<sup>94</sup> The whole family shares the finances and resources among each other. This type of family is also typically patriarchal in nature, where the head, typically the oldest male in the household, has the ultimate say on decisions pertaining to the family. Unlike the nuclear family, the extended family is most frequently observed in Asia, notably India. Patel notes that while the size cyclically changes and the family itself may transform from extended to nuclear and vice versa, the extended form still dominates over any other form in India. Patel also points out that the average size of the family is only 4.9, meaning that the majority of households in India is rather small, though 22% of the households consist of more than six members.<sup>95</sup> The average Indian family is therefore larger than the average family in the UK.

The extended family also operates under different values and traditions. Instead of individual growth, this type of unit functions on the premise of cohesiveness. The well-being and prosperity of the whole unit is placed above the interests of the individual members. The more cohesive, the stronger the family is. Dosanjh and Ghuman mention that respect and obedience to the older members of the family is one such value commonly observed.<sup>96</sup> Age and gender play a significant role in how much power the individual member of the unit holds. The

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<sup>93</sup> Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 201.

<sup>94</sup> Mary Stopes-Roe, Raymond Cochrane, *Citizens of this County: The Asian-British* (Clevedon, Bristol: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1990), 21.

<sup>95</sup> Patel, "New faces of the Indian family in the 21st century," 24–25.

<sup>96</sup> Dosanjh, Ghuman, *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities*, 18.

younger generations have to yield to the older, with the head of the family having the ultimate choice.

A tradition widely practiced in India is that of an arranged marriage. According to Dosanjh and Ghuman, the reason why arranged marriage is popular is the procurement of respect, prestige, and monetary provision.<sup>97</sup> Having the offspring marry well also invites better social standing. Though Dommaraju also points out, that it is a manner of controlling the purity and sexual activity of the daughters in the family, as premarital sex would bring shame upon the whole household.<sup>98</sup> The descendants, both male and female, can thus be engaged from an incredibly young age, though the actual marriage takes place when they reach adulthood. The traditional arrangement, as described by Stopes-Roe and Cochrane, involves the selection of the spouse by the parents or the elders in the family without any input from the children themselves.<sup>99</sup> To arrange a marriage for their children is actually seen as a responsibility of the parents. The spouses have no say and have to defer to their family, often meeting for the first time on the day of the wedding. The age of the spouses when the betrothal takes place also factors into their inability to express their opinion. The concept of arranged marriage is mostly accepted as normal and expected, as it has been taught since childhood. That said, the traditional concept morphed over time and nowadays the spouses have a say in who to marry or not marry.

As was alluded above, women in the Indian family are subject to tighter control. Women are perceived to be of a lesser standing than their male counterparts and are thus subjugated to their will. Dosanjh and Ghuman describe, that one such issue contributing to the divide in standing is dowry.<sup>100</sup> By marrying a daughter off, the family is required to contribute a dowry, often of significant monetary value. Therefore, while the family gains connections and respect, it also loses a certain amount of financial assets. On the other hand, were it a male offspring marrying, the spouse coming into the household would contribute her dowry and improve the family's financial stability as well as standing. Another factor which is closely tied to a woman's standing in marriage and family according to Dommaraju is the ability to

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<sup>97</sup> Dosanjh, Ghuman, *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities*, 19.

<sup>98</sup> Premchand Dommaraju, "Divorce and Separation in India," *Population and Development Review* 42, n.2 (June 2016): 196.

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44015635.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A1a0ae832a8c0fb62ee1d84251fb501e6&a\\_b\\_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44015635.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A1a0ae832a8c0fb62ee1d84251fb501e6&a_b_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1)

<sup>99</sup> Stopes-Roe, Cochrane, *Citizens of this Country*, 30.

<sup>100</sup> Dosanjh, Ghuman, *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities*, 19.

bear sons.<sup>101</sup> Giving birth to a male descendant and the future head of the family is taken as her duty and is thus tied to the power she wields. A woman unable to bear children will be viewed in a much more negative way than a woman who bore a son, by the family as well as the community.

Another discrepancy between the gender of the offspring is the view on remarrying. Marriage is closely connected to religion in India, be it Islam or Hinduism, and thus often seen as indissoluble. That said, as Dommaraju examines, divorces do happen and are acknowledged.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, both parties have the ability to dissolve the marriage. The issue though arises with remarriage. Women, unlike men, are scrutinized and discouraged from remarrying. That is because their prospect of finding another good match diminishes greatly.

The first generation of migrants from India in the UK retained these traditional values about marriage. This came into conflict with the British culture. As Stopes-Roe and Cochrane researched, most of the British population strongly disagreed to the notion of arranged marriage. In their survey, “only two parents and one young person out of the 40 British families thought the system was alright.”<sup>103</sup> Most respondents rejected the premise completely. The biggest issues as seen by the British were the lack of a close bond before marriage and individual freedom.

The second generation of migrants born and raised on the British soil stood in the epicentre of this conflict. On one hand, their parents raised them to accept the traditional concept. On the other, the environment they grew up in was starkly different to that of their parents. Thus, they began questioning the traditions and values they had normalised since childhood. They demonstrated stronger individualistic tendencies and bigger need in pursuing their needs and ambitions. According to Ghuman, this discord between the British and Indian marriage value was eased by the appearance of modified marriage.<sup>104</sup> The children now had a say in the marriage. They could reject or accept whom they wanted and meet their possible future spouse before the wedding took place. Though Stopes-Roe and Cochrane add that the parents had to approve of the choice as well.<sup>105</sup> The idea of marriage in the second generation

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<sup>101</sup> Dommaraju, “Divorce and Separation in India,” 201.

<sup>102</sup> Dommaraju, “Divorce and Separation in India,” 200.

<sup>103</sup> Stopes-Roe, Cochrane, *Citizens of this Country*, 44.

<sup>104</sup> Ghuman, *Coping with two Cultures*, 60.

<sup>105</sup> Stopes-Roe, Cochrane, *Citizens of this Country*, 30.

therefore merged the values of both cultures together, though it was still less about individual freedom and more about appeasing the family unit.

*The Buddha of Suburbia* depicts the values and traditions of relationships in several family units. It also shows the contrast between each family as well as each generation. The ones this thesis will focus on are Anwar, Jeeta and Jamila as one unit, Jamila and Changez as another, and Haroon, Margaret, and their sons as the last one.

Before migrating to the UK, Anwar married Jeeta. The marriage was arranged by their parents. As it was a traditional marriage in northern Pakistan, it is likely that Anwar and Jeeta saw each other properly for the first time at the wedding itself and not before. This would also support the fact that neither had any deep feelings for each other nor were they very close. Furthermore, Anwar relocated to the UK soon after the wedding took place, which indicates the lack of bond or love that could have formed in the meantime. In addition, Anwar's main objective in the UK was not the financial support of Jeeta, but rather his own further education. Jeeta soon followed her husband, though not of her own desire. This is illustrated by Karim repeatedly asking her to name certain ministers or politicians and her not knowing or caring about the answer.<sup>106</sup> Jeeta's only role was to follow her husband regardless of her own wishes.

Moreover, their relationship was not only unhealthy, but also abusive. According to Jamila, Anwar would physically abuse Jeeta.

“Except for my mother. He takes it out on Jeeta. He abuses her.”

“Hits her? Really?”

“He used to, yes, until I told him I'd cut off his hair with a carving knife if he did it again. But he knows how to make her life terrible without physical violence. He's had many years of practice.”<sup>107</sup>

Anwar clearly used a combination of physical and psychological abuse towards Jeeta to keep her submissive, so she would not question his decisions as the patriarch of the family.

The standing of Jeeta and Anwar within their marriage and the family is even mirrored by their positions in their store.

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<sup>106</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 51.

<sup>107</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 58.

Jeeta's till was crammed into a corner by the door, so she was always cold and wore fingerless gloves all the year round. Anwar's chair was at the opposite end, in an alcove, from which he looked out expressionlessly.<sup>108</sup>

Anwar was overlooking the store from a good vantage point, indicating his power and control. His place was also more secure than Jeeta's, whether it be from a possible attack or the temperature fluctuation. Jeeta, however, was right next to the front door. In case of an attack or a robbery, she would have been in immediate proximity of the attacker. This means that the probability of an injury would be much higher for Jeeta than it would be for Anwar.

Jeeta could not divorce Anwar for several reasons. Firstly, as Karim stated, was the language barrier.<sup>109</sup> Jeeta did not know English enough to be able to stay on her own. Secondly was the matter of finances. They both struggled financially at first, which means that she could hardly afford the expense of a return trip. And thirdly is the question whether her family would accept her back. If she were to divorce Anwar and return, she would be seen as impure and could thus bring shame to her family. Her prospects of finding another good match would be diminished as well.

Together with Jamila, they formed a nuclear patriarchal family. Being separated from their original natal families made it impossible to form an extended family. Where they still on the Indian peninsula, it is probable that they would merge into Anwar's family.

In the case of this family unit, Anwar especially upheld the traditional values taught to him in India. This meant that when it came to Jamila's marriage, Anwar insisted on arranging everything by himself. He came into contact with his brother in India and through him found a suitable match for his daughter. Jamila did not share the same values and traditions as her father, which resulted in a conflict between them. Anwar fasted himself in order to force Jamila to submit to his decision.

"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," I explained. "No one does that kind of thing now. They just marry the person they're into, if they bother to get married at all." This homily on contemporary morals didn't exactly blow his mind.

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<sup>108</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 51.

<sup>109</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 26.

“That is not our way, boy. Our way is firm. She must do what I say or I will die. She will kill me.”<sup>110</sup>

This interaction between Anwar and Karim shows two things. The first is that there is no limit to Anwar’s machinations when he feels he needs to act according to his values. He was capable in waging psychological terror against his own daughter in order to make her acquiesce to his demands. For him, his power as the patriarch of the family was absolute and Jamila disobeying him would shake his authority.

The other thing apparent from their interaction is Karim’s stance towards arranged marriage. Unlike Anwar, Karim, as the member of the second generation, grew up in mixed environment of both cultures. This meant that he questioned the traditional values and gave much more weight to the importance of individuality and mutual attraction. This shows the stark difference between both generations.

Initially, after Jamila agreed to the marriage and Changez arrived, Anwar was ecstatic. Karim thought that was both because Anwar reaffirmed his place as the patriarch of the family and gained a much-desired son in the process.<sup>111</sup> However, instead the opposite happened.

There was a campaign against him. Since his attempt to starve himself to death, Princess Jeeta was, in her own way, starving her husband to death, but subtly, month by month. There was very definite but intangible deprivation. For example, she spoke to him, but only occasionally, and made sure not to laugh. He started to suffer the malnutrition of unalloyed seriousness.<sup>112</sup>

By forcing his values onto his family, he caused them to lose all respect for him. Jeeta began to torment Anwar in a more subtle way; by ignoring him and starving him emotionally. Anwar thus became essentially ostracized in his own family. Moreover, the son he so wished for did not meet his standards and became useless in his eyes.

In the end, Anwar died, symbolising the rejection of the rigid traditional values. His death illustrates that the inability to adapt and compromise does not work in a different cultural environment. The fact that Anwar died as a consequence of being hit by a sex toy also symbolises the victory of sexual liberation and freedom over the archaic outlook the first generation retained.

The union between Jamila and Changez, while arranged, differed from that of her parents. Changez, who was raised outside of Britain, still held some of those traditional values of

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<sup>110</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 60.

<sup>111</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 79.

<sup>112</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 208.

patriarchal household. He tried to instil himself as the head of the family, though he was unsuccessful.

Changez, being at heart a traditional Muslim, explained the teachings of the Koran on this subject to her, and then, when words were not sufficient to convince her, he tried to give her a whack. But Jamila was not whackable. She gave Changez a considerable backhander across his wobbling chops, which shut his mouth for a fortnight, during which he miserably carried his bruised jaw to his camp-bed - that raft in a storm - and didn't speak.<sup>113</sup>

Jamila grew up to be confident of herself and refused to surrender her freedom for the sake of a traditional marriage. Changez, unable to force Jamila to submit, was forced to accept that he had no ultimate say, especially pertaining to Jamila. Their marriage was unconsummated, with both of them finding intimacy elsewhere, albeit reluctantly in Changez's case.

Eventually both settled into a community home, forgoing the concept of nuclear or extended family altogether. Jamila became pregnant by one of the other tenants and they decided to raise the child communally.<sup>114</sup> Neither of them decided to file for a divorce, however, as they saw it unnecessary. Jamila then even started seeing another tenant, female this time, thus bringing her sexual orientation into question.<sup>115</sup> Experimentation and questioning of sexual orientation were common among second generation of immigrants.

Haroon and Margaret's marriage was starkly different to that of Anwar and Jeeta. One of the biggest differences was the nature of their marriage. Margaret fell in love with Haroon at first sight.<sup>116</sup> As a native British woman, it is likely that she was attracted to Haroon because he represented something exotic, new, and different from what she knew. Haroon, similarly, probably saw a prospective partner that would differ from the expectation of his family. Furthermore, marrying Margaret would help him assimilate better. They thus entered into matrimony out of mutual attraction and affection, as was commonplace in the West. This therefore put a contrast between the two pairs.

Furthermore, Haroon, while not overtly traditional, still retained the pride of having sons instead of daughters, which became a point of conflict between him and Anwar later on.

There had been friction between Anwar and Dad over the question of children before. Dad was very proud that he had two sons. He was convinced it meant he had 'good seed'. As Anwar had only produced one daughter it meant that he had 'weak seed'. Dad

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<sup>113</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 134–135.

<sup>114</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 231.

<sup>115</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 277.

<sup>116</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 26.



loved pointing this out to Anwar. “Surely, yaar, you have potentially more than one girl and one girl only in your entire lifetime's seed-production, eh?”

“Fuck it,” Anwar replied, rattled. “It's my wife's fault, you bastard. Her womb has shrivelled like a prune.”<sup>117</sup>

As evidenced, Haroon enjoyed irritating Anwar with this issue. He called into question Anwar's ability to sire sons and made him feel ashamed. Anwar, unable to admit to his failure, lest he diminish his worth as the head of the family, lay all the blame on Jeeta.

While Haroon and Margaret formed a nuclear family with their two sons, it was far from traditional. Margaret did take the role of the caretaker and nurturer. This was already alluded to at the beginning of the first chapter, as her first appearance was after she came from the kitchen wearing a floral apron.<sup>118</sup> Haroon, on the other hand, did not really acclimate to the role of the patriarch. He was very individualistic, as was discussed in the previous chapter, and frequently put his own needs above that of his family. This caused a clash between them, which eventually became one of the reasons for the dissolution of their marriage.

During the story, Haroon was confronted with a choice. While he loved Margaret, he was also drawn to Eva. This put both of them into a juxtaposition, creating a stark contrast between the two women. Margaret represented the domestic, safe, and mundane, with emphasis on family life. Eva, on the other hand, symbolised the embodiment of ambition and strive for recognition. In other words, it was a conflict between the old and known against the new and unknown. In the end, Haroon chose to stay with Eva, having once again put his own needs above that of his family, though he would often think about his life with Margaret. At the end of the book, it even perturbed him, when he was told Margaret found a new boyfriend and thus definitely moved on with her life.<sup>119</sup> This showed that while he did not regret his choice, he still held affection for Margaret and what they once had.

To conclude, Anwar's insistence of upkeeping the traditional values of the East was incongruous with the mentality of the West. They were seen as outdated by the younger generation and thus rejected. Jamila and Haroon adapted to the Western values more easily. They both found partners outside of their marriage and were more focused on their own desires over someone else's needs.

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<sup>117</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 57.

<sup>118</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 4.

<sup>119</sup> Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 280–281.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the development of relationships between the characters in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. This was achieved by focusing on the main themes displayed throughout the novel. Each chapter examined one theme in detail and then applied the knowledge to the characters and their behaviour, especially Haroon and Anwar, as these characters contrasted each other in several ways. The three main themes discussed were the historical background of India, Pakistan and Great Britain after World War 2, the issue of identity, and the relationship and family values.

The first chapter focused on the Partition of India and Pakistan and the subsequent displacement and massive migration of the citizens. Due to the ability to retain full citizenship status as well as the opportunity to financially and socially advance, Britain became the centre of immigrants from the Commonwealth and dominions. Racial prejudice, and the lack of interconnectedness between the migrants and the natives caused the formation of ethnic boroughs. Furthermore, it also prevented the migrants from reaching higher work positions, forcing them either into manual labour or self-employment. This in turn impeded their chances of keeping or reaching the status of higher social class.

All four characters, which migrated to Britain experienced these factors to some degree, breaking thus their illusions of the idealized 'Englishness'. All four fell down the stratification ladder and could no longer enjoy the luxuries of their previous life. Their work status was impeded as well. Anwar became self-employed and was eventually followed by Jeeta and Changez, whereas Haroon initially worked in an office, though he was convinced he could never be promoted, due to racial prejudice.

The question of identity was the focal point of the second chapter. Identity cannot be unanimously defined, as it is an issue too complicated and studied differently depending on the discipline. This chapter focused on identity from the perspective of sociology, therefore examining, how society influenced the individual and vice versa. The social identity theory was introduced, including the terms in-groups and out-groups. Connected to this was the topic of collectivism and individualism. Collective societies recognize individuals as parts of a collective, rather than as singular units. Individualistic societies, on the other hand, place individuals outside of any group structures, seeing them as unique. The terms allocentrism

and idiocentrism then convey the same meaning, though on a smaller scale, applying to individuals.

The practical part applied this knowledge to two characters: Haroon and Anwar. Both characters were raised in the same conditions and therefore in-groups, making their bond incredibly close. After arriving in Britain, however, their in-groups, as well as their tendencies, started to change. Haroon, an idiocentric, adapted to the individualistic country with more ease and attained self-discovery, even at the cost of his family. Anwar, an allocentric, failed to conform and believed his aims to be identical to that of his family's. After their rejection, Anwar fell into a depressive episode and wished to return to India, a collective country, where his beliefs would be supported.

The last chapter discussed the values in families and relationships. Families are important for their ability to establish and maintain relationships. The idea of family, however, differs in the West and the East. The classic Western structure constituted of a traditional nuclear family, consisting of the father, mother, and their offspring. Though, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century this type lost its popularity due to the sexual revolution, rise of feminism, as well as the increasing number of divorces. On the other hand, the typical Eastern family was extended, meaning that the unit included at least three generations of male descendants. Another subject that differed depending on location was arranged marriage. In the East, it is understood as a common practice, unlike the West, where it is thought to be archaic, as the emphasis should lay on mutual attraction and individual choice.

The practical part of this chapter then displayed the differences in three family units: Anwar's, Haroon's and Jamila's. Anwar represented the typical Eastern values, which in the end resulted in the rejection by his family. Jamila, unlike her father, absorbed the Western values, and wished to be more independent. She was therefore more dominant in her marriage to Changez and forced him to conform to her rules. Haroon's family showcased the typical nuclear structure, though it ended in divorce as Haroon became gradually more unhappy while married to Margaret.

The characters in *The Buddha of Suburbia* therefore showcase, how the differences in geographical location, time period, identity type, and relationship values influenced the development of their relationships.

## Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat vývoj vztahů postav v románu *Buddha z předměstí* od Hanifa Kureishiho. Kureishi je britským spisovatelem, scénáristou a dramatikem pákistánského původu. Jelikož byl vychován ve střetu dvou odlišných kultur, využil tak ve svých dílech námětů ze svého osobního života. Jeho hrdinové často řešili otázky identity, a to etnické, národní, či sexuální. Kureishiho díla zvýraznila témata, která byla do té doby nedostatečně zastoupena a obohatila tím současnou literární scénu. Divadelní hra *Moje krásná prádelnička* a román *Buddha z předměstí* zůstávají i nadále jeho neznámějšími díly.

Tato práce je rozdělena do tří hlavních kapitol, přičemž každá obsahuje analytickou část, která uvádí danou problematiku a definuje pojmy a část praktickou, která poté tyto pojmy aplikuje na postavy románu. Nejvíce prostoru je věnováno postavám Haroona a Anwara, jelikož sdílejí mnoho společného, ale zároveň se v mnohém odlišují.

První kapitola se zabývá historickým kontextem Indie, Pákistánu, a Velké Británie po konci druhé světové války. I přes vítězství bylo Britské impérium oslabeno, což se projevilo vzrůstem napětí v koloniích a dominiích, včetně Indie. Přes veškerou snahu Britské vlády se nepodařilo situaci uklidnit. Naopak, napětí způsobilo, že se zvýšil počet demonstrací, protestů a nepokojů. Indický národní kongres v čele s Mahátmou Ghándím požadoval nezávislost Indie nad Velkou Británií. Nicméně situace nebyla tak jednoduchá, jak se na první pohled zdálo. V Britské Indii bylo vyznáváno hned několik odlišných náboženství, která si značně protirečily. Nejvíce zastoupenými byl hinduismus a islám, přičemž hinduismus byl nejčastěji praktikován v jižní části Indie, kdežto islám v části severní. Mezi těmito dvěma skupinami docházelo často ke krvavým konfliktům, které měly za následek nespočetné oběti. Z tohoto důvodu bylo nakonec rozhodnuto, že místo jednoho samostatného státu vzniknou státy dva, a to Indie a Pákistán. K tomu nakonec došlo 15. srpna 1947.

Nicméně ani nově nalezená samostatnost neuklidnila situaci mezi oběma státy. Náboženské menšiny obou států byly nuceny opustit své domovy, a tudíž došlo k nucenému odsunutí značné části obyvatelstva. Místo přesunu do země s náboženskou majoritou se někteří rozhodli migrovat do úplně jiných zemí, nejčastěji však do Velké Británie. Bylo to tak z důvodu plného občanství, které si obyvatelé Pákistánu a Indie, coby člena Commonwealthu, měli právo podržet. Následovala masová migrace, a to zejména mužů, kteří přicestovali za

prací. Původně měl být jejich pobyt dočasný, ale většina se nakonec rozhodla usadit nastálo a poslala pro své rodiny, aby se k nim přidali.

Z důvodu rasové nesnášenlivosti, ale také z důvodu sdílení kultury a zvyků, začali imigranti vytvářet etnické čtvrti. Zde pak udržovali své tradice a mohli daleko lépe prosperovat.

*Buddha z předměstí* obsahuje čtyři postavy, které imigrovaly z Indie do Velké Británie: Haroona, Anwara, Jeetu, a Changeze. Haroon a Anwar imigrovali jako první, a to krátce po rozdělení Indie a Pákistánu. Oba pocházeli z vyšší společenské vrstvy, což je dokázáno například tím, že byli oba voženi do školy rikšami taženými koňmi. Jejich přesun do Británie nebyl z finančních důvodů, nýbrž kvůli rozšíření vzdělání. Oba muži nakonec v Británii zůstali, nicméně se propadli v sociální třídě až na nižší střední. Po příchodu tím samým pak prošli i Jeeta a Changez, přičemž u Jeety je to obzvlášť patrné. Jeeta v Pákistánu držela titul princezny, čímž bylo naznačeno její vysoké postavení. Po příchodu do Británie však chvíli žila s Anwarem v jedné místnosti blízko železničních kolejí. Všechny postavy pak také zažily rasovou nesnášenlivost rodilých obyvatel.

Druhá kapitola řešila otázku identity, a to především z pohledu sociologie. Identita je inherentně subjektivní pojem, který není možné jednoznačně definovat. Nejjednodušší vysvětlení je takové, že se jedná o to, jak člověk vidí sám sebe, ale zároveň, jak jej vidí jeho okolí. Identita také není ucelená, ale je mnohočetná. To znamená, že se skládá z mnoha různých identit, například z identity národní, genderové, nebo etnické. Všichni jedinci tak mají do jisté míry identity identické, nicméně odlišné složením, čímž se stávají unikátními.

Ze sociálního hlediska se identitu snaží vysvětlit dvě teorie, a to teorie identity a sociální teorie identity. Teorie identity je založená na sebe-realizaci, kdy si jednotlivec přiřadí významy různým rolím, a ty pak ztvárňuje v různých situacích. Sociální teorie identity se také zabývá sebe-realizací, nicméně ještě přidává porovnání a zařazení jednotlivce do sociálních skupin. S tímto pak souvisí pojmy kolektivismus a individualismus. Kolektivismus upřednostňuje pohled na jednotlivce, coby součást skupiny. To znamená, že potřeby jednotlivce mohou být často přehlédnuty pro potřeby celého kolektivu. Individualismus je opakem kolektivismu, tj. že vidí jednotlivce mimo skupinu a zdůrazňuje tak jeho individuální vývin. Zatímco tyto pojmy jsou aplikovány ve větším měřítku, jako například na celé společnosti, nebo kultury, na jednotlivé jedince jsou nahrazeny pojmy allocentrismus a idiocentrismus v tomto pořadí. Ve výsledku pak může jedinec s idiocentrickými sklony žít

v kolektivní společnosti, a naopak. Nicméně u těchto případů se může vyvinout depresivní stav, jelikož žijí ve společnosti, která má odlišný postoj.

Praktická část aplikovala tyto poznatky na postavy Haroona a Anwara. Oba muži si byli v mládí velice blízcí. Důvodem bylo, že spolu sdíleli stejné sociální a kulturní skupiny, pocházeli ze stejné sociální třídy, a byli vychováni ve stejném náboženství. Po příchodu do Británie se ovšem začalo jejich smýšlení rozcházet. Haroon byl idiocetrikem, tudíž toužil po sebe-realizaci. Tu byl ovšem nucen potlačit poté, co se oženil s Margaret a zplodil dva syny. Starost o rodinu se tak dostala do konfliktu s jeho vnitřním přesvědčením. Tento konflikt vyvrcholil, když se seznámil s Evou Kay, která měla podobné smýšlení, a začal s ní milostnou aféru. Nakonec si Haroon zvolil Evu a s Margaret se rozvedl, čímž si zvolil vlastní štěstí na úkor své rodiny.

Anwar byl naopak allocentrický, tudíž se ztotožnil se svou rodinou a své cíle proměnil v cíle rodinné. Očekával tak, že se rodina podvolí jeho autoritě. Anwarova dcera Jamila měla jako Haroon smýšlení více idiocentrické, což vedlo k rozporu mezi ní a jejím otcem při otázce dohodnutého sňatku. Jamila se nakonec poddala, nicméně Anwar tím ztratil místo ve své rodině. Anwar se začal cítit nepotřebným, což zapříčinilo jeho úpad do depresí, které nakonec byli jedním z důvodů jeho úmrtí.

Individualistické prostředí Velké Británie také napomohlo Haroonovi a naopak ztížilo život Anwarovi. Haroonův a Anwarův postoj se tedy postupně rozešel, což posléze vedlo ke konci jejich přátelství.

Poslední kapitola zkoumala problematiku rodinných struktur a manželství. Rodiny jsou místem, kde se děti učí, jak formovat a udržet vztahy. Představa rodiny se však liší v západním a východním světě. Západ vidí základní strukturu rodiny jako rodinu nukleární, tj. otce, matku, a jejich děti. Tento typ ovšem prošel ve 20. století krizí, způsobenou sexuální revolucí, emancipací žen, a v neposlední řadě také zvýšeným počtem rozvodů.

Východ oproti tomu vnímá rodinu především jako rozšířenou, tj. alespoň tři generace mužských potomků a jejich manželek, kteří spolu žijí pod jednou střechou. V tomto typu je pak kladen důraz na pozice jednotlivých členů, které v rodině zastávají, obzvláště pak pozici hlavy rodiny, kterým je typicky nejstarší muž domácnosti. Pro tento typ rodiny je také typická soudržnost a respekt k patriarchovi.

Tak jako se liší představy typických rodin podle lokality se také liší pohled na dohodnuté manželství. Západní svět dohodnutý sňatek do velké míry odsuzuje. Naopak dává důraz na vzájemnou přitažlivost a soudržnost obou jedinců. Východní svět na druhou stranu upřednostňuje, aby bylo manželství uzavřeno bez ohledu na citové pouto manželů. Takové manželství je pak nejčastěji dohodnuto patriarchy obou rodin, a to ne vždy za přítomnosti, či svolení obou hlavních aktérů. Stává se tak, že se novomanželé poprvé potkají až na své svatbě.

První generace migrantů z Indie a Pákistánu si své hodnoty podržela. Jejich potomci však již byli vychováni v rozporu dvou různých hodnot. Z tohoto důvodu se tak často u druhých a dalších generací obě hodnoty spojily a vytvořily tak jakousi hybridní kulturu.

Praktická část zkoumá tři rodinné celky, a to rodinu Anwara, posléze rodinu Jamily, a rodinu Haroona. Anwar znázorňoval typické hodnoty Východního světa. Byl patriarchou rodiny, tudíž očekával naprostý respekt a poddajnost. Byl to právě on, kdo rozhodl o sňatku Jamily, a kdo jí našel manžela. Jamila, na rozdíl od svého otce, preferovala hodnoty západního světa a nechtěla se tak podvolit. Nakonec k manželství svolila, ale odmítla sama východní hodnoty, čímž zároveň odmítla patriarchát Anwara. Ve svém manželství s Changezem se projevovala dominantněji než on, a Changez se tak musel podřídít jejím pravidlům. Jejich sňatek zůstal i přes Changezovy snahy symbolickým, avšak nevěra probíhala na obou stranách. Nakonec oba manželé začali žít v komunitním domě, kde se posléze Jamile narodila dcera jednoho z obyvatel domu. Haroonova rodina znázornila tradiční nukleární rodinu podle západní představy. Nicméně i tato rodina nakonec skončila rozvodem, a to z důvodu jeho aféry s Evou Kay, a jeho touhy po hledání lepšího života.

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