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IDENTITY FORMATION REVEALED IN MIGRATORY EXPERIENCE: MONICA ALI'S BRICK LANE, HANIF KUREISHI'S THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA AND ZADIE SMITH'S SWING TIME AS MULTICULTURAL BILDUNGSROMANE

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ABSTRACT

IDENTITY FORMATION REVEALED IN MIGRATORY EXPERIENCE: MONICA ALI'S BRICK LANE, HANIF KUREISHI'S THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA AND ZADIE SMITH'S SWING TIME AS MULTICULTURAL BILDUNGSROMANE

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The flourishing of the Bildungsroman in English literature precipitated a new way of representing the individual in relation to social mechanisms and entailments of the Victorian era. Correspondingly, the Bildungsroman hero's physical and mental development heavily depended on his successful integration into the society and its moral and cultural codes. However, the Bildungsroman still offers a proper ground for exploring the "becoming" process of the protagonist in postmodern literature as well, particularly by recurrently employing the contemporary concepts of identity, multiculturalism, hybridity, fluidity, and others. These notions became very popular especially with the increase in transnational migration specifically to Britain and with the influence of globalization in the 1950s. Consequently, a new type of literature developed to be designated as migration literature: it shares its theoretical background with postcolonial studies to a large extent and primarily focuses on the individual's experience of cultural difference. Contrary to the nineteenth-century Bildungsroman, the postmodern/multicultural Bildungsroman thematically encompasses the subject's acquisition of an empowered self in accordance with his/her divergence from pre-established social, cultural, racial, and gendered norms. However, the concepts of "identity" and "change" as the common elements both in the Victorian Bildungsroman and the postmodern theory generate a comprehensive and consolidative field of study. In this respect, the present study aims to provide a comparative analysis of **Brick Lane** (2003), **The Buddha of Suburbia** (1990), and **Swing Time** (2016) regarding their protagonists' identity formation and maturation perpetuated by their nomadic conditions in multicultural London. Each of them experiences cultural hybridity differently; nevertheless, they eventually construct mobile, fragmented, and liberated

identities initiated by the process of self-discovery. The thematic and structural elements and principles of the Bildungsroman tradition as well as the theoretical approaches of Stuart Hall, Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha, along with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, which cover concepts such as identity, hybridity, diversity, and difference, are scrutinized, combined and applied in this study reifying our attempts to identify the protagonists' transformation into liminal and dislocated subjects and ultimately conferring **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time** the status of distinct fictional hypostases of the multicultural Bildungsroman.

Keywords: Multicultural Bildungsroman, Identity formation, Hybridity, Diversity, Change.

ÖZ

GÖÇ DENEYİMİNDE KİMLİK OLUŞUMU: ÇOKKÜLTÜRLÜ BILDUNGSROMAN OLARAK MONICA ALI'NİN BRICK LANE, HANIF KUREISHI'NİN THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA VE ZADIE SMITH'İN SWING TIME ROMANLARI

DERYA BENLİ

Bildungsroman'ın İngiliz edebiyatında ortaya çıkışı, Viktorya döneminin toplumsal mekanizmaları ve gereklilikleri ile iç içe olan bireyi temsil etmenin yeni bir yolunu oluşturdu. Buna bağlı olarak, Bildungsroman kahramanının fiziksel ve zihinsel gelişimi büyük ölçüde toplumla ve onun ahlaki ve kültürel kodlarıyla başarılı bir şekilde bütünleşmesine bağlıydı. Bununla birlikte Bildungsroman, kimlik, çokkültürlülük, hibridite ve akışkanlık gibi çağdaş kavramların sıklıkla kullanıldığı postmodern edebiyatta da başkahramanın "oluş" sürecini keşfetmek için uygun bir zemin sunar. Bu kavramlar, 1950'lerde küreselleşmenin etkisiyle özellikle İngiltere'ye yönelik uluslararası göçün artmasıyla oldukça popüler hale geldi; böylece kuramsal altyapısını büyük ölçüde sömürgecilik sonrası çalışmalardan alan ve öncelikle bireyin kültürel farklılığı deneyimlemesine odaklanan göç edebiyatı türü ortaya çıktı. 19. yüzyıl Bildungsroman'ının aksine, postmodern/çokkültürlü Bildungsroman, öznenin kalıplaşmış sosyal, kültürel, ırksal ve toplumsal cinsiyet normlarından uzaklaşarak güçlenmiş bir benlik edinmesini ele alır. Ancak kimlik ve değişim kavramları, hem Victoria Bildungsroman'ında hem de postmodern kuramda ortak unsurlar olarak kapsamlı ve pekiştirici bir çalışma alanı oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma **Brick Lane** (2003), **The Buddha of Suburbia** (1990) ve **Swing Time**'ın (2016) başkahramanlarının çok kültürlü Londra'daki göçmenlik deneyimleri sırasında kimlik oluşumu ve olgunlaşmalarına ilişkin karşılaştırmalı bir analiz sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Her bir karakter kültürel melezliği farklı şekilde deneyimlemekte; yine de, sonunda kendini keşfetme sürecinde dinamik, parçalanmış ve özgürleşmiş kimlikler inşa etmektedirler. Bu çalışma Bildungsroman geleneğinin tematik ve yapısal ilkelerini, Stuart Hall, Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha, Deleuze ve Guattari'nin kimlik, melezlik, çeşitlilik ve farklılık gibi kavramları kapsayan kuramsal

yaklaşımlarını bir araya getirerek, kahramanların eşikte ve yerinden edilmiş öznelere dönüşmesini tespit etmek ve incelemek amacı taşımaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu tez çalışması **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia** ve **Swing Time**'ı çok kültürlü Bildungsroman'ın temsilcileri olarak ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çokkültürlü Bildungsroman, Kimlik Oluşumu, Hibridite, Çeşitlilik, Değişim.

PREFACE

As a study of the Bildungsroman, this thesis is firmly constructed on the theory of identity while scrutinizing the transformation of the protagonists of **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia,** and **Swing Time.** The close reading of their identities enabled me to become immersed in their psychological states and discover the very tiny details of their personalities which are deftly implanted by the writers of these novels. It also empowered me to detect and analyze the process of their identity formation and change with the help of the prominent philosophical and cultural theories of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, and Mikhail Bakhtin concerning the contemporary concepts of heterogeneity, difference, mobility, fluidity, and hybridity.

Considering the writing process of this thesis, which might be described as both turbulent and illuminating, I must, first of all, specify that I am sincerely thankful to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Yıldız Kılıç for always being there with her kindness, elegance, and empathy to show the way and teach. She was always very patient and meticulous while reviewing my thesis, and her suggestions and comments were very influential on my writing process.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Within the postcolonial discourse, many concepts and terms already used in literary and cultural studies began to acquire various levels of meanings and perspectives. Among these terms, identity, hybridity, ambiguity, self and other, and hegemony are the most common ones. Their usage reveals that the effects of decolonization and postcolonial processes on culture and individuals determine the core of postcolonial studies and literature by applying specific significance to these key terms. For instance, the concept of identity is a very broad term and has been studied within different fields of science, including psychology and sociology; whereas postcolonial theory approaches identity through a socio-geographical perspective, regarding the condition of minorities trying to define a cultural space and attain a sense of belonging in an expanding colonial world. Another significant postcolonial concept is hybridity, which originates from the study of biology, but has connection to the linguistic background as well, referring to a cultural and social context which is used to suggest the combination multiple cultures to form a new cultural being. Notions inherent to the postcolonial discourse generally constitute the thematic aspect of literatures produced by formerly colonized countries, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afro-Caribbean countries as a mode of expression in their resistance to colonial powers and subjugation. However, after the 1950s, with the increase in transnational migration specifically to Britain**,** with the influence of globalization, a new type of literature developed as **migration literature**, which shares the theoretical background with postcolonial studies to a large extent.

The personal ordeal of cultural transplantation as experienced by British-born immigrant writers determines whether they write of the experience as being destructive or as positively formative and productive. The first generation writers, who were migrants themselves, tend to express the migrant experience as a threat to national and ethnic culture by presenting the sufferings of the migrant character and the detrimental aspects of the colonial process. The expectation that London as a multicultural society would be a welcoming place**,** turns to disillusionment; the idea of **rootedness** is the main issue in these novels, for instance in Sam Selvon's **The Lonely Londoners**

(1956) which is about the Caribbean migrants living in London and who are unable to become a part of the cultural heterogeneity.

From the end of the twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century, British migration literature was dominated mostly by the second-generation writers, who were primarily British-born and whose celebratory approach towards migration and multicultural experience formulated a new source of expression within the postcolonial theory. While they touch upon the predicaments of being a migrant with different skin colour and race in a totally different cultural environment, at the same time they advocate the idea that cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism is an opportunity for the migrant individual to establish an identity with multiple perspectives and transformative capacity by substantially using Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity.

The rejection of stability, rootedness and singularity, and the celebration of heteroglossia, multiple perspectives, fluidity, which lead to constant development and change, open up a new literary ground which would enable the study of the metamorphosis of the migrant or racially hybrid protagonist by applying the theory of the postmodern Bildungsroman. The Bildungsroman tradition and its thematic aspects are strongly connected to the formative characteristic of the multicultural migration literature, although it emerged in the eighteenth century in Germany having originally different concerns and perspectives. The Bildungsroman is not just a genre which centers on the formation of identity; it also carries political motive. The protagonist works to fulfill themselves as an individual, seemingly seeking autonomy against the better wishes of society, but in reality, the purpose is to show that in fulfilling self-realization, the middle-class premise of society is realized. An example would be Robinson Crusoe as a subversive hero and demanding to create his own world, ending up replicating and thereby proving perfect his father's 'middle-class' world. The Bildungsroman is the process of ingratiating the individual into society; but it also verifies the patriarchal, authoritarian, imperialist status quo, which is in binary opposition to the postcolonial/postmodern text. The Bildungsroman is an eighteenth

and nineteenth century politically motivated construct, whose purpose and manner of function within the narrative needs to be considered.

Since the Bildungsroman, or the novel of formation, reveals the character development in relation to the social environment, the contemporary novels, which represent our concern, thematize the element of formation with regard to the migrant experience in a multicultural society. In the Bildungsroman literary tradition, the protagonist is usually expected to disclose both physical and mental progress at the end of the novel; the pattern also includes a significant change both in his/her life in general and a development in his/her intellectual perspective, leading to epiphany. Thus, it is the notion of change that determines the individual accomplishment of the character, which is paralleled by the understanding of hybridity acquired by postcolonial and multicultural migration novels, as well as its potential of perpetual transformation which would initiate new horizons and a new accomplished identity for the multicultural Bildungsroman protagonist.

From this point of view, the first chapter of this study concentrates on the historical development of the comprehensive and generic literary and cultural theories applied to three contemporary British novels – Monica Ali's **Brick Lane** (2003), Hanif Kureishi's **The Buddha of Suburbia** (1990), and Zadie Smith's **Swing Time** (2016). First, the flourishing of the Bildungsroman tradition at the end of the eighteenth century in Germany, its emergence in British literature afterwards, and its evolution in the periods of modernism and postmodernism are presented by specifying to what extent the principles of the Bildungsroman are maintained or deviated regarding the literary movement of each period. Then, the postmodern and postcolonial concepts and major contemporary theorists enabling a wide perspective of study in poststructuralist philosophy, multiculturalism and migration literature, among whom are Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Gilles Deleuze, are evaluated, which also constitute the main theoretical source of this study. Besides the most prominent postmodern concepts of identity, hybridity, fluidity and becoming, alternative ideas related to those contemporary notions are likely to be employed in the exploration of the novels that this thesis is dealing with in the following chapters.

The second chapter entitled “Migration and Building Identity in Monica Ali’s **Brick Lane**” focuses on the protagonist Nazneen’s process of identity development after she comes to London as an eighteen-year-old girl from Bangladesh with her husband Chanu just after their marriage. As a Bildungsroman, the novel retrospectively reveals Nazneen’s childhood and her socio-cultural environment in which she grew up, by emphasizing how Nazneen is controlled by fate and made submissive because of her monolithic, fixed and normative society. The controlling, indoctrinating nature of the social context is a vital part of the Bildungsroman, in particular the one encompassing the realist tradition, which equals fate to a rigidly controlling society. Thus, Nazneen is unable to develop herself as an individual in her native land, frozen in her passivity; but in the detached, uninterested and alien environment of London she achieves, an albeit, negative liberty and subsequently the chance to realize herself. The novel also illustrates the dramatic comparison of these two different cultures by constantly exposing the miserable life of Nazneen’s sister Hasina, who is entrapped into her native culture’s restrictive norms and boundaries, and mercilessly casted out, especially as a woman. This is the reason why Monica Ali was harshly attacked by some critics who claimed that she disdained and betrayed her own culture and background.

Throughout the novel, Nazneen undergoes many changes regarding her life and family, such as having a baby and losing it, physically integrating into the metropolitan society by wandering on the streets, and learning the language and communication, all of which stimulate the transformation of her perspective of self and identity by making her develop differing points of views and apprehension towards everything including her relationship with her husband. This chapter also illuminates the diasporic experiences of minor characters such as Chanu, Razia, Dr Azad, Karim and Nazneen’s British-born daughters by making references to Bhabha’s concept of “third space”, while delineating Nazneen’s identiy development within the framework of Deleuze and Guattari’s **rhizome** theory.

Chapter Two attempts to discuss Nazneen’s relationship with Karim, her young lover, as another turning point in her life regarding her self-formation. With Karim,

Nazneen enters a different social and political environment by attending the meetings of a Muslim organization, the Bengal Tigers, and faces socio-political condition and sufferings of other Muslims, which she would not be aware of before. Karim embodies yet another critical point in Nazneen's transformation: discovering sexuality and learning to take pleasure from it. This chapter argues that, by the end of the novel indications of Nazneen's identity formation and evolution become more powerful as their day of permanent return to Dhaka is approaching, because she must decide whether to stay or go. As a stronger and more decisive woman, the uncertainty and the mess of questions in her mind suddenly frustrate her and she reaches a point: "*I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the one*" (Ali, 2003: 405), which is interpreted in this study as a critical moment of epiphany that manifests Nazneen's metamorphosis towards being a self-sufficient woman and building an accomplished identity.

This chapter aims to achieve to the idea that Nazneen is the portrayal of the postcolonial idea of cultural multiplicity, complexity and flux, which, within the context of migration, pave the way for perpetual mobility and change providing the migrant individual with new possibilities for developing innate identity with multiple perspectives. By refusing to go back with Chanu and stating her decision to him openly and confidently, Nazneen accomplishes her biggest quest in her road towards individual transformation within the framework of the multicultural Bildungsroman. However, this does not mean that her formation is completed; the novel discloses the fact that she is in a constant flow of progression. She is no longer entrapped by the cultural indoctrination and social control, instead, she begins to rule her life with principles of rationality as an independent woman both economically and socially. The chapter concludes with the argument that the novel clearly reveals that multicultural London, cultural diversity and rootlessness provide Nazneen with strength and agency that she needs for a fulfilled identity. While she is ice-skating with her sari, she becomes the exact embodiment of the hybrid individual who creates her own Third Space in a multicultural Western society, as Homi Bhabha suggests.

Chapter Three discusses Hanif Kureishi's debut novel **The Buddha of Suburbia**, which posits a different approach towards the issues of cultural hybridity, identity construction and postcolonial stereotypes and categorizations by introducing a satirical and ironical tone to the narration, contrary to the sentimental nature of **Brick Lane. The Buddha of Suburbia** exhibits the social aspects of postcolonialism and multiculturalism such as racial and ethnic discrimination, social stereotypes and identifications in 1970s multicultural London. The novel depicts the condition of both the first and second generation immigrants, such as Haroon and his son Karim. Haroon experienced the cultural dislocation when he first came to London from India in the 1950s and could not maintain his previous prosperous, aristocratic life; however, having been born in England, Karim sees himself as an Englishman, "a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories" (Kureishi, 1990: 3), who is completely aware of his hybrid position.

By presenting an adolescent character in his way through maturity, seeking to accomplish his life goals by desiring to leave his limited suburban environment for the excitement of the life in a big city – London – and by highlighting the postcolonial issues of cultural and ethnic difference with their stereotypical and exotic perception by the Western ideology, Kureishi introduces the thematic elements of the multicultural Bildungsroman from the very beginning. Karim is unsatisfied with the inactive, monotonous, stable and boring life in the suburbs and always wants movement, action and any kind of excitement that only metropolitan life can offer. This chapter analyses the novel's juxtaposition of the suburbs and the city by reiterating Bakhtin's and Bhabha's predilection of heterogeneity, change, dynamism and continuous flow over homogeneity, stability and essentialism, while also touching upon the changing image of the suburbs since modernity. The heterogeneity of suburbia as a productive **field of immanence** in Deleuzean terms, is illustrated by underpinning certain theories of space and heterotopia, and the queer theory regarding interpersonal relationships both in the suburbs and the city.

It is suggested in this study that Karim has had the potential of developing his identity towards complexity and cultural multiplicity from the start. His desire of

movement and action is fulfilled with the beginning of his new life in London upon leaving the suburbs. His mobility is investigated through the lens of the **contemporary nomad figure** whose **becoming** is perpetuated by the **rhizomatic thought** as Deleuze suggests, which is also pertinent to Bakhtin's idea of **internally persuasive discourse**. The novel indicates that Karim's identity formation and self-discovery are initiated by his arrival to London, a place totally different from his former environment. In London, Karim is doubly alienated because of his mixed race and suburban origin, which constitutes an important factor in his self-awareness. Thus, the critical approach of this study would reveal that, similar to Monica Ali's attitude towards metropolitan London as a prompter of identity construction, Kureishi's London is the primary factor in Karim's character formation with its polyvocality, hybridity and, queer and subcultural representations.

Karim's character formation and individual accomplishment emerge as he gradually integrates into the multicultural society despite the ethnic and racial discrimination that he encounters during his journey through his professional career. This chapter deliberates that Karim creates his **Third Space** in a society which has been established by fixed norms, especially by racial implications, and his accomplishment lies beneath his ability to subvert the essentialism of the western thought, while protecting and maintaining his hybrid identity both in terms of ethnicity and individual preferences, such as his sexuality – as he is revealed as bisexual, which again discloses his rejection of stereotypical and pre-determined identifications. At the end of the novel, he manages to reach the social and economic position that he has strived for from the beginning with his own original and fluid character without adjusting himself according to the definitive expectations of society.

The concepts of identity, change, gender and ethnicity gain a different form in Zadie Smith's novel **Swing Time**, which is the main argument of the fourth chapter of this thesis. As a multicultural Bildungsroman, **Swing Time** explores the details and depths of the unnamed female narrator and protagonist's identity as a mixed-race girl beginning from her childhood to her early adulthood. While focusing on themes like friendship, family, cultural difference and class issues, the author intends to touch upon

the racial problems of black and mixed-race people in England by revealing the protagonist's struggles of identity construction.

The narrator's childhood memories are mostly surrounded by her best friend Tracey, who is a vicious, exuberant and self-confident mixed-race girl raised by an uneducated working class white mother. Their friendship begins as they meet in a dance class in London, and dance becomes a unifying bond between them, which also manifests the author's attribution of a special meaning and function to dance and music throughout the novel. On the other hand, the novel highlights the narrator's mother's ambitious and self-reliant character, who is a black feminist struggling to create a niche for herself and her daughter in British society. She wants her daughter to have a similar awareness and consciousness of race and class by perpetually reminding her of ethnic background, because she is concerned that her white father is not able to do it.

This chapter closely investigates the passive and submissive character of the narrator, who is presented as a shadow of her mother and Tracey, and unable to establish and assert her own identity, by attempting to identify and introduce the psychological and socio-cultural reasons behind it. Regarding the dynamics of identity construction, Stuart Hall's premises on the relationship between identity and culture constitute a significant theoretical background for this study.

The novel demonstrates the protagonist in a constant state of movement in terms of both education and professional career; she attends college, starts working in a famous music channel and climbs higher as the personal assistant of the world-wide pop star Aimee, while her path with Tracey is separated. She participates in Aimee's project of building girls' school in Africa, and goes to an African country – probably Gambia, for the name is never given throughout the novel – in which she experiences the dramatic consequences of cultural difference. What she encounters there from the moment she arrived is a complete strangeness and unfamiliarity, although she is aware that her ethnic roots – from her mother – belong to here. Nevertheless, it turns out to be a formative experience for the narrator; she finds a chance to compare her life in London with socio-economic conditions of Africa; everything loses its previous

significance and certainty, as she recognizes the relativity and fluidity of meaning, specifically in cultural and racial contexts. Thus, in this chapter, the narrator's cross-cultural migration is manifested as a catalyst of her extended perspective and mental maturation. The novel's consideration of the ideas of identity, belonging, cultural difference and mobility are perpetuated with the theoretical concepts of **nomadism** and **nomadic consciousness**, which imply constant becoming and transformation of the subject. Moreover, this chapter amalgamates Smith's employment of the concepts of relativity and meanings in flux, particularly related to space/territory, with Deleuze's influential theories of **rhizomatic assemblage** and **planes of immanence** by making certain references to the narrator's spatial and interpersonal experiences.

In this chapter, the bond between the narrator and her mother is scrutinized as one of the determinants of the narrator's identity formation from the perspective of psychoanalytical and feminist theories frequently employed in the analysis of female identity. Thus, it is ultimately asserted that the novel consolidates multiculturalism, hybridity, and intimate relationships as the prominent agents of the protagonist's character development throughout the novel.

The last part of the thesis embodies the concluding reflections and comparison of **Brick Lane, The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time**, regarding the way they manifest the Bildungsroman tradition and depart from its established fictional pattern. The concurrent evaluation of these three novels unveils their common thematic elements and theoretical substratum, and attempts to provide a fresh insight. Their protagonists exhibit maturation and formation of identity which would permit the novels to be studied as Bildungsroman; moreover, all of them are culturally and ethnically hybrid and migrant individuals living in Britain, and they reveal accomplished identities by being a part of the heterogeneous and multicultural society.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BILDUNGSROMAN IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: THE RISE AND FLOURISHING OF A GENRE FROM ITS ROMANTIC BEGINNINGS TO POSTMODERNITY

This chapter focuses on the definition and the historical, literary and structural development of the Bildungsroman literary tradition since it was first introduced to the literary realm in Germany in the eighteenth century with the publication of Goethe's novel **Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre** (Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship) between 1794 and 1796. Further investigation is going to be centralized on the Bildungsroman's transition to English literature in the first half of the nineteenth century with Thomas Carlyle's translation of Goethe's canonical Bildungsroman, as well as his own Bildungsroman **Sartor Resartus** (1833-1834), and its contextual divergence from the German Bildungsroman which was flourished from the **Sturm und Drang** movement's philosophical perception of the term **Bildung**. Other components that contributed to the development of the Bildungsroman tradition in English literature such as the elements of picaresque tradition, the Romantic Movement and the principles of realism are going to be introduced by making references to Mikhail Bakhtin's views on the emergence and definition of the Bildungsroman.

Also known as the **novel of formation**, **apprenticeship novel** or **coming of age novel**, the Bildungsroman is a very broad and flexible literary concept and should not be limited to a single definition. It has types and subgenres, and has been subjected to perpetual adjustment and development according to historical periods, movements and trends since it emerged in the eighteenth century. Although it can be labelled as a nineteenth century realist or Victorian literary tradition, today in this postmodern world and until it, Bildungsroman has been a living phenomenon, being produced by preserving the essential thematic element "formation", but evolving by gaining or abandoning various characteristics within the epoch that it belongs to, such as modernist, postmodern, postcolonial, and the multicultural Bildungsroman. That is what makes this fictional subgenre a special and progressive organism.

Although Goethe is commonly associated with the emergence of the Bildungsroman with his novel **Wilhelm Meister** as the first prototype of the Bildungsroman, Wilhelm Dilthey, who is a sociologist and philosopher, is the one who first used **Bildungsroman** as a term in 1870. However, in the 1820s, Karl Morgenstern emphasized the term **Bildung** (formation) while demonstrating the formative experience of Goethe's protagonist Wilhelm Meister. Since then, each scholar or theorist approached the concept from different philosophical and social angles by propounding different definitions, and as the tradition expanded internationally, its thematic application varied according to cultural and social conditions of the nations. The Germans feature the individual and aesthetic growth and awareness of the character because of the influence of the idealist philosophy and Romantic impulse during that period, whereas the British articulate the maturation and identity formation of the protagonist in relation to society as an outcome of the Victorian realist thought. Or, as Golban states,

> [t]he German and French Bildungsromane value youth and change; their English counterpart gives meaning and significance to childhood, whereas youth is a problematic and negative stage which the hero or heroine must go through unchanged (meaning to keep unaltered the values of moral essence, family, and so on assumed in childhood) in order to be rewarded with social integration and achieve success of formation. Moreover, the plot of the German and English Bildungsromane is therefore dominated by the principle of classification (emphasis on traditional, pre-industrial values of stability, order, success, maturity, self-culture), and the French Bildungsroman by that of transformation (emphasis on change and youth, signifying modernity). (2018: 13)

On the other hand, considering the German Bildungsroman's emphasis on the individual and artistic cultivation, Sarah E. Maier defines the Bildungsroman by exposing its types and categories:

> The German term *bildungsroman* has been used to designate a genre of novel (*roman*) which demonstrates the formation (*bildung*) of a character; indeed, the possibilities of such a novel proliferate. Ideas of literary characters' self-development have been variously categorized as novels of growth, education (*erziehungsroman*), development (*entwicklungsroman*), socialization, formation, culture, or as novels of coming-of-age of the artist (*künstlerroman*). (2007: 317)

Admittedly, of all these subcategories of the Bildungsroman and its distinct definitions, there is one unifying element, which is **formation**. Formation of identity

in general, which includes education, physical and psychological growth, aesthetic or artistic achievement, and social integration, constitutes the core thematic material of the Bildungsroman literary tradition. Thus, if we intend to present a comprehensive definition of the Bildungsroman, we should state that it is a literary system, tradition or a novelistic subgenre which exhibits the biological and mental development of the protagonist starting from his/her childhood until he/she reaches to adulthood while experiencing a number of ordeals within a picaresque journey eventually leading towards psychological maturation, self-development, social acceptance, a profession, and character formation.

The protagonist's formative journey begins with his departure from ordinary, mundane and limited environment and home, provoked by a social or individual conflict and enters a larger society. He goes through a personal or institutionalized education which marks the beginnings of the expected change and formation of the character. As he physically grows up, his social relations grow as well, which includes certain characters representing social types that will be influential in the protagonist's character development. He gains a professional career together with a social position. Sentimental experience or test is another necessary thematic element in identity maturation whether it ends up with emotional gratification or not, and provides the hero with an important life lesson and spiritual and emotional cultivation. His journey, consisting of ordeals and painful experiences brings him the "*epiphanic* realization signaling the *change*" (Golban, 2018: 22), and identity formation, eventually.

The Victorian Bildungsroman adapts these thematic components to the principles of realist fiction which greatly advocates and reflects the aspects and requirements of social conventions, as well as moral and social didacticism. Hence, society possesses an important and decisive role in the character's maturation by awarding him with social position and acclaim. If the hero could not adapt himself to the norms and expectations of society, his identity formation ends up with failure. This can be explained by the concept of **social determinism**, which is an inseparable principle of the Victorian realist fiction. The emphasis on the theme of childhood is another peculiar characteristic of the Victorian fiction, which is actually a continuing

consequence of the previous period's literary doctrine that is Romanticism. Childhood experience in the Victorian novel provides an effective opportunity for the expression of the process of character development and both physical and mental maturation, such in the canonical Victorian Bildungsroman **Jane Eyre** (1847), **Wuthering Heights** (1847), **David Copperfield** (1849), and **Great Expectations** (1861).

Although the German origin of the Bildungsroman is of great importance to understanding its main thematic and structural system, it is necessary to investigate the Bildungsroman's literary background going back much further, which is clearly demonstrated and systematically classified by Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism" (1986). His ideas on both Bildungsroman and the concept of hybridity generate one of the main theoretical references in this study.

1.1. M. M. Bakhtin and His Surveyistic Approach to "Roman Vospitaniya"

In his seminal essay "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism", Mikhail Bakhtin focuses mainly on the creation of the hero and how the creation strategy varies depending on the organization of plot, time and space by presenting different types of novels and their literary principles. He argues that these novelistic types belonging to different historical periods are interrelated and each transmits certain aspect to the subsequent type, ultimately paving the way for the emergence of the Bildungsroman tradition. He follows a systematic categorization of novel types and introduces their structural and thematic components by placing the hero in the center. The first type of novel that he deals with is **the travel novel**, in which "the hero is a point moving in space." (Bakhtin, 1986: 10) The hero is not the focus of the author and does not have any significance in the plot line. What is regarded is the space or the physical environment around the hero. He is just a static device used to strengthen the function of space in the fictional environment. According to Bakhtin, the European picaresque novel and nineteenth century adventure novels are influenced by the travel novel to a great extent, such as **Lazarillo de Tormes**, **The Life of**

Guzman de Alfarache, Francion, Gil Blas, Defoe's novels **Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders,** and Smollet's **Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle** and **Humphry Clinker**. "The travel novel typically involves a purely spatial and static conception of the world's diversity. The world is a spatial contiguity of differences and contrasts, and life is an alternation of various contrasting conditions: success/failure, happiness/unhappiness, victory/defeat, and so on" (Bakhtin, 1986: 11). Time is not a determinant, as well as the **biological time**, which is the hero's age or his gradual growth. Only the adventure time possesses an efficient role in the construction of the plot organization. The hero is a static component of the story, does not experience any kind of transformation and change from the beginning to the end, exists only in a state of physical movement.

The second type of novel that Bakhtin investigates is the **novel of ordeal**, in which the hero is more actively involved in the course of action. The hero is subjected to tests for "fidelity, valor, bravery, virtue, nobility, sanctity, and so on" (Bakhtin, 1986: 11). Although he is the major concern of the action, these tests and ordeals do not change his character and stability. "The tested hero is also ready-made and pre-determined. The tests (suffering, temptation, doubt) do not become formative experience for him, they do not change him, and in that very immutability of the hero lies the entire point" (Bakhtin, 1986: 13). Many European novels can be listed under this category, and Bakhtin subcategorizes this type as the Greek romance, the early Christian hagiographies, medieval chivalric novel, and the most important one, the baroque novel. According to him, the baroque novel is the most appropriate subcategory that introduces the concept of testing of the hero. It is beyond the realistic representation, because everything is exaggerated and unusual. He, then, analyses the structural elements of the novel of ordeal such as plot, time, and depiction of the world, because each has a special function in the construction of the novel. The plot of the novel of ordeal does not cover the whole life period of the hero, but exhibits a distinct and exceptional part of it, "therefore, the events of a novel of ordeal, whatever they may be, do not create a new type of life, a new human biography that is determined by the changing conditions of life" (Bakhtin, 1986: 14). Time in the novel of ordeal covers

a specific time period, which is the **adventure time**. In this type of novel, time progresses differently from biological time, as a "violation of normal temporal categories: for example, the work of several years is done in one night or, conversely, a year passes in one moment (the bewitched dream motif)" (Bakhtin, 1986: 15). Especially chivalric novel belongs to this category. The time period in terms of historicity is not specified; the events take place in an ambiguous historical segment. Contrary to the travel novel, the depiction of the world does not have a specific function, because the major concern of the narrative is the hero and the adventures he experiences in a pre-determined period of time. The surroundings and the environment are just necessary devices in the representation of the ordeals and the hero involving in them. Again, the element of change and formation of the hero does not exist; neither the world changes nor the hero. Although the popularity of the novel of ordeal expired in the eighteenth century, its theme of ordeal and test has been maintained in the subsequent type of novels, including the Bildungsroman.

The biographical novel is the third type which Bakhtin elucidates concerning the construction of the hero whose existence is interrelated with the elements of plot, time, and the world. He claims that the biographical novel does not exist as a unique novelistic type, but provides the **biographical (autobiographical) principle** to the representation of the image of the hero. The most significant thematic feature of the biographical novel is the exposition of the hero's achievements and failures during his life period. The plot is arranged not as a distinguished or selected part of the biological life time of the hero, but covers the whole of it, from his birth to death, the whole-life experience including childhood, education, marriage, successes, and failures. In this type of novel, the hero's identity does not change and is not exposed to any formative motivation. The novel's concentration is on the life of the hero and the constitutive components of his course of life. As the events are narrated in a sequence, the time of the events also requires an orderly arrangement. Bakhtin calls it as the **biographical time** and emphasizes its realistic aspect. Time in the biographical novel covers longer life periods, and "the moment, the day, the night, and the immediate contiguity of short moments lose almost all of their significance" (Bakhtin, 1986: 18). The representation

of the world gains significance in this type of novel in terms of the relationship between the hero and the world. The characters, places, and everything around him are in a constant inter-connection, which is a common literary principle of the realist novels. Throughout his biographical time, the hero's character remains unaltered and static; the only thing that changes is his destiny. The biographical novel contributes to the Bildungsroman tradition's one of the most remarkable principles of the construction of the hero, which is the biographical/autobiographical aspect.

These are the major types of novel and their structural elements which influence the construction of the **hero's image**, until the emergence of the Bildungsroman tradition in the eighteenth century. With the flourishing of the Bildungsroman, the representation of the hero evolves into a distinctive practice in which the hero's identity is illustrated as dynamic and in a process of development, as Bakhtin calls it **becoming**. In other types, "[t]he hero is a *constant* in the novel's formula and all other quantities – the spatial environment, social position, fortune, in brief, all aspects of the hero's life and destiny – can therefore be *variables*" (Bakhtin, 1986: 21), whereas in the Bildungsroman, the hero transforms into a **variable** with his state of constant transformation. However, even if the Bildungsroman diverges from previous novelistic types in terms of the construction of the hero, the literary principles of the travel novel, the novel of ordeal and the biographical novel granted many thematic elements by generating a hybrid form, the Bildungsroman.

While presenting a general definition of the Bildungsroman, Bakhtin focuses on the hero's process of becoming and its significance in the construction of the plot by asserting that the Bildungsroman is "the novel of human *emergence*" (1986: 21). The main concern is the formative experience of the hero, and in order to demonstrate his process of becoming, the time of the novel should be **cyclical**, which is the opposite of the limited adventure time. Bakhtin argues that

> in idyllic time one can depict man's path from childhood through youth and maturity to old age showing all those essential internal changes in a person's nature views that take place in him as he grows older. Such a sequence of development (emergence) of man is cyclical in nature, repeating itself in each life, (1986: 22)

by locating this type of novel of emergence as a subcategory of the Bildungsroman. Here, the cyclical time works only with the age of the hero while introducing his gradual formation and maturation. The other type of Bildungsroman exhibits the cyclical formation of the protagonist starting from "youthful idealism and fantasies to mature sobriety and practicality" (Bakhtin, 1986: 22) and the spatial constituents function as a school or an educative entity. According to Bakhtin, the novel of education which emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century can be classified under this category, whose most important representative is Goethe. The third type of novel of emergence is the biographical one. Bakhtin claims that the cyclical representation of the hero's formation is replaced with the biographical time. In the biographical time, the emergence of man does not repeat itself as in the cyclical time; it is unique and individual. "Emergence here is the result of the entire totality of changing life circumstances and events, activity and work. Man's destiny is created and he himself, his character, is created along with it" (Bakhtin, 1986: 22), and Bakhtin regards **Tom Jones** and **David Copperfield** as the examples of this type of Bildungsroman. In the fourth type of novel of emergence, the author assumes a didactic and pedagogical goal while presenting the hero's formation process, which includes the works of Goethe and Rabelais. In the last and the most important type of novel of emergence, the hero's formation is achieved in real historical time. Bakhtin specifies that in other types of Bildungsroman, time and the world are not related to historical time; they are unchanged, immobile and not affected by the emergence of the hero. The world requires the hero to fit into it. However, in this type of Bildungsroman, which can be called as the realistic Bildungsroman, the hero's formative experience is in an interconnection with the world and the historical time. Contrary to other types,

> human emergence is of a different nature. It is no longer man's own private affair. He emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. (Bakhtin, 1986: 23).

The hero's existence in real historical time and his formation along with the dynamism of the real world distinguish this type from other novels of emergence, hence providing it a special position and field of investigation as in Bakhtin's essay.

Among the five types of novel of emergence, Bakhtin celebrates the realistic Bildungsroman mostly and provides a detailed examination of the idea of **assimilation of real historical time** in such novels; including Goethe's **Wilhelm Meister**, while critically exploring the construction of the hero's identity and maturation within the historical time. Although the realist Bildungsroman is of a distinct literary significance in the representation of the emergence of the hero, the previous types of novel and other types of Bildungsroman contributed to the flourishing of the realist type to a great extent both thematically and structurally, thus their significance should not be disregarded.

Regarding Bakhtin's argumentation on the emergence of the Bildungsroman as a result of the contributions of the previous literary forms such as the travel novel, the novel of ordeal and the biographical novel, it would not be a difficult task to explore the traces of these novelistic types even in the postmodern novels that are involved in the concept of identity formation. **Brick Lane, The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time**, which constitute the literary framework of this study as multicultural Bildungsroman, can be investigated from the Bakhtinian perspective to discover the components he claimed came to form the Bildungsroman literary system and the construction of the hero image.

The Bildungsroman borrows the idea of hero's physical move in space from the travel novel by changing the static position of the hero into a dynamic one, for the Bildungsroman requires character formation while the hero is in a spatial movement. **Brick Lane** introduces the identity development of the protagonist as she experiences a limited spatial diversity; a domestic and immobile life style with her intense intrinsic and psychological states. The protagonists of **The Buddha of Suburbia** and **Swing Time** have more dynamic and physically active way of living: Karim's constant move from the suburbs to London and to New York to accomplish his desire, and the female

narrator of **Swing Time** who is constantly travelling with Aimee, to Africa, New York and London. These three novels also reveal the biographical/autobiographical aspect as Bakhtin suggests as one of the providers of the emergence of the Bildungsroman. In the context of multiculturalism and migration, the authors' background as being mixed-raced, British-born or migrant, have a powerful impact on the production of their narrative works and fictional characters who are migrants or hybrid individuals themselves. The characters reveal the truest perspective of being the **other** in a multicultural and cosmopolitan city, which is London, with the existential predicaments, and the endless struggle to discover and master the strong facet of self to survive in a different culture and to successfully integrate into it. We believe that these novels and all other novels that portray character formation of the fictional individual within the multicultural context are actually the self-expression of their authors in which they articulate their own process of development and identity formation during their migrant experience and construction of hybrid identities.

The theme of ordeal constitutes the primary element in the shaping and formation of the self in the Bildungsroman, which is influenced by the novel of ordeal as Bakhtin indicates; however, in the novel of formation the eventual consequence of the ordeals that the protagonist endures is maturation and transformation of identity contrary to the unchanged hero of the novel of ordeal. In nineteenth century Bildungsroman, the ordeals and tests are imposed on the character by society and social values, besides the personal and emotional trials, because the ultimate goal is to become an integrated part of the society – as individuals in their own right. The context of the ordeals is very crucial in reflecting the cultural and social discourse and disposition of the period or the literary movement. For instance, the hero/heroine of the modernist Bildungsroman confronts personal ordeals by ignoring social dependence and expectations, such as existential angst, alienation, frustration, and individual struggle against the meaninglessness and mundaneness of everyday life. In the framework of this study which embraces the three examples of multicultural Bildungsroman the protagonists Nazneen, Karim and the unnamed narrator of **Swing Time**, experience their own personal ordeals enforced by multiculturalism, racial and

ethnic hybridity, and migration. All of them struggle to construct powerful identities by freeing themselves from the cultural impediment of their ethnic backgrounds; while at the same time maintaining their cultural heritage by compounding it with their new multicultural identity and consequently building an independent hybrid personality, which indicates the **emergence** of a new self as Bakhtin proposes.

1.2. The Romantic Precursors of the Bildungsroman

The historical development of the novel and other fictional genres since ancient times has revealed that although they have a unique and distinguishable literary sphere – sometimes rejecting the literary mindset and tradition of the previous epoch, their existence paved the way for the emergence of the succeeding literary type, which propounds their strong interdependence. The fictional existence of the hero has always been one of the most important constituents of all literary genres since antiquity; however, its construction and representation has become remarkably diversified. Bakhtin scrutinizes the travel novel, the novel of ordeal and the biographical novel in terms of their strategies of construction of the hero image; nevertheless, it is the Bildungsroman which presents the formation and becoming process of the hero by uncovering his psychological and intrinsic state. But other thematic features of the Bildungsroman, such as the adventurous journey of the hero, childhood, test and ordeal, autobiographical aspect and the element of verisimilitude, prove that the Bildungsroman works with the historical dynamism of literary trends, by borrowing certain principles from each novelistic subgenre. Yet, it was the primary literary models, the picaresque novel, romanticism and realism, in particular, which contributed to the thematic complexity of the Bildungsroman tradition.

Besides the picaresque novel's influence on the emergence of the novel of formation, the romantic movement and romantic literature offered pivotal thematic principles to the Bildungsroman, such as the concept of child and childhood, subjectivity and the psychological insight towards the protagonist. As romantic thought focuses on individuality and the intrinsic expression of feelings, together with a melancholic longing for the past, childhood as a thematic component provides a very

suitable narrative area for the artist to disclose his subjective literary experiment. Childhood is often associated with innocence and purity by the romantics, and they perceive it as the true reflection of untouched feelings.

The romantics' literary concern with individuality, emotional expression, nature as the source of inspiration, and childhood as a reflection of a stage of life in which innocence, unlimited feelings and imagination are the governing forces, had a powerful impact on the emergence of the Bildungsroman literary system, although it was a literary outcome of nineteenth century realist movement. Although the historical proceeding of literature and literary epochs, a movement or a doctrine was always rejected by the following period and its literary understanding, the previous movement never expired abruptly but continued to influence the succeeding literary ideology. That is how the Bildungsroman's literary system and structure was established.

Character formation, which is the key thematic concern of the Bildungsroman, requires a complex analysis and representation of the emotional and psychological states of the protagonist who is expected to achieve character improvement. The character's emotional levels, epiphanies and psychological development are very crucial for the demonstration of his maturation process, which also provides a dynamism to character construction, instead of offering a static and superficial protagonist. The romantics' influence on the Bildungsroman regarding emotional expression, sentimentality and subjectivity, provides it with a profound thematic aspect, characterization and psychological complexity by differentiating the Bildungsroman from the picaresque narrative, in which the internal states and identity development of the protagonist is disregarded. If we consider that the hero of the Bildungsroman goes through a two-layered process of development, which are social and individual, we could argue that the influence of the picaresque tradition on the Bildungsroman constitutes the social aspect of the hero's formation, which involves the connection between the hero and the milieu, for the picaresque presents the social progression and development of the protagonist, while the subjective and psychological demonstration and formation of the character and his intrinsic state generates the personal level as an outcome of the romantic influence.

In the Bildungsroman, the protagonist's development process begins with his childhood, in which the character's immaturity, lack of experience, naivety, innocence, childish dreams and ambitions for the future career and social position are emphasized. Starting his developmental journey from the lowest social and economic stage as an immature and inexperienced individual, the hero undergoes a number of social, emotional and economic trials and sufferings which leads him towards maturity while physically growing up and moving away from childhood. Achieving an identity formation and individual development after a compelling process, the sharp distinction between the hero's former psychological and social state as a child and his final achievement, both personal and social, as an adult and mature individual constitutes the fundamental thematic structure of the Bildungsroman tradition, by revealing the process of identity formation in a very effective and apparent way.

The strong occupation of the thematic concept of childhood was explicitly embodied by Charles Dickens in many of his novels. Although he is one of the major representatives of nineteenth century realist novel, Dickens was quite interested in the representation of human psychology and individuality in his novels, and he expressed his concern with subjectivity mostly through child characters. **Oliver Twist** (1837), **The Old Curiosity Shop** (1840), **David Copperfield** (1849), and **Great Expectations** (1860) are only some of his novels that centered on child protagonists and their relationship with society, which is one of the most significant principle of the realist novel in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Charlotte Bronte's **Jane Eyre** (1847) reveals psychological and emotional state of the female protagonist both in her childhood and early adulthood by exhibiting the true embodiment of the romantic influence on the Victorian realist novel and the realist Bildungsroman. While disclosing Jane's personal accomplishment and identity formation, the novel illustrates her fears, desires, dilemmas and epiphanies by constructing a very personal and sentimental narrative perspective.

The theme of childhood continues to inhabit the postmodern Bildungsroman, although its narrative strategy may have been changed. While some of the postmodern novels follow a linear narration in terms of the presentation of the character formation

beginning from the childhood of the protagonist, as in **The Buddha of Suburbia**; some narrate this process with an irregular chronological order, such as **Never Let Me Go** (2005), **Swing Time** and **Brick Lane**. As a postmodern narrative technique, non-linearity represents the rejection of traditional narrative structure of the previous literary movements, especially the realist one; however, the postmodern Bildungsroman maintains the thematic significance of childhood, although it delineates it in an irregular way, by scattering the childhood memories of the protagonist here and there throughout the narration. As a thematic component, childhood memories possess an important function in the identity formation of the character, or as a way of escapism from the current situation of his/her private and social life. Experiencing a challenging adaptation and development process, Nazneen in **Brick Lane** holds on to her childhood memories during her migratory experience into a completely new cultural environment, which is the postmodern version of the concept of romantic escapism. Some of her images in nature and moments with her sister Hasina create a form of parallel existence where she can flee from Chanu's idyllic monologues, her mundane daily life and being a migrant in a new culture and in a metropolis; while the cultural impediments and limitations of her past and her ethnic background constitute a reason for her escape from the culture and community she belongs to.

> That afternoon, when the rest of the village was drugged by the sun and stretched out on chokis, bedrolls or the ground to sleep it off, Nazneen was not tired. She walked around the pond and stepped over the silvered back of a snake, which lid into the water and became itself a glittering ripple. She climbed a little way up an amra tree and wedged herself into a forked branch to look out across the flat fields. The closer ones were lavish green, dense and deep, but the far fields filled with golden jute flowers were slick as mirrors. The sun polished them until they shone. She wondered if, when she married, she would have to go as far away as those fields. She thought she would not like to go that far. (Ali, 2003: 104)

In one of her childhood moments, she is as free as a part of nature, as if she has integrated with it. While she is independently wandering around and climbing up the trees, she tries to imagine her future married life; however, she could not estimate that she would go away somewhere much further than those fields, and would live an urban life entrapped in a small house in a country whose language she does not know.

Besides the thematic significance of childhood in the Bildungsroman tradition, the romantic emphasis on nature and its impact on the Bildungsroman is clearly reflected in this specific passage. The detailed natural descriptions revealing the special bond between the individual and nature, and their co-existence unveil that the romantic principles have been retained in the postmodern Bildungsroman.

Childhood experience is one of the primary thematic concerns in **The Buddha of Suburbia** and **Swing Time** as well. Contrary to Nazneen, the unnamed female protagonist of **Swing Time** and Karim in **The Buddha of Suburbia** both were born and raised in a different cultural system. **Swing Time** is divided into seven parts, Part One is called "Early Days" and deals with the protagonist's childhood, her relationship with her friend Tracey and with her family. While narrating her story as an adult, she questions her infantile perception of the world around her, including her relationships, interests and everything that being a mixed-race woman brings about. As she grows up towards maturity, she experiences a number of self-revelations, especially concerning her problematic relationship with her mother:

> What do we want from our mothers when we are children? Complete submission. (…) She has to lay down arms and come to you. And if she doesn't do it, then it's really a war, and it was a war between my mother and me. Only as an adult did I come to truly admire her – especially in the last, painful years of her life – for all that she had done to claw some space in this world for herself. When I was young her refusal to submit to me confused and wounded me, especially as I felt none of the usual reasons for refusal applied. (Smith, 2017: 18)

She begins to understand her mother as she develops into a mature individual, and she acquires the perspective of a woman that struggles to construct her life as a self-sufficient individual, as her mother did in the past.

The childhood and early adulthood of the protagonist of **The Buddha of Suburbia** divide the novel into two parts: "In the Suburbs" and "In the City". Karim's suburban life provides him with a chance to experience multiplicity of cultures and to develop various sorts of relationships as a child. Karim is a child, who is fully aware of his identity, his expectations and what he wants from his future life. However, he is immature and inexperienced in his predictions about the metropolitan life, which offers

a dynamic and exciting lifestyle as Karim wishes to have. He is unaware of the difficulties of being a part of a system that is ruled by pre-determined categorizations about race, ethnicity and gender. Karim tries to get involved in a homogeneous social structure in terms of the imposed racial stereotyping, with his heterogeneous identity, which causes the predicaments about the sense of belonging that he lives through in London. Thus, it can be argued that the suburbs draw a contradiction with the city by having a more complex and heterogeneous quality, in which the individuals from various cultures and ethnicities dwell without having any attempt of racial discrimination and othering. Therefore, the suburbs construct a thematic association with childhood which is dominated by freedom, inexperience and immaturity, and the adulthood in which self-awareness and identity formation are initiated, is represented by the metropolitan life throughout the novel, in "In the City" part. The binary oppositions of childhood versus adulthood, or suburbs versus city in postmodern sense is the re-application of Blake's poetic expression of romantic concepts of innocence and experience.

1.3. Modernism Changing the Thematic Perspectives of Identity Formation

The novel which developed in and dominated the Victorian era, undergoes a radical change in form and content by generating a new path from traditional representation of reality to innovative techniques and experimentation. The transformation of the approach towards the function of literature begins in the late nineteenth century with new aesthetic movements, which advocate the idea of art for art's sake. The rejection of social and moral didacticism and social responsibility of the artist paves the way for the development of a new group of intellectual and elite readers and artists, whose attempts to change the ways the literary works are written and read cause a strong conflict between nineteenth century traditional literary concern and the modern perspective of aesthetic and experimental production.

One of the first modern evaluation of the novel and its aesthetic nature is propounded by Henry James in 1884, in his essay entitled "The Art of Fiction", in

which he stands against Besant's argumentation on moral and social function of the novel confined by conventional rules and laws of writing. Instead, he proposes that the novelist should discard the rules that would limit his inspiration and independence in order to demonstrate the essence of life and human mind accurately. Percy Lubbock is another influential name in the construction of the modernist thought, with his book **The Craft of Fiction** (1921), in which he as well, emphasizes the aesthetic function of the novel instead of its moral concern. Virginia Woolf follows the same literary perspectives of James and Lubbock, and in her two famous essays "Modern Fiction" (1919) and "Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown" (1924), she manifests her own understanding of reality and the ways of creating **real** characters. She attacks the literary style of the Edwardian novelists, especially Wells, Bennet and Galsworthy for being materialists and for their superficial representation of reality and fictional characters. She presents the most accurate description of reality and ordinariness infused in the human mind in "Modern Fiction":

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions--trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday (…) Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it. (Woolf, 1994: 157)

In her critical writings and novels, Woolf insists and demonstrates that the reality of life can be achieved only if the author represents the depths of the mind with its continuous flow of thoughts, instead of the external circumstances or the social position of the individual. The individual or the fictional character should exist and be represented merely by his or her psychological and internal essence, instead of identifying him or her according to the external connections. She also discusses that real life is not always precisely ordered or our thoughts are not well-organized as 19th century fiction reflects. The mind is unlimited, occupied by perpetual movements of fragmented and unarranged impressions, which is expressed through the technique of

stream of consciousness. This experimental attempt transforms the form of the novel, as well as its content, by abandoning the linear presentation of plot and time, and applying a disintegrated, non-linear and more abstract narration, which can be vividly detected in the canonical novels of the period, Dorothy Richardson's **Pilgrimage** (1915), James Joyce's **Ulysses** (1922), Virginia Woolf's **Mrs Dalloway** (1925), and **To the Lighthouse** (1927).

The thematic concern of the modern novel encompasses the alienation and isolation of the individual caused by the rapid industrialization and urbanization, by turning the perspective of the author from outward to inward. James Joyce in **Ulysses** clearly presents the concerns of the modernist period by using quite fragmented, incomplete, and sometimes meaningless sentences and interior monologues in order to reveal pure and natural state of his characters' mind. The novel portrays the instant thoughts of Leopold Bloom without any filter and interpretation of the author. The sentences are arranged without an order, and no meaning; they emerge instantly and randomly from Bloom's mind, as they are presented just like they are, because that is how the human mind works. That is the modernists' reality.

> Fly by night. Just the place too. POST NO BILLS. POST 110 PILLS. Some chap with a dose burning him.
>
> If he...
>
> O!
>
> Eh?
>
> No... No.
>
> No, no. I don't believe it. He wouldn't surely?
>
> No, no. (Joyce, 2008:147)

The modernists' repudiation of rules in fiction writing and the representation of the protagonist by his or her social connections and integration, which are the literary methods of the nineteenth century, encourages them to reevaluate or adopt the pre-existed literary types by subverting them, one of which is the Bildungsroman. Nineteenth century Bildungsroman's primary concern with identity formation

achieved as a result of the balance between individual and social accomplishment, is not embraced by the modernists because of their distrust with social system and institutions. They assert that social structure and the protagonist's need to merge with certain social expectations do not provide him with a real character formation and spiritual development, for the social demands establish a restrictive area and limited possibilities for the hero in the process of discovering the self. Gregory Castle defines the condition of the Bildungsroman hero in his externally authorized experience of becoming as a crisis: "the history of Bildungsroman reveals a fundamental contradiction between the ideal promised by Bildung in the classical narrative form and the condition of relative *unfreedom* that makes achieved Bildung impossible for the protagonist" (2019: 144). Therefore, the unachieved self-development under the influence of the milieu is a dead-end from the modernist perspective, which requires new thematic components for the possibility of the accomplished identity in the modern world, one of which is the motif of **the portrait of the artist** (ibid.). The modernists' celebration of artistic and aesthetic representation both formally and contextually, becomes a recurring thematic element, which is narrated through the protagonist's aesthetic aspirations that make him turn inward to explore his true self and spiritual freedom by unbounding himself from peripheral forces. Thus, considering the traditional concept of the Bildungsroman, the modern hero does not attain a successful character formation because of his socially alienated and disintegrated life and despair; however, this perception of failure is actually the accomplishment of the protagonist of the modernist Bildungsroman. Forster's **A Room with a View** (1908), Richardson's **Pilgrimage**, Woolf's **The Voyage Out** (1915), **Jacob's Room** (1922) and Joyce's **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** (1916) are prominent modernist fictions that engage in maturation processes of the protagonists whose endeavors of self-formation are achieved through artistic and internal experiences, while offering the autobiographical expression of the author's aesthetic development and production.

As the modernist writers break the rules concerning chronotope in their narrative by rejecting the linearity and chronological order of the plot, the formation

or deformation process of the hero occurs in a multidimensional existence by overlapping past, present and future. The modernist perception that these three dimensions of time can be experienced simultaneously for they are in constant interaction in the protagonist's mind is explicitly portrayed through stream of consciousness and interior monologue techniques. The hero in his developmental progression through self-cultivation possesses a better vision of his identity by moving between and evaluating past and present, which has the possibility of changing the future as well. With this intense preoccupation of interiority, temporal amalgamation and fluidity, the modernist hero of the Bildungsroman is estranged from physical and external actuality and social affiliations.

1.4. Postmodernity and Postmodernism: New Concerns and New Thematizations

This part of the thesis aims to introduce major postmodern concepts and theories by specifically focusing on their emergence, evolution, conjoined mechanism, and their embodiment within literary texts, particularly in multicultural Bildungsroman. Among the vast field of contemporary approaches, certain theorists and their critical ideas are provided as being pertinent to our literary study of three multicultural Bildungsromane – **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time**, and to their protagonists' discovery of self and identity formation. Throughout this section, the presentation of a general framework of postmodern thought is reinforced by Michel Foucault's theories, which is followed by a subtitle covering Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's philosophical interpretations of the postmodern mind-set. Afterwards, **hybridity** as one of the most acknowledged postmodern concepts is explored starting from its early manifestation by Mikhail Bakhtin to its employment by Homi Bhabha as a cultural and postcolonial notion. Finally, identity as an umbrella term is investigated in relation to its reformation by those contemporary perspectives which pave the way for the celebration of a fragmented, fluid and mobile identity. This study, and this chapter in particular, insistently argues that the contemporary conception of **identity-in-flux** can entirely and comprehensively be embodied by postmodern and

multicultural Bildungsroman in the literary context, which attempts to illustrate the migrant or biracial individuals' perpetual transformation and self-formation in a multicultural society.

Besides being an efficacious movement of literature, philosophy, art, architecture and music, postmodernism should first of all be considered as a peculiar way of thinking in the most general sense, which features a sharp resistance and scepticism towards grand narratives, the historical knowledge produced by the fundamentalist western thought, and the modes of representation of reality and everyday life employed in previous periods, including modernism. The mid-twentieth century and onwards has been witnessing more diversified and suspicious views on the production of meaning, thus, paving the way for the subsidence of the unitary voice of authority – namely the state, religion, society, and the historian – in almost every field of life from politics to sexuality. However, the most striking assertion of postmodern discourse has been declared as the **death of the man** or **death of the subject**. Until postmodernity, human mind has been accepted as the source of knowledge and producer of meaning, which makes man superior and the controller of all systems. "Metaphysical humanism is thus characterized by the urge to *know*, yet this apparently noble impulse has a dubious underside – it can just as readily devolve into the desire to possess and master, to convert otherness and difference into sameness" (Sheehan, 2004: 22). However, the ruling power of man was crushed under new linguistic, philosophical and literary approaches developed in the 1960s, which have reversed the traditional idea that reality can be designated by language, and man is the source of any fixed meaning produced by linguistic or literary contents. The philosophers and poststructuralist theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault determined the main argument of the postmodern thought which manifests the arbitrariness of meaning and "reveal[s] man in his true aspect: not as a timeless, godlike being possessed of an immortal soul, but as an accidental, provisional creature, precariously poised between the "epistemological regions" of economics, biology, and philology" (Sheehan, 2004: 26). He no longer

constructs meaning through language, but language constructs him and the world he is living in.

In the 1980s, textual and linguistic postmodernism concedes to a more extended perspective in which it turns its sceptical gaze towards the dynamics of social structures, power relations, and the production of knowledge, initially declared and developed by Michel Foucault. He attempts to question the way the institutions – the fields of power – create discourses, hierarchies, and standardized definitions by occupying and manipulating knowledge in order to constitute a well-specified subjectivity. This type of subjectivity (self) is intolerant of the one that he/she is not (the other), which is a potential threat to the functioning of the power. Thus, while Foucault rejects the subjectivity that has been moulded by the discourses of power and their truths and norms, he believes that subjectivity should be an innate and self-developing dynamic entity, independent from pre-determined and oppressive forces of power, such as race, gender and moral rules. His ideas on subjectivity have also illuminated the path of the subsequent theorists who study and develop the concept of identity.

In his influential works **Discipline and Punish** (1975) and **The History of Sexuality** (1976), Foucault focuses on body and sexuality as two effective agents of power structures. He argues that throughout history, body has been a means of oppression, manipulation and practice of the systems of power and their political discourses:

> What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. (Foucault, 1995: 138)

On the basis of the relationship between body and power, Foucault elaborates his theory by scrutinizing the concepts of sexuality and sexual bodies. He believes that sex and sexuality are constructed notions and cannot be classified as natural and

biological – even the concept of natural sex is an established idea. Like body, sex operates to determine a standardized mode of subjectivity and certain categorizations, such as gender and sexual identity. By presenting it as an autonomous and physiological entity, the power is able to define the **normal** and employ this normality to body and sexual subjectivity:

> […] the notion of "sex" made it possible to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning, a secret to be discovered everywhere: sex was thus able to function as a unique signifier and as a universal signified. […] We must not make the mistake of thinking that sex is an autonomous agency which secondarily produces manifold effects of sexuality over the entire length of its surface of contact with power. On the contrary, sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures. (Foucault, 1978: 154-155)

While Foucault provides a critical approach towards the relationship between power and knowledge, he also insists that it is impossible to unsettle this system and to get rid of it; the only thing that can be done is to make some alterations within this system with the formations of resistance groups. In this sense, Foucault's theories have become very influential for feminist and queer studies, which have been among these resistance groups.

Although Foucault's ideas on body and sexuality have not fully been appreciated by some feminists, they have been a source of inspiration for such theorists as Judith Butler, especially in understanding the oppression and control of the female body and sexuality by the normativities, codes and demands of the dominant ideology, which is patriarchy. Foucault's rejection of the sexed bodies is widely promoted also by queer theorists, who assert that gendered and sexual categories are socially constructed and the division of sexual identities as lesbian/gay or homosexual/heterosexual is not natural as well, which, they claim, are the conceptual productions of the power structure.

Postmodernism is such a term that cannot be limited within a single definition and sentence, which justifies its defiance of all categories and definitive constructions. That is why instead of providing a lengthy definition of postmodernism, this part of

the thesis initially presents Michel Foucault's postmodern theories, which are quite illuminating in understanding the postmodern thought. Among the vast amount of postmodern approaches towards language, literature, culture, identity, etc. – namely almost every aspect of the globalized world – I intend to proceed with the ones which are more relevant to our study's concern with multiculturalism, postcolonialism, identity, and Bildungsroman. In the subsequent chapters which primarily focus on the novels **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time**, these postmodern approaches will frequently be addressed in exploring the nomadic conditions of the protagonists and their identity development. In this sense, Gilles Deleuze and his colleague Félix Guattari constitute one of the most crucial theoretical backgrounds of this study with their original and multidimensional perspective of difference and plurality, which is presented under the following title in detail.

1.4.1. Deleuze and Guattari: Dwelling in the World of Interactions

With their widely acknowledged books **Anti-Oedipus** (1972) and **A Thousand Plateaus** (1980), Deleuze and Guattari take Foucault's social and philosophical theories one step further by offering more complex and subversive modes of thinking against the phenomenological and structuralist approaches of the mainstream Western philosophers and psychologists, including Hegel, Husserl, Hume, Freud, and Lacan. These theorists' intention of explaining knowledge, human mind, psychology and language with certain systematic structures and pre-determined patterns is what Deleuze and Guattari strictly reject; instead, they advocate that knowledge, meaning, and subjectivity emanate from multiple/infinite connections and coexistence with each other, which paves the way for new possibilities and becomings. For instance, in **Anti-Oedipus**, Deleuze and Guattari reconsider Freud and Lacan's view of **unconscious** from this pluralist perspective by focusing on the concept of desire. Contrary to Freudian desire as a feeling repressed by power and as something we want or lack, which they consider as a dichotomous way of thinking, desire for Deleuze and Guattari is anti-oedipal, which is independent from father-mother relations or any other social

and cultural dependencies. Thus, desire is generated by constant flow of connections throughout life, and constitutes the **desiring machines** within a process of production:

> Everywhere it is machines-real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts. The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth a machine coupled to it. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 1)

Instead of being repressed by a power, desire itself forms productive and powerful structures by perpetually connecting to other desires and enhancing towards an endless becoming. Deleuze and Guattari use the term "rhizome" while explaining this network of becomings by being inspired by the botanical term rhizome, which is "a stem of some plants that grows horizontally along or under the ground and produces roots and leaves" ("Rhizome", **Cambridge Dictionary**). Deleuze and Guattari propose the philosophical idea of rhizome as a challenge to the essentialist and hierarchical system of thought which they address as **tree-like** or **arborescent**, growing out vertically contrary to the horizontal expansion of rhizome. They advocate in their influential work **A Thousand Plateaus** that rhizomatic systems enable multiplicity and constant change, which is inevitable in our globalized world. The rhizome is produced by multiple and simultaneous connections, which they call as **assemblage**, and thus, a never-ending evolvement and becoming is achieved. They even regard their book **A Thousand Plateaus** as an assemblage of inter-connected thoughts without any specific subject and order, which means that their book itself is a rhizome. Because,

> [t]here is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 4)

Deleuze and Guattari offer certain principles of rhizome to provide a better understanding of the idea: (1) **connection** and (2) **heterogeneity**: a rhizome is capable of connecting to any other from any point unlike a tree or a root, which develops within an order. They assume, for instance, Chomsky's linguistic model as tree-like, as it

depends on binaries and dichotomies. (3) **multiplicity**: the assemblages form multiplicity, which constantly transforms as expanding its dimensions. Deleuze and Guattari exemplify multiplicity of rhizome with puppet strings connected to the puppeteer's nerve system, which is another rhizome. (4) **asignifying rupture***:* a rhizome may randomly fracture into other units of lines, and cannot be destroyed by cutting out any piece of it. Crouch grass, for instance, is a rhizome; if it is broken up, it will continue to expand and grow out from a different place. Hence, a rhizome cannot be wiped out completely. However, a tree-like or vertical structure would collapse if one piece of it is removed, as each piece is settled on another. (5) **cartography** and **decalcomania**: Deleuze and Guattari insist that rhizome is like a map, not a tracing; because map is accessible through any point and each point is inter-connected to each other; it does not have a beginning or an end. It can be used for any political, social, economic or scientific purposes. However, tracing is a closed structure and exists as a part of the map. They argue that the theories that psychoanalysts and linguists have produced are the tracings of unconscious and language by connecting **possible** lines of flight to a fixed idea of oedipal desire or the signifier, and they were unable to achieve a rhizomatic thinking; because,

> [psychoanalysis] subjects the unconscious to arborescent structures, hierarchical graphs, recapitulatory memories, central organs, the phallus, the phallus-tree—not only in its theory but also in its practice of calculation and treatment. Psychoanalysis cannot change its method in this regard: it bases its own dictatorial power upon a dictatorial conception of the unconscious. Psychoanalysis's margin of maneuverability is therefore very limited. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 17-18)

The perpetual multiplying assemblages within a rhizome inevitably proceed toward metamorphosis, change, or **becoming**. For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming is the expected and desired process of rhizomatic development, but it is not a closure. They also explain the emergence of becoming with the binary relationship between **majority** and **minority** not in a quantitative way but with a representative approach. They regard majority as a group creating and determining a standard and constant meaning or truth regardless of their number, and thus reigns a power and domination over the minority. Deleuze and Guattari indicates the presence of majority and minority in every political, social, literary, artistic, linguistic or musical spheres by

particularly urging on male-white-Western-heterosexual-adult groups as majorities, who are occupying fixed and stable positions. Therefore, the minorities, which Deleuze and Guattari call as **subsystems**, including women, non-whites, non-Europeans, non-heterosexuals, and children, always struggle to deviate from the standard of the majority and become more creative and mobile; thus, their perpetual struggle generates the process of movement and becoming. Deleuze and Guattari states that

> [t]here is no becoming-majoritarian; majority is never becoming. All becoming is minoritarian. Women, regardless of their numbers, are a minority, definable as a state or subset; but they create only by making possible a becoming over which they do not have ownership, into which they themselves must enter; this is a becoming-woman affecting all of humankind, men and women both. (1987: 106)

They also emphasize that becoming is not an imitation, identification, progress or evolution towards a vertical direction; it is not a betterment, since "[b]ecoming produces nothing other than itself" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 238). Becoming is, then, the rhizome itself.

Considering that women are a minority who is disengaged from norms and standards, becoming-woman, then, is the first step of **becoming** both for men and women, according to Deleuze and Guattari. It is not being transformed into the form of a female body; instead, it is about becoming a "molar entity" as the woman, since Deleuze and Guattari define **becoming** as molecular: "Although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming-woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings" (1987: 277). Besides promoting the dynamism of political and social minorities, Deleuze and Guattari celebrate minor literature, as well, by emphasizing its divergence from mainstream movements, writers or language, which perpetuates literature's productivity and heterogeneity. For instance, they identify Kafka as one of the most significant writers of minor literature with his political concerns and usage of **deterritorialized language**, which is Prague German. In their **Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature** (1975), Deleuze and Guattari state that "[a] minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a

major language" (2003, 16), by pointing out Kafka's minor usage of a major language. Therefore, it can strongly be asserted that deterritorialization, is an important aspect of rhizomatic systems, minorities, and the process of becoming. Considering our protagonists Nazneen, Karim and the unnamed narrator of **Swing Time**, it can evidently be argued that their process of becoming is pertinent to their minor existence in multicultural London – that is being a female, biracial/migrant, and queer subject. These characters endeavour to assert their racial, cultural, gendered and sexual identities against the normative implications of major systems, and, as Deleuze and Guattari insist, their attempt to move beyond the centripetal powers paves the way for a perpetual becoming and a prolific perception of life, which is going to be investigated in detail in the following chapters of literary analysis.

Territory, deterritorialization, milieu and refrain are other significant interrelated concepts that Deleuze and Guattari examine in detail in their **A Thousand Plateaus**, which might also be useful in exploring the nomadic conditions, deterritorialization and spatial movements of the protagonists that this thesis is dealing with. Although territory sounds like a tangible concept, Deleuze and Guattari refer it as a state of being in every dimension of life, which is composed of milieus, assemblages, or connections in flux: "The notion of the milieu is not unitary: not only does the living thing continually pass from one milieu to another, but the milieus pass into one another, they are essentially communicating" (1987: 313). As a compositional element of territory, a **milieu** is itself an organism formed by "the periodic repetition of the component" (1987: 313). For instance, while we can consider the human body as a milieu, the internal organs which constitute the body are also sub-milieus working within a machinic and periodic repetition. Rhythm is thus, what enables the milieus to work together and construct a **refrain***;* a productive and repetitive pattern. A **territory** emerges when a milieu stops being functional and becomes expressive. The urine of a cat, for instance, becomes a territorial component when it ceases its biological function and becomes an expressive element in determining the cat's spatial zone. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari exemplify, a stagemaker bird drops leaves to the ground and turns the pale side of the leaf up in order to create and specify its territory, and changes

the functional quality of the leaf, which is a milieu. This act can also be considered as a process of decoding, which explains the paradoxical relationship between territorialization and deterritorialization:

> A territory is always en route to an at least potential deterritorialization, even though the new assemblage may operate a reterritorialization (something that "has-the-value-of" home). We saw that the territory constituted itself on a margin of decoding affecting the milieu; we now see that there is a margin of deterritorialization affecting the territory itself. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 326)

Hence, the function of cat's urine is decoded/deterritorialized and becomes a part of another milieu, which is the connection between the cat and its environment. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of territory is not spatial; it is a mode of existence, a state of being, a process of meaning production made up of milieus/assemblages/connections – it is life itself. Their argument points out that territories do not determine its components, it is the milieus that generate the territory and its expressiveness. This idea is closely related to minoritarian discourses regarding their perpetual becoming while deterritorializing the hegemonic and normative structures. Feminist discourse deterritorializes the pre-established patriarchal codes by rejecting them, and produces a new expressive milieu, or, the non-heterosexuals unsettle the territorial forces of sexual dichotomy and initiate the process of gendered deterritorialization. Considering the primary focus of this study, Deleuzean concept of territory would be a proper critical perspective of the literary analysis of this study in investigating the migratory experiences of multicultural subjects, their cultural and racial hybridity, and their construction of new lines of flight on different personal, social and cultural levels. Their cultural/racial hybridity is going to be discussed in the light of Deleuze and Guattari's minoritarian approach by also regarding their minor – ethnic, social, gendered and sexual – positions.

Throughout the thesis, these above-mentioned postmodern approaches are going to be reinforced with Mikhail Bakhtin's perspective of multiplicity and hybridity, and Homi Bhabha's post-colonial theories of cultural hybridity and in-betweenness, which are going to establish a multi-dimensional theoretical framework for the literary analysis of **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time**.

1.4.2. Trajectory of Hybridity: From Bakhtin to Bhabha

Mikhail Bakhtin presents a parallel mode of thinking on the concepts of difference and plurality, specifically in language and literature. He constructs and develops his theoretical arguments on the idea of "dialogic relationships" and dynamic connections, which can evidently be recognized in his concept of **heteroglossia** – a term that indicates the multiplicity of language and its capacity to communicate with other languages contrary to the dualistic approach of the structuralists. Because for Bakhtin,

> [t]he new cultural and creative consciousness lives in an actively polyglot world. The world becomes polyglot, once and for all and irreversibly. The period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end. Languages throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language. (Bakhtin, 1981: 12)

Instead of regarding language as a fossilized nationalistic entity, Bakhtin proposes a dynamic idea of language by seeing it as a living organism, actively and dialogically flowing between **centripetal** and **centrifugal** forces – namely between the central power of the national language and the languages/voices of various peripheral social, cultural and professional groups, and existing within a process of perpetual becoming:

> Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These "languages" of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways forming new socially typifying "languages." (Bakhtin, 1981: 291)

On the basis of his linguistic concept of heteroglossia, Bakhtin in his essay "Epic and Novel" (1981), presents a historical examination of literary genres, which he considers as specific forms of utterance and language. He claims that until the emergence of the novel, all genres including the literature of Ancient Greek and Rome, were produced by a fixed and pre-established order of the ruling power and its monologic language, by working for the constitution of a unified and harmonious literature. The epic, for instance, is a product of a canonical, nationalistic, historical, and traditional system: "It is both monochronic and valorized (hierarchical); it lacks

any relativity, that is, any gradual, purely temporal progressions that might connect it with the present" (1981: 15). However, the novel is anti-canonical for its flexible usage of language and its power of encompassing and parodying other genres without losing its form. As Bakhtin insists, the novel has a dynamic and transformative nature, which **novelizes** other canonical genres and that is why it has a supremacy over them because of its polyvocal nature. When other genres are novelized, according to Bakhtin,

> [t]hey become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the "novelistic" layers of literary language, they become dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody and finally – this is the most important thing – the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the openended present). (1981: 7)

Bakhtin's concept of **carnivalesque** constitutes another dimension of his dialogic approach, which celebrates parodic, subversive, and humorous representation of the official and nationalistic system and its cultural outcomes. Although it has originated from anti-authoritarian and gay culture of the carnivals held in the Middle Ages, where the hierarchic social positions were neutralized or turned upside down, Bakhtin celebrates the process of carnivalization as a manifestation of polyvocality by presenting it as a contemporary philosophical and literary perspective in his **Rabelais and His World** (1965):

> As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed. (1984: 10)

The book primarily focuses on the idea of **carnivalized writing**, which indicates the literary works written with non-hierarchic and polyphonic mode of the Medieval carnivals – the unity of distinct voices, de-crowning of the authorial power, laughter, joy, movement and freedom; and for Bakhtin, Rabelais' **Gargantua** (1532) and **Pantagruel** (1534) are the most prominent examples of the carnivalesque writing, which practice the festive spirit as a literary style, and illuminate the subsequent literary eras and writers; for, although he is a sixteenth century writer, Rabelais'

literary attitude shares much with the postmodern subversion of the essentialist Western thought, as Bakhtin attempts to demonstrate in his **Rabelais**.

In carnivalized writing, and Rabelais' work in particular, Bakhtin emphasizes the significance of the principle of **grotesque realism**, which foregrounds the material body with its physical features or actions, such as eating, drinking, laughing, sex and apparent sexual organs, and bodily defects with an exaggerated manner. Bakhtin refers grotesque realism as a process of degradation, which reduces all supreme, spiritual, flawless and utopian images of human body into a lower, material and realistic degree. He asserts that these binary levels of **upwards** (heaven) and **downwards** (earth) are commonly used as topographical representations in grotesque realism; and earth symbolizes reproduction, fertility, womb and grave. Thus, degrading towards the earthly level means both birth and death, which manifests a dynamic and polyphonic connotation. That is why, for Bakhtin,

> [t]o degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and a new birth take place. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving. (1984: 21)

Considering Bakhtin's pluralist attitude towards language and literature, it can evidently be argued that his perspective has considerably contributed to contemporary literary theories, which specifically celebrate multiculturalism and multicultural identity. His ideas and theories constitute a valuable point of departure throughout this study, as well, in investigating the protagonists' experience of cultural hybridity and identity formation. His concepts of carnivalesque and material body, particularly, generate the theoretical background of **The Buddha of Suburbia**'s and its protagonist Karim's frequent use of explicit and subversive bodily practices, which shatter the normative representations of body both racially and sexually. On the other hand, Bakhtin's articulation of pluralism as a reaction to essentialist and hierarchical systems provides a firm theoretical ground for twentieth century postcolonial and migration writers and theorists who promote multicultural and heterogeneous existence of the migrant subject. Thus, Homi Bhabha, whose theories of cultural hybridity, in-

betweenness and mimicry constitute the framework of contemporary multicultural studies, should doubtlessly be included within this study's theoretical point of view.

As a term which has been originally used in biology to explain the union of two different species, hybridity evolves into a more detailed and complex notion which needs to be approached from multiple perspectives with the emergence of postcolonial discourse, along with the global movement and intermingling of cultures. It is not difficult to observe that nothing remains stable and fixed in this rapid and ongoing globalization, and the term 'hybrid' becomes more meaningful. Hybridity has become a key term in postcolonial studies with Homi Bhabha, who closely examines the dynamics of cultures which are constantly in a process of overlapping, and claims that this cultural amalgamation creates fertility and richness for the individuals experiencing cultural and ethnic multiplicity. As hybridity requires more than one element whether it is scientific, linguistic or cultural, there is always the idea of plurality against singularity, and constant movement against fixity. Thus, in postcolonial and multicultural discourse, what was once recognized as **assimilation** with the adoption of another culture, is now perceived as the experience of multiplicity and cultural richness.

In his seminal work **The Location of Culture** (1994), Bhabha, just like formerly-developed pluralist discourses, exhibits a contemptuous attitude towards dichotomous representations, especially in terms of colonialism and politics of culture. He insistently repudiates the fixed identifications like self and other, black and white, produced by the hierarchical relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, and denies the existence of cultural purity by emphasizing the perpetual interconnection of cultural forms. Thus, hybridity, as he manifests, is not a completed and singular phenomenon but a dynamic process that promises an infinite becoming. Bhabha is particularly interested in this productive zone of cultural intersection, in which new hybrid formations and meanings emerge independent from binary representations, and he regards this process as a **cultural translation**:

> Cultural difference marks the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification, through processes of negotiation where no discursive authority can be

> established without revealing the difference of itself. The signs of cultural difference cannot then be unitary or individual forms of identity because their continual implication in other symbolic systems always leaves them 'incomplete' or open to cultural translation. (1990: 313)

Deriving from Bakhtin's idea of dialogic structures, Bhabha posits his own perspective within postcolonial context by celebrating the interconnection of cultures and its consequence of **liminality**. The liminal space is where the individual stands in-between the epistemological polarities, particularly in the context of culture and ethnicity, and challenges them by transforming into a new form of existence and cultural identity totally different from those contesting identifications. The subjects experiencing cultural in-betweenness and liminality also become a part of the **Third Space** which Bhabha defines as the liminal place enabling the construction of an independent and hybrid identity in a multicultural society:

> It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory – where I have led you – may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of culture, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves. (1994: 38-39)

Bhabha celebrates cultural diversity and the elimination of boundaries within this Third Space, as in Deleuze's rhizome, by rejecting hierarchical and nationalistic politics of culture which produce definite identifications, especially with identity and race. In postcolonial point of view, these fixed and essential constructions are established by Western and Eurocentric ideology that intends to define the **other**, which creates the essential perplexity in the multicultural experience of migrant/biracial individuals who struggle to dwell within the Third Space. The in-between space produces richness and endless possibilities in terms of individual development, and Bhabha uses the **stairwell** metaphor to understand the cultural overlap and refers it as the **connective tissue** while stating that "[t]his interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (1994: 4).

Cultural hybridity, which is a key concept of contemporary migration novels, thus requires constant transformation, change, and fluidity by providing the migrant identity a multicultural perspective.

As Bhabha rejects singularity and fixity in cultural sense, he first mentions the "singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories" (1994: 1), and emphasizes the significance of cultural plurality:

> What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1994: 1-2)

Thus, beyond its social consequences, cultural hybridity results in the advantages that Bhabha speaks of in subjective and individual dimension, by entering into another theoretical site, which is postmodern understanding of **identity**, in which its relativity and fluidity is reiterated by building a connection with the postcolonial idea of multiplicity and perpetual becoming.

1.4.3. Politics of Identity and Its Literary Echoes in the Multicultural Bildungsroman

Heterogeneity, difference, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity, and becoming. These above-discussed contemporary discourses have one crucial formative outcome in common: **identity**. Although it has been acknowledged as a postmodern phenomenon, the concept of identity and the questioning/understanding of the **self** constitute the primary impulse behind the philosophical ideas and movements since early ages. The previous representations of identity manifest an essentialist and normative approach towards selfhood by asserting that identity is constructed and determined by certain codes of national, cultural, economic, social, religious, and gendered groups, which James Procter refers as "traditional identity politics" and defines it as "[…] an absolute, undivided commitment to, and identification with, a particular community; a group which presents a united front through the exclusion of

all others" (2004: 118). However, with the acceleration of globalization and cross-cultural encounters, the boundaries between these categories became blurry or completely disappeared, thus, paving the way for a more fluid and fragmentary understanding of identity. Under the influence of anti-essentialist philosophical approaches of Foucault, Deleuze, Lyotard, Lefebvre and others, the concept of identity have become diversified by the emancipatory discourses of minor groups, such as feminist identity, multicultural identity, queer identity, and Black identity, etc. This is, indeed, a palpable indication of the embeddedness of culture, philosophy, politics and identity in our postmodern world.

There are a number of theorists who treat the postmodern concept of identity from different angles. Ernesto Laclau, for instance, has provided significant ideas on the contingent relationship between identity, power and political discourses in **New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time** (1990) by emphasizing that the emergence of any social identity – black, female, working class etc. –entirely depends on the existence of a power system against which these **objective** identities resist. This double edged condition of repression and resistance creates "dislocated identities"; because for Laclau, the oppressive power both jeopardizes identities and paves the way for their objective emanation, as well. Parallel to what Foucault, Deleuze and other postmodern theorists have claimed, Laclau celebrates fragmented and dislocated conditions by clinging to the idea that the process of decentring opens up new articulations and possibilities. He manifests that

> […] the recompositions and rearticulations will thus operate at increasingly deeper structural levels, thereby leading to an increase in the role of the 'subject' and to history becoming less and less repetitive. […] We are dealing with a very specific dislocation: one that stems from the presence of antagonistic forces. Social dislocation is therefore coterminous with the construction of power centres. […] We thus have a set of new possibilities for historical action which are the direct result of structural dislocation. The world is less 'given' and must be increasingly constructed. (1990: 40)

Upon revealing the significance of dislocation for identity construction, Laclau presents three dimensions of it with regards to their positive outcomes. The first dimension is the **temporality** of dislocation, which is contrary to space and spatiality. For Laclau, space is consisted of successive events and repetitive structures, and the

unsettling of this repetition creates temporality. Thus, dislocated identities who are disembodied from pre-established power systems are involved in a temporal and fragmented existence which opens up the possibility of change. The second dimension, which explains dislocation as a form of **possibility**, is, then, an outcome of the temporality of dislocation. According to Laclau, "[t]he dislocated structure thus opens possibilities of multiple and indeterminate rearticulations for those freed from its coercive force and who are consequently outside it" (1990: 42-43). The third dimension of dislocation, which is **freedom**, is the state of detachment from the determinant structure and not being a product of it. Regarding the necessity of disentanglement from the structure, Laclau declares that "[…] the greater the structural indetermination, the freer a society will be" (1990: 44). Laclau's ideas of dislocation, temporality, possibility and freedom are identical with what Deleuze and Guattari have previously expounded with their concepts of deterritorialization, infinite assemblages, and lines of flight, all of which eventually project identities in a process of **becoming**.

Stuart Hall, one of the most prominent names in cultural studies, constitutes a firm theoretical ground of this thesis thanks to the strong relevancy of his theories of cultural identity with our inquiry on the protagonists' shifting identities and process of identity development in a multicultural context. Regarding the transformation of the concept of identity through time under the influence of the dominant perspective of the era, Hall provides three major approaches of identity in **Modernity and Its Features** (1992). The first one is the **enlightenment subject**, which employs the perception of the self as an innately sufficient, completed and absolute being, capable of controlling the world. Next, the **sociological subject** is born lacking certain qualities; however, fulfilled and moulded by the moral codes and patterns of society. This perception of identity, as Hall indicates, "[…] stitches (or, to use a current medical metaphor, 'sutures') the subject into the structure. It stabilizes both subjects and the cultural worlds they inhabit, making both reciprocally more unified and predictable" (1992: 276). The last concept of identity, which is the **post-modern subject**, unsettles the idea of fixed and coherent subjectivity, instead, projects a fluid, mobile and contingent form of identity, which will precisely be the focus of intention of our study

in investigating the multicultural Bildungsroman. Hall states that the idea of static, pure and completed identity is a delusion, since "the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily" (1992: 277). He also adds that these old forms of social identities have not disappeared; however, we are now more aware of individual differences and fluid identities.

Hall's concept of identity depends on the principles of difference, contingency, arbitrariness and articulation, to which he frequently addresses while enunciating ethnic identities, specifically the **black** identity. While doing that, he attempts to disembody the notion of "black" form its representations as merely a skin colour or a racial **other**, and to create a multicultural awareness of the historical and cultural value of black communities. He, then, offers a number of solutions to overcome the essentialist and racial segregation of black people and to promote cultural heterogeneity, one of which is to accept

> […] the politics of living identity through difference. It is the politics of recognizing that all of us are composed of multiple social identities, not of one. That we are all complexly constructed through different categories, of different antagonisms, and these may have the effect of locating us socially in multiple positions of marginality and subordination, but positions which do not yet operate on us in exactly the same way. It is also to recognize that any counterpolitics of the local which attempts to organize people through their diversity of identifications has to be a struggle which is conducted positionally. It is the beginning of antiracism, antisexism, and anticlassism as a war of positions, as the Gramscian notion of the war of position. (Hall, 2019: 78)

This is exactly the positions of Nazneen, Karim, and **Swing Time**'s narrator, who experience racial categorization that puts them in a disadvantaged position in the first place; nevertheless, all of them manage to discover their own complex identities and to establish their lives on the basis of positional struggle against racist, gendered, and sexual normativities as Stuart Hall mentions above. Their spatial mobility and positional struggle against the determinant structure can also be explained by Laclau's concept of dislocated identities together with its dimensions. It is precisely this recognition of changing, dislocated and shifting identities that provides them with a rhizomatic and progressive experience of multiculturalism and character formation, which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The prevalent preoccupation with the ideas of movement, migration, change, difference, hybridity, and identity has become considerably influential on the literary development of this period as well, by catalysing the emergence of new literary types and sub-genres. Multicultural and migration novels have been dominating the literary field since the second half of the twentieth century, and the novelists such as Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, and Hanif Kureishi have become major representatives of this specific type of novel. The multicultural novels particularly explore the dislocation and transformation of the migrant/biracial/black subjects who live in a culturally heterogeneous environment, and how their nomadic and uprooted condition provides them with perpetual becoming and identity formation. Therefore, considering the main principles of the Bildungsroman tradition that have been presented in the previous chapter, it can be asserted that the contemporary concept of becoming and the Bildungsroman's pursuit of character formation generate an interdisciplinary zone of intersection – multicultural Bildungsroman –, in which we can confidently implant **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time**.

The principle of character formation is adopted and adjusted by the postmodernists, who provide the Bildungsroman with a different dimension thematically and theoretically. As the postmodern period has brought new concerns, such as identity, self, other, global mobility, post-colonialism and multiculturalism, they constitute the scope of the **multicultural Bildungsroman** as well. The protagonist in the process of becoming manages to discover his/her self in the multidimensional postmodern world. As the ideas of relativity, diversity and hybridity dominate the period, the identity formation of the postmodern individual is accomplished in a heterogeneous environment both culturally and socially. Thus, the character is able to develop his/her personality by gaining multiple points of view, which provide him/her a multiple faceted identity. The postmodern theorists reject stability, fixity and definite classifications while celebrating multiplicity and continuity. Multicultural identity in terms of the postmodern mindset is in traditionally marginalized ethnicities being made central to western culture and literary canon; therefore, we should consider the ideals of identity formation as they

are presented in the postmodern through existential principles. Existential individualism, needless to say, is counter to Bildungsroman. Thus, it is worth mentioning that the term **becoming** as the thematic basis of the Bildungsroman literary system has a common point in terms of perpetual change and transformation as opposed to stability. Bakhtin discloses the novel of formation by emphasizing the concept of becoming in his article:

> Along with this predominant, mass type, there is another incomparably rarer type of novel that provides an image of man in the process of becoming. As opposed to a static unity, here one finds a dynamic unity in the hero's image. The hero himself, his character, becomes a variable in the formula of this type of novel. Changes in the hero himself acquire *plot* significance, and thus the entire plot of the novel is reinterpreted and reconstructed. Time is introduced into man, enters into his very image, changing in a fundamental way the significance of all aspects of his destiny and life. This type of novel can be designated in the most general sense as the novel of human *emergence*. (1981: 21)

In all types of the postmodern Bildungsroman, the protagonist is in a process of self-maturation but not detached from social interaction while the stimulus of his/her character formation changes according to the context. Relatedly, the protagonists of **Brick Lane**, **The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time** reveal their character development and self-accomplishment in a multicultural society, which is also the reason or stimuli, rather than a mere background, behind their becoming. That is why they can prominently be classified as multicultural Bildungsroman.

CHAPTER TWO

MIGRATION AND BUILDING IDENTITY IN MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE*

The postmodern reading of a novel would require an unlimited, free and plural approach to the aspects that the novel attempts to expose. For this, **Brick Lane** is a perfect example with its simultaneous display of postmodern issues, such as migration, multiculturalism, hybridity, cultural ambiguity, identity, and identity formation. With the acceleration of mass migration and trans-national mobility, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, migration literature and literature of globalization have become significant literary fields of the contemporary world. The reason is that this type of literature

> is the grand spectacle of virtual surge of people flowing across the surface of the globe: refugees, exiles, expatriates, international vagrants, guest workers, immigrants, globetrotting travelers and package tourists, wanderers of all kinds crisscrossing the planet and all its national, ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic borders. (Moslund, 2010: 2)

The huge global mobility has resulted in heterogeneous social and cultural structures, by destabilizing and thwarting the **functional** existence of borders and sharp disparities of cultures and ethnicities. Thus, a cognizant resistance against essentialist, homogeneous, fixed, static and rooted formations have emerged in philosophical, cultural, literary and political discourses. This contemporary approach has also changed the old-fashioned attempts at defining identity with racial, ethnic, and religious categorizations, which paves the way for the celebration of identity as liquid and fluid. In this age of mobility and border crossing, the migrant subject is accepted as the embodiment of fluid identity; in this respect, Bauman draws a parallel between the metaphoric meaning of fluid and its actual form of material:

> Fluids, so to speak, neither fix space nor bind time. While solids have clear spatial dimensions but neutralize the impact, and thus downgrade the significance, of time (effectively resist its flow or render it irrelevant), fluids do not keep to any shape for long and are constantly ready (and prone) to change it; and so for them it is the flow of time that counts, more than the space they happen to occupy: that space, after all, they fill but 'for a moment'. (2000: 2)

Thus, in the context of displacement, hybridity, identity and difference, the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha and Gilles Deleuze would be applicable to the multicultural and migration novels in the examination of the migrant characters' both internal and external journeys and decentered identities. These characters experience Bakhtin's **heteroglot** world with cultural and linguistic diversity; they acquire Bhabha's hybrid identity with multiple and complex aspects; and they expand like the **rhizomes** of a plant by perpetually multiplying and developing themselves so that a new life and new possibilities prone to flourish at distinct locations as Deleuze and Guattari manifest:

> [t]o be rhizomorphous is to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange new uses. We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They've made us suffer too much. All of arborescent culture is founded on them, from biology to linguistics. Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes. (1987: 15)

In the context of migration and multiculturalism, the migrant subject liberated from his/her cultural roots is capable of experiencing difference and change, and his/her identity penetrates into a state of perpetual becoming and formation. The mobile individual who achieves fluidity and rhizomatic progression, challenges tree-like and fixed structures such as cultural, racial and religious categorizations, which are centripetal. According to Deleuze and Guattari, language and literature produced by immigrants and minorities are also rhizomatic. A minor system and minorities are subsystems which have a potential of productivity, constant becoming and deterritorialization of the major language, whereas a major language and major systems create a standard and a constant. In his commentary on Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical approaches, Moslund presents the essence of their celebration of minor literature by stating that

> [i]t involves a linguistic deviance, an impoverished vocabulary, an improper use of grammar, an unadorned, minimalistic style, which turns it into a sign machine that avoids closure, that keeps pushing language to its limits, breaking down signification and multiplying meaning potentials. Minor literature is thus supposed to radically disrupt the purity and homogenizing unity of major cultures. (2010: 7-8)

Departing from this point of view and accepting Monica Ali's **Brick Lane** as a novel of migration, this part of the thesis concentrates on the experiences of the major characters in **Brick Lane**, such as Nazneen, Chanu, Karim and Razia, who live in the Bangladeshi community in East London, and experience different aspects of being a migrant in a distinct and larger society and culture; however, the primary concern of this chapter is Nazneen's migrant experience and personal transformation, which results in an accomplished, fluid, and hybrid identity, and her acquisition of an emancipated social position by penetrating in the rhizomatic and progressive structure of nomadic experience. Nazneen's identity formation is also scrutinized by applying main thematic principles of the Bildungsroman and the ways the novel deconstructs and departs from the classical structure of the tradition.

The mass migration which began in the 1950s, especially from South Asia and Africa to England for labor and financial concerns, has created a cultural diversity and various ethnic settlements in different areas of London. The religious and racial conflicts as an inevitable result of this heterogeneous structure, and the condition of migrants struggling to survive and cope with cultural ambiguity, have been one of the most important issues of contemporary multicultural and diasporic fictions of British-born Asian and African writers. In **Brick Lane**, Monica Ali presents a panoramic portrayal of the Bangladeshi community living in Brick Lane, the East End London, while exhibiting cultural and socio-ethnic structures of Bangladesh through the experiences of Nazneen and her sister Hasina. Besides, the novel overtly questions the influence and power of fatalistic belief especially in monolithic communities and cultures, and answers the question whether we can "change this ruling force, and our entire perspective of life" by perpetually juxtaposing East and West and their cultural divergence.

The novel opens with Nazneen's birth with glimpses of her cultural environment and family dynamics. She was born in a traditional community in Bangladesh, ruled by strict patriarchal and religious codes, which can precisely be an epitome of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of arborescent, rooted and hierarchical social structure. Nazneen's premature birth reveals and foreshadows her ineffective

and obedient social and familial position, as well as other women in the village, against fate and its governing force. As Nazneen is about to die as a newborn baby because of weakness, her mother Rupban chooses to leave her to fate instead of taking her to hospital, for, "Fate will decide everything in the end, whatever route you follow" (Ali, 2004: 14). As she grows up, she is made to believe that her mother is a saint, and she is the heroine of Nazneen's story of "How You Were Left To Your Fate" who makes an audacious choice and surrenders to fate. In the first chapter, the novel portrays Nazneen's voiceless and passive existence in front of religious and patriarchal dominance, and her natural acceptance and unawareness of her situation. Before her future husband Chanu, her father has been the patriarchal figure in her life, who has chosen the man she is going to marry. It is so acceptable for Nazneen that she appreciates her father's decision without any knowledge about her husband: "Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma" (Ali, 2004: 16).

The spatial and temporal shift from Nazneen's local environment to 1985 London – as she marries Chanu who lives and works in London - indicates one of the most important changes in her life, as she steps into a completely new experience of cultural dislocation and migration, while it also represents one of the thematic principles of the Bildungsroman tradition that embodies the protagonist's move from provinciality to a larger society. In the Victorian, modernist and postmodernist Bildungsroman, London is usually adopted as the representative of the notion of urban society, which provides the protagonist with educational, financial, professional and social opportunities. The protagonist's enlarging environment and the experience of city go parallel with his/her developing consciousness and inner perspectives, by disentangling his/her infertile connection and conflicts of the provincial background. Considering **Brick Lane** as a postmodern and multicultural Bildungsroman, Nazneen's physical journey from her village to London epitomizes her personal and psychological odyssey towards freedom, emergence of the self, and cultural hybridity, thanks to the numerous possibilities and heterogeneity of multicultural London. It is also significant to state that while the province stands for the childhood and immaturity

of the Bildungsroman hero, the city becomes the emblem of a symbolic rebirth, perpetual becoming, process of development and multiplicity, as in Nazneen's experience of London and cultural diversity.

Nazneen's new life in Tower Hamlets is the extension of her previous life in Dhaka, considering her inferior position as a servant-like wife, "an unspoiled girl from the village", and "a good worker" (Ali, 2004: 22-23) whose only occupation is doing housework and cutting Chanu's corns. Her domestic life is a microcosm of Bangladeshi culture, tradition and life style: the authentic decoration of the house, commitment to the religious values, cooking habits, and a male dominated family structure. According to Mahmudul Hasan, the patriarchal oppression of women in migrant communities is strongly connected to the unconscious desire of protecting cultural identity: "diasporic patriarchy seeks to re-institute sociocultural constraints for women under its control, as it wants them to manifest the signs of an embedded 'home' tradition and be essentially different from those of the host society" (2018: 60-61). That is why Chanu is quite unwilling to let Nazneen learn English and socialize with the outside world, although ironically, he considers himself as a westernized man. Learning English means acquiring social and cultural independence, which disturbs Chanu's masculine dominance in domestic sphere and his cultural identity. Nazneen's physical isolation is thus, pertinent to her linguistic and social incompetency, as it is evident when she dreams of going out to visit the tattoo lady living in the opposite block:

> She thought of it but she would not go. Strangers would answer if she knocked on the wrong door. The tattoo lady might be angry at an unwanted interruption. It was clear she did not like to leave her chair. And even if she wasn't angry, what would be the point? Nazneen could say two things in English: sorry and thank you. She could spend another day alone. It was only another day. (Ali, 2004: 19)

Living in a different cultural environment, although restrained in her small apartment, Nazneen desires to explore the unfamiliar outside world and the Western culture, which astonishes her and creates an imbalance between her authentic, passive and obedient self and her newly discovered inquisitive, rebellious identity. The emergence of split identity is the first instance of her eventual character formation

which is accompanied by her cultural and sexual metamorphosis. The moment when she is carrying dirty dishes to the kitchen and sees the ice skating couple on television and is bewildered by it, is the striking depiction of the juxtaposition of two different cultural products and two kinds of woman. One is both physically and mentally constrained by traditional norms and could not proceed beyond domestic duties, while the other – ice-skating woman – is both literally and symbolically liberated from the nets of patriarchal and monolithic structures as she is constantly moving and smoothly sliding as if challenging fixity:

> The woman raised one leg and rested her boot (Nazneen saw the thin blade for the first time) on the other thigh, making a triangular flag of her legs, and spun around until she would surely fall but didn't. She did not slow down. She stopped dead and flung her arms above her head with a look so triumphant that you knew she had conquered everything: her body, the laws of nature, and the heart of the tight-suited man who slid over on his knees, vowing to lay down his life for her. (Ali, 2004: 36)

It is evident that these two women are the embodiment of Nazneen's double identity and the latter signifies and foreshadows the self-sufficient and independent woman that the former will transform into.

Although it mainly concentrates on Nazneen's diasporic experience and identity development, **Brick Lane** offers a wide range of Bangladeshi migrant characters who respond to cultural alienation and marginalization differently, such as Chanu, Razia, Mrs. Islam, Mrs. Azad, Karim, and Nazneen's daughters Shahana and Bibi. They are confronted by cultural, racial, religious and economic problems while struggling to preserve their authentic identity and adapt to the new cultural environment at the same time; however, it is a fact that women in the immigrant community face doubled isolation and oppression regarding their gender roles under the patriarchal domestic and social structure of their ethnic background. While male immigrants participate in the milieu of the host culture more actively as the provider of family's financial income, women are secluded in domestic sphere or have limited contact with other women in the community. For instance, while Nazneen experiences a gender-oriented and physical alienation in the diasporic Western society, Chanu exhibits a rather psychological and individual exclusion from his social environment because of his resistance to cultural integration, although he has been in London for a long time. He

preserves his obsession of promotion, eager to earn more money and go back to Bangladesh, which explains the materialistic and pragmatist framework of his migrant experience as well as the strong bond to his ethnic background and traditions:

> You see, when the English went to our country, they did not go to stay. They went to make money, and the money they made, they took it out of the country. They never left home. Mentally. Just taking money out. And that is what I am doing now. What else can you do? (Ali, 2004: 214)

Chanu constantly boasts of his intellectuality and educational degrees, and looks down on other Bangladeshis in England by calling them peasants. "They don't ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here" (Ali, 2004: 32). Nevertheless, it is ironic that he possesses the same cultural duality and in-betweenness as in Bhabha's words, which is the main reason of his inability of constructing a new cultural identity in the Western society. Similarly, Dr. Azad is another example of "Going Home Syndrome", which causes a serious disparity between him and his wife, as portrayed in Chapter Five. Witnessing the contrast between Dr. Azad and his wife's approach to cultural issues, Nazneen realizes the true reason of Dr. Azad's visits to their house:

> Watching her (Mrs Azad) now, Nazneen felt something like affection for this woman, this fat-nosed street fighter. And she knew why the doctor came. Not for the food, not to get away from this purple-clawed woman (although maybe for these things as well), not to share a love of learning, not to borrow books or discuss mobile libraries or literature or politics or art. He came as a man of science, to observe a rare specimen: unhappiness greater than his own. (Ali, 2004: 114-115)

Considering Mrs. Azad's, Razia's and Nazneen's successful social and cultural integration into Western society by destroying normative and traditional nets that restrict their independence and individual will, the novel emphasizes that women in the context of immigration and diaspora tend to be more adaptive to cultural difference and identity transformation. However, regarding the age groups of the immigrant women in the community and Mrs. Islam's fundamentalist approach to cultural heterogeneity, it is evident that

> [t]he older women had a fixed idea of their identity and were less likely to change; it was the middle-aged women going out to work who brought about changes. They have shown that despite the relations that constructed their roles as subordinate, they did not

> suffer in the passive way indicated by the images that dominate their roles. They have developed their own form of resistance, taken control of their own lives and developed their own ideas about British life and Britain. Yet at the same time they do not cut themselves off from their historical and cultural traditions. (Hussein, 2016: 25)

This statement evidently foreshadows Nazneen's successful amalgamation of Western and Eastern cultures, as she infiltrates into Bhabha's interstitial space by acquiring linguistic, social and economic competency in London. However, men usually remain static, could not free themselves from their ethnic background, and thus, fail to find a balance and to develop a multicultural identity, as can be observed from Chanu, Dr. Azad, and Razia's husband actively supporting and maintaining his own status via the Islamic/Bangladeshi world order. Karim is another example of male anxiety of losing ethnic identity. Although he seems to inherit the Western culture with his accent and clothing style, Karim displays similar cultural bond to his ethnic and religious roots, as he is an active and authoritative participant of the nationalist and Muslim group Bengal Tigers. He also seeks a kind of connection with his culture of origin in his relationship with Nazneen, attempts to attribute to her the role of the domestic woman from his native country, and recreates the image of his mother on Nazneen's female identity.

Nazneen tries to maintain the connection with her cultural background and homeland through recollections of her childhood mostly in the natural habitat of her village, which create a contrasting image with her present life constrained within the walls of her small apartment in London. In Nazneen's moments of recollection, Ali re-conceptualizes nineteenth century Romantic traditions, such as dualism of existence and romantic escapism. Nazneen's memories of her childhood and the village's natural environment provide a separation from the present time and a psychological and internal experience, just like the Byronic/romantic persona who is lonely, alienated and unable to establish a communication with his/her physical environment. Her socially excluded position paves the way for psychological isolation as well; a state of romantic escapism,

> in the form of non-reality, a non-tangible world, a kind of spiritual reality, a different background through which the human condition with its actual, social, material and bodily manifestations is rejected. This non-reality, congenial for individual experience,

> is an imaginary place or space of divine and spiritual essence, a fantastic setting, an ideal and utopian world, a spiritual reality, a type of existence reified by and within the realm of dream, art, myth, history, individual past (childhood), nature, and countryside. (Golban, 2018: 201-202)

The letters from her sister Hasina, on the other hand, are the only physical bond to her family and past. Contrary to Nazneen's obedience and acceptance of religious and cultural norms, Hasina portrays a rebellious and passionate character, who elopes with a man she loves and makes a marriage which does not fit familial and social expectations. Throughout the novel, the reader witnesses Hasina's personal experiences in Bangladesh through her letters, parallel to Nazneen's diasporic experience in Britain. Two sisters in two different locations subject to same cultural codes and masculine authority; however, their path towards self-dependence proceed in opposite directions. While Nazneen gradually evolves into a self-conscious, determined and independent woman by disentangling herself from traditional and patriarchal constraints, which attempt to rule her life and fix her identity, Hasina is entrapped in cultural and gendered categories, beaten by her husband, dragged by financial problems, becomes a prostitute, and unable to assert her identity and free will against the masculine power that governs her existence; namely, as a low-class woman desiring to explore the world beyond monolithic boundaries and make her own choices, she is victimized by her own cultural and economic system in her homeland.

As Nazneen becomes more acquainted with foreign culture through television within the confines of her house, she begins to oscillate between two poles of gender roles: one as submissive, and the other rebellious. Once she is exposed to cultural diversity, she is immediately fractured into various modes of existence. She watches the ice-skating on television every afternoon, and "she was no longer a collection of the hopes, random thoughts, petty anxieties and selfish wants that made her, but was whole and pure" (Ali, 2004: 41). As she penetrates into the sphere of cultural difference out of her authentic cultural boundaries, which is her safety zone, she both takes pleasure and feels guilty, as "[s]he was glad when the ice e-skating came no more" (Ali, 2004: 41), which validates her split-identity and cultural duality. Although it creates an imbalance and anxiety in Nazneen's psychological state, the split of

identity signals her future character formation in which she embraces various forms of cultural representations and achieves mobility between these boundaries.

In Chapter Three, Nazneen's domestic passivity turns into an active participation into the city's dynamism, as she walks on the streets with a feeling of strangeness. For Nazneen, this experience is a significant form of gaining knowledge of the foreign culture, and another act of migration towards difference initiated with "the physical body as situated within a new environment" (Poon, 2009: 426). Her physical journey to the city also indicates her symbolic quest from rural to urban, margin to center, familiar to unfamiliar, and static to mobile; a micro structure of mobility which commences the process of formation in the Bildungsroman. She closely observes her environment and people; their constant movements, clothes, and hairstyles, which create contrasting images compared to her halting position and physical appearance, which drags Nazneen into a moment of self-othering as she "began to be aware of herself. Without a coat, without a suit, without a white face, without a destination" (Ali, 2004: 56). Nazneen's odyssey to city provides her with an opportunity to realize that she is an individual capable of taking responsibility and acting accordingly, free from the centripetal forces dominating her life. Although uncomfortable with the physical pain, mental confusion and excitement, she takes pleasure from being an invisible observer and enjoys her freedom; and finally she is noticed by a stranger and communicates with him, "and she has been understood and acknowledged. It was very little. But it was something" (Ali, 2004: 61). This tiny step towards self-empowerment gives her a sense of fulfillment and confidence, which would manifest the literary perspective of **Brick Lane** as a contemporary female Bildungsroman.

As a Bildungsroman heroine, Nazneen starts her formative journey by leaving her ordinary rural environment and entering a larger urban society, which is prompted by external factors: cultural codes and marriage (decided by the father). The principle of social integration has been an indispensable thematic element of the Bildungsroman tradition since the nineteenth century, as Wilhelm, David, Pendennis and other Bildungsroman heroes achieve identity development by determining their social

position. However, while in the classical Bildungsroman, the hero is required to conform to social norms and expectations in order to be a part of the homogeneous social structure with an accomplished identity, the postmodern and the multicultural Bildungsroman distorts the scope of this principle by emphasizing social heterogeneity and cultural hybridity of the protagonist who challenges social, cultural, racial and gendered categorizations to achieve a unified self. Thus, Nazneen's trial would involve embracing cultural plurality, defying masculine power, and discovering her capabilities while growing up into a mature woman. Moreover, other thematic principles of the Bildungsroman, such as development of social relationships, emotional experience, suffering and psychological crisis, and epiphanic experience that would generate the final step towards identity formation, reveal the novel's simultaneous treatment of identity construction and diasporic experience.

The novel constantly juxtaposes Nazneen's eagerness for action and Chanu's static character. Upon learning that Hasina left her husband and went to Dhaka, Nazneen wants Chanu to go and find her, because for Nazneen, "*[a]nything is possible*" (Ali, 2004: 62), after she has overcome an impossibility: she walked on the streets of London, got lost, asked directions and found her home. She accomplished this on her own, but she remains silent and does not say a word to Chanu, who is unwilling to make a move: "Let me tell you something. Sometimes we just have to wait and see. Sometimes that's all we can do" (Ali, 2004: 63).

Impotent to raise her voice, Nazneen develops rebellious behavior by **accidentally** misdoing routine housework:

> she chopped two fiery red chilies and placed them, like hand grenades, in Chanu's sandwich. Unwashed socks were paired and put back in his drawer. The razor slipped when she cut his corns. His files got mixed up when she tidied. (Ali, 2004: 63)

She enjoys being incongruous, and likes the idea that she has power and free-will to change the course of things, which gives her visibility and self-confidence. Although they seem insignificant and small, these shifts of personality indicate Nazneen's attempts to question and challenge the principles of fate, acceptance and obedience, which she has inherited from her mother.

Chapter Four illustrates Nazneen as a mother of a newly-born baby boy, stepping into another formative experience and a new gender role. Although being a mother physically fixates her within domestic boundaries and burdens with more responsibilities being placed on her, her voice and self become more liberated from oppressive forces. She is more determined and straight in her statements, demands and refusals. She does not want to sit on the chair that Chanu has bought, for instance, and "she just refused and that was that" (Ali, 2004: 82). Or, when Mrs. Islam offers to take the baby for a while, she directly declares that "'He is staying here.' She could have added something to soothe. Something to show her respect. She could have said, I will bring him later. He's not well today. Another day, I will bring him. He'll be in good hands with you. All she said was, 'He is staying here'" (Ali, 2004: 88). The words she did not say belong to the former Nazneen, whose priority was to please and obey others' demands and advice. Now, with her newly-flourishing self-confidence and maternal instinct to protect her child, Nazneen stands more powerful and realizes her own existence as an individual.

Sometimes Nazneen is surprised at her own behavior and thoughts, and feels that her mind is acting independently from her, and desiring constant movement and change. She misses her prayers, instead, she naps and looks at magazines; but her excuse is that "her mind walked off on its own sometimes" (Ali, 2004: 93), as if she throws off the feeling of guilt. In her moments of romantic escapism, she either dreams she is ice-skating, and moving freely without fear, or, she gets lost in Hasina's letters, imagining being independent like her.

Brick Lane is involved with contemporary issues, such as construction of identity, cultural hybridity, mobility, change, and becoming by illustrating complex characters and relationships, one of which is Nazneen's friend Razia. She is illustrated as the embodiment of female empowerment in diaspora, who manages to assert her position in the Third Space, which is defined by Homi Bhabha as a territory of cultural plurality and difference. Razia establishes a cultural identity by rejecting and eliminating the boundaries of stereotypical and essentialized implications of cultural, racial and gendered frameworks. As Bhabha states,

> [t]he move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world. (1994: 1)

Razia is well-aware of the socioeconomic and political condition of her community in Britain, and challenges the undermining and restrictive structures that encapsulate the female immigrants, particularly. She knows that embracing the host culture will provide her with a productive and multi-perspectival identity; that is why she never hesitates moving against the centripetal forces of patriarchy and traditional systems: "'Will the community feed me? Will it buy footballs for my son? Let the community say what it will. I say *this* to the community.' And she flicked her fingers" (Ali, 2004: 97).

Chanu does not want Nazneen to see Razia, and does not consider her as respectable as Mrs. Islam: he sees Razia as a threat to his wife's authentic identity and oppressed feminine role. He does not approve of Razia's short-cut hair and westernized clothes, and assumes her to be a misfit of Bangladeshi traditions. However, Razia is a strong character who manages to be a part of the rhizomatic system by proceeding horizontally and having no roots that fixate her to a specific point. Eventually, she achieves the status of what Bhabha calls **cultural translation**, in which new forms of being, new meanings and becomings emerge. Besides Nazneen's character formation, the novel also portrays Razia's metamorphosis and **Bildung**, and her becoming a successful business woman in the end.

The strong relationship between language and identity is represented in Razia's acquiring of British identity and culture, as she learns English and becomes a part of the interstitial area of the two cultures. For Nazneen, as well, learning English and identity formation go hand in hand in the process of her cross-cultural experience. However, for the second-generation immigrants born in Britain, English is more internalized compared to their native language, as it allows them a smooth integration into the British society and creates a sense of belonging, which the novel perfectly demonstrates with Nazneen's future elder daughter Shahana.

As Nazneen becomes close with Razia, she witnesses and understands her struggle for economic independence to provide a life to her children, and the reason behind her reaction against the community and the system. Their friendship and shared cultural background pave the way for their mutual transformation, which the novel manifests as the celebration of diasporic female power within the context of cultural hybridity.

Chapter Five presents an intense occupation with postcolonial issues, ethnic identity, assimilation, and Nazneen's growing awareness of cross-cultural interaction and its consequences. Nazneen and Chanu make a visit to Dr. Azad's house, where they encounter different facets of diasporic experience and the dilemma of Dr. Azad, who is portrayed as being "poised uncomfortably at the threshold of the East and the West" (Chakravorty, 2012: 514-515). With her untraditional and Westernized style, Mrs. Azad creates an impression on Chanu and Nazneen that they have come to the wrong place when she opens the door. Upon seeing Mrs. Azad "in a short purple skirt leaned against the doorpost", with "[a] cigarette burned between purple lacquered nails" and hair "cropped close like a man's" (Ali, 2004: 106-107), Chanu does not have any slightest presumption that it is the Azads' house, as he requests her to point out his place. Chanu exhibits the essentialist cultural mindset by attempting to categorize and displace Mrs. Azad's ethnic identity, for he does not assume her as a Bangladeshi woman and as the wife of Dr. Azad.

As they sit together in the living room, the conversation between Chanu and Mrs. Azad reveals two controversial perspectives of postcolonial thought. Against Chanu's disapproval of cultural integration and multicultural identity, Mrs. Azad clearly demonstrates the realistic picture of living in a Western society and the necessity of adapting to the new cultural environment:

> Fact: we live in a Western society. Fact: our children will act more and more like Westerners. Fact: that's no bad thing. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes! (Ali, 2004: 113)

Like Razia, who refuses to put on sari to free herself from little bird steps and take on wings instead, Mrs. Azad as well, liberates herself from cultural and ethnic fixities by

penetrating into change and becoming. However, considering the fact that hybridity requires the fusion of two or more cultural structures and the emergence of a new entity and identity, it is important to specify that Mrs. Azad's complete renunciation of her ethnic origin cannot be explained by hybridity, but mimicry. Bhabha argues that:

> [i]n mimicry, the representation of identity and meaning is rearticulated along the axis of metonymy. As Lacan reminds us, mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically. Its threat, I would add, comes from the prodigious and strategic production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory 'identity effects' in the play of a power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no 'itself'. (1994: 90)

With the portrayal of Mrs. Azad's rather clichéd Anglicized behavior and way of life, Monica Ali attempts to illustrate the very fine line between the postcolonial discourses of hybridity and mimicry. Mrs. Azad's **Bildung** would require the simultaneous negotiation of diversities; for, "[t]he transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One* […] *nor the Other* […] *but something else besides*, which contests the terms and territories of both" (Bhabha, 1994: 28).

Ali shatters the boundaries of polarities and creates a balanced and embedded scene of both good and bad, when baby Raqib gets sick and is taken to the hospital. The days spent in the hospital form a different dimension of existence for Nazneen and Chanu, which bring misery and pain, and a new formative experience, as well. The sense of unbelonging and displacement is sentimental and personal this time, not cultural, which exposes that the concept of belonging has an instantaneous transformative and fluid nature: "Nazneen pressed her fingers against the incubator. He was the centre. The world had rearranged itself around this new core. It had to. Without him, life would not be possible" (Ali, 2004: 117). The pain and fear of loss construct a new world for Nazneen and Chanu, isolated from cultural and social territories. In this new world, there are only three of them; anything beyond them has no meaning.

> Nazneen smiled at her husband. For now, he was speaking only to her. There was no one over her shoulder. The audience had finally gone home. She put her free hand

> briefly across his round cheek. To touch like this was permitted here, among these stateless people, where the rules were unknown and in any case suspended. (Ali, 2004: 119)

Nazneen's emotional and painful experience in the hospital culminates in a new insight on her relationship with Chanu and his personality. She gains a better understanding and a wider perspective towards his actions, which she previously rejects and criticizes.

> Her irritation with her husband, instead of growing steadily as it had for three years, began to subside. For the first time she felt that he was not so different. At his core, he was the same as her. […] Where Nazneen turned in, he turned out; where she strove to accept, he was determined to struggle; where she attempted to dull her mind and numb her thoughts, he argued aloud; while she wanted to look neither to the past nor to the future, he lived exclusively in both. They took different paths but they had journeyed, so she realized, together. (Ali, 2004: 121)

She now sees that difference and polarities can work together; although they speak different languages, they still can establish a meaningful companionship, in the context of Bakhtin's notions of polyvocality and heteroglossia. Nazneen's epiphany is a crucial step towards her character formation and maturation, just as David Copperfield in the Victorian Bildungsroman

> experiences internally directed epiphanies, moments of insight leading to the comprehension of the reality of things. He now feels a sense of duty to the self and the others, a sense perhaps induced by the positive experience of childhood, nonetheless strong through all the rebellion and turbulence of adolescence and youth, and in spite of its apparent submission in the long process of formation. At this moment, the attaining of a greater consciousness (as in Wordsworth), which means the accomplishment of the formation of personality, has loneliness as its counterpart and should reveal actually a change in consciousness, which would eventually determine a move from earlier, restricted ways of experience of life towards a new philosophy of life, a new vision and understanding of life's meaning. (Golban, 2003: 133-134)

Nazneen's new insight transcends her to another moment of philosophical duality in which she contrasts fate and free will. First, she remembers her mother's words about God's power to decide everything and the story of How You Were Left To Your Fate. The fatalistic belief was once the dominant force in her life, but now, she could not remain silent and dormant while her son is dying. That is the moment she challenges the teachings of her mother and her sanctity for the first time:

> At once she was enraged. A mother who did nothing to save her own child! If Nazneen (her husband's part she did not consider) had not brought the baby to hospital at once, he would have died. The doctors said it. It was no lie. Did she kick about at home wailing and wringing her hands? Did she draw attention to her plight with long sighs and ostentatiously hidden weeping? Did she call piously for God to take what he would and leave her with nothing? Did she act, in short, like her mother? A saint? (Ali, 2004: 135-136)

Then, the memories of her childhood and her mother's funeral haunt her mind. She remembers washing her mother's dead body, every detail of it. Amma has been submitting to fate all along her life, and now, her body surrenders to eternal immobility and "all-encasing winding sheet [which] was Amma's Fate to wear" (Ali, 2004: 138). Nazneen is surrounded by the idea of death, and upon learning that Razia's husband has passed away just after her retrospection, she feels that death comes closer to her. Thinking that she has gained the power of free will and control of her life, she even believes that she has directed the force of death to Razia's husband, when she was fighting for Raqib.

Nazneen is still in a state of split identity. She leaves the hospital and goes home, and enjoys the personal space she has created just for herself. She "soaped herself with a bar of Pears, washed her hair with Fairy Liquid and, when she had finished, dusted between her toes with baby talc" (Ali, 2004: 140-141). In her imaginative flight, she is skating while watching her legs in front of the mirror; it is not a threat anymore, and it gives her pleasure. But suddenly, when she thinks of having caused Razia's husband's death, she blames herself for letting the jinn conquer her mind: "Be gone from me! she shouted. Be gone! Back to hell, where you belong. And with these words, banished the jinn that had danced briefly, spitefully, through the room and into her head" (Ali, 2004: 143). She is in-between the desire of being a western woman and her cultural and religious implications. She also fights with and oscillates between the guilt of blaming her mother and facing the harsh reality that destroys her life-long fatalistic belief and sanity of her mother. Monica Ali attempts to demonstrate the powerful influence of cultural and familial frameworks, specifically of the mother figure. For,

> [i]t is the mothers who educate their daughters to conform so that women become the symbols of the culture; they become representatives of South Asianness. The break with traditional concepts of familial unity and the close mother-daughter ties are difficult and fraught with guilt and tensions. The rejection of such values and the adoption of the Western values are threatening and are tied to the idea of izzat and honour. (Hussein, 2016: 29)

Nevertheless, when she returns to the hospital, she learns that Raqib has died. Nazneen washed her mother in her childhood, washed herself some time ago, and now, she would wash her son's dead body. As an Islamic ritual, washing the body signifies the purification of the deceased person from all the sins and sufferings before his/her spirit travels to the other world, which also symbolizes the beginning of another life. Thus, in the novel, while the recurrent image of washing the body is presented as a religious implication, it is also a symbolic transformative practice for Nazneen, as she washes herself, which foreshadows her stepping in another world with a new identity. Moreover, remembering her mother's washing ritual, and her tragic decision of washing her son are both significant moments for Nazneen in becoming of the self.

The novel's narration turns into epistolary form in Chapter Seven, which consists only of Hasina's letters, covering the timeline between 1988 and 2001. The letters reveal the working conditions of Hasina in Bangladesh, which is the reflection of the actual economic and social situation of Bangladeshi women, and they "dispel the myth that Bangladesh is still rural, a paradise; it is urban and violent" (Hussein, 2016: 98). Hasina is working at the garment factory, and staying in the rented accommodation that a landlord named Chowdhury has provided for her. Many of the women working at the factory, including Hasina and her friends, are separated from their families and homes for employment in difficult conditions and under patriarchal pressure:

> *Aleya have five children she comes from Noakhali. […] Money she make she send her boys to school. Husband make problem for her but Aleya thinking of children only and not the husband. The husband say 'Why should you work? If you work it looks bad. People will say – he cannot feed her.' […] Oldest of us is Renu a widow. She was marry at fifteen to old man who die within three month. She go back to father short time he throw out. All the life she has work but she the one who do not wish for this. […] Then the brick breakers. All day squatting over red bricks with little stone hammer. So huge pile wait for this little hammers. Like you take teaspoon to empty lake. Most is woman and they look hungry. Children help. Swell belly children and still laughing hitting*

> *breaking laughing. […] Zainab say one hundred and fifty girls in one factory getting pregnant. This is kind of thing people say. Who going to stop them?* (Ali, 2004: 150-151-153-155)

The panoramic view of Bangladesh also demonstrates how women are being judged by cultural and religious codes. When women wear saris in bright colors, that means she invites people to look at her; lips that are full and pink, even if natural (as are Hasina's), should be camouflaged so that she does not appear impure. Regarding the living standards of the two sisters in Dhaka and London: Nazneen is gradually liberating herself from those kinds of socio-cultural categorizations in the multicultural environment; while Hasina gets more and more entrapped and punished by her traditional society as she is chasing her personal independence. She is dispelled from the job and accused of sleeping with her landlord in exchange for cheap rent and for having a relationship with Abdul, a worker at the factory. Then she is raped by her landlord and no rent is paid. Now, she blames herself for everything that has happened:

> *I pray God forgive me. I sick then inside my mind. Everything has happen is because of me. I take my own husband. I leave him. I go to the factory. I let Abdul walk with me. I the one living here without paying.* (Ali, 2004: 166)

Nevertheless, she cannot realize that it is her own society that has brought her to that point. She considers herself as being a low woman, and not worthy of marriage, as Ahmed wants to marry her. Then they marry, and Hasina becomes a wife doing housework and tidying everything as her husband wants them in exact order. Monica Ali once again exposes the striking difference between the sisters as they are moving in opposite directions within two distinct social and cultural environments. While Nazneen in her process of *becoming*, is seeking physical and mental freedom and socialization by going out of her apartment, Hasina, this time, aspires for an enclosed space to protect herself from social and traditional dangers: "*Sister I know how you enjoy to leave your flat. But I have come inside now. How I love the walls keep me here*" (Ali, 2004: 172-173).

Until Chapter Eight, Hasina's letters are the main narrative form exposing also the changes in Nazneen's life over thirteen years, in which she has had two daughters, Shahana and Bibi. In Chapter Eight, the omniscient third person narration continues to

unveil Nazneen's development process, and depicts Chanu teaching his daughters the "Golden Bengal", the national anthem of Bangladesh. Now, besides Chanu's unchanged essentialist connection and desire to go back to his roots and culture, the narrative also encompasses the generation conflict in the context of diaspora, considering Shahana and Bibi's unwillingness to learn their culture of origin. Shahana, especially, the elder one, is more resistant to her father's pressures and dictations of traditional heritage:

> Shahana did not want to listen to Bengali classical music. Her written Bengali was shocking. She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them. […] Shahana did not care. Shahana did not want to go back home. (Ali, 2004: 180)

While illustrating the cultural displacement, isolation and identity crisis that the first generation immigrants have been encountering within the host culture, Ali also touches upon the condition of the second generation immigrants, and the inter-generational conflict by depicting the explicit clash between Chanu and his daughters. In the context of diaspora, although the first immigrants' children share the same cultural and racial origin with their parents, they were born and raised in a different culture, have twin nationality, and have developed a distinct sense of identity and perspective of life, which Yasmin Hussein calls as **hyphenated identity**. According to her, "[f]or this generation the hyphenated term British-South Asian identity not only symbolically describes the encapsulation of the group from the wider society, or a disassociation from the indigenous culture, but an amalgamation of both that describes their cultural identity" (2016: 26). They are exposed to two different cultural representations: first at home with the authentic language, religious and cultural practices, and the other in the outside world and educational institutions with the intense experience of British culture and language. On the other hand, while the preceding generation considers themselves as temporal inhabitants of the host country with economic purposes and carry the motive of eventual return home, the new generation born in Britain interiorizes the country as their homeland, and they construct their identity accordingly. As they grow up with their white British peers in both educational and social contexts, they are more aware and demanding of their equal rights. Contrary to

their parents who are more static and rooted to their ethnic background, the second generation is rather mobile, rhizomatic, multi-faceted and politically active. In the novel, Shahana, Bibi, Razia's children Tariq and Shefali, and Karim as well, are all representatives of the subsequent generation who are educated there and embrace the Western cultural patterns through their languages, clothing, desires and interests. Razia makes fun of her son's calling her "OK-Ma" all the time, and says "[b]oy thinks I'm called 'OK-Ma'" (Ali, 2004: 189), or when Chanu leaves home, Shahana and Bibi switch to English, and Nazneen "let it pass. Perhaps even encouraged it" (Ali, 2004: 194).

Shahana is quite insistent in asserting her Westernized identity which irritates her father and causes serious and violent arguments. Chanu is very anxious about his daughters' adoption of Western culture and their distancing themselves from their national and traditional values, which triggers him to make serious plans for returning to Bangladesh. However, they need to save money, and figure out solutions for the financial issues. Chanu brings a sewing machine for Nazneen as a present, which turns out to be the first tiny step in Nazneen's gaining autonomy and personal space. Although it is a symbol of a feminine and domestic occupation, it provides her with a chance to develop her skills and contribute to the family's financial income, which also foreshadows her future job in the garment industry, leading eventually to economic emancipation, and personal empowerment. Meanwhile, Chanu's growing anxiety of earning money makes him more desperate and frustrated, as he could not accomplish his plans, he tries new jobs and works very hard. But he is not respected "[b]y customers, by suppliers, by superiors and inferiors. He worked hard for respect but he could not find it. There was in the world a great shortage of respect and Chanu was among the famished" (Ali, 2004: 203). This is actually a slice of actual life, in which South-Asian or African immigrants and migrant laborers in Britain experience serious racial treatment and discrimination in the field of work, and are forced to work hard with very low payments.

The narrative presents a more detailed insight into the psychological condition of the characters, such as Chanu's disillusionment within racist and hegemonic threats,

and Nazneen's concerns about the never-ending conflicts between Chanu and the girls, which makes her feel "like walking through a field of snakes" (Ali, 2004: 205). Nazneen's stream of consciousness reveal her nostalgia with the past; she remembers Raqib, and thinking whether she loves her daughters as she loved Raqib is a very intimate and courageous act that she feels like she is about to jump in the cold pond in a cool winter night, which is another memory of her with Hasina. These harsh and disturbing moments awaken inside her the urge to eat, and she goes to kitchen immediately and puts whatever she finds into her mouth, which indicates her psychological hunger and the need to fill in the emptiness and her incomplete identity.

Things get better as Chanu becomes a middle-man and begins to bring home some pairs of trousers to be hemmed, and all kinds of garment to be sewed. While this garment job improves the family's economic condition to some extent, it also creates an atmosphere of peace and hope:

> She fixed the thread and began. One trouser leg, then the other. When she had finished, they clapped and Bibi became sufficiently carried away to venture a small cheer, and Chanu's applause was emphatic, and Shahana smile fleetingly and marched back to the bedroom. (Ali, 2004: 207)

She gains more independence and self-agency by saving money for Hasina secretly, going out more often, for instance, to the bank to send the money. Chanu is more determined to teach the girls their religion and culture, and to go back to Bangladesh. Nevertheless, Shahana does not accept Bangladesh as her home, and says " 'I'm not going. I will run away. […] I am ready to run'" (Ali, 2004: 216). As Bibi asks Nazneen whether she wants to go or not, she tells them the story of How You Were Left To Your Fate, and ends it with "*that was God's will*" (Ali, 2004: 217). This is her answer, which indicates that she leaves her future life and unborn accomplished self to fate, just as her mother did for her once. She still does not consider herself as capable of deciding instead of God and fate, and remains inactive.

Hasina's letters continue to reveal her situation in Bangladesh, now as a maid in an upper-class Bangladeshi family. Apart from Nazneen's process of becoming, the novel also introduces Hasina's Bildung, as she too is growing up within perpetual

movement and new epiphanic experiences. Her upper-class experience teaches her the purest form of love from a child, as she looks after the children of the family. Until now, she has been involved in two types of love: passionate with her first husband, and immoral as a prostitute, to survive. But this time, she understands that the most real and permanent love comes from a child:

> *Bedtime now the boy give to me kiss and hug. Baby Daisy always want her face to me and she sit on my hip all day if only no work to do. When she smile she put her head back and show all her teeth. All my life I look for one thing only for love for giving and getting and it seem such a thing full of danger can eat you alive and now I stop the looking it come right up to me and show all it tiny little teeth.* (Ali, 2004: 228)

Although it seems like the sewing job has improved Nazneen's self-sufficiency and confidence, she is still immobile and enclosed within the domestic sphere, as the sewing machine requires staying fixed in a specific point. However, it will be soon revealed that this job brings her sentimental and sexual experience and liberation from patriarchal and traditional ties, and also from her submissive self with the appearance of the new middle-man Karim "with a bale of jeans over his broad shoulder. This was how he came into her life" (Ali, 2004: 209).

As he comes to bring garments, Nazneen observes the way he talks, his stammering Bengali, his confident voice in English, his hair, his clothes, the way he stands, and every such details. She is attracted to him. With Karim, Nazneen not only embarks on an emotional experience, but also is introduced for the first time to religious and political perspective of migrancy in terms of civil organizations, as she learns about Lion Hearts, which Karim is in conflict with.

Chapter Eleven introduces Nazneen as embarking on a new social experience as she decides to go to the meeting of the Muslim group Bengal Tigers, to which Karim has invited her as an **older woman**. It also reveals that Nazneen is more liberated and self-dependent in her actions, and can go outside for the meeting when Chanu is sleeping at home. The meeting is totally a new world for Nazneen, and offers her the feeling of significance, as she votes for Karim in the election of Chairman.

> Nine votes for the Questioner and ten for Karim. I have given him victory, thought Nazneen. She felt it a momentous thing. By raising her hand, or not raising it, she could

> alter the course of events, of affairs in the world of which she knew nothing. (Ali, 2004: 242)

For the first time, she gains a voice outside the walls of her home, which indicates the enlarging of both her physical environment and perspective of life. It is a symbolic stepping out of the boundaries of her domestic responsibilities and patriarchal hegemony of her husband.

Through the Islamic organization of Bengal Tigers, Monica Ali provides a postmodern approach to the emergence of Muslim identity in the context of diaspora and multiculturalism, by unveiling the concept of identity as relative, fluid, fragmented and a social construction. As the second generation of South-Asian immigrants, who are English-born, are more aware of their rights in terms of citizenship, they are more demanding and persistent in asserting their identity as British Muslims. Because of racial prejudice and Islamophobia, especially after the attacks of 9/11, British Muslims are forced to establish such civil organizations, which induces conflicts and protests such as the Oldham Riots in 2001. The polarity of political and racial ideologies produces various fragments of identity, in terms of **self** and **other**. While the white British impose on the Muslim immigrants the identity of **other**, **black**, or **primitive**, the Muslims want to be accepted as British, which can be explained by **social identity theory** developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. They propose that individuals who belong to certain group, class, or community sharing common concerns and ideologies tend to develop similar forms of identity and sense of belonging, while shaping a perception of other; in turn this difference and categorization leads to the emergence of **ingroup** and **outgroup**. According to Benwell and Stokoe, another thing to point out is that "outgroups are more easily and reductively characterized than ingroups, such that ingroup identification often leads to stronger stereotyping and prejudice towards outgroups" (2006: 25). Especially in multicultural societies such as London, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity promotes the emanation of different social and religious groups, and multiple constructions of identity, as manifested in **Brick Lane** with two opposite groups Bengal Tigers and Lion Hearts. Bengal Tigers seeks to assert its own existence and identity as **ummah**, regardless of nation, culture and gender, by

nevertheless ironically, forming a fixed structure of Islamic unity within themselves, although they demand to be a part of the cultural and religious diversity. This is exactly the ironic, fluid, and relative nature of the postmodern concept of identity. Stuart Hall, as well, explains how identity is established under certain discourses, ideologies and circumstances by stating that

> [p]recisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally constituted unity – an 'identity' in its traditional meaning (that is, an all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation). (1996: 17)

Karim becomes the embodiment of a connecting tissue that carries Nazneen to a larger world in which she discovers the sufferings of other Muslims in other countries, and her own problems seem very insignificant to her: "when she was disquieted by her undisciplined mind or worried about her sister – now she felt the smallness of it all" (Ali, 2004: 244). As Nazneen is more integrated into this new world and her newly acquired self, she gets more disconnected to her village and her memories. They become blurred as she tries hard to see, feel and smell the vividness of her recollections. Only in her dreams can she grasp the wholeness of the village and her family. It is evident that Nazneen begins to construct a new form of belonging and **home** in London, which creates a growing distance and dichotomy between her present self and fixed past, represented by her imagined homeland. She is gradually expanding and dissolving in her social and cultural environment, her new home, just as Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome, which survives by perpetually multiplying and developing itself:

> A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines. You can never get rid of ants because they form an animal rhizome that can rebound time and again after most of it has been destroyed. Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 9)

However, although she seems to be assimilated in her new cultural environment, she embraces and maintains her authenticity by merging it with her rhizomatic progression and achieves a complex identity.

In the context of diaspora and migration, the concepts of **home** and **memory** are significant factors which determine the migrant's current situation in creating a successful sense of belonging or not. According to Stock,

> [t]wo rather common areas of enquiry concern the relationship of (descendants of) migrants to an 'originary homeland', and questions of 'feeling at home'. The first might focus on (material or symbolic) transnational ties, myths of migration and dreams of return; while the second might trace the desires and the (im)possibilities of making oneself at home – in the different spaces diasporic subjects inhabit, but mainly in the current place of residence. The question about the relationship between 'homeland ties' and successful homemaking in the 'new home' is one of the more straightforward examples of the interrelatedness between these two uses of home. (2010: 25)

From this point of view, Nazneen and Chanu manifest two contradictory ideas of home and belonging in their diasporic experience. For Chanu, home is a concept that he longs for, and a mythical place for an eventual return, which restrains him from constructing a new home and sense of belonging in London, as well as a hybrid and fluid identity. He is the embodiment of a tree-like, rooted structure that grows vertically out of a specific point, which is always connected to where it starts. As the root – which is the centre – provides life for the tree itself, Bangladesh constitutes the cultural and ethnic root for Chanu, by nourishing his dreams, desires and life-time goals. Deleuze and Guattari argue that unlike rhizome, tree and root cannot reproduce and multiply itself, and creates a hierarchic and stable structure, which profoundly corresponds to Chanu's **unbecoming** and his eventual return to his roots. Regarding that "[c]ollective memories of home and *dominant discourses of otherness* (my italics) inform and restrict their options for constructing notions of (non-)home" (Stock, 2010: 26), Chanu's experience of racial and ethnic discrimination especially in his professional career, strengthens his desire to go back to his roots which he embraces as his home. However, Nazneen will soon discover that her homeland and cultural background are the main sources of her own **othering** or social exclusion as a woman, not London. On the contrary, London is the provider of her personal and physical

liberation, professional career, and acquiring an accomplished hybrid identity, which pave the way for her important decision of not going back to Bangladesh and not leaving her home, London.

Nazneen is still governed by the forces of duality and split identity, especially in her relationship with Karim. While she is encapsulated by the increasing physical attraction for Karim, she tries to hold on to faith and religious thoughts:

> Her two angels, who recorded every action and thought, good and evil, for the Day of Judgement. […] All the time, Nazneen felt the angels at her back. She jerked her shoulders. Karim came into her mind. The angels noted it. She felt irritated. *I did not ask him to come into my mind like that.* It was recorded. (Ali, 2004: 255)

Sometimes, as she is thinking that she is committing a sin, she feels relieved and pleased when she is walking behind her husband with her head down, and hair covered, like a dutiful and faithful wife. However, at the same time, she makes deliberate acts to unbind her rebellious self, like shaving her legs as if she is noticing the upcoming and inevitable sexual intercourse with Karim.

In Chapter Thirteen, Nazneen experiences one of her important epiphanies that changes her perspective of life. On one of the days when she wants to do something just for herself, she wears her red and gold silk sari. When she sees herself in the mirror, she suddenly realizes that if she changes her clothes and style, her entire life will change. She thinks of the women she has seen in the streets, with high heels, short skirts, and trousers. If she wears a tiny skirt and a bright top, would she skate with a handsome man and spin freely? Her final remark which signals her character development, also unveils the novel's perpetual involvement with clothes as the bearer of identity and as a cultural symbol: "For a glorious moment it was clear that clothes, not fate, made her life" (Ali, 2004: 278). Throughout the novel, Ali infiltrates the personalities of her characters through their clothing, which is also the expression of their position and preferences within cultural and social implications. For instance, Mrs. Azad, with her short skirt, purple lacquered nails and rust-colored hair, manifests her identity transformation and assimilation of the Western culture by challenging the static immigrant ideology. Karim, on the other hand, grows beard and wears panjabi

pyjamas and skullcap as his Muslim identity gets stronger after the 9/11 attacks. Razia's Union Jack sweater, trousers and short-cut hair are the physical markers of her independent and disobedient character, as well as her British identity. By refusing to wear sari, she is overwhelmingly revolting against traditional and cultural norms and their restrictive power. However, in the context of diaspora, she is marginalized in either ways, whether she wears her sari, or the Union Jack sweater. Similarly, when Nazneen and Razia visit a shop called "Fusion Fashions" selling eastern-style clothes for the British and wishing to create a cultural hybridity, Razia refers to the duplicitous nature of colonialist mindset by stating that "[l]ook how much these English are paying for their kameez. And at the same time they are looking down onto me" (Ali, 2004: 394). According to Yasmin Begum,

> […] South Asian dress is appropriated by western culture, but rather than bridge the gap between two ways of dressing and indeed two cultures, differences remain and this become problematic when a further hierarchical structure is devised. Therefore, although dressing patterns can superficially appear to harmonise cultures through hybrid forms of dress, clothes in themselves do not alleviate difference. Rather, it may be the case that they create further complexities to 'structures of representation' where a particular way of dressing does not in itself represent an archetype as portrayed in popular culture as the appropriation of union jack displays. (2018: 184)

Besides the representation of clothes as the emblem of cultural and social structures, the novel ascribes a special meaning and transformative function to clothes in Nazneen's journey towards self-development. The sewing job constitutes one of the most important steps of Nazneen's liberation as she makes money, even provides Hasina with financial support, creates her own personal space and agency, and thanks to this job, she meets Karim, and discovers her femininity by gaining sexual and emotional freedom. At the end, the garment and designing business that she runs with Razia, appears to be a golden gate that leads Nazneen to an entirely new life, in which she acquires a stronger identity. Hasina as well, pursuits both economic and individual independence by working in the garment factory in Bangladesh, but could not be successful because of patriarchal and cultural impediments, which conveys the novel's critical perspective towards normative, hierarchical and hegemonic ideologies, and their destructive influence on individual emancipation, especially for women.

Realizing the expressive power and idiosyncratic meaning of clothes, Nazneen goes to the meeting of Bengal Tigers wearing her red and gold sari, and "imagined Karim walking in and seeing her there, right beneath him, by the stage. […] she became dizzy with relief that she had worn her red and gold sari" (Ali, 2004: 278). Nazneen deliberately uses her clothes as a physical instrument to attract Karim's interest, just as she **forgets** to wear her headscarf every time he comes to her house. While trying to focus on the discussion, she dreams of Karim in her flat, walking around and filling the space. By thinking that "[e]ach time he came now he inhabited the flat a little more" (Ali, 2004: 286), she, indeed, is well aware of Karim's occupation of her entire life, not only the physical space. Regarding that the concept of home is a private and an enclosed area for the family – particularly for the immigrants –, a symbolic zone in which cultural, traditional and religious values are maintained and protected against the foreign culture outside, Karim's physical inclusion into Nazneen's home is a metaphoric destruction of those essentialized and normative systems. Their first sexual intercourse right after the meeting in Chanu's and Nazneen's bedroom, is a turning point both for the flourishing of Nazneen's sexual identity and femininity, and for the shattering of Chanu's masculine dominance in his own house and bed.

Chapter Fourteen opens with Chanu's decision to organize a family sightseeing of London. Thirty years after he arrived in London, Chanu, for the first time, attempts to enlarge the boundaries of his presence in the Western society; however, not as having a sense of belonging to this society, but precisely as a tourist:

> Chanu bought a pair of shorts which hung just below his knees. He tried them on and filled the numerous pockets with a compass, guidebook, binoculars, bottled water, maps and two types of disposable camera. Thus loaded, the shorts hung at mid-calf. He bought a baseball cap and wore it around the flat with the visor variously angled up and down and turned round to the back of his head. A money belt secured the shorts around his waist and prevented them from reaching his ankles. (Ali, 2004: 289).

The caricaturizing of Chanu, and his ridiculous acts on the bus which makes the conductor "stare hard at Chanu, as if considering whether to eject him from the bus" (Ali, 2004: 291), reveals his current misfit position and thirty years of unbelonging in the context of migration.

Nazneen's discovery of her femininity and acquisition of sexual liberation also unchains the social and traditional nets subjugating her communicative actions as she constantly asks questions, talking and laughing, which seems very strange to Chanu and the children. However, not knowing the reason behind it, Chanu is very pleased as "[h]e swelled with pride at how marvelously he had managed the day" (Ali, 2004: 294). For the first time, they take a family photo standing all together, immortalized as if they will never break up. The photograph displays Nazneen next to Chanu, as her shoulder is touching him, like "a dutiful and modest wife, in a cotton-print sari" (Ali, 2004: 296). This scene perfectly summarizes the novel's embodiment of postmodern thought in which the representation of reality is conveyed through plural and fluid meanings by rejecting pre-established definitions and absolute truths. The reality, which is in a process of perpetual change, transformation and movement is juxtaposed with the meaning the photograph illustrates, which is frozen and stabilized within frames by representing a singular and one-dimensional fact. Chanu's conversation with the English man who takes the photo also reveals the pre-determined and essentialized Western perception of the East as the man insistently considers Chanu as an Indian, and wants to take their family photo for himself as if he encounters a rare species.

Still in the process of becoming, Nazneen oscillates between two antagonistic worlds of existence, as she develops her relationship with Karim both sexually and emotionally. She penetrates into the world of desire where everything is limitless, impulsive, immanent, unruly, and in a perpetual motion. For the first time in her life, Nazneen challenges the hierarchical and normative forces, which have ruled her entire life and personality, and adopts a different self as she enjoys her sexuality:

> In the bedroom everything changed. Things became more real and they became less real. Like a Sufi in a trance, a whirling dervish, she lost the thread of one existence and found another. 'S-slow down,' he moaned. But she could not. (Ali, 2004: 299)

The bedroom emerges as the physical echo of the world of desire in flux; however, out of it, she turns back to her submissive self, to the world of codes and rules, and regards herself as a sinner, who has committed a crime and should be sentenced to death.

> Out of bedroom, she was – in starts – afraid and defiant. If ever her life was out of her hands, it was now. She had submitted to her father and married her husband; she had submitted to her husband. And now she gave herself op to a power greater than these two, and she felt helpless before it. (Ali, 2004: 300)

However, this time, she herself is the source of this power, not any other man in her life, and this feeling gives her pleasure and strength. Imprisoned between sexual desire and religious codes, Nazneen fluctuates between centripetal and centrifugal forces: while the centripetality of religion and traditional norms push her towards the essentialized centre, she struggles to inhabit the centrifugal field of desire, which is heterogeneous and marginal. Nazneen's personal battle occupying centripetal and centrifugal forces is the reproduction of the Bakhtinian concepts of centripetal and centrifugal language systems in which the generative and ideological forces of language try to overcome heteroglossia:

> A common unitary language is a system of linguistic norms. But these norms do not constitute an abstract imperative; they are rather the generative forces of linguistic life, forces that struggle to overcome the heteroglossia of language, forces that unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language, or else defending an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia. (Bakhtin, 1981: 270-271)

Entrapped between these two worlds, Nazneen experiences a serious mental breakdown. After realizing that their return to Dhaka will bring more serious consequences than she thinks, like leaving Karim behind, she is horrified:

> Only a short time ago it had seemed that she worried unnecessarily about everything. Now it was clear that she had not worried enough. She was back on the tightrope that stretched between her husband and her children, and this time the wind was high and tormenting. And there was Karim. (Ali, 2004: 321)

She begins to vomit and loses her perception of reality. Her subconscious is unleashed as the image of her mother, telling her that God tests her with the jinn in the shape of a man, and she will teach her how to pass this test. Grasping the fact that she has failed the test, Nazneen loses herself and passes out. Staying in bed for a couple of days, she fluctuates between life and death, as if she is punished for her sins:

> For several days she stayed in bed and clung to her collapse. She pushed down into it like a diver, struggling against buoyancy, fighting her way into the depths. Where the

> water clouded with mud, where the light could not reach, where sound died and beyond the body there was nothing: that was where she wanted to be. At times she found this dead space and rested within it. but then she was caught in a net of dreams and dragged up to the surface, and the sun hit the water and sliced her eyes and she saw everything in pieces as if in a smashed mirror, and she heard everything at once […]. (Ali, 2004: 324)

As a thematic element of the Bildungsroman tradition, pain and psychological suffering of the hero/heroine is a crucial stage of the developmental process which provides a better and more matured perception of life, just as David experienced upon Dora's death, or, Pip learned that Magwitch is the provider of the money, or, Jane realized that Rochester is married. Nazneen, for instance, gains a subtle apprehension of the true reason behind the relationship between her husband and Dr. Azad just after her mental collapse. She makes more complex interpretations and accurate observations, and sees that Chanu and Dr. Azad "entwined their lives to drink from the pools of each other's sadness. From these special watering holes, each man drew strength" (Ali, 2004: 328). Now, she is aware that she has reached up somewhere she can look back and make judgements of her past, which palpably propounds her character formation and acquisition of a more sophisticated perspective. When she thinks of the time she has just arrived London and her old flat, she realizes that she could have done many things differently; she could have bought seeds and grown them in pots, she could have sewn a cover for the sofa, she could have thrown away the wardrobe or painted it, or she could have placed Chanu's certificates on the wall. She feels that she has lost her chance to change things.

But her passion for Karim is changing; a growing and more intense desire captivates her body when Karim comes for the first time after her illness. Gentle touches turn into wild and ferocious acts, as she bites his ear, his lip, and tastes blood.

> He held a hand across her throat and she wanted everything: to vanish inside the heat like a drop of dew, to feel his hand press down and extinguish her, to hear Chanu come in and see what she was, his wife. (Ali, 2004: 343)

Her passion is so strong that she ventures all the worst scenarios and consequences. Her newly-flourished self dominates her body and mind, and even the feeling of guilt and disgust coming after their sinful intimacy does not appear any more. She imagines

Chanu coming home and finding them together in the sitting room; however, she feels surprisingly indifferent to this thought. “By this attitude, she was vaguely shocked and nearly thrilled for it seemed at once wanton and sublime, the first real stoicism she had shown to the course of her fate” (Ali, 2004: 347).

More aware of herself and her desires, Nazneen begins to perceive the underlying forces of her passion for Karim. When he sits on the sofa with his feet on the coffee table, Nazneen tries hard not to see the big hole in his white sock with his big toe coming out of it. Then she remembers the time when she attended Bengal Tiger meeting in her golden and red sari, watched his powerful speech on the stage, and was attracted by his masculinity. “That was how she wanted him, like that, not with his feet on her coffee table and holes in his socks” (Ali, 2004: 345).

Nazneen demonstrates her improving identity and agency in an argument between Chanu and Shahana about going to a festival, to which Chanu objects. With her determined and powerful declaration, she easily solves the problem between father and daughter, and by asserting her dominance she says the last word: “ ‘I say she can go,’ she yelled. They were silent and shocked, as if she had ripped out their tongues. ‘And Shahana, show respect to your father.’ ‘Yes Amma,’ said Shahana. ‘And you,’ she told Chanu, ‘should be careful what you say to such a small girl’” (Ali, 2004: 349). Nazneen’s self-confidence and growing awareness of herself provide her with the courage to unveil her secrets to Chanu and Razia. She tells everything about Hasina to Chanu, all about her problems and being raped that she has never told before. She tells them very straight and very calmly, and her manner urges Chanu’s eagerness to help and to do something. On the other hand, she reveals her relationship with Karim to Razia without hesitation, which Razia was suspicious about before. Nazneen’s indifference to what others think increases as she proceeds towards a self-centered, powerful and emancipated character, and a more complex perception of the world around her. The ice-skating on television, once bewildered her, now seems fake and ordinary: “Nazneen looked at the couple on the television screen, the false smiles, the made-up faces, the demented illusion of freedom chasing around their enclosure. Turn it off, she said” (Ali, 2004: 364).

Meanwhile, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York accelerate Chanu's attempts and plans to return to Bangladesh, as racist acts of Islamophobia become the major concern of the Muslim community in Brick Lane.

> A pinch of New York dust blew across the ocean and settled on the Dogwood Estate. Sorupa's daughter was the first, but not the only one. Walking in the street, on her way to college, she had her hijab pulled off. Razia wore her Union Jack sweatshirt and it was spat on. 'Now you see what will happen.' Said Chanu. 'Backlash.' (Ali, 2004: 368)

One day Chanu brings a suitcase – a symbolic declaration of the eventual return, which is now inevitable, as Nazneen thought: "it is going to happen. We are going to Bangladesh" (Ali, 2004: 376). During a conversation with Karim, Nazneen learns that Karim loves her because she is "the real thing" for him (Ali, 2004: 385), an arranged village girl having the potential of transformation, whom "you never know *what* you are going to get" (Ali, 2004: 385), as Karim states. This dialogue reminds her of Chanu's words when they first came to London and he was talking about her as being an unspoilt girl from the village. She is cognizant of her own metamorphosis, and knows that she is not that village girl anymore, and going back to Bangladesh would destroy her developing identity. She is entrapped between rationality and emotion, just as Jane Eyre was, about her relationship with Rochester in her process of identity formation. While Karim wants her stay, Nazneen thinks of every possibility about her future life in London, and about her daughters. As she now possesses a more mature perspective, she is very cautious and tries to be reasonable while thinking of every possible alternative for the future. Even the thought of marrying Karim – if she chooses to stay – does not astonish her; instead it drags her into a bunch of perplexing questions:

> How could she present the girls with a new father like that? And what would they think? How terribly it would scythe at their young minds, one question repeating itself over and over: by what means did our mother ensnare this boy? (Ali, 2004: 404)

Then, Nazneen experiences a very crucial moment of her identity development as she is strangled by all these thoughts and questions which urge the ferocity inside her:

> The burn was fierce and it unleashed in her an equal ferocity. Suddenly her entire being lit up with anger. *I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the*

> *one.* A charge ran through her body and she cried out again, this time out of sheer exhilaration. (Ali, 2004: 405)

It is the palpable affirmation of her acquired self-agency, which confronts the power mechanisms that encircle and control her life. Here, Nazneen's construction of a liberated identity can be appreciated regarding Ernesto Laclau's definition of identity in relation to power structures. He argues that an objective identity emerges together with the existence of a system of power which subjugates it; that is to say, "[i]f […] an objectivity manages to partially affirm itself, it is only by repressing that which threatens it. To study the conditions of existence of a given social identity, then, is to study the power mechanisms making it possible" (1990: 32). Thus, in Nazneen's diasporic experience, patriarchy, cultural codes, and colonial ideology are the essential power structures both threaten Nazneen's emancipated self, and pave the way for her self-discovery, in which she is able to repress these mechanisms. In this sense, Nazneen fulfills three dimensions of dislocation, which Laclau enounces in his elaboration of dislocated identity. She achieves **temporality** by surpassing spatial representations both literally and metaphorically; acquires multiple cultural and gendered **possibilities**; and constructs her individual **freedom**; since "[f]reedom is the absence of determination" (Laclau, 1990: 43), which implies normative and essential systems.

Meanwhile, the narration draws a parallel between Nazneen and Razia, as each is fighting with their personal problems. Razia locks her drug-addicted son in his room with iron bars, and Nazneen is tackling the idea of leaving Karim behind. Tariq's moaning and whistles behind the door echoes in Nazneen's imagination as Karim, who kisses a new girl after her to find solace: "Behind the door, Tariq whistled softly as if he had just woken to a bright and beautiful dawn. Karim kissed his new girl. Tariq whistled louder. Karim began to unwind the sari" (Ali, 2004: 426). Upon seeing Razia's determination despite his son's crying and suffering in the room, Nazneen understands that she has to make a decision and take action as well, as tickets are bought and only a few days left to go.

Nazneen realizes that she must end her financial dependence to Mrs. Islam, who keeps asking money although they have already paid what they borrowed. As Nazneen plans to visit her, Mrs. Islam comes to her apartment with her two sons to collect a further two hundred pounds. Without hesitation, Nazneen asserts that they do not have any loan that they need to pay back, upon which "Son Number Two" smashes the showcase and the shelves with his cricket bat. Staying very calm and determined, Nazneen gains victory over Mrs. Islam as they leave the flat without taking the money. As she stands on the pieces of glass, she serenely realizes that she has shattered the authority and immorality of Mrs. Islam, who feeds on and exploits religious and traditional values.

> Nothing at all came to her mind. As she squatted in the debris, everything inside was peaceful. She stopped working and slipped into the moment like a hot bath. Gradually, a thought began to form. God provided a way. Nazneen smiled. God provided a way, and I found it. (Ali, 2004: 446)

Nazneen gains a more transparent and clear vision of everything around her, including her relationship with Karim. Her increased sense of self provides her with an insight of how she and Karim see in each other what they want to see. Before acquiring this new perspective on life, she has constructed an image of Karim, which "[s]he had patched together, working in the dark. She had made a quilt out of pieces of silk, scraps of velvet", then she begins to see the essence of her creation of Karim, as she "held [the quilt] up to the light the stitches showed up large and crude, and they cut across everything" (Ali, 2004: 454). Just like her, Karim too creates the image of Nazneen as he wants her to be; as a Bengali wife from the village. Nazneen's meeting with Karim to break up, is another crucial step in her formation. The narrative evidently illustrates Nazneen's self-confidence and her successful integration into British society as she buys a ticket and travels on the tube on her own to see Karim. Regarding Nazneen's social and economic assimilation, Ziegler points out that

> [b]y buying the ticket and putting the freedom she witnessed in the global city of high commerce into effect in the local city, Nazneen has broken through her gendered skin and has made herself a public individual. Her identification with the woman on the platform is the identification of equal citizens in the liberal consuming community. (2007: 160)

She openly states that she does not want to marry him by explaining the true reason, something she has realized recently: “I wasn’t me, and you weren’t you. From the very beginning to the very end, we didn’t see things. What we did – we made each other up” (Ali, 2004: 454-455).

As the day of departure comes, Shahana escapes to meet her friend at a café in Brick Lane, and Nazneen goes out on her own to find her daughter wandering in the streets, which are closed by the police because of the fight between two Bangladeshi groups. This scene creates both semblance and controversy with Nazneen’s first experience of the city, as she was lost in the complexity and strangeness of the streets and the crowd of people. She was then a passive observer and an outsider, while this time she smoothly blends in the flux of the city, although it is entirely male-dominated – policemen and the boys from the fighting groups. She is not invisible as before, and insistently asserts her existence in front of the policeman who does not let her go through the street: “‘Why I can’t go through?’ said Nazneen. She put her face right up to the policeman’s face. *Do you see me now? Do you hear me?*” (Ali, 2004: 469). Nazneen’s confrontation to the police manifests the empowerment of her newly acquired female identity challenging patriarchal hegemony in general. As Ziegler argues

> Nazneen’s new gender status is so radically different than her previous role that she is actually able to drag a wounded man to his feet and save his life before making her way through the chaos and finding Shahana hiding in the café. (2007: 160-161)

She takes Shahana home and knows that it is time to talk to Chanu about her decision to stay.

As if knowing what Nazneen is going to say, Chanu constantly talks, fearing that Nazneen will say something. He talks “with his hands, his arms, his eyes, eyebrows, cheeks and nose as well as his lips” (Ali, 2004: 476), with exaggerated gestures as usual. During the intimate and emotional moment of their talk, Chanu reveals his epiphany concerning his dream of returning home as a Big Man, in which he realizes that to be a Big Man is not about status and money, but being together with family. Either way, he is not going back as a Big Man, but – ironically – as smaller in

size and shrunken because of the ulcer, without status and family. Ali creates a sentimental atmosphere in their final conversation, which simultaneously exhibits Chanu's pitiful situation and Nazneen's powerful and liberated identity; however, with their mutual respect and love:

> His tears scarred her hand.
>
> 'You are coming with me, then? You'll come?'
>
> 'No,' she breathed. She lifted his head and looked into his face. It was dented and swollen, almost out of recognition. 'I can't go with you,' she said.
>
> 'I can't stay,' said Chanu, and they clung to each other inside a sadness that went beyond words and tears, beyond that place, those causes and consequences, and became a part of their breath, their marrow, to travel with them from now to wherever they went. (Ali, 2004: 478)

The final part of the last chapter portrays Nazneen together with her friends, Razia, Hanufa and Jorina, designing clothes and arranging selling and payments, which unveils their initiation to the garment business. Nazneen earns enough money to feed themselves and even to send Hasina some. Karim too returns to Bangladesh, as Nazneen learns, while Chanu calls and writes every week telling of his life in Dhaka. Shahana and Bibi continue their education in London, and Shahana begins to take French classes.

The last scene, which reveals Nazneen while ice-skating with her sari, is the metaphorical reflection of the postcolonial and diasporic evaluation of hybridity that the entire novel attempts to manifest. The scene fuses the ice-skating as a cultural production of the west with Nazneen's traditional clothes by creating a moment of cultural hybridity. While bearing these two cultural implications, Nazneen, is both literally and symbolically sliding and moving among the **lines of flight** as Deleuze and Guattari call, which represents diverse, complex and overlapping structures and possibilities, resulting in perpetual identity development. She manages to penetrate into the cultural heterogeneity of London, by protecting her authentic self and wearing her sari, in spite of the hierarchical power structures that attempt to push her towards the margin. At the same time, she adopts the Western culture by fusing it with her authenticity, which results in the building, emergence, and assertion of an original

identity. She clings to her environment and constructs a new and promising future for herself and her daughters, just like the bunch of turf squares she encounters in the courtyard, which were delivered in summer. “Then, they were bright and even. Soon enough, they blended into the environment” (Ali, 2004: 455).

CHAPTER THREE

THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA: HYBRIDIZATION AND SUBVERSION OF IDENTITY

With the acceleration of mass migration and globalisation, many concepts that were the determinants of Western culture and the ideology of the **Empire**, have been rearticulated and questioned, among which cultural identity, ethnicity and nation are the predominant ones. These old-fashioned categorizations have been replaced by more flexible and seamless norms and ideas that celebrate cultural complexity, hybridity, and mobility, while also transforming the cultural and political meaning of the cosmopolitan sites, such as London. Once seen as a city of homogeneity and the centre of the dominant Western culture, London now has been represented as hosting diverse ethnic groups and cultures by destabilizing its former hegemonic power after the Second World War. John Clement Ball calls this dramatic change the "reinvasion of the centre", while stating that "[w]here once London reached out expansively into 'the world,' now the world began to shrink in upon London" (1996: 8). Especially for the postcolonial and contemporary writers, London has become an experimental site for their fictions of multiculturalism and cultural hybridity. Hanif Kureishi's first novel **The Buddha of Suburbia** (1990) handles the issues of identity, race, class; London as a metropolitan city, and suburban life with a humorous, critical, and subversive manner. By presenting its protagonist Karim's growing up into an actor, and bringing the concepts of becoming and multiculturalism together, the novel also overtly conforms to the principles of the postmodern Bildungsroman.

Kureishi, who was born as a child of an English mother and a Pakistani father, considers himself as being a **Londoner** not **British**, by deconstructing the unified meaning of **Britishness** and all kinds of ethnic identity, just like Karim does in the novel. Having strong autobiographical nuances, **The Buddha** delineates London as

> a cosmopolitan space not fully attached to or detached from either British nation-space or some nationless world-space. It hovers interstitially between the two. […] Kureishi's

> ‘London’ can be called a semi-detached signifier: it is and is not Britain; it is and is not the world. (Ball, 1996: 9)

We argue that the term **interstitial** is the essential idea that defines the novel itself, and every other notion that the novel attempts to express. Each of these concepts, such as identity, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, city, suburbia has indefinite and floating meanings, and cannot be fixed into a single category because of their liquid connotations.

Similar to Nazneen’s cross-cultural journey, the protagonist Karim’s process of becoming starts in the suburbs of London and proceeds into the city, which can be considered as the re-application of the traditional Bildungsroman’s embodiment of the province and the city as two antithetical spatial elements in the character development of the hero. However, instead of conforming to the conventional structures of space, society and family as the Bildungsroman requires, Karim challenges and subverts these fixed frameworks for his own personal, professional, and financial benefits, and eventually becomes a well-known actor. As a multicultural and postmodern Bildungsroman, Kureishi’s novel encompasses Karim’s experience of being a second-generation immigrant in London’s suburbs and how he constructs his own interstitial space and fluid identity among racial, sexual, and social categories.

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don’t care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. (Kureishi, 1990: 3)

Karim’s first-person narration and self-description reveals his racially hybrid character and his suburban origin. He lives in Bromley, which is Kureishi’s birthplace, as well, and describes the 1970s’ suburbs as a monotonous, dull, consumerist, and as a place which hinders Karim’s flaming desire for movement and excitement. He has a typical suburban and lower-middle class family: an Indian-born civil servant father, a melancholic and depressed sales-assistant English mother, who “wore an apron with flowers on it and wiped her hands repeatedly on a tea towel” having a traditional housewife image, and a younger brother Allie. In the first place, Karim’s perception of the suburb conforms to its negative treatment by some writers, such as George

Orwell and T. S. Eliot, by whom it has often been criticized for its homogeneity, sexual and familial conventionalism, conformism, and consumerism:

> a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by the people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless pre-fabricated foods, from the same freezers. (Mumford, as cited in Pope, 2015: 1-2)

Karim sees his environment just the same way, which prompts his dream of escaping the suburbs for the sake of a metropolitan life in London, "where life was bottomless in its temptations," (Kureishi, 1990: 8) full of excitement, movement, diversity, and offering the possibility of different forms of sexual experience. Until postmodernity, the city and the suburb has often been represented as two opposite terms and as having sharp boundaries. However, the writers who celebrate multiplicity and heterogeneity have attempted to eliminate these distinctive borders, and show that the suburb, too, can provide myriad of possibilities and cultural, ethnic, and sexual richness. In **The Buddha**, Kureishi overtly portrays the eccentric aspect of Karim's suburbia, although Karim does not seem to be aware of it in the first place. His description of the Victoria Road, for instance, clearly reveals the residents' diverse ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds:

> Here lived Mr Whitman, the policeman, and his young wife Noleen; next door were a retired couple, Mr and Mrs Holub. They were socialists in exile from Czechoslovakia, and unknown to them their son crept out of the house in his pyjamas every Friday and Saturday night to hear uncouth music. Opposite them were another retired couple, a teacher and his wife, the Gothards. An East End family of birdseed dealers, the Lovelaces, were next to them – old Grandma Lovelace was a toilet attendant in the Library Gardens. Further up the street lived a Fleet Street reporter, Mr Nokes, his wife and their overweight kids, with the Scoffields – Mr Scoffield was an architect – next door to them. (Kureishi, 1990: 74)

Although Kureishi's suburbia consists of different social groups and unconventional practices, such as Karim's father Haroon's regular mystic performances, his extramarital relationship with Eva, and Karim's homosexual affair with Charlie, it also conforms to traditional representations in terms of social structure and relationships. As Karim states, his parents do not get on well, but they do not even consider divorcing, because "[i]n the suburbs people rarely dreamed of striking for happiness.

It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the reward of dullness" (Kureishi, 1990: 8).

In the first part of the novel, entitled "In the Suburbs", Karim is involved in various suburban experiences as he is in a state of constant movement, while presenting both conventional and unconventional aspects of suburbia. The night Karim and Haroon are invited to Eva Kay's house is the turning point in their life, which takes them out of the dullness of suburban milieu, while introducing new future possibilities. There, Karim watches his father performing a mystic talk and some yoga positions for the people gathered in Eva's front room. Here, Haroon, an ordinary Indian civil servant living in the suburbs, turns out to be a mystic arts instructor, who is expected to show "the Way, the Path" (Kureishi, 1990: 13). Witnessing his father's transformation into an important man who "led the discussion, talking loudly, interrupting people and touching whoever was nearest" (Kureishi, 1990: 12), Karim is very surprised and confused: "At home Dad would have laughed all this. But now, in the thick of it, he looked as if he was having the highest time of his whole life" (Kureishi, 1990: 12). Although Karim does not currently acknowledge it, his father is shifting from one social identity to another by being identified and accepted by a different social group. Haroon is apparently aware that "identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation" (Hall, 1996: 16). This manipulation of identity, indeed, constitutes one of the main thematic concerns of **The Buddha**, which also becomes Karim's lifelong strategy of his professional career and personal development.

While his father is performing his **Buddha** show, Karim goes upstairs with Charlie, Eva's son. Charlie's room in the attic emerges as a completely different spatial dimension, which metaphorically transcends them from suburban conformism and traditional mentality to an unconventional and limitless level of existence. Although the attic is expected to restrain physical movement and to symbolize repressed feelings because of its narrow and cramped structure, it unbinds the boundaries of sexuality and mundanity of everyday life and becomes an infinite place of freedom in the novel.

Charlie's room also confronts the ruling power of time in the suburbs, where everything depends on a planned and fixed order: dinner time, working hours, train and bus schedules, TV programmes etc., as Charlie wants Karim to remove his watch when he steps in his room: "In my domain time isn't a factor" (Kureishi, 1990: 14). Here, from Laclau's perspective, the dislocation of suburban values in Charlie's room paves the way for the breaking of temporal borders, as well. As they lie down next to each other, Karim unveils his adoration and sexual interest for Charlie:

> I tried to kiss him. He avoided my lips by turning his head to one side. But when he came in my hand it was, I swear, one of the pre-eminent moments of my earlyish life. There was dancing in my streets. My flags flew, my trumpets blew! (Kureishi, 1990: 17)

This homosexual act is another powerful confrontation to "heterosexual familialism" (Haddour, 2014: 79) of suburbia, where family and domestic life is considered as crucial. Throughout the novel, Kureishi's engagement with the concept of **space** as possessing multiple meanings and functions – as in the representation of the attic, is an evident manifestation of Foucault's idea of **heterotopia**, which signifies "various institutions and places that interrupt the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary everyday space. Because they inject alterity into the sameness, the commonplace, the topicality of everyday society […]" (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 3-4). In his article "Of Other Spaces" (1986), Foucault meticulously discusses the perception of space in our epoch and how it has transformed since the Middle Ages. The medieval idea of space, as Foucault argues, was consisted of hierarchical and rigidly identified places, which he calls the **space of emplacement**. However, in the contemporary period, especially after significant astronomical discoveries, the ancient concepts of time and space have expanded their verges towards infinity, and localization has been replaced by extension (Foucault, 1986: 23). Thus, physical places have the potential of representing something else beyond their functions as Foucault points out:

> Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (Foucault, 1986: 24)

During that night, Haroon, too, subverts the suburban familialism and the line between private and the public by having sex with Eva in her garden, which is "a liminal space between public and private" (Brook, 2005: 218). Considering the whole night, Eva's place becomes an interstitial site for the emergence of new identities and deconstruction of suburban normativity, while at the same time providing Karim with an important epiphany related to his future life in the toilet:

> I could see my life clearly for the first time: the future and what I wanted to do. I wanted to live always this intensely: mysticism, alcohol, sexual promise, clever people and drugs. I hadn't come upon it all like this before, and now I wanted nothing else. The door to the future had opened: I could see which way to go. (Kureishi, 1990: 15)

Just like Charlie's room in the attic, the toilet as a heterotopia is liberated from its claustrophobic and dim-lit atmosphere and is transformed into an unbounded and illuminating multi-layered **space** for Karim in determining his path towards the future; because, "[t]he heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault, 1986: 25).

Upon presenting a portrait of life in suburbia, the novel then reveals Haroon's past experience of immigration from Bombay to London with his best friend Anwar. He comes from an upper-class family in India, has servants, plays cricket and tennis every week, and goes to school in a horse-drawn carriage. However, in London, nothing happens as he expected: he stays in the dentistry office of a friend of his father, works for a low salary, and cooks for himself though he has never been in the kitchen before. Haroon represents the first-generation migrants, also called the **Windrush generation** coming from South Asian, African and Caribbean countries to London in the 1950s, who experience cultural dislocation severely. According to Chris Weedon,

> [i]n the 1950s and 1960s people of Colour, both those settled in Britain for generations, mostly in London and port cities such as Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff, and the influx of new immigrants, predominantly from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent, found themselves confronted on the one hand by overtly racist rejection and discrimination and on the other by discourses of assimilation that rejected their difference, implicitly asserting the superiority of the white British 'way of life'. (2004: 63)

Just like Chanu in **Brick Lane**, Haroon tries hard to be a part of this white society both in his career and social life, but he knows that he is always one step behind because of

the racial discrimination he has been experiencing since he settled down in London: "'The whites will never promote us, […] not an Indian while there is a white man left on 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'" (Kureishi, 1990: 27).

Karim, Haroon and Eva attend another spiritual meeting in Chislehurst, where Haroon's mysticism and teachings of Buddhism gradually evolve into a product which they commodify for the white society. The house is decorated for that purpose by using Indian cultural elements: "the sandalwood Buddhas, brass ashtrays and striped plaster elephants" (Kureishi, 1990: 30), while Eva is wearing a red dress and a turban. Finally, the room is prepared for the culture-consumers. "The candle industry was stimulated, Venetian blinds were lowered, Indian sandalwood stinkers ignited and put in flowerpots, and a small carpet was put down for the Buddha of suburbia to fly on" (Kureishi, 1990: 32). These gatherings in various suburban houses become the **zones of consumption**, or the microcosm of a shopping center where people come, buy the product and leave. It is evident that Haroon builds a social identity by marginalizing and exoticizing himself on purpose, and takes advantage of his ethnic background to subvert the consumerist and materialist suburban mentality. Here, the novel attempts to show the double-sided gaze of the white suburbans against the black British, as they consume and celebrate their cultural exoticism while segregating them within social and professional domains. For instance, the day after the meeting in which the white suburbans admire the teachings of the Buddha Haroon, Karim experiences a racial attack from Helen's father whom he calls "Hairy Back". He does not want her daughter to go out with "wogs" like Karim, and releases his dog at him, which symbolizes the racial oppression of the black British. The dog also goes further by ejaculating on Karim's back, exposing him as being "literally and figuratively fucked by white society" (Fischer, 2014: 289).

Kureishi's postmodern Bildungsroman offers a mixture of multiple contexts that contribute and provide for the character development of the protagonist, such as the suburban environment, metropolitan London, queer relationships, and various forms of hybrid representations. Like many postmodern theorists and writers, Kureishi

draws the straight line between hybridity and identity by presenting different aspects of hybridity, including racial, cultural, and sexual. According to the postmodern theorists like Bhabha, Bakhtin, and Deleuze, in order to achieve an accomplished identity, one must liberate himself/herself from fixed and singular constructions by establishing liminal spaces where they can experience multiplicity and difference. In one of his interviews, Bhabha defines hybridity as

> the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. […] The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (Rutherford, 1990: 211)

Thus, considering the Bildungsroman tradition and postmodern ideology together, the principle of identity formation is closely related to hybrid positions and liminal spaces that bestow endless possibilities and new areas of advancement for the individual. In **The Buddha**, Kureishi intends to create a character who has always desired to belong to that third space with his ethnicity, liberal mentality, cultural and social status, and sexual preference. That is why Karim wants to escape from the stability and traditionalism of suburbia and go to London; a metropolitan city where perpetual movement and complex formations are possible. Despite his young age, Karim understands and celebrates being a hybrid and tries to make use of it. When he talks about his bisexual inclination in Chapter Four, he actually humorously epitomizes the true nature of hybridity and its advantages:

> It was unusual, I knew, the way I wanted to sleep with boys as well as girls. I liked strong bodies and the backs of boys' necks. I liked being handled by men, their fists pulling me; and I liked objects – the end of brushes, pens, fingers – up my arse. But I liked cunts and breasts, all of women's softness, long smooth legs and the way women dressed. I felt it would be heart-breaking to have to choose one or the other, like having to decide between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. […] When I did think about it I considered myself lucky that I could go to parties and go home with anyone from either sex […]. (Kureishi, 1990: 55)

With his habits, sexual interest, and desires which are unusual for the suburban community, Karim begins to establish a new way of life, and a new social and sexual identity in the suburbs, and develops it as he moves to the city. That is to say, before

he fully achieves maturation both physically and mentally, Karim has already had the potential for his future development by having an eccentric and hybrid lifestyle, unlike Nazneen in **Brick Lane**, who starts her developmental journey at the bottom of the ladder and experiences a more dramatic transformation in the end. However, Karim's journey is challenging enough, too, as he battles with the conventional and normative social structure of both the city and the suburbs by constructing a "queer time and space" for himself as a postcolonial nomadic subject.

Beyond its connotation of being sexually non-normative, queerness has also been regarded as a postcolonial condition of moving outside of all nationalistic, ethnic and social identifications, which paves the way for the creation of queered time and space in terms of the temporality of dislocation, in Laclau's words. From this perspective, queerness embodies a strong denial of a commitment to normative and categorized representations, and the institutions such as family, reproduction, heterosexuality and conventional domesticity which require stability and assurance of future life. Relatedly, Nigianni and Storr define queer as being "always already in response to a dominant heterosexual matrix: a solely reactive force of re-signification, mockery, disrespect to the dominance of heterosexuality, to the power of the norms […]" (2009: 4). Here, it is necessary to remember Foucault's perception of sexuality, which is one of the most crucial arguments of the deconstructionist and queer ideology. By asserting that sexuality is not a natural element but a socially constructed entity - a very long-termed production of social, cultural and religious power structures, Foucault has established an important impetus for the queer discourse. He, of course, does not deny the biological sexes; however, he insistently attempts to underline the authoritative influence of these systems on the construction of the meaning of sexuality on the basis of heterosexual norms since early ages. Thus, sexuality has been manifested as a biological, medical and social identification rather than being a personal desire. Therefore, while queer theory intends to eliminate the hetero-normative meaning of sexuality, it is, in a general sense, "at odds with the normal, the norm, whether that is dominant heterosexuality or gay/lesbian identity. It is definitively eccentric, ab-normal" (Spargo, 2000: 40). In this context, **The Buddha**

portrays its protagonist Karim as a representative of the queer subject with his bisexuality and racially hybrid identity, who evidently attempts to annihilate sexual, cultural and social categories in the suburbs, in London, and in America, as well.

Throughout the novel, the conventionalism of the suburbs, its dullness and intense predisposition for heterosexual familialism pave the way for the emergence of various queer practices, which destabilize traditional suburban notions of time and space. By focusing principally on the construction of queer time and space, in **In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives** (2005), Judith Halberstam addresses this normative perception of timeline as "middle-class logic of reproductive temporality", which sees "longevity as the most desirable future", and labels anything rapid and non-stable as threatening and dangerous, such as drugs and alcohol (2005: 4). By detaching themselves from the timeline of both past and future, the queer subject is willingly alienated from social constructs like family, reproduction and labor, and thus, inhabits queer time; since, the concept of future is completely disregarded and the present time becomes the only axis. Halberstam also argues that queer time always coexists with the production of queer spaces, which "refers to the place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage and it also describes the new understandings of space enabled by the production of queer counterpublics" (2005: 6). From this point of view, Halberstam's perspective of queer space is congruous with Foucault's concept of heterotopia, in which he highlights multiple representations of space beyond its traditional definitions.

Beside his sexuality, Karim reveals his queer identity by rejecting his postcolonial subjection and categorization as the **other** because of his half-Indian heritage, and by identifying himself as an Englishman. Considering the racial labeling and classifications such as white/black, British/non-British, and self/other, the imperialist and colonialist representations form another controversial framework for the queer theory.

> The term 'postcolonial' thus embraces a geography that is defined as *not* Euro-American; 'postcolonial' evolves into a moniker for those spaces and bodies that are 'queer' in relation to the timelines and spaces of the West, and which are actively

> ‘queered’ by the West in a continued process Othering and examination, opposing the local to the global and the Westernized. (Romanow, 2011: 145)

Thus, Karim is racially queered by the white society, as he “had been punched and kicked to the ground by a teacher […], called Shitface and Curryface, and coming home covered in spit and snot and chalk and wood-shavings” (Kureishi, 1990: 62-63). While he is being segregated by this nationalist and essentialized thought, he, at the same time, voluntarily excludes himself from all kinds of racial categorizations including his half-Indian origin, and considers himself a hybrid. Therefore, his ethnic background and queerness both in terms of sexuality and race, become major formative elements in his journey towards self-development. Just as Nazneen in **Brick Lane**, Karim’s trial would be his successful integration into the British society, which could be hostile to South-Asians, by powerfully asserting his British identity and queerness. However, contrary to the traditional Bildungsroman, **The Buddha** as a postmodern one, subverts the conventional and normative social structures and expectations, and still provides for the successful **Bildung** of the protagonist.

While Hanif Kureishi presents the problems and neocolonial discrimination of immigrants and British-born South Asians in their adaptation to Western society predominantly through the protagonist Karim, he also touches upon cultural rootedness of migrant subjects and differences across generations. Haroon’s best friend Anwar, with whom he came to London, is the most evident example of cultural and traditional fixity to the country of origin. Anwar’s daughter Jamila tells Karim that her father wants to arrange a husband for her from Bombay, which she strictly rejects, and that is why Anwar does not eat and drink anything until Jamila accepts the marriage. Anwar experiences an anxiety of losing his origins and traditions therefore insisting on a patriarchal practice of his culture, and attempts to impose a role on Jamila to perpetuate their cultural heritage. However, Jamila is a British-born, self-confident, feminist and an admirer of Simone de Beauvoir, whom Karim describes as having “a PhD in physical retribution.” Once, for instance, “a greaser rode past on [them] on an old bicycle and said, as if asking the time, ‘Eat shit, Pakis.’ Jammie sprinted through the traffic before throwing the bastard off his bike and tugging out some of his hair,

like someone weeding an overgrown garden" (Kureishi, 1990: 53). **Brick Lane** as well, introduces a similar situation concerning the generation conflict and continuation of the cultural practices in the host country, as Chanu forces his daughters to behave according to conventional values, which results in serious disputes between the daughters, especially Shahana, and their father. Relatedly, Yasmin Hussein argues that

> [t]he racism experienced brought with it a potential threat to the continuity of the group identity, forcing minority groups to define and emphasize their own ethnicity, by seeking support from their own kinship and friendship networks in Britain. This succeeded in enhancing the individual's self-consciousness of their minority group membership and strengthening their in-group cohesiveness and solidarity. These networks continue to determine a dominant pattern of activity in almost all fields of social interaction among the South-Asian population in Britain, helping to facilitate the immigration and settlement within British society. (2016: 20-21)

When Anwar first thinks of arranging this marriage, he consults Haroon and seeks approval, since they share the same cultural background and ethnic community in London. Realizing the similarity between his father's recent interest in Eastern mysticism and Anwar's traditional intention, Karim cleverly expounds their situation:

> Perhaps it was the immigrant condition living itself out through them. For years they were both happy to live like Englishmen. […] Now, as they aged and seemed settled here, Anwar and Dad appeared to be returning internally to India, or at least to be resisting the English here. It was puzzling: neither of them expressed any desire actually to see their origins again. (Kureishi, 1990: 64)

However, Jamila decides to marry the man her father chooses for her because of Anwar's death strike which would end badly. Then, Changez, Jamila's husband-to-be, arrives in London with his **salwar kamiz** and "with a dark-red stringy knitted jumper stretched over [his stomach]" (Kureishi, 1990: 78). His arrival indicates the power and victory of the patriarchal hegemony maintained in Western society. However, Jamila manages to suppress him by having financial power and not having sex with him even once. She does not allow him to establish a typical wife-husband relationship, but they begin to have a good time in their flat playing cards and talking about India. She addresses him as "'Hey, Changez, husband or whatever you are, don't you know any more about that politician geezer that got thrown into jail?'" (Kureishi, 1990: 98). She even becomes friends with Changez's sex partner Shinko, which is a palpable

subversion of the family institution, and Jamila's challenge to traditionalist and male-dominated systems of power.

Meanwhile, Haroon passionately falls in love with Eva and decides to live with her, and tells his wife Margaret about his decision, which results in the dispersal of the family. While Margaret leaves home with Allie and goes to her sister Jean in Chistlehurst, Karim joins his father and Eva to live with them. Haroon's decision is a manifestation of the rejection of suburban values, one of which is the nuclear family and safety of home. By shattering the secure walls of his home and family, Haroon takes his biggest step towards their formative journey out of the suburbs, and he also metaphorically subverts the conventional representation of suburban life once again. However, Haroon's act supports the gendered social structure of suburbia, in which "it is only men who dream of adventure and/or escaping from routine drudgery, while suburban conformity is almost always feminized – and it is women who 'embody the shackles of suburban constraints'" (Morley, 2000: 130) – except for Eva. Eva is a significant and subversive female character besides Jamila, who confronts gendered normativity and traditionalism of the suburban culture, and the catalyst of Karim's identity development by enlarging his perspective on life and provides him with experience of metropolitan London. Karim perpetually compares Eva with his mother, and realizes that they are poles apart in personality and social position. Karim sees people as two opposite kinds: interesting people and nice people, and classifies Eva as an interesting person, who is the counterpart of dreary suburban mentality: "The interesting people you wanted to be with – their minds were unusual, you saw things freshly with them and all was not deadness and repetition" (Kureishi, 1990: 93). However, his mother is a nice person and not interesting, as a typical despondent suburban woman: "Like Mum, they were good and meek and deserved more love. But it was the interesting ones, like Eva with her hard, taking edge, who ended up with everything, and in bed with my father" (Kureishi, 1990: 93). Although she is the reason of destruction of his family, Karim begins to like Eva, because he openly states that "Eva was unfolding the world for me. It was through her that I became interested in life" (Kureishi, 1990: 87).

Even though he does not reveal, Karim is negatively affected by the separation of his parents. He does not attend his classes and exams at the college that Eva arranged for him. He feels sorry and guilty about her mother's increasing depression, and often visits her in Auntie Jean's house. However, now, he becomes obliged to live a mobile life that he has always dreamt of upon losing his home and unity of family:

> […] I now wandered among different houses and flats carrying my life-equipment in a big canvas bag and never washing my hair. I wasn't too unhappy, criss-crossing South London and the suburbs by bus, no one knowing where I was. Whenever someone – Mum, Dad, Ted – tried to locate me, I was always somewhere else, occasionally going to a lecture and then heading out to see Changez and Jamila. (Kureishi, 1990: 94)

He is both literally and metaphorically a nomad, who is in constant mobility and capable of adapting to different spaces. He goes out of the boundaries of the suburban home and family which is fixed and steady, which can be categorized as an arborescent entity in Deleuzean perspective. Karim is overtly within a rhizomatic experience and progression that end up with character transformation by justifying Deleuze's argument:

> Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. (1987: 21)

Deleuze's juxtaposition of tree-like structure and rhizomatic structure has been formerly specified by Mikhail Bakhtin in **The Dialogic Imagination** as **authoritative discourse** and **internally persuasive discourse**. According to Bakhtin, authoritative discourse is static, normative, and hierarchical, like religious dogmas, moral codes, scientific truths, and political or institutional power. Its meaning is single and fossilized, which does not allow any change:

> authoritative discourse permits no play with the context framing it, no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transitions, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it. It enters our verbal consciousness as a compact and indivisible mass; one must either affirm it, or totally reject it. (Bakhtin, 1982: 343)

On the other hand, internally persuasive discourse is personal and emerges as an independent voice. It is productive and creative; moreover, contrary to authoritative

discourse, "[t]he semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is *not finite*, it is *open*; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer *ways to mean*" (Bakhtin, 1982: 346). Bakhtin states that these two discourses are in perpetual conflict, and this struggle promotes the individual becoming and the development of individual consciousness. Deleuze and Bakhtin's corresponding arguments are perfectly embodied in Karim's character, as he challenges traditional norms of nationality, gender, suburbanism, and sexuality by having a multifaceted hybrid personality and establishing his own **internally persuasive discourse**. He rejects suburban conformity, familial stability, sexual and racial homogeneity and social categorizations. His liberation from all kinds of labelling provides him with new paths including his journey from the suburbs to the city, and then his cross-continental experience as a migrant both literally and metaphorically. Iain Chambers in **Migrancy, Culture, Identity** (1994) advocates that in the contemporary world, the physical body, as well, becomes a site of diversity and flexibility. The body becomes a migrant, which he calls "the modern metropolitan figure" who "are the active formulators of metropolitan aesthetics and lifestyles, reinventing the languages and appropriating the streets of the master" (Chambers, 1994: 23). This plasticity of the body and migrancy disturbs the fundamentalist and radical systems of nation, identity, culture, center and self. The politics of difference and heterogeneity manifest that "we are no longer at the centre of the world. Our sense of centre and being is displaced. As historical, cultural and psychic subjects we, too, are uprooted, forced to reply to our existence in terms of movement and metamorphosis" (Chambers, 1994: 24). In this sense, Karim shatters the boundaries of center/periphery, self/other, black/white, and same/different by moving across them freely and recklessly as a migrant body, while at the same time perpetuating his formative journey having no eventual destination.

The Buddha conforms to certain thematic elements of the Bildungsroman tradition, although it occasionally deconstructs some principles of it. In the novel the theme of physical journey initially starts within the boundaries of the suburbs, then advances towards London, a larger society. The move from rural to urban, or province

to town, is a crucial part of the individual development of the protagonist, since this spatial transition brings about different social environments, new experiences and new horizons. Franco Moretti in his seminal work entitled **The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture** (1987), specifies the relationship between youth and mobility by also declaring that Bildungsroman is a symbolic form of modernity. According to Moretti, in modernity, youth is represented by dynamism and restlessness contrary to the pre-modern societies' understanding of youth within the contexts of **apprenticeship** and instruction with stabilized discourses. Thus, he states that

> [i]n this first respect youth is 'chosen' as the new epoch's 'specific material sign', and it is chosen over the multitude of other possible signs, because of its ability to *accentuate* modernity's dynamism and instability. Youth is, so to speak, modernity's 'essence', the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past. (Moretti, 2000: 5)

Therefore, the Bildungsroman's recurring theme of **movement** is an indispensable principle that has been maintained in both modernist and postmodernist periods in order to epitomize the protagonist's character development. The **nomad** is the contemporary version of the Bildungsroman hero who is in a state of perpetual movement together with shifting identities, regarding Bauman's definition of the nomad: "The nomads, like the pilgrims, were all along busy constructing their identities; but theirs were 'momentary' identities, identities 'for today', until-further-notice identities. Nomads do not bind time/space, they move through it; and so they move *through* identities" (1992: 694). As a nomad embodied by youthful dynamism, mobility and passion, Karim's journey towards his **bildung** continues in London, which is a new phase for his personal and professional life, and which also constitutes the second part of the novel: "In the City".

Karim, Haroon, Eva and Charlie move in to an old and filthy house that Eva has bought recently in West Kensington. London bewilders Karim with its complexity and vastness, while also intimidating him. Before he comes to London, he has dreamed of it with "kids dressed in velvet cloaks who lived free lives" and with "thousands of black people everywhere" (Kureishi, 1990: 121), among whom he would not feel

alienated. He thinks that he is ready for everything, but obviously he is not, as he recognizes now. He sees the dark side of London once he experiences it personally:

> there were transvestites and addicts and many disoriented people and con-merchants. There were small hotels smelling of spunk and disinfectant, Australian travel agents, all-night shops run by dwarfish Bengalis, leather bars with fat moustached queens exchanging secret signals outside, and roaming strangers with no money and searching eyes. (Kureishi, 1990: 127)

Karim's move from the suburbs to London is a kind of cross-cultural migration parallel to the migrant experience of his preceding generation coming from India. Just as they struggled with cultural dislocation and marginalization, Karim, too, undergoes cultural and racial deterritorialization because of both his suburban and half South Asian origin. During the party that Eva holds to celebrate their move to London, Karim meets theatre director Shadwell, and Eva convinces him to talk to Shadwell to participate in his theatre company. He gets prepared for the audition with the help of Eva, although he is afraid of failing and of not being able to express his full potential. He performs his part during the audition; however, it is soon revealed that Shadwell wants Karim for a specific role, which is Mowgli in **The Jungle Book**; only for his physical appearance and Indian background, not for his successful performance. Shadwell expresses his racist ideology and politics of difference by expecting him to speak his **own language**. He calls him a **half-caste** and intentionally otherizes him, although Karim accepts himself as an English man: "That must be complicated for you to accept – belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism" (Kureishi, 1990: 141). Karim, then understands that it is not only in the suburbs that racist discourse exists, but even in cosmopolitan London he can encounter discriminative acts. Shadwell and his ideology exclude people like Karim from British national and cultural unity and values by fearing that they destroy their cultural homogeneity and purity. This fundamentalist policy causes strong polarities of **us** and **others**, or **same** and **different** in multicultural societies like Britain. Nevertheless, with the ongoing process of globalization, it is impossible to maintain a single cultural and national identity, and it is significant to understand the advantages of cultural heterogeneity and having a fluid identity like Karim. These people, according to Stuart Hall,

> belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home; who have learned to negotiate and translate *between* cultures, and who, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, have learned to live with, and indeed to speak from, *difference*. They speak from the 'in-between' of different cultures, always unsettling the assumptions of one culture from the perspective of another, and thus finding the ways of being both *the same as* and at the same time *different from* the others amongst whom they live. (1995: 273)

Shadwell overtly and literally consumes Karim's body for the play, and is not satisfied with his skin-color by attempting to paint his body with darker brown in order to make him **more authentic**. He also wants Karim to have a more authentic Indian accent, and explicitly specifies Karim's function in the theatre: "Karim, you have been cast for authenticity and not for experience" (Kureishi, 1990: 147). Karim feels so marginalized and humiliated that for the first time he thinks that he actually belongs to the suburbs: "I wanted to run out of the room, back to South London, where I belonged, out of which I had wrongly and arrogantly stepped" (Kureishi, 1990: 148). However, just as Haroon commercializes his authentic origin by being a **Buddha**, Karim utilizes and manipulates the identity imposed on him with the Mowgli role in order to remain in the theatre community. He even mixes his authentic Indian accent with cockney sometimes to make it more funny. Recognizing that he could not escape racism, he begins to take advantage of having a crucial role in the play, thanks to his flexible identity and recklessness:

> I started to make little demands of Shagbadly. I required a longer rest; and could I be driven home by someone, as I felt so tired? I had to have Assam tea (with a touch of lapsang souchong) available at all times during rehearsal. Could that actor slide a little to the right; no, a little further. I began to see that I could ask for the things I needed. I gained confidence. (Kureishi, 1990: 150)

However, although Karim begins to disregard his racist positioning for the sake of his benefit, his orientalized Mowgli role highly disturbs his father and Jamila who come to see the preview of the play. Jamila, especially, accuses Karim of legitimizing the racial prejudices and clichéd representations of the Indians, and not being ashamed of it. On the other hand, Karim's mother, aunt Jean and uncle Ted, who are white British, attend the play as well, and are very proud of his Mowgli role and quite enjoy it, which

reveals the different perspectives of white and black British concerning racial and cultural issues.

Meanwhile, Eva's son Charlie, who rarely comes home, joins a music band in London and becomes famous by appearing on the cover of magazines. Upon coming to London, both Karim and Charlie have established their own lines of flight, although in different fields. Charlie is now engaged in an aggressive and expressionistic lifestyle called **new nihilism** or the **new hopelessness**, and a new identity, as Karim observes: "His hair was dyed black now, and it was spiky. He wore, inside out, a slashed T-shirt with a red swastika hand-painted on it. His black trousers were held together by safety-pins, paperclips and needles" (Kureishi, 1990: 151). One night Karim and Eva attend Charlie's gig at a club, in which they closely witness the youth of this new wave of music and punk culture, dressed in black, and with different colors of hair. From the very beginning of the novel, youth culture, pop, rock and punk music with subcultural elements have a significant function in reflecting the characters' perspective of life. The novel has frequent references to The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, King Crimson, David Bowie, and so on, who are the leading names of the 60s and 70s British youth culture and music. In the post-war period starting from the 1950s, new movements and divisions have emerged especially in music and culture, such as hippie culture, punk youth, progressive and psychedelic rock, etc., which revolt against mainstream and traditional values and hegemony of restrictive stereotypes by seeking freedom from all these responsibilities and parental control with a specific inclination towards sex, drugs and alcohol. In relation to this centrifugal challenge, Roger Sabin, for instance, defines punk as

> a subculture best characterised as being part youth rebellion, part artistic statement. […] Philosophically, it had no 'set agenda' like the hippy movement that preceded it, but nevertheless stood for identifiable attitudes, among them: an emphasis on negationism (rather than nihilism); a consciousness of class-based politics (with a stress on 'workingclass credibility'); and a belief in *spontaneity* (my italics) and 'doing it yourself', (1999: 2-3)

On the other hand, Judith Halberstam draws a parallel between subcultures and queer lives, and regards various forms of youth culture as "queer temporalities" by focusing on their subversion of "normative narratives of time". and their "transient,

extrafamilial, and oppositional modes of affiliation" (2005: 154). Remembering the novel's emphasis on Charlie's and other young people's unusual punk style, we can argue that the physical expression of their queerness precisely justifies the way Halberstam evaluates "subcultures in terms of the way they challenged hegemony through style rather than simply through overt ideological articulations" (2005: 159). All these youth subcultures throughout British history, including Teds, Mods, Skinheads, Hippies and Goths, reflected their ideology and rebellious positions against certain widely-acknowledged norms through their idiosyncratic hair style, clothes, and make-up. In **The Buddha**, both Charlie and Karim attempt to dismantle the temporal order and responsibilities of suburbia; however, while Charlie manifests his divergence from suburban conventionality by actively participating in a punk group and changing his clothing style, Karim usually creates his own queer temporality in his room, as a separate world within suburban banality, an alternative level of existence; listens his records of the 70s non-conformist musical bands and reads **Rolling Stone** magazine:

> I favoured the tuneless: King Crimson, Soft Machine, Captain Beefheart, Frank Zappa and Wild Man Fisher. […] During these nights, as all around me was silent – most of the neighbourhood went to bed at ten-thirty – I entered another world. […] Sometimes I felt the whole world was converging on this little room. And as I became more intoxicated and frustrated I'd throw open the bedroom window as the dawn came up, and look across the gardens, lawns, greenhouses, sheds and curtained windows. I wanted my life to begin now, at this instant, just when I was ready for it. Then it was time for my paper-round, followed by school. And school was another thing I'd had enough of. (Kureishi, 1990: 62)

Here, Karim palpably juxtaposes his self-made **queer time and space** with uniformity, conventionalism and punctuality of the suburbs, and indicates his desire to transgress all familial, institutional, and sexual normativities. Thus, it can be argued that **The Buddha**'s motivation of encompassing such subcultural elements is closely related to its celebration of postmodern and multicultural notions of temporality, dislocation fluidity, liminality, queerness and destabilization of essentialist norms. From this point of view, in the novel, the characters pursue to discover their multi-faceted identities through the creativity and productivity of youth subcultures.

Meanwhile, Shadwell's team learns that Matthew Pyke, an important and well-known theatre director buys a ticket for **The Jungle Book**, which creates a great excitement among the actors. After the play they all go to a bar, where Pyke asks Karim to work with him, and Karim accepts his offer. Karim's new career opportunity create envy among the others in the theatre, which goes further and turns out to be a racist accusation: "'If I weren't white and middle class I'd have been in Pyke's show now. Obviously mere talent gets you nowhere these days. Only the disadvantaged are going to succeed in seventies' England'" (Kureishi, 1990: 165). A new page is turned in Karim's professional life, as he joins Pyke's team. Compared to Shadwell's theatre, Pyke's group is more cosmopolite consisting of six actors; three men and three women: two of them are black, one is suburban like Karim, one is upper-middle class, and one of them is gay. Pyke's new play is planned to cover the issue of class, and the actors are expected to find characters from different class groups. Karim chooses to impersonate Charlie; however, Pyke soon discourages him by saying that he needs someone from Karim's own background, "someone black" (Kureishi, 1990: 170). Karim thinks of a Nigerian boy from his school, since he does not consider himself and his family as black. Then, he decides on Anwar and displays the character with a monologue revealing his personality and hunger strike that he made for Jamila's arranged marriage, which remarkably disturbs Tracey, the other black actor in the theatre. She makes a very similar statement with Jamila who dislikes Karim's Mowgli role previously, and accuses him of degrading black people and their culture:

> 'Your picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs. To the white man we're already people without humanity, and then you go and have Anwar madly waving his stick at the white boys. I can't believe that anything like this could happen. You show us as unorganized aggressors. Why do you hate yourself and all black people so much, Karim?' (Kureishi, 1990: 180)

However, Karim insists that this is the reality, which should not be censored. Eventually, he has to give up this role and changes his mind to impersonate Changez under the name Tariq. Nevertheless, Changez is not willing to allow his personality to be revealed like that, especially if Karim is involved. Karim promises Changez not to do that, but he still does not want to give up such an authentic character, which would enhance and strengthen his position as an actor in the theatre. If he breaks his promise,

he would be an untrustworthy person and a liar, which incredibly and surprisingly disturbs him, as his narration affirms:

> As I sat there I began to recognize that this was one of the first times in my life I'd been aware of having a moral dilemma. Before, I'd done exactly what I wanted, desire was my guide and I was inhibited by nothing but fear. But now, at the beginning of my twenties, something was growing in me. Just as my body had changed at puberty, now I was developing a sense of guilt, a sense not only of how I appeared to others, but of how I appeared to myself, especially in violating self-imposed prohibitions. (Kureishi, 1990: 186)

This is the first and the most powerful manifestation of Karim's personal development and becoming, as he is physically growing up, as well. In the Victorian Bildungsroman specifically, the hero is required to gain a more developed perspective of both his inner self and of his physical environment and relationships, which signals his/her spiritual, emotional, moral and social maturation. Karim's epiphany exactly demonstrates his matured sense of self by recognizing his own transformation, but once again, as a postmodern hero, he ignores and subverts the moral impediments which would hinder his liberty concerning his individual and professional benefits, and starts to make his observations of Changez's walk, accent and crippled hand that would seem so funny on stage. This time, Pyke likes the character and finds it more appropriate to the contexts of class, race and farce, and Tracey cannot make a comment.

Karim's changing point of view towards himself and the people around him now turns to his father. He seems to Karim like a different person; his character and attitudes which Karim does not care or seem normal before, now begin to disturb him. He is "part of the world now, not the source of it" (Kureishi, 1990: 193). As Karim grows up and is involved in various social and cultural environments out of the suburbs, his perspective of life is shaped by these external influences, which make him look at things from a different angle. Through the end of the novel, Karim is presented as more inquisitive about himself and his environment, and is able to grasp the difference between his childhood and his newly discovered matured and empowered self: "I began to think that the admiration I'd had for him [his father] as a kid was baseless. What could he do? What qualities did he have? Why had he treated Mum as

he had? I no longer wanted to be like him. I was angry. He'd let me down in some way" (Kureishi, 1990: 194).

Throughout the novel, Kureishi illustrates different classes and the theme of class mobility through Karim, who in his bohemian and metropolitan life, becomes an observer of classes and their definitive features. Meanwhile, Karim is involved in a passionate relationship with Eleanor, another actress from the theatre, who comes from an upper-middle class family. As Karim gets more acquainted with Eleanor and her environment, he has the chance to observe and acknowledge the gap between classes, the suburban milieu and metropolitan life. For instance, Heater, one of Eleanor's lovers, is a road-sweeper and a working class boy, whom Karim dislikes and sees "as the authentic voice of the proletariat" (Kureishi, 1990: 175). Or, his epiphanic expression about Eleanor's social environment reveals how he feels alienated and deficient regarding his lower-middle class suburban background and the level of intellectuality compared to Eleanor's:

> In the past few weeks circumstances had made me discover what an ignoramus I was. Lately I'd been fortunate, and my life had changed quickly, but I'd reflected little on it. When I did think of myself in comparison with those in Eleanor's crowd, I became aware that I knew nothing; I was empty, an intellectual void. I didn't even know who Cromwell was, for God's sake. I knew nothing about zoology, geology, astronomy, languages, mathematics, physics. (Kureishi, 1990: 177)

As a **class detective**, Karim this time gets the chance to observe Pyke's luxurious house, when he invites Karim and Eleanor to his bohemian and artistic place "with dark-red and green walls and modern portraits hanging from them – a couple of Marlene, a photograph of her by Bailey – and 1960s furniture: low coffee tables with Caulfield and Bacon catalogues on them […]" (Kureishi, 1990: 198). The novel once more shatters the essentialist idea of family unity, this time in metropolitan London and upper class milieu, and demonstrates the limitless extremity of queer sexuality as Pyke offers Karim to his wife Marlene as a sex partner. Marlene specifically wants Karim and makes him an object of desire, and as they are having sex, Pyke intervenes and puts his penis into Karim's mouth: "[…] England's most interesting and radical theatre director was inserting his cock between my speaking lips. I could appreciate the privilege, but I didn't like it much: it seemed an imposition" (Kureishi, 1990: 203).

During this graphic scene of both heterosexual and homosexual act, Marlene and Pyke palpably use their upper-class and white power over Karim who is both suburban and half-Indian, which indicates a racist oppression that Karim could not escape in the city, either.

Karim experiences one of his important epiphanies concerning his identity and belonging during Uncle Anwar's funeral. Anwar is accidentally and tragicomically killed by his son-in-law Changez with a dildo knocked on his head, upon which Karim calls Changez the "Dildo-Killer." With such ludicrous details, Kureishi eliminates the borders between tragic and comic by blending them wittily in Anwar's death, also with Karim's humorous narration:

> Uncle Anwar, who'd come from India to the Old Kent Road to lodge with a dentist, to jangle and gamble, to make his fortune and return home to build a house like my grandfather's on Juhu Beach, could never have guessed all those years ago that late in life he would be knocked unconscious by a sex-aid. No fortune-teller had predicted this. Kipling had written 'to each his own fear', but this was not Anwar's. (Kureishi, 1990: 210-211).

Karim's developing consciousness, spiritual maturation and metropolitan experience with various people he has encountered, also create a new kind of awareness in him towards Indians and himself as he watches them during the funeral. He strikingly realizes that a part of him is actually Indian, contrary to the way he commercializes his Indianness as a fanciful identity that he adopts only for acting. He now feels incomplete because he has rejected and ignored the truth all this time, and he thinks that he let the white British consume his ethnicity:

> But I did feel, looking at these strange creatures now – the Indians – that in some way these were my people, and that I'd spent my life denying or avoiding that fact. I felt ashamed and incomplete at the same time, as if half of me were missing, and as if I'd been colluding with my enemies, those whites who wanted Indians to be like them. (Kureishi, 1990: 212)

Karim's epiphany forces him to decide on whether he will comply with the clear-cut categorization of Indian ethnicity, or continue embracing fluid and multiple identities by subverting and marketing his Indianness on stage. From this point of view, acting becomes a productive ground for Karim to perpetuate his quest of complex and various personalities, to discover his own interstitial area where he establishes a balance

between his Indian and British self, and to deconstruct the essentialist Western perception of the East, as Glabazňa propounds:

> [Karim's] on-stage impersonations of the most stereotyped forms of Indianness do not mean selling himself or colluding with the enemy, but simply returning the colonial gaze by way of a complete mockery of these colonial clichés. His on-stage excesses hold up a mirror to the downright stupidity of the colonial discourse. To act out Eurocentric stereotypes on stage, as Karim does, would, on Bhabha's reading, mean to undermine these stereotypes to the point where they simply fall apart. (2010: 71)

Concerning Haroon and Karim's subversive performative acts and **The Buddha**'s specific emphasis on acting, it can be argued that Kureishi adheres to Bakhtin's concept of **carnivalesque**. Just as the actors are disengaged from their own selves, relations, and positions within the pre-established system and world order while they are performing as a different character on stage, Bakhtin's idea of carnival proposes a zone of complexity where all social ranks, hierarchies, categories and restrictions are suspended and equalized contrary to the official feasts of the Middle Ages held by a hierarchical and political order. Carnival is a place for feasting and laughter, embraces freedom of expression, and nourished by dynamism and change. Here, Bakhtin suggests

> the peculiar logic of the "inside out" (*a l'envers*), of the "turnabout," of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrown-ings. A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed; it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a "world inside out." (2004: 687)

On stage Karim steps in a carnivalesque world, in which he is always in pursuit of laughter, plays with shifting identities, manipulates the existing social and racial normativities and strict divisions, and turns the colonial gaze upside down by ridiculing and undermining his own ethnicity as an Indian. However, it does not mean that Karim remains indifferent to the discriminative and racist acts of nationalist white British, as he becomes very angry when he learns that Changez has been attacked under a railway bridge and left with the initials of the National Front carved on his stomach with a razor blade. Karim wants to do something about these racist attacks and decides to join the march in which Jamila and her friends participate to make their

voices heard. Since his epiphany during Anwar's funeral, Karim clings to his ethnic identity strongly and consciously by justifying what Pyke has taught him:

> What a strange business this acting is, Pyke said; you are trying to convince people that you're someone else, that this is not-me. The way to do it is this, he said: when in character, playing not-me, you have to be yourself. To make your not-self real you have to steal from your authentic self. […] Paradox of paradoxes: to be someone else successfully you must be yourself! This I learned! (Kureishi, 1990: 219-220)

Therefore, accepting and internalizing his Indian identity provides Karim with a clear vision to construct different identities on stage and to manipulate the racial stereotypes more strikingly and mockingly. This is one of the most significant indications of his identity formation and flourishing sense of self, which justifies the Bildungsroman's depiction of "[…] man's path from childhood through youth and maturity to old age, showing all those essential *internal changes* (my italics) in a person's nature and views that take place in him as he grows older" (Bakhtin, 1986: 22).

However, these internal changes inevitably haul the Bildungsroman hero to psychological oscillations and depression, just as Nazneen in **Brick Lane** has experienced a mental breakdown as she has been crossing from one identity to another. Karim finds himself in serious emotional pain as he breaks up with Eleanor, becomes more fragile and sensitive towards racial issues and postcolonial politics while struggling to find a niche for himself between his Indianness and Britishness:

> We became part of England and yet proudly stood outside it. But to be truly free we had to free ourselves of all bitterness and resentment, too. How was this possible when bitterness and resentment were generated afresh every day? (Kureishi, 1990: 227)

Just as he has acquired an awareness of his Indian identity, Karim develops a special insight towards his Britishness, too, when he goes to America with his company for the play. This time as British he witnesses an attempt of cultural and racial categorization and prejudice when he hears an American saying that "[t]hese English are animals. Their whole culture has fallen through the floor" (Kureishi, 1990: 245). Here, Karim ultimately acknowledges that the problem is not being British or Indian, and that racial homogenization is everywhere; what is significant is getting rid of the

essentialist concepts and constructing universal and fluid identities as Stuart Hall manifests:

> identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (1996: 17)

In New York Karim meets Charlie and stays there with him for six months, since he does not know what to do and cannot recover from his depression and feelings of loneliness. During this time, he becomes a part of Charlie's luxurious celebrity life. One day Charlie offers Karim the chance to participate in an experimental sexual experience with him, through which he desires to push the limits as in the old days. He brings a girl named Frankie, and Karim watches their sexual intercourse, which involves extreme torture and pain. Finding all these too much, Karim comes up with an important moment of recognition:

> as [Frankie] blew out a candle, lubricated it and force it up [Charlie's] arse, that I realized I didn't love Charlie any more. I didn't care either for or about him. He didn't interest me at all. I'd moved beyond him, discovering myself through what I rejected. He seemed merely foolish to me. (Kureishi, 1990: 255)

Upon this, Karim decides to return to London, a place he deeply longs for.

Karim's return to London can be read as the final step of the monomythical journey of the hero, in which he comes back to the point where he started, having achieved wisdom, fulfillment, transformation, and a new perspective of life, as Joseph Campbell asserts in his prominent work, **The Hero with a Thousand Faces** (1949). After he comes back to London Karim visits his father, Eva, his mother, Allie, Changez and Jamila, and each of his visits unveils how he is transformed and how his vision of the world has changed, although some of them disturb him deep inside. For instance, he is very surprised when he sees his father and how weak he has become, which immediately makes him recall his childhood memories:

> […] when I was a kid, Dad always out-ran me as we charged across the park towards the swimming pool. When we wrestled on the floor he always pinned me down. […] Now he couldn't move without flinching. I'd become the powerful one; I couldn't fight

> him – and I wanted to fight him – without destroying him in one blow. It was a saddening disappointment. (Kureishi, 1990: 261)

This is one of his striking and palpable recognitions not only of his physical growth, but also his mental development and maturation. Although Karim seeks a continual progression and empowerment, he still does not want to be stronger than his father, which actually indicates the termination of his childhood.

Karim's physical and nomadic journey appears to be a cyclic one; however, his psychological development and self-formation are perpetuated within a rhizomatic process embedded by various lines of flight. Now, for instance, a new phase is opened in his professional career as he is offered a significant role in a well-known soap opera in London. The novel ends with a celebration dinner for Karim's new and prestigious job, and his final remark regarding his current and future position in life:

> And so I sat in the centre of this old city that I loved, which itself sat at the bottom of a tiny island. I was surrounded by people I loved, and I felt happy and miserable at the same time. I thought of what a mess everything had been, but that it wouldn't always be that way. (Kureishi, 1990: 284)

Just like Karim's self-definition at the first paragraph of the novel, which reiterate his ethnic and cultural hybridity with such ambiguous statements as, "almost an English man," "mixture of here and there," "belonging and not," he concludes his narrative with similar expressions embodying contrasting images, "happy and miserable at the same time," and the feelings of both melancholy for the past and hope for the future. This ambiguity indeed, is what Kureishi attempts to articulate throughout the novel. In his world nothing serves for a singular and definite correspondence. In **The Buddha** he portrays the amalgamation of the concepts that have been previously categorized and polarized such as suburb/city, black/white, British/non-British, male/female, comic/tragic. By annihilating and destabilizing the boundaries between the clear-cut and definitive concepts such as nationality, ethnic identity, gender norms, and social hierarchies, Kureishi establishes a seamless and liminal space where his protagonist is able to crisscross multiple identities and construct alternative spaces to perpetuate his character formation. By discovering the

essence of his self, Karim is now more determined for the future which he “would live more deeply” (Kureishi, 1990: 284).

CHAPTER FOUR

SWING TIME: THE FORMATION OF FEMALE IDENTITY AND MULTICULTURALISM

Zadie Smith's fifth novel **Swing Time** (2016) hovers around the story of its unnamed and biracial female protagonist-narrator, who struggles to create a niche for her **self** since her childhood, particularly in her long-term but impeded friendship with Tracey, in her problematic relationship with her mother, and in her career. While touching upon certain issues such as identity, race, and class embodied in intimate relationships as in her previous novels **White Teeth** (2000), **On Beauty** (2006) and **NW** (2013), Smith leaves some contextual points ambiguous and without any definite resolution: essentially the protagonist's construction of a self-efficient identity and a sense of belonging. Besides applying to these often-discussed postmodern political discourses, Smith furnishes **Swing Time** with pleasant and witty details of music, dance, rhythm, and certain references to the popular Hollywood musicals like **Ali Baba Goes to Town** (1937) and famous tap dancers of the 1930s such as Fred Astaire and Ginger Roger's **Swing Time** (1936), which is the source of the novel's title. More importantly, the novel scrutinizes to what extent identity is moulded by external agents such as colonialism, race, class, gender and personal relationships, especially for biracial individuals like our narrator and her friend Tracey. Also as a female Bildungsroman and a novel of friendship, **Swing Time** focuses on childhood memories of the narrator comprising of her family relations – mostly with her mother –, of her best friend Tracey, the dynamics of their friendship, divergence of their personalities and gradual estrangement as they grow up within a diasporic background. In this chapter, in the light of certain theories of identity and nomadism discussed by Staurt Hall, Deleuze, Guattari and Braidotti, and feminist concepts such as female subjectivity and the mother-daughter relationship which are critically underpinned by such theorists like Adrienne Rich and Jane Flax, are explored and employed in specifying the identity formation of the protagonist, and whether her journey of identity construction concludes as empowerment or failure.

The novel opens in the present time, in a rental flat in London, where the narrator has been hiding from cameras and tabloid journalists for three days after having been fired from her job. When she makes sure that no one is left outside, she leaves the flat and walks out into the city just to distract herself from her troubles. She buys a ticket for a film event at the Royal Festival Hall and suddenly a famous clip from the movie **Swing Time** starts playing, in which Fred Astaire is dancing with three silhouettes behind him. She knows this part very well, as she watched it over and over again when she was a child, but surprisingly, she has just realized that those three shadows were also Fred Astaire, which awakens a crucial epiphany about herself, and the meaning of her existence throughout her life:

> I saw all my years at once, but they were not piled up on each other, experience after experience, building into something of substance – the opposite. A truth was being revealed to me: that I had always tried to attach myself to the light of other people, that I had never had any light of my own. I experienced myself as a kind of shadow. (Smith, 2017: 4)

Contrary to Astaire's dancing shadows behind him, the narrator identifies herself as a shadow of someone else; someone more powerful, talented and self-reliant like her mother, Tracey and her employer pop-star Aimee. Once being a source of her interest and love for tap dance, the movie **Swing Time** now haunts the narrator with more serious and political reflections, as in her self-inquiry regarding the essence of her identity, and her realization – although she does not explicitly specify – that the movie serves for the Western racist discourse upon seeing Fred Astaire dancing in black face:

> I hardly understood what we were looking at: Fred Astaire in black face. In the Royal Festival I'd sat in the gods, without my glasses on, and the scene opens with Astaire in long shot. But none of this really explained how I'd managed to block the childhood image from my memory: the rolling eyes, the white gloves, the Bojangles grin. I felt very stupid, closed the laptop and went to sleep. (Smith, 2017: 5)

The narrative skips back to the childhood memories of the protagonist and sheds a light on the nature of her relationship with Tracey, the similarities and differences between them and their families. Both are from the housing estates of West London, sharing the same brown skin tone, "as if one piece of tan material had been cut to make [them] both" (Smith, 2017: 9). The narrator's mother is a class-conscious black feminist who is self-educated and dedicated to the improvement of her personal

and intellectual autonomy, who outweighs the narrator's white father with her dominance and ambition. She refuses to be identified with her physical appearance and wears no make-up, wears her hair in a half-inch Afro, and dresses herself and her daughter very plainly. However, the narrator observes just the opposite in Tracey's family with their showy outfits, which she finds captivating: "logos, tin bangles and hoops, diamanté everything, expensive trainers of the kind my mother refused to recognize as a reality in the world" (Smith, 2017: 10). Not surprisingly, as a child the narrator aspires to be like Tracey "in those thrilling yellow bows, a frou-frou skirt of many ruffles and a crop top revealing inches of childish nut-brown belly" (Smith, 2017: 11), and to the affectionate bond between Tracey and her mother. Both the similarities and differences between them become the source of attraction for the narrator, when she sees Tracey for the first time in the dance class; however, above all, their love of dance is actually the unifying element of their friendship. They regularly meet at each other's house and watch the dance videos of Fred Astaire, Jeni LeGon, and Michael Jackson, which fascinate and inspire them to dance; however, soon after the narrator is diagnosed with flat feet, a hindrance to her future dance career, while Tracey is a natural dancer:

> Other girls had rhythm in their limbs, some had it in their hips or their little backsides but she had rhythm in individual ligaments, probably in individual cells. Every movement was as sharp and precise as any child could hope to make it, her body could align itself with any time signature, no matter how intricate. Maybe you could say she was overly precise sometimes, not especially creative, or lacking in soul. But no one sane could quarrel with her technique. I was – I am – in awe of Tracey's technique. She knew the right time to do everything. (Smith, 2017: 26)

Although she knows that she is not as talented as Tracey, the narrator still loves the idea of dance, music, and movement; she believes that there should not be any strict distinctions such as black music or white music, and to her "a dancer was a man from nowhere, without a nation or people, without obligations of any kind" (Smith, 2017: 24). Throughout the novel, however, dance is presented as having complex cultural and political implications, which can be perceived from the novel's frequent references to tap dancing. At first, the narrator naively and non-politically finds it beautiful that tap dancing originated from "the Irish crew and the African slaves, beating out time

with their feet on the wooden decks of those ships, exchanging steps, creating a hybrid form" (Smith, 2017: 290). However, as she gets more conscious of cultural and racial dichotomies through the end of the novel, she acknowledges that it rather has an unpleasant and colonial history, as many theorists point out. For instance, Suzanne Scafe argues that tap dancing emerged "over a three century period of musical and social exchange, appropriation, exclusion, mixing, and borrowing between African slaves and their descendants and Irish indentured labourers in North America and the Caribbean" (2019: 109). Moreover, she specifies that the white minstrels' performing in blackface instead of Afro-American dancers can be strongly associated to racist discourse, which Constance Valis Hill also claims in her **Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History**:

> The conceptualization of tap dance as an Afro-Irish fusion, fueled by the competitive interplay of challenge in a battle for virtuosity and authority, puts into focus issues of race and ethnicity; it inevitably takes on the history of race, racism and race relations in America. (2010: 3)

Thus, considering the socio-political context of dance and music, the novel explores and juxtaposes the pure nature of music and dance as the reflections of unbounded feelings and desire for movement with the ways they have been transformed into cultural and political productions. Proceeding from this perspective, the novel also reveals how the narrator and Tracey experience the contexts of dance and music as determined by cultural and racial codes during their childhood and professional careers, and how they build their identities accordingly.

Tracey and the narrator attend different schools in different neighbourhoods, but they keep seeing each other at the dance class and at their houses, which have distinct life styles. Tracey has an enormous amount of toys, a pink Barbie car bed, frilled curtains, and shiny white cabinets, which bewilder the narrator and make her feel like she has stepped in a different world, for she does not have a single doll. Thus, during their meetings at the narrator's house, they are forced to play in a totally different context, such as writing stories, in which Tracey is the one who makes up and dictates the story. Her stories are mostly about the dramatic incidents that have happened to a "posh prima ballerina", whom Tracey chooses, as the narrator realizes,

with silky blond hair and big blue eyes, and when the narrator tries to write brown eyes "Tracey [takes] the pen out of [her] hand and scratche[s] it out" (Smith, 2017: 32). In her other stories, African men attack "lily-white dancers" with iron bars to break their knees, or a terrible secret is revealed about the ballerina, who is actually "half-caste" (Smith, 2017: 32). Even if it seems as though a game, both Tracey and the narrator mirror the cultural and socio-economic difference between them and their families. Tracey, having a white unemployed mother and a black mostly-absent father, is more aware of her political, cultural and socio-economic position than the narrator, and to repress her marginalized social status she manipulates certain vulnerable pre-determined categories such as race and class. She creates a negative image about being black and knows that having blond hair and blue eyes, or in a word, being **white**, is a privileged position in British society; thus, in her stories she invents such characters and creates an alternative social identity for herself. Tracey's impudent, frivolous and strong-willed character makes it easy for her to transgress these categories and identities. For instance, although she is biracial herself, she calls one of her classmates **Paki** by excluding herself from the racially marginalized group that she also belongs to, as she is well-aware of the dynamics of racist discourses and their individual consequences. For such reasons, as the narrator asserts, her mother has always been unwilling for them to be friends and looked down on Tracey's family and her mother's method of parenting:

> 'When you're with that girl,' explained my mother, 'it's a kind thing to play with her, but she's been raised in a certain way, and the present is all she has. You've been raised in another way – don't forget that. That silly dance class is her whole world. It's not her fault – that's how she's been raised. But you're clever. Doesn't matter if you've got flat feet, doesn't matter *because you're clever* and you know where you came from and where you're going.' (Smith, 2017: 31)

Her mother tries to encourage her to develop friendship with other girls at school, who have similar ethnic backgrounds and **broader horizons** than Tracey, but the narrator cannot feel any connection with them, for she imagines that "Tracey and [she] were sisters and kindred spirits, alone in the world and in special need of each other" (Smith, 2017: 34). Because of her mother's strict rationality and political vision of life, the narrator often finds herself swinging between her own desires and her mother's

identity. At home as well, she witnesses a constant conflict between her parents regarding their parenting style, character and domestic roles. The narrator thinks that her father is more affectionate towards herself unlike her mother, and he is the one who is more available while mother is in her **day off**:

> Day off from what? From us. She needed to read up on her isms. After my father took me to dance class we had to keep going somehow, find something to do, stay out of the flat until dinner time. It became our ritual to travel on a series of buses heading south, far south of the river, to my Uncle Lambert's, my mother's brother and a confidant of my father's. (Smith, 2017: 20)

As Quabeck also argues, the narrator negatively associates her mother's indifference towards her family with her feminism and other strong political principles, that is why the narrator develops an unconscious reaction to these forms of –isms and could not establish a strong female identity (2018: 466). As it has been emphasized in previous chapters, Deleuze and Guattari propose the strong connection between the concept of **becoming** and identity by specifying the necessity of multiple transformations and rhizomatic progressions to reach beyond social and cultural norms and thoughts, as the narrator's mother struggles to do. If the male is the origin of the phallocentric world order, as they argue, and the woman the opposite of this essentialist system, who is the **other**, **becoming-woman** is then the first step to exceed the limits and to complete the process of becoming: "Although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming-woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 277). In this sense, the narrator's mother seems to locate herself on the privileged site of the other by emancipating herself from feminine and domestic roles and accomplishing the first stage of becoming, **becoming-woman**, and demonstrates the integrity of being an autonomous black woman. However, although the mother wants to develop the narrator's political consciousness by constantly reminding her of where she has come from and where she should proceed to, the narrator is still very unaware and detached from her ethnic background as a black person, and considerably far from her **becoming**. One day, her father brings two white young people, a boy in his early twenties and a girl who looks like fifteen or sixteen, to introduce them to the narrator. Her mother seems very anxious as she is looking out of the window and watching them

coming. As the narrator sees the tears on her face, she also feels that her mother is in a state of shame, which she expounds as the "shame of no control", because "she could not dominate this situation nor protect [her daughter] from it as, for once, it had nothing to do with her" (2017: 43). The narrator soon learns that these two young people are her father's children from another woman, and she could not think rationally besides questioning the possibility of sharing the same father with her siblings who are white:

> […] I didn't ask myself, for example, who the mother of this Emma was or how and when she could possibly have known my father. My head wouldn't go that far round. I only thought: he made one like me and one like her. How can two such different creatures emerge from the same source? (Smith, 2017: 44-45)

At that moment, the narrator oscillates between the sense of belonging and unbelonging to her father, and unintentionally attempts to categorize herself the **other**, because she connects being white with perfectness and rightness in her mind while looking at her brother:

> It was right that he should be my father's son, anyone looking at him would see the sense of it. What didn't make sense was me. […] I looked at this boy and thought: yes, he is right and I am wrong, isn't it interesting? (Smith, 2017: 46)

It should be noted that Smith successfully demonstrates how racial categories are evoked and interpreted in a child's imagination and naivety; however, this familial confrontation also reveals the narrator's lack of a strong sense of self. Thus, when she encounters a **difference** within the family, which unbalances her sense of belonging, she automatically otherizes and identifies **herself** as the marginal, the strange, and the wrong. Because, according to Stuart Hall,

> [s]haring the same 'maps of meaning' gives us a sense of belonging to a culture, creates a common bond, a sense of community or identity with others. Having a position within a set of shared meanings gives us a sense of 'who we are', 'where we belong' – a sense of our identity. Culture is thus one of the principal means by which identities are constructed, sustained and transformed. (1995: 265)

From that point of view, both in her childhood and adulthood, whether in Britain or in Gambia, the narrator could not establish a cultural belonging as a biracial person, and finds it difficult to transform the third space she is inhabiting to an advantaged position where she could employ multiple becomings and transformations as Deleuze suggests.

The novel explicitly illustrates the protagonist's racial hybridity as one of the factors of her ambiguous identity formation and inadequacy of constructing a nomadic identity. When she later remembers her father's funeral, in which she sees her siblings for the second time as an adult, she once more experiences that similar feeling of self-alienation and self-othering upon comparing herself with them who are weeping and mourning: "And I, who couldn't cry, once again found them both to be far more convincing children of my father than I had ever been" (Smith, 2017: 157). Her revelation proves that, since childhood, she has manifested the same weakness and childish under-estimation towards her own self, and that her perspective towards identity politics has not developed, as she associates the meaning of self with physical representations and categories:

> But isn't there also a deep expectation of sameness between parent and child? I think I was strange to my mother and to my father, a changeling belonging to neither one of them, and although this is of course true of all children in the end – we are not our parents and they are not us – my father's children would have come to this knowledge with a certain slowness, over years, were perhaps only learning it fully at this very moment, as the flame ate the pinewood, whereas I was born knowing it, it is a truth stamped all over my face. (Smith, 2017: 157).

The narrator mentions another memory with her classmate Lily Bingham, who is white, how gentle she was while playing with her dolls unlike Tracey, what mattered for her was a person's heart regardless of their skin colour, and in her games, as the narrator states, "there was absolutely no black and no white, for, as she solemnly explained to me one day as we played, she herself was 'colour blind' and saw what was in a person's heart" (Smith, 2017: 116). The narrator also remarks that Lily was fond of ballet, played with the cardboard theatre of Russian Ballet while a copy of **Swan Lake** was playing in the background, and she was not interested in tap dancing. Once, the narrator showed her a copy of **Stormy Weather** Lily surprisingly overacted on it and was offended by it, because everybody was black in the movie:

> It was unkind, she said, to have only black people in a film, it wasn't fair. […] And we wouldn't like it, she said, if someone said to us that only black people could come to Isabel's dance class, that wouldn't be nice or fair to us, would it? We'd be sad about it. Or that only black people could come into our school. We wouldn't like that, would we? I said nothing. I put Stormy Weather back in my rucksack and went home, walking beneath a Willesden sunset of petroleum colours and quick-shunting clouds, going over

> and over this curious lecture in my mind, wondering what she could have meant by the word 'we'? (Smith, 2017: 116-117).

This is one of the most significant parts of the novel that manifests Smith's main argument on the politics of race, polarity, and the essentialized dichotomy of **us** and **other**, and how these fossilized discourses are imposed and injected on individuals and on language since childhood by dominant power structures. Smith also attempts to demonstrate the difficulty of unsettling these ideologies in real life by exposing Lily Bingham's inconsistent arguments and the fact that she is entrapped by stereotypical western codes. While she loves ballet, which is a white-dominant culture and everybody can be white in a ballet performance, she is quite disturbed by the tap dance movie in which all dancers are black. Thus, she unhesitatingly uses a segregated language by repeatedly emphasizing the word **we**. As Stuart Hall scrutinizes the influence of culture on identity, he precisely underlines this linguistic and ideological marginalization:

> Those who identify with a culture, who share a cultural identity, are assumed to be the same (identical) by virtue of this membership. Cultures are usually seen as well-bounded formations, clearly marked off from other cultures. This marking of cultural difference both increases the sense of community or group solidarity ('us') amongst those who belong and … sharpens the sense of difference from 'other cultures' ('them'). (1995: 265)

It should also be noted that although Lily behaves stereotypically in terms of race and culture, she is very conscious of power and political structures like Tracey; however, the narrator's lack of knowledge and awareness of these racial implications is once more unveiled as she does not understand what has Lily implied by saying **we**.

After fourteen chapters, which constitute the first part of the novel entitled "Early Days", and uncover the reminiscences of her childhood, family and friendship, sometimes by reinterpreting and reconsidering them from a more matured point of view, in Part Two, "Early and Late", the narrator juxtaposes her childhood days with more recent part of her life, when she starts working at YTV, a famous MTV-like music channel. The time when she meets the world-wide popstar Aimee while working there is the turning point in her life, and when she later becomes her personal assistant, her life changes dramatically. Although Aimee presents the opportunities of cross-

continental mobility, economic and social advantages to the narrator, she once again becomes the shadow of someone, someone of superior and dominant personality like Tracey and her mother. In relation to that, Franziska Quabeck proposes the existence of a strong psychological reaction behind her professional preference of being a personal assistant by stating that

> [t]he true rebellion against the mother, however, shows itself in an almost pathological passivity – a constant refusal to take action for herself or others. This passivity primarily shows itself in her chosen profession as personal assistant, which requires an existence in service at the constant disposal of someone else and at the cost of giving up her own life completely. (2018: 466)

Nevertheless, Aimee should be accepted as an influential character in the narrator's life, who metaphorically becomes a threshold to the contexts of cultural multiplicity and shifting identities, as the narrator herself describes Aimee's symbolic globalism and unbounded aura: "I noticed she did not have an Australian accent, not any more, but neither was it quite American or quite British, it was global: it was New York and Paris and Moscow and LA and London combined" (Smith, 2017: 95).

Being Aimee's assistant requires a great deal of energy, devotion and constant mobility, and the narrator should get used to this new life style, which is timeless, placeless and rootless: "[…] we were never in one place long enough. If we didn't like winter we flew towards summer. When we tired of cities we went to the beach – and vice versa" (Smith, 2017: 149). These physical **lines of flight** are potential moments of cultural intersection and nomadic experience which would culminate in identity formation:

> The nomadic tense is the imperfect: it is active, continuous; the nomadic trajectory is controlled speed. The nomadic style is about transitions and passages without predetermined destinations or lost homelands. The nomad's relationship to the earth is one of transitory attachment and cyclical frequentation; the antithesis of the farmer, the nomad gathers, reaps, and exchanges but does not exploit. (Braidotti, 1994: 25)

The narrator physically becomes a nomad; however, the question is whether she could manage to cross ideological boundaries and to establish a strong female identity. While portraying her mobile life with Aimee the narrator implies the lack of "external ties" of Aimee's employees including herself; however, she still has "only one rope", which

is her mother, as she asserts (Smith, 2017: 150). She knows that it will be an arduous challenge for her to disentangle herself from being a shadow of her mother, because in her mind, the narrator considers herself and her job as in an inferior position regarding the mother's powerful being, now with her new political career:

> She was flying high herself, a few days from becoming the Member of Parliament for Brent West, and as I turned left, heading towards the Oxo Tower, leaving Parliament behind me, I felt, as usual, my own smallness next to her, the scale of what she had achieved, the frivolousness of my own occupation in comparison, despite all she'd tried to direct me towards. She seemed more impressive to me than ever. (Smith, 2017: 150).

Meanwhile, Aimee comes up with a new project of building a girls' school in Africa after announcing her voluntariness for "global poverty reduction" in the press (Smith, 2017: 152). The narrator mentions Aimee's plan to her mother, thinking that her political position would be helpful in solving the bureaucratic issues and building connections with authorities; nonetheless, her mother is negatively inquisitive about the policy behind Aimee's project, by indicating Britain's colonial history: "White woman saves Africa. Is that the idea? Very old idea" (Smith, 2017: 153), against which the narrator reacted naively and adamantly.

The novel's fourth part entitled "Middle Passage" focuses on the narrator's cross-cultural experience in Africa, which initiates new horizons, the sparkles of change and a fresh consciousness of power relations of race, culture and identity. The first chapter of this part opens with a dance scene of a kankurang, a dancer in Gambian tradition, "a wildly swaying orange shape, of a man's height but without a man's face, covered in many swishing, overlapping leaves" (Smith, 2017: 163), who is believed to be a protector against the evil. The crowd is dancing with fast beats, claps, and drums. Amongst these constantly moving bodies and loud music, the narrator tries to figure out what is happening, she asks her Gambian guide, Lamin, in English, but she cannot make herself heard, as dance is the only connection among people. She climbs up on the car with the help of Lamin, and as she is watching the ecstatic chaos below, she thinks that "here is the joy I've been looking for all my life" (Smith, 2017: 165), which once again reveals the novel's recurrent motif of dance and music as the agents of the

narrator's oscillation between her submissive identity and her desire of movement and change.

As mentioned before, **Swing Time**'s preoccupation with music and dance not only serves as a narrative pattern, but also projects more complex implications concerning identity and culture. In the novel, Zadie Smith smoothly juxtaposes the double-edged nature of music and identity: by questioning music's ambiguous nature as being both an individual, passionate and uncontrolled expressive force, and as a representation of social and cultural discourses, she actually interrogates the ambiguity of identity on the basis of these two contrasting planes. From the very beginning, Smith demonstrates her protagonist in a perpetual relationship with dance and music: 1930s' tap dance and 1980s' pop music dominate and shape the narrator's childhood and her friendship with Tracey; she works for a well-known pop singer in her early adulthood; she travels to Africa and experiences the spirit of the local culture expressed through ecstatic dance rituals and drumming. Throughout the novel, the narrator, and the reader too, witness various cultural and social levels of music and its capacity of being modified by time, culture and political discourses. The narrator has always dreamt of music and dance as liberated from these contexts, because she believes that they are uncontrollable expressions of intense personal emotions, thus, cannot be encapsulated by external forces. However, when she faces different cultural and political forms of music, a perplexing question arises: is music a subjective manifestation of inner feelings and desires, or, is it inevitably subordinated by pre-existed powers, or both?

Before providing a proper answer to this question, it would be illuminating to explore the philosophical underpinnings of music and its relation to identity. For Deleuze and Guattari, music or sound is the source of all rhythmic formations such as milieus and territories, which constitute refrains. By departing from musical refrain, they determine any kind of rhythmic structure on the universal level as refrain, which they define as **a glass harmonica**:

> the refrain is a prism, a crystal of space-time. It acts upon that which surrounds it, sound or light, extracting from it various vibrations, or decompositions, projections, or transformations. The refrain also has a catalytic function: not only to increase the speed

> of the exchanges and reactions in that which surrounds it, but also to assure indirect interactions between elements devoid of so-called natural affinity, and thereby to form organized masses. The refrain is therefore of the crystal or protein type. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 348)

Thus, although it seems repetitive, the refrain produces difference, plurality and connections. It eliminates chaos and creates a rhythmic order. A child who is afraid of darkness sings to calm himself, and creates a territory in the middle of the chaos; the regular voices within a house – radio or television, or the singing of the housewife – create a territory with sonic walls and generate an order within the chaos of the outside (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 311). Therefore,

> the refrain is our means of erecting, hastily if needs be, a portable territory that can secure us in troubled situations. […] In every case, our music-making is expressive inasmuch as it serves to construct a territory. That territory defends against the anxieties, fears, pressures we feel; it doesn't do away with them, of course, but it gives them a different form. (Buchanan, 2019: 16)

Deleuze and Guattari prioritize the power of refrain and music in the process of deterritorialization, creative assemblages and becomings; for,

> [i]t seems that when sound deterritorializes, it becomes more and more refined; it becomes specialized and autonomous. […] Sound owes this power not to signifying or "communicational" values (which on the contrary presuppose that power), nor to physical properties (which would privilege light over sound), but to a phylogenetic line, a machinic phylum that operates in sound and makes it a cutting edge of deterritorialization. But this does not happen without great ambiguity: sound invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us. It takes leave of the earth, as much in order to drop us into a black hole as to open us up to a cosmos. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 347-348)

From this point of view, music in its most basic form, appears as a unifying tissue and core idea of overall postmodern concepts of fluidity, mobility, plurality and becoming. Regarding Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, music is then, a means of reflecting emotions in flux, an experience of self beyond external codes that attempt to fabricate specific types of subjectivity. In this sense, music can be a particular way of forming a liberated identity and a fluid mode of thinking. In **Swing Time**, therefore, the narrator's love of music and dance can be interpreted as a subconscious desire and need for self-liberation from her submissive position in front of the strong characters around her, such as her mother, Tracey and Aimee. She reveals this powerful desire in

a bar, for instance; when singing with a piano player on stage and losing herself in the rhythm of music:

> And now I found I couldn't stay small, my eyes stayed closed but my voice lifted, and kept lifting, I got louder and louder, I did not feel I had control of it, exactly, it was something I'd released that now rose up and away and escaped my reach. My hands were in the air, I was stamping my heels into the floor. […] I could turn time into musical phrases, into beats and notes, slowing it down and speeding it up, controlling the time of my life, finally, at last, here on a stage, if nowhere else. (Smith, 2017: 137)

That moment of musical transcendence grants the narrator a firm stance, an instant feeling of control over her life "finally, at last", and detachment from her insignificant, inauthentic existence. The narrator's rhythmic voice surmounts her physical body and establishes a new sense of self in-flux, thus creating a new territory, a new liberating milieu for herself by using the power of rhythm, the **refrain**. She experiences another similar rhythmic moment when she watches by chance a small part of the movie **Swing Time** at the Royal Festival Hall, in which Fred Astaire is dancing with three silhouettes behind him. This time, the power of rhythm captures the narrator through dance by generating the same stimulating impact on her:

> […] my feet, in sympathy with the music, tapped at the seat in front of me. I felt a wonderful lightness in my body, a ridiculous happiness, it seemed to come from nowhere. I'd lost my job, a certain vision of my life, my privacy, yet all these things felt small and petty next to this joyful sense I had watching the dance, and following its precise rhythms in my own body. I felt I was losing track of my physical location, rising above my body, viewing my life from a very distant point, hovering over it. It reminded me of the way people describe hallucinogenic drug experiences. (Smith, 2017: 3-4)

Only when being detached from her bodily existence and personal problems through music and dance, she objectively manages to evaluate her identity and experiences the most striking epiphanic moment of her life in which she acknowledges that she has lived her entire life as a shadow of someone else. Here, Smith makes a palpable reference to the direct correlation between music and identity to underline the ambiguous position of her protagonist in determining and developing a sense of self. Many theorists, indeed, focus on the way music shapes identity by initiating a special form of subjective experience, not on the idea of music as a product and representative of people – just like the postmodern concept of knowledge; thus, they consider music as an experience of identity, which is mobile and fluid, like music itself, and also as

> an aesthetic experience - that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity. The aesthetic, to put this another way, describes the quality of an experience (not the quality of an object); it means experiencing ourselves (not just the world) in a different way. identity is mobile, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; […] our experience of music - of music making and music listening - is best understood as an experience of this self-in-process. Music, like identity, is both performance and story, describes the social in the individual and the individual in the social, the mind in the body and the body in the mind; identity, like music, is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics. (Frith, 1996: 109)

Besides presenting music as a personal and subjective experience, Smith also touches upon its function in constructing cultural and collective identity as she frequently portrays African music and dance rituals throughout the novel. The Kankurang dance ritual that the narrator witnesses on her first day in Gambia is expressed as a powerful manifestation of African cultural identity and as a mediator between two different cultures; for, although there is no common denominator including language, the narrator is able to feel a connection with the African culture, which is also her half-origin, and thinks that she has found the joy she is looking for. At that moment dance, as the physical reflection of music, appears to be a universal language which unites different cultural identities within the same intensive energy and movement. The novel illustrates a similar dance performance of the village children during the opening ceremony of the girls' school, in which they express local patterns as well as international dance figures like hip-hop and ragga. Regarding this cultural intersection through dance Nathaniel states that

> […] Smith positions rhythmic expressiveness at the focal point of local, national, and international contests of power: the disruptive rhythms of the Kankurang celebration cast down and dance upon Aimee's obtuse timeline for the girl's school; later, the performative rhythms of the children resist and overturn the stifling circumstance of the school's authoritarian opening ceremonies. (2021: 6)

From this perspective, these local performances explicitly illustrate the ambivalent nature of dance and music by showing them both as an expression of a communal stance against any external threat and also as a universal network that shatters cultural and social barriers, which is neatly articulated by Simon Frith:

> We absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies; they have a looseness of reference that makes them *immediately accessible* (my italics). At the same

> time, and equally significantly, music is obviously collective. We hear things as music because their sounds obey a more or less familiar cultural logic […] (1996: 121)

On the other hand, while manifesting the transcendental and fluid nature of music and the narrator's imagination of it as liberated from racial and gendered categories, the novel also simultaneously unveils how music is commodified by the political and colonial agenda of the contemporary world, as seen in Aimee's appropriation of the local dance figures she learns from Lamin in her choreography, or in the novel's frequent references to tap dance and its re-articulation in nineteenth-century American entertainment as blackface minstrelsy and in famous musicals and movies of the 1930s. By defining blackface minstrelsy as an entertainment tradition in which white men ridiculed the Africans by painting their hand and faces black, Eric Lott and Greil Marcus point out its explicit racial depreciation by stating that

> [w]hile it was organized around the quite explicit "borrowing" of black cultural materials for white dissemination, a borrowing that ultimately depended on the material relations of slavery, the minstrel show obscured these relations by pretending that slavery was amusing, right, and natural. Although it arose from a white obsession with black (male) bodies which underlies white racial dread to our own day, it ruthlessly disavowed its fleshly investments through ridicule and racist lampoon. (2013: 3-4)

Considering the novel, Zadie Smith pays special attention to the movie **Swing Time** and chooses it as the title of her book for its palpable portrayal of music and dance as enslaved by racial identifications and as commodified by popular culture. Therefore, the novel's epitomizing of blackface minstrelsy as a way of racial commodification of the body is no less different than Karim's being dyed brown for the Mowgli role in **The Buddha**, which makes his body an object of consumption for the racist white-British. Both in **The Buddha** and **Swing Time**, the protagonists are expected to discover their own paths among the ambivalence of these concepts – music, dance, race, culture, etc., and to construct a fluid identity. Karim's challenge would be manipulating and subverting these patterns, while the narrator of **Swing Time** is in the process of acknowledging cultural and racial agenda of power systems in Foucault's words, and eventually recognizes the limits of music and dance before these power discourses in her thirties. However, she still prioritizes and reckons on the power of rhythm in discovering her true self and in healing her relationship with Tracey. By

revealing and underlining the double-edged nature of music in her novel, Smith actually attempts to show her reader that the concept of identity, too, is inherently ambivalent as it has the potential of both achieving the level of continuous becoming and liberation, and also has the possibility of being constructed and governed by pre-determined categories.

The narrator's journey to Africa is crucial both for her discovery of self and for the novel's generic structure as a postmodern Bildungsroman. The spatial mobility as one of the thematic components of the Bildungsroman tradition since it first appeared in the nineteenth century manifests itself in **Swing Time** in a subversive way and with more complex implications. The move from province to town, rural to urban, and margin to center enlarges the Bildungsroman hero/heroine's social environment and perspective of life, which has been enhanced by the postmodern Bildungsroman writers by sharpening the concepts of constant movement, heterogeneity, rhizomatic progression and perpetual change that galvanize the protagonist's character formation and acquirement of a fluid identity. It is important to specify that while **Brick Lane** and **The Buddha** demonstrate identity formation of their protagonists in relation to their spatial movement starting from small-scale and traditional society to a larger one, Smith in her female Bildungsroman, takes the classic motif of the move from rural to urban and smartly turns it upside down, by presenting the narrator's nomadic experience starting off from the city of London to a village of Africa, yet still smoothly employs her experience of cultural difference, in-betweenness, and shifting identities.

Since the very first day in Gambia, the narrator senses the cultural difference revealed by rituals, clothes, language, and daily activities of the local people. She witnesses another cultural form of dance, and is soon embraced by its energy, which helps her to discover a small niche of mutuality in a completely different culture. She observes the interconnectedness of culture, language and identity when she observes Lamin speaking his native language with the villagers and becomes a different person by shifting among cultural identities:

> […] Lamin entered the crowd to ask questions, becoming another Lamin altogether, not the monosyllabic whisperer he was with me but what must have been the real Lamin,

> serious and respected by everyone, funny and loquacious, seeming to know everybody, greeted with warm, fraternal affection by beautiful young people wherever he went. (Smith, 2017: 172)

She makes conscious efforts to cross the cultural barrier and buys specific clothes and head scarf to wear in the village; she wants to visit the shore where the slave ships left heading toward her mother's island, then America and Britain, to strengthen the spiritual connection with her mother's ethnic background. But no matter hard she tries, she constantly feels the existence of the boundary of **difference**, and realizes that everybody in the village treats her like a child:

> Where grandmothers crouched to eat from the communal bowl, resting on their powerful haunches, gathering up rice and scraps of ladyfish or garden egg in their fingers, I was brought a plastic chair and a knife and fork, because it was assumed, correctly, that I would be too weak to assume the position. (Smith, 2017: 177)

This cultural in-betweenness and uprootedness, which are positively underpinned by the contemporary theorists who advocate the productivity of the interstitial site in establishing a self-conscious hybrid self, appear in the novel as a challenging stage for the narrator to grasp the emancipatory essence of being a rootless nomad and to turn this situation into an advantage. In order to achieve to an accomplished self, she needs to internalize both sides of her hybridity – her Britishness and African heritage – and able to oscillate between her multiple and flexible identities. Only when Nazneen in **Brick Lane** willingly opens herself to embrace British culture and her new British identity while holding on to her cultural background she manages to settle her hybridity and empowered self. Similarly, Karim in **The Buddha** could develop his fluid and hybrid identity when he accepts his Indianness and internalizes the suburbs as the place he has come from. Thus, as an **other** both in Britain and Africa, the protagonist of **Swing Time** finds herself in a kind of limbo, which is theoretically a liminal space where two cultures and ethnicities overlap. She is not able to utilize the liberating position of the liminal space at first, for she has not acquired the awareness of her British and African self in the context of multiculturalism and lacks the knowledge on the politics of race, class, gender and ethnicity. In Africa the narrator gradually understands the relativity of these concepts and any meaning can easily transform into another:

> As I poured a full litre of water down the drop toilet, to flush out a cockroach that disturbed me, not one of the dozen young girls I lived with ever let me know exactly how far she'd walked that day for that litre. When I snuck off by myself, to the market, to buy a red-and-purple wrapper for my mother, Lamin smiled his anxious smile but spared me the knowledge of what proportion of his yearly teacher's salary I'd just spent on a single piece of cloth. (Smith, 2017: 177)

The narrator is seriously confronted by her own inefficient insight in colonial discourses as she gradually gets involved in African culture and encounters new people. Six months ago in her first talk with Fernando Carrapichano, the project manager, on the plane going to Togo, she asks him how Togo is like:

> 'I have not been,' he said coldly, without turning round.
>
> 'But you practically live here – I read your résumé.'
>
> 'No. Senegal, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, Ethiopia, yes – Togo, never.'
>
> 'Oh, well, you know what I mean.'
>
> He turned to me, red-faced, and asked: 'If we were flying to Europe and you wanted to know what France was like, would it help if I described Germany?' (Smith, 2017: 194)

The narrator displays an essentialist Eurocentric mentality by categorizing Togo as a representative of a homogeneous, simplified, and singular African image, and disregards its cultural difference and authenticity. She shares the similar political attitude, albeit unconsciously, with her employer Aimee, who represents the superiority complex of the west over the east by propounding their insufficiency of governing themselves, as she has openly enounced in an interview that the government of Togo "did nothing for their people" (Smith, 2017: 194), which has offended the country before their withdrawal from the shortlist of the school project. With her existence as a shadow of Aimee this time, the narrator could not achieve a nomadic consciousness which requires going beyond pre-established racial and cultural categories, and being a **body without organs** as Deleuze and Guattari puts it forward as an ideal position closely connected to nomadic subjectivity. They assert that if organs of a body constitute an organism which is systematically arranged, then the disengagement from that organization produces a limitless field of emancipation where the emergence of multiple becomings is enabled. For, "The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the

phantasy, and signifiances and subjectifications as a whole" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 151). In the context of postcolonialism and multiculturalism, disentangling the body from the organs indicates extricating the mind from fixed and pre-determined categories such as racial, gendered and cultural definitions. Therefore, in her process of becoming, embodying a nomadic consciousness and being a body without organs would precisely be the essential formative quest for the protagonist of **Swing Time**.

The narrative swings back to the adolescent years of the narrator, which reveals that Tracey has been accepted to the dance school and the narrator starts high school, in which she experiences a self-realization on the essence of her existence without Tracey next to her; a ghost: "I was […] a body without a distinct outline. The kind of girl who moved from group to group, neither welcomed nor despised, tolerated, and always eager to avoid confrontation. I felt I made no impression" (Smith, 2017: 213). They gradually drift away from each other, and seemingly occupy different paths. As the narrator gets more and more introvert, Tracey is self-confident and ostentatious as always, "[e]lectric, charismatic, outrageously sexual, filled with the summer's energy at all times, even in freezing February" (Smith, 2017: 214). Without Tracey, the narrator could not develop a sense of belonging in her social circle, because she does not have any personal knowledge about who she is, what she wants, where she wants to go, and what she wants to do in the future:

> […] the friendship rings began to form and harden around me, defined by colour, class, money, postcode, nation, music, drugs, politics, sports, aspirations, languages, sexualities … In that huge game of musical chairs I turned round one day and found I had no place to sit. At a loss, I became a Goth – it was where people who had nowhere else to go ended up. (Smith, 2017: 215)

Sometimes she sees Tracey in the streets with her full energy and blossom which creates an impression on the narrator that she has a great and happy life. However, the last time she encounters her outside the Camden palace at midnight while being harassed by a man becomes a revelation for her about Tracey's problematic life and her unhappiness. While the narrator and her mother is taking her to the hospital, Tracey is apparently on drugs and angrily unveils her long-term resentment about their attitude towards her:

> Tracey accused us both of kidnapping her, of trying to control her, we who had always been trying to control her, ever since she was a child, who always thought we knew what was best for her, what was best for everybody, we had even tried to steal her from her own mother, her own father! (Smith, 2017: 233)

Tracey has always been well-aware her own socio-economic position and that she could not change it considering her mother's and father's unemployment and educational backgrounds, while the narrator's family is socio-economically moving upward as her mother finishes the open university and goes into politics, and her father is promoted at his job. Thus, Tracey is obliged to use the slightest opportunity to cling herself to a powerful social position without her family's financial support, and uses her dancing skill for social mobility. However, her subversive manner of dealing with her unprivileged condition of being both a working class and a biracial young woman has some abrasive consequences in her social relations which push her away to a more marginalized position. For instance, when the cashbox is stolen from Miss Isabel's dance class, both the narrator's mother and Miss Isabel accuses Tracey, although the narrator and she were together the night before while leaving the class and the narrator saw her going her way to home. Their judgmental approach towards Tracey palpably emerges from her socio-economic position, which makes her the only usual target "[w]ith a family like that …" (Smith, 2017: 280), although her alleged crime has never been proved out.

Upon the disclosure of Tracey's drug addiction and seeing her so vulnerable and powerless for the first time in the hospital, the narrator recognizes the insignificance of her own childish problems and indifference towards her environment:

> On the way out I caught a reflection of myself in the long mirror on the wall of a disabled toilet that happened to have, at that moment, its door flung open. I saw my drab black uniform and absurd dusted-face – of course, I'd seen it all before, but not under that stark hospital lighting, and now it was no longer the face of a girl, now a woman stared back. The effect was very different from anything I had seen before by the light of the dim purple bulb in my black-walled room. I was over the threshold: I gave up the gothic life. (Smith, 2017: 234)

The narrator metaphorically steps out of her own dark and narrow egocentric world and self-pitying viewpoint to an illuminated and extended perspective of life in which

she is more comprehensive about the existence of the pre-established structures of class, gender and race and their possible consequences on individuals. **Swing Time**'s occupation with contemporary issues of cultural hybridity, diversity, and class structures embodied in the construction of female identities and the pursuit of an empowered sense of self results in an inevitable point of destination, which is the eventual **identity formation** of the protagonist as a thematic pattern of the Bildungsroman tradition. Although Smith does not expound a conspicuous accomplishment of the protagonist at the end of the novel, she presents the process of character development and search for self strongly permeated with the concepts of identity, mobility, change, relativity, and multiplicity by designating her novel as a representative of the postmodern Bildungsroman. The narrator has such moments of epiphany throughout her narration as she does in the hospital or in her self-awareness of being a shadow, in which the nuances of her process of development and maturation, albeit ponderous, are made explicit.

The narrator begins to acknowledge the mechanisms of power relations such as class and social mobility as she sees Tracey struggling for her financial freedom by taking part in musical shows and manipulating "the artistic codes of dominant Western culture" (Kürpick, 2018: 336) by featuring her femininity and straightening her hair to get attention on stage, or engaging in an extra-marital affair with Chalky to use his financial power for her own education "by way of a reversal of the predominant and gendered pattern of the male 'breadwinner'" (Kürpick, 2018: 336). Nevertheless, the narrator witnesses the fluid nature of these structures, the relativity of cultural implications and shifting identities more closely and strikingly in her cross-cultural experience in Africa. Once, in one of her conversations with Granger, the black American bodyguard of Aimee, the narrator finds out how personal experiences shape the perception of things by unveiling their relativity, as they approach Gambian village and its living standards from a very different perspective:

> Where I saw deprivation, injustice, poverty, Granger saw simplicity, a lack of materialism, communal beauty – the opposite of the America in which he'd been raised. Where I saw polygamy, misogyny, motherless children (my mother's island childhood, only writ large, enshrined in custom), he remembered a sixth-floor walk-up, a tiny

> studio apartment shared with a depressed single mother, the loneliness, the food stamps, the lack of meaning, the threat of the streets right outside his front door, and spoke to me with genuine tears in his eyes of how happier he might have been raised by not one woman but fifteen. (Smith, 2017: 223)

By perpetually underscoring the fluidity of meanings and socio-political discourses in her novel, Smith draws a parallel to what Deleuze has attempted to hypostatize with the world, all beings and meanings in flux, including his theory of space and territory. Deleuze proposes a counter-perspective to the antique Western thinking of space/place as representing singular, fixed and hierarchical meanings which produces homogeneous cultural structures and subjects. After the second half of the twentieth century, specifically with the influence of the world war, the flourishing of French deconstructionist philosophy has provided the re-evaluation of the construction of meaning and its dynamics, especially with the theories of Foucault and Derrida by propounding such terms as **différance** and infinity of meaning, which shatter the monolithic and restrictive mode of thought. Deleuze, with his colleague Felix Guattari, has implemented these poststructuralist ideas to more extended contexts including politics, music, cinema, war, capitalism, language, nomadism, and space/territory, all of which are introduced interconnectedly in **A Thousand Plateaus** (1987). For Deleuze and Guattari, territory is an entity not determined by certain borders and pre-existing significations, but rather emerges from the rhizomatic assemblage of constant change, dynamism, fluidity of meaning, and desire (intensity): "One travels by intensity; displacements and spatial figures depend on intensive thresholds of nomadic deterritorialization (and thus on differential relations) that simultaneously define complementary, sedentary reterritorializations" (1987: 5). Regarding that the subject and subjective expression become the perpetuator of territorialization, Gambian village and all other relative and fluid cultural implications that the narrator and other characters involve in are represented in the novel as individualized territories, which each individual experiences differently and establishes different lines of flight. Regarding the example of village as a **plane of consistency** or a **plane of immanence**, in which all hierarchical and pre-established forms are fractured into an inherent, indefinite and perpetually evolving territory, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, the narrator and Granger destabilize the spatial singularity by **decoding** the socio-cultural

significations of the village from the angle of their personal desires, fears, and past experiences. Because

> [t]he plane of consistency is the abolition of all metaphor; all that consists is Real. These are electrons in person, veritable black holes, actual organites, authentic sign sequences. It's just that they have been uprooted from their strata, destratified, decoded, deterritorialized, and that is what makes their proximity and interpenetration in the plane of consistency possible. A silent dance. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 69)

The narrator's frequent travels to London, New York and Africa provide her with a broader perspective and a more developed insight into the flexibility of meaning, this time in a global sense:

> […] decisions made about the village from these locations always appeared to have certain plausibility while we were making them, and only later, when one or other of us arrived back here, and crossed this river, did the potential absurdity of whatever it was become clear. (Smith, 2017: 299)

In one of their meetings in New York they decide on the necessity of teaching Darwin's theories to the children and teachers in the village, which would be a good point of focus in an efficient and qualified educational environment; however, when they come back to the village in a rainy season and find out that "a third of the kids off with malaria, half a classroom's ceiling fallen in, the toilet contract unfulfilled and the solar-panel-powered electricity circuits rusted and corrupted" (Smith, 2017: 299), everything about education loses its significance and meaning. The narrator and Fern, the project manager, begin to recognize that there are bigger problems to be solved before teaching English or Darwin to the students, and other unrealistic plans of Aimee, who is now obsessed with bringing technology to the village and giving laptop to each student. It is soon revealed that Aimee's project turns out to be a failure, as she could not fully grasp social, cultural and economic differences between the two continents from that distance while dwelling in her ultra-luxurious mansion, and does not have a local experience as the narrator and other employees do. With her evolving perspective of colonial and cultural contexts, the narrator comprehends the unsustainability of Aimee's project and that she employs an exploitative intention for her own popularity, especially after the narrator learns Aimee's adoption of local dance figures in her performances. Whereas Lamin's compound is implemented with a new

door, a new toilet, a new roof and a flat-screen TV, as Aimee develops an emotional interest in him, the educational, health and other conditions of the village are gradually getting worse no matter how Fern tries to inform Aimee and ministries about these realities:

> The government seemed to have withdrawn from the village generally: many other previously well-running, or reasonably well-running, services now languished cruelly. The clinic had not reopened, a huge pot-hole in the road just outside the village had been left to crater and spread. […] Perhaps this kind of thing would have happened anyway. But it was hard to avoid the suspicion that the village was being punished for its connection with Aimee, or deliberately neglected in the expectation that Aimee's money would flow into the gap. (Smith, 2017: 300)

Meanwhile, the narrator feels that she has been deliberately pushed away from her position as being Aimee's personal assistant, as she is no longer provided the private jet and has to use the commercial flights, she is given insignificant works like cataloguing shoes, taking kids to yoga class, and could not see Aimee for weeks. She assumes that she has been punished for interrogating Aimee's relationship with Lamin and the rumors that she will get him a visa to bring him to London. However, the narrator finds out that it has nothing to do with Lamin, and that it is because of her mother's public statements about Aimee and her project in West Africa, to which she refers as "Dictatorships in West Africa" (Smith, 2017: 334). Although the narrator has partly achieved an awareness about the political framework of Aimee's project, she is still disregardful of her mother's arguments, and does not want her to get involved in her job, which is the extension of her unconscious resistance and rebelliousness against her mother's indoctrination and emotional negligence since her childhood. She palpably fluctuates between the need of a liberated self and the comfortable feeling of being someone's shadow, which she explicitly specifies regarding the bond between Tracey and her: "Relief came over me, familiar, though I had not felt it for a long time, and I connected it to being taken in hand by Tracey, to having decisions removed from me and replaced instead by her will, her intentions" (Smith, 2017: 330).

While unveiling the contexts of race, gender, and class within the framework of personal relationships as the main formative elements of the protagonist's **becoming** process, the novel also puts a special emphasis on the mother-daughter relationship,

which should be scrutinized with regards to the essence of the narrator's identity formation. Many contemporary psychoanalytical theorists who work on the development of female identity insist that constructing an autonomous female identity is strongly connected to a sufficient emotional bond with the mother, which should be established during infancy, preoedipal stage, and childhood. Jane Flax in "The Conflict between Nurturance and Autonomy in Mother-Daughter Relationships and within Feminism" (1978) presents a more improved analysis of mother-daughter relationship, which Freud has previously studied, and propounds a detailed examination of the first stages of identity development that is quite applicable to those who study **female identity**. As Flax and other psychoanalysts argue, the first three years of life, in which the child is mentally and physically dependent on the mother, should conclude with a healthy process of separation to establish a strong sense of self both in childhood and adulthood. This period of connectedness, which Flax calls as "symbiotic experience", provides the child with a sense of security, only if the mother gives adequate emotional care and support. She also claims that the mechanisms of this relationship becomes more complicated if the baby is a girl; for, "[b]ecause women tend to identify more strongly with their girl children, more internal conflict is likely to be stimulated by their role as mother. Memories of unresolved wishes from their own infancy are more likely to be evoked" (Flax, 1978: 174). Thus, the absence of an efficient emotional bond thwarts the separation process of the child, as "[s]he lacks to some degree the firm base from which to differentiate" (Flax, 1978: 175).

Throughout **Swing Time** the narrator portrays her mother as a self-confident, ambitious, and self-centered woman, conscious of her rights as a black woman and struggling to achieve a higher level of intellectuality and social status. She is strongly attached to the feminist ideology and rejects to be engaged in domestic and motherhood duties, although she is quite concerned about raising her daughter with a similar way of racial and gendered consciousness. However, her radical rationality and political enthusiasm pushes her into a distanced position by creating an emotional gap between her and the narrator. As a child, the narrator could not get sufficient affection from her mother, which makes her feel that she is unwanted: "My earliest sense of her

was of a woman plotting an escape, from me, from the very role of motherhood" (Smith, 2017: 18), and she identifies herself as an intruder destroying her mother's personal space:

> When we got home she was watching a lecture from the Open University, pad and pencil in her hand, looking beautiful, serene, curled up on the couch with her bare feet under her bottom, but when she turned round I could see she was annoyed, we'd come back too early, she wanted more time, more peace, more quiet, so she could study. We were the vandals in the temple. (Smith, 2017: 23)

Lacking the necessary emotional connection with her mother in her childhood and, most likely, in the first three years of her life as well, as Flax mentions, the narrator could not locate a safety zone and a sense of belonging to establish a self-sufficient identity and to successfully complete the separation stage from the mother, which paves the way for her existence as a shadow both in her relationship with her mother and with her social environment, including Tracey and Aimee:

> If symbiosis has not been adequate, this phase will either be delayed or premature, as the infant desperately attempts to assert some autonomy without the inner resources to do so. In either case, the sense of self and ability to form relations with others are likely to be more fragile and impaired. (Flax, 1978: 176)

Her attachment to her childhood friend Tracey, and in her early adulthood to Aimee, reveals the fact that the narrator attempts to recreate the symbiotic bond in which she pursuits the feeling of security by being controlled by powerful female characters which substitute for the mother figure. After graduating from the college the narrator is convinced by Tracey to work behind the stage of the dance production in which Tracey performs as dancer. While Tracey is shining on stage, the narrator is again a shadow, invisible at the backstage, responsible and ready for service:

> The thing I remember most vividly is the warmth of her body as she ran off stage and into the wings, into my arms, where I stood ready with a pencil skirt to replace her satin dress, or a black cat's tail to be pinned on her behind […] it's Tracey I remember, holding on to my elbow for balance with one hand and stepping lightly into a pair of bright green capri pants which I then zipped up the side, taking care not to catch her skin, before kneeling down to tie the bows on her stack-heeled white taps. (Smith, 2017: 341)

Following the similar pattern, the narrator then starts working for Aimee as her personal assistant, which again requires perpetual devotion both mentally and

physically for someone else, someone superior. The psychological substratum of her constant attachment to other strong female characters, which is precipitated by her lack of agency and existence as a shadow, is utterly manifested by Flax in her statement that

> [o]nly through relationships with other women can women heal the hurts suffered during their psychological development. The rift between identifying with the mother and being oneself can only be closed within a relationship in which one is nurtured for being one's autonomous self. (1978: 179)

That is why the narrator does not get involved in any serious relationship with a man throughout the novel. Her several one-night dates do not develop into a relationship, she does not respond to Fern's intimate emotions for her, and she will later have sex with Lamin for a different purpose without having any feeling for him, which will pave the way for her dismission from the project and from the job:

> I think we both knew perfectly well that whatever passion existed between us was directed through the other person towards something else, towards Hawa, or towards the idea of being loved, or simply to prove to ourselves our own mutual independence from Aimee. She was really the person we were aiming at with all our loveless fucking, as much a part of the process as if she were in the room. (Smith, 2017: 421)

The narrator is stimulated by the power of desire which emerges from her realization and expression of the need for independence from Aimee, and thus, this sexual act and physical desire is transformed into a form of rebellion against all psychological, social, moral and cultural limitations imposed on her identity since childhood, which can be regarded as a development in her becoming process, becoming of a **body without organs** in Deleuze's sense; since she is embraced by **the field of immanence**, which is equal to desire, and infinite and dynamic formations.

In one of her visits to London the narrator has dinner with her mother and learns that Tracey has been sending many abusive e-mails to the narrator's mother accusing her of neglecting herself, black and working-class children including her own, single mothers, and the estates. The narrator remarks that

> Tracey believed my mother had let her down. You never liked me, you never wanted me around, you always tried to humiliate me, I was never good enough for you, you were scared of being associated with me, you always had yourself apart, you pretended

> you were for the community but you were only ever for yourself, you told everybody I stole that money but you had no proof and you never defended me. (Smith, 2017: 398)

The narrator observes that her mother has taken this issue very seriously and has been painfully troubled about it, because a part of her mother knows that Tracey's accusations are accurate to a certain degree. For the first time, she opens herself to the narrator about her motherhood, accepts her mistakes regarding her approach towards the narrator and Tracey, and explains her personal motivation with tears on her eyes:

> I wish you would understand that it was not easy raising you, I was not in an easy situation, and on top of everything I was focused on trying to get myself educated, trying to get myself qualified, maybe too much so in your opinion … but I had to make a life for you and for me. I knew your father couldn't do it. He wasn't strong enough. No one else was going to do it. We were on our own. And I had a lot of balls in the air, that's how it felt to me, and – she reached across the table and grabbed my elbow: We should have done more – to protect her! (Smith, 2017: 394)

This striking moment of revelation discloses Smith's essential and overall argument with double-edged consequences of women's struggle for a life, power, equality, and economic and political independence. Particularly for Black-British women, as Smith reiterates in this novel, the situation gets far more challenging in both endeavoring for a liberated female identity and raising a child while protecting him/her from gendered and racial segregations. In **Swing Time**, Smith attempts to demonstrate the dilemma of women in their battle for maintaining their self-agency and motherhood by portraying both the accomplishment of the narrator's mother and the crisis she undergoes with her daughter, just in the way Adrienne Rich has delineated the very idea of duality in womanhood in **Of Woman Born**:

> The quality of the mother's life – however embattled and unprotected – is her primary bequest to her daughter, because a woman who can believe in herself, who is a fighter, and who continues to struggle to create livable space around her, is demonstrating to her daughter that these possibilities exist. Because the conditions of life for many poor women demand a fighting spirit for sheer physical survival, such mothers have sometimes been able to give their daughters something to be valued far more highly than full-time mothering. But the toll is taken by the sheer weight of adversity, the irony that to fight for her child's physical survival the mother may have to be almost always absent from the child, […]. (1995: 247)

From this point of view, the psychological consequence of the inevitable absence of the mother, which is previously underpinned with Jane Flax's detailed elucidation of

the formation of female identity, is juxtaposed with the concept of female empowerment throughout the novel, which creates the central perplexity in the becoming process of the narrator.

After reading Tracey's e-mails the narrator goes to Tracey's house to tell her to stop disturbing her mother, because the narrator has recently learned that her mother has cancer and is going to die soon. As Tracey opens the door the narrator sees a middle-aged woman with three kids, which surprises her as she has not seen her for eight years. As she goes in she is suddenly embraced by her childhood memories with Tracey in that same flat upon seeing the screening of **South Pacific** on TV "which made it hard to keep in mind the hateful Tracey of the emails […]. [She] knew the Tracey who wasted an afternoon on **South Pacific** and [she] loved that girl" (Smith, 2017: 400-401). The narrator tries to open up the subject but she realizes that she has returned to that obedient and passive little girl in front of Tracey's unbending and dominant aura:

> Everything was the wrong way round: I was the solicitous, apologetic one, she in a place of righteousness. The flat itself seemed to draw this submissive role out of me. On the stage of Tracey's life I had no other role to play. (Smith, 2017: 402)

Then she warns Tracey with a serious tone by threatening her with the police, and leaves the apartment.

One of the most striking moments in which the narrator exposes her developing sense of political and racial contexts, and of Aimee's exploitative steps in Africa, is when she finds out that Aimee has adopted a baby from one of the villages in Africa with a contract drawn up, and a large amount of money has been paid to the parents. The narrator questions the falsity of the matter as well as the fact that "[i]t seemed logical to everyone that Aimee should be able to procure a baby as easily as she might order a limited-edition handbag from Japan" (Smith, 2017: 423). She talks to other personal assistant who was present as the contract was being signed, to get more information, and when she goes to the bathroom the narrator takes the screenshot of the contract from her phone and emails it to herself.

The narrator's improved perspective towards racial categories is also revealed when she expresses her changed ideas about her childhood idol black dancer Jeni LeGon and Fred Astaire, and how she imagined them as very close friends because she believed that music and dance were emancipated from the dichotomy of black/white. When she learns the fact that Fred Astaire never talked to LeGon on set, refused to recognize her beyond the maid roles she played, and many other directors did not hire her for any other role except for the maid, she clearly recognizes that dance has always been a slave to this system of racial discrimination and essentialism of the Western thought: "Researching [LeGon], often alone, often late at night, in a series of European hotel rooms, I realized how much I had fantasized about her as a child, how fundamentally naïve I had been about almost every aspect of her life" (Smith, 2017: 427).

Through the end of the novel, the narrator painfully experiences the feeling of homelessness when she learns that she has been fired from her job upon the exposition of her sexual intercourse with Lamin; however, it turns out to be a chance for the narrator to manifest her developing self and to shatter the constraints of Aimee's world enslaving her. When she looks at the non-disclosure contract that Judy the personal assistant has sent her recently, she experiences the most intense epiphany about her **self** and how Aimee has possessed her:

> I looked at a PDF of a piece of paper I must have signed, aged twenty-three, though I couldn't remember ever doing so. Within its inflexible terms the things that came out of my mouth did not belong to me any longer, not my ideas or opinions or feelings, not even my memories. They were all hers. Everything that had happened in my life in the past decade belonged to her. Rage rose up in me instantaneously: I wanted to burn her house down. (Smith, 2017: 434)

Then she publishes everything she knows about Aimee's adoption of the baby and attaches the screenshot of the contract to a gossip site with an anonymous profile. This is the first and the biggest step she takes with her own will and determination, which also makes her mother proud of her brave action.

Although the novel mostly remains ambivalent regarding the protagonist's Bildung, it unfolds the particular nuances of her development and gaining a more

sophisticated perspective of herself, her personal relationships and socio-cultural dynamics of the world. Moreover, the novel provides an optimistic ending, which foreshadows her penetration into Deleuze's **field of immanence**, a field of rhizomatic connections, temporality, and perpetual becomings; as the narrator feels that this new beginning upon losing her job will bring her a liberation:

> I was settling into the idea that I wasn't going anywhere, there was no hurry any longer, I would not be on the next plane. Time was on my side, as much as it is on anyone's. Everything that afternoon felt wide open to me, a kind of shock, I didn't know what was happening in the next few days or even the next few hours – a new feeling. (Smith, 2017: 450).

Upon releasing herself from Aimee, which paves the way for a new insight, the narrator even starts to consider the possibility of a future with Fern. After she and her mother achieve to a mutual understanding of each other, she can fully recognize her mother's purpose in this life: "Only as an adult did I come to truly admire her – especially in the last, painful years of her life – for all that she had done to claw some space in this world for herself" (Smith, 2017: 18). The last time she sees her mother at the hospice before dying, she tells the narrator that it is time to do something for Tracey and her children, which provokes the narrator to save the most valuable possession left – her friendship with Tracey, and goes to her apartment with the hope of a new beginning:

> […] there might be something else I could offer, something simpler, more honest, between my mother's idea of salvation and nothing at all. […] I was about to enter the stairwell when I heard music, stopped and looked up. She was right above me, on her balcony, in a dressing gown and slippers, her hands in the air, turning, turning, her children around her, everybody dancing. (Smith, 2017: 453)

Though she leaves the rest ambiguous, Smith offers the signals of a hopeful future for the narrator and Tracey, as the last word of the novel, and its most powerful metaphor **dancing** foreshadows a new beginning for their friendship just like the way it brought them together at the dance class for the first time.

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to present **Brick Lane, The Buddha of Suburbia**, and **Swing Time** as representatives of the contemporary migration novel, and of the multicultural Bildungsroman, in particular. This attempt has required evaluation of the novels through multi-layered perspectives and on manifold theoretical territories simultaneously, because of their complex thematic structures. Departing from the protagonists' nomadic experiences in the context of cultural diversity throughout the novels, the aim has been to portray their character formation towards hybrid and self-sufficient identities as being migrant or biracial subjects. For this purpose, this thesis initially provides the main principles of the Bildungsroman as a sub-genre together with its emergence in the nineteenth century in Britain and its evolution until postmodernity. Understanding certain thematic elements of the Bildungsroman tradition, such as childhood, spatial mobility, physical and psychological maturation, the relationship between individual and society, and achieving an enlarged vision of life, is essential in regarding how they are maintained or altered in subsequent literary periods. In relation to that, it is significant to note that while this study intends to advocate those three novels as multicultural Bildungsromane, it is also a lucid manifestation of the Bildungsroman's flexibility and capacity of being molded by diverse literary representations.

In postmodernity, where everything is in-flux, the terms ambiguity, fluidity, hybridity, plurality and movement have become primary expressions of subjectivity and identity, particularly in philosophical, social, cultural and literary fields. Contrary to the idea of pure and stable identity, postmodern thought celebrates fragmented self, which is in a constant process of change. In this sense, many contemporary fictions and literary works including the postmodern Bildungsroman, attempt to demonstrate the dismantling of the self from the essentialist political and cultural significations, and almost all of them end up with the same question: to what extent can we liberate ourselves from these power structures and build an authentic self?

For postmodern discourse and the critics of diversity, the quest for an emancipated identity, or **becoming** – a well-recognized contemporary term, is contingent on various determinants such as cultural interaction, mobility, liminality, space, and interconnections, as Deleuze puts it: "Becomings belong to geography, they are orientations, directions, entries and exits" (1987: 2). Thus, once promoting the formation of identity as stipulated by social codes and rigidly defined subjectivity, the Bildungsroman in the contemporary era rather seeks for the character development experienced as ambiguous, dynamic and dislocated. In this regard, the multicultural Bildungsroman, which is the central framework of this study, introduces the migrant/biracial protagonist in a process of self-discovery and **becoming** prompted by cultural encounters, spatial mobility and personal experiences. In this last and concluding chapter of the thesis, the aim is to evaluate and compare **Brick Lane, The Buddha of Suburbia** and **Swing Time** with a more compact and concurrent look considering how they embody the main principles of the multicultural Bildungsroman, and depart from its traditional structure.

In order to acquire the process of becoming, the hero of the Bildungsroman is required to move from his/her local and limited environment to a larger society, which provides better social, institutional and professional opportunities. According to Rosi Braidotti,

> […] mobility also refers to the intellectual space of creativity, that is to say the freedom to invent new ways of conducting our lives, new schemes of representation of ourselves. Freedom of the mind as the counterpart of physical mobility; […] Mobility as the means of achieving a more adequate representation of ourselves. (1994: 256)

While this thematic pattern works for a proper social integration of the protagonist in terms of moral and gendered expectations of the society in nineteenth-century Bildungsroman, it evolves into a means of deviation from the homogeneous social structure and an experience of cultural plurality in the multicultural Bildungsroman. In **Brick Lane** and **The Buddha**, both Nazneen and Karim embark on their formative journey by moving from their conventional chronotope to the city of London, where they encounter cultural diversity and polyphony. Nazneen comes from Bangladesh, where she is subjected to extreme fatalistic, religious and patriarchal codes inhabiting

her female identity. However, when she starts living in multicultural London and gradually integrates into its cultural heterogeneity, she acknowledges the consequences of monolithic representations and discovers her independent female identity. Karim's journey from the suburbs of Bromley to central London likewise manifests a move from conventionalism towards complexity and cultural diversity, and a symbolic odyssey from childhood to a self-conscious maturity. He becomes a constant traveler in London – and cross-continentally later on, which enables him to re-discover the dynamics of class, race, cultural and social structures and manipulate them by adopting different identities. The protagonist of **Swing Time** as well, is portrayed in a continuous move, in which she experiences cultural difference by moving from London to an African village. The novel reverses the traditional pattern of mobility from province to town; however, this journey still constitutes one of the most significant formative experiences for the narrator-protagonist in the process of her self-discovery. From this perspective, this study clearly propounds that as multicultural Bildungsromane, these three novels introduce their protagonists as nomads considering their physical mobility and formative journeys; since nomadic subjectivity is an indispensable concept of postmodernism and contemporary cultural studies. As they find a niche from which to reject social, cultural, racial, sexual and gendered codes, the protagonists manage to acquire the nomadic position that Deleuze and Guattari celebrate as a state of freedom and becoming. For, "[n]ot all nomads are world travelers; some of the greatest trips can take place without physically moving from one's habitat. It is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of traveling" (Braidotti, 1994: 5).

In Victorian Bildungsroman, the hero's character formation is stimulated by a psychological breakdown or an emotional pain, which eventually generates an epiphanic experience and the expansion of his perspective of life. In **Brick Lane, The Buddha** and **Swing Time**, this generic principle is maintained and projected as critical moments of self-awareness, which signal the identity development of each character. For instance, before Nazneen's baby son Raqib dies at the hospital when Nazneen painfully expects him to recover, she passes through a crucial awareness regarding the

role of fate in her life, and for the first time she questions the essentialist norms, which have dominated her whole life. Moreover, the novel clearly demonstrates Nazneen's developing insight and more complex perspective towards life after she experiences a serious psychological breakdown. Similarly, **The Buddha** exhibits Karim in certain moments of emotional pain and identity crisis, like breaking up with Eleanor, Uncle Anwar's funeral, and his depression and loneliness in New York, all of which end up with important decisions and epiphanies about his cultural identity and self-empowerment. The narrator of **Swing Time** too, achieves a crucial recognition about her identity as a shadow after she loses her mother, her job, and is left homeless. As this thesis has previously asserted, the recognition of self and the socio-cultural dynamics allows the narrator to be more determined and encouraged particularly in recovering her friendship with Tracey.

Besides all those above-mentioned features of the Bildungsroman, **internal change** and **identity development** of the hero is the most fundamental and expected outcome, which is also the unifying element of the three novels scrutinized in this study. It has been concluded that as multicultural Bildungsromane, **Brick Lane, The Buddha** and **Swing Time** subvert the conventional pattern of identity formation, which depicts the protagonist's physical and mental maturation together with his successful amalgamation into the society as a social and moral stereotype. However, the fixed social codes once being a powerful determinant of the accomplished identity, now in the multicultural novel, is incarnated as the primary impediment for the individual's emancipated and nomadic identity. Thus, throughout this thesis the concern has been to present the way Nazneen, Karim and the protagonist of **Swing Time** are disembodied from pre-established cultural, racial and gendered definitions to discover their fluid and hybrid identities. In order to do that, certain contemporary philosophical approaches have been cited, which celebrate multiplicity, difference, liminality and mobility, including the ideas of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Bakhtin, and Bhabha. In the light of their influential theories, the characters' formation towards hybrid, rhizomatic and nomadic identity have been examined in detail.

Throughout the process of their physical and mental development, Nazneen, Karim and the narrator of **Swing Time** embody the emancipatory aspect of multiculturalism, although each of them experiences cultural hybridity in different contexts. Nazneen's formative journey proceeds towards the acquisition of a mobile and powerful female identity by successfully disengaging herself from patriarchal and restrictive cultural conventions in London. This study has prominently reflected certain instances of Nazneen's evolution and confident attempts in welcoming her new independent identity, especially after she decides to stay in London without Chanu, and becomes a business-woman. Although she is not racially hybrid, she achieves the position of cultural hybridity, which Bhabha refers to as "being in the beyond" and as "the space of intervention". For Nazneen, who invents a new perpetually-evolving cultural identity,

> […] [i]t is the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices that introduces creative invention into existence. […] [t]here is a return to the performance of identity as iteration, the re-creation of the self in the world of travel, the resettlement of the borderline community of migration. (Bhabha, 1994: 9)

Unlike Nazneen, Karim's formative experience is more about reversing racial, social and sexual categories as a biracial person and internalizing his half-Indian origin by acquiring a manipulative and queer identity. Throughout the analysis of **The Buddha**, we have applied Deleuze and Guattari's theories of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and rhizome in identifying Karim's subversion of traditional suburban values, racial and sexual normativities of the city of London as spatial representations, and his metaphorically and physically nomadic position. In the end, Karim's **becoming** process is justified as he builds an ambivalent and fluid identity, which is ready to follow the **lines of flight** that his future provides for him.

As this study has formerly disclosed, the character development of **Swing Time**'s protagonist is not illustrated as palpably as in the other novels; however, the growing up of the narrator together with her personal awareness is neatly integrated in particular intimate and familial relationships, and embroidered with the nuances of rhythm, dance and music. The novel demonstrates and juxtaposes childhood memories of the narrator with her more matured sense of self as she grows up and experiences

various cultural and personal encounters both in London and Africa. Her naivety and unawareness of cultural and social politics gradually evolve into the acknowledgement of these concepts and relations; however, the most significant development is achieved as she finally realizes her submissive and passive self, especially in her relationship with Tracey, Aimee and her mother, which evokes the necessary encouragement to disembody herself from the external ties and to construct a nomadic subjectivity.

Conclusively, this dissertation has provided the theoretical dimensions of the postmodern novel reflected in **Brick Lane, The Buddha of Suburbia** and **Swing Time**, and has critically defended that these novels can be manifested as explicit examples of the multicultural Bildungsroman, regarding their protagonists' identity development embedded in cultural heterogeneity. We can also humbly suggest that this study might be handled as a guideline for the literary analysis of the contemporary novels in similar contexts.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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