

The Dysfunctional Father in Hanif Kureishi's Novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*

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Abstract—This study seeks to offer a comprehensible understanding of the father figure in family and how the father character in Hanif Kureishi's "*The Buddha of Suburbia*" becomes dysfunctional to some extent. However, critics, historians or literary figures concentrate less on the structure and more on the description such as a happy family or a sad family, etc. Add to that, writers succeed to depict the image of a ruling father who owns everything inside the family including his wife and children. Also, they may portray a successful mother who manages to take care of her children in the absence of a husband. Nevertheless, fathers as abusive and dysfunctional in particular families are seldom taken into consideration; perhaps because of the patriarchal stereotypes in certain communities. Thus, Fatherhood is the main reason to family destruction and disintegration in contradiction to the patriarchal system that positions the father as the symbol of unity and at the same time of power.

Index Terms—the dysfunctional father, family, dress, Hanif Kureishi

I. INTRODUCTION

Family has been discussed in different fields, it is a structure in society and it takes different forms. These forms are combined according to the members of the family, yet, it is a combination of a triad: father, mother, and a son, or a step father, a mother, and a son, and so on. However, critics, historians or literary figures concentrate less on the structure and more on the description such as a happy family or a sad family, etc. Add to that, writers succeed to depict the image of a ruling father who owns everything inside the family including his wife and children. Also, they may portray a successful mother who manages to take care of her children in the absence of a husband. Nevertheless, fathers as abusive and dysfunctional in particular families are seldom taken into consideration; perhaps because of the patriarchal stereotypes in certain communities.

II. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Additionally, to fully grasp the dysfunctionality of the father, one needs first to position that character within the right context. Thus, Corboz et al. (1993) in "Systemic Analysis of Father-mother-baby Interactions: The Lausanne Triadic Play", situate the father in the triadic relationship in which the authors provide a mathematical synthesis of "two plus one", the mother, son and then comes the father or vice versa, the father, son and later on the mother, in which the son takes a fixed state (Corboz et al., 1993). Also, in "Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research" Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009), argue about the importance of including post-structural techniques such as language and discourse to demonstrate how power is related, and manipulative for diverse forms of subjectivity or identity, which means that through language the father gains power and, thus, may become dysfunctional by using abusive words (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009).

In "When a Child Rejects a Parent: Tailoring the Intervention to Fit the Problem" Friedlander and Walters (2010) emphasize the fact that there are causes that lead to the dysfunctionality of the father figure. They maintain that it starts first like a problem within the triadic or between the dyadic. In other words, they argue that there are three factors that lead to the dysfunctionality of the father; violence is the major factor, along with abusiveness and neglect (Friedlander & Walters, 2010). Moreover, in "Troubling the Functional/Dysfunctional Family Binary Through the Articulation of Functional Family Estrangement" Allen and Moore (2017) argue that the binaries functional/dysfunctional are interchangeable, if the communication is accessible and democratic between family members, the family is functional. On the other hand, if communication is absent and takes the traits of subjugation then the family is dysfunctional. In this context, the traits of subjugation are the father's in comparison to the mother because sons fear their fathers mostly and not their mothers. Yet, the father or "the breadwinner" is dysfunctional when we come to the verbal stage or communication (Allen & Moore, 2017). Indeed, a growing body of research evidence shows that the representation of fathers has always been as the powerful and the breadwinners but never focus on how this powerfulness converts to a "weak point". In this sense, in their book "*Constructing Fatherhood: Discourses and*

Experiences” Lupton and Barclay (1997) discuss how the popular media succeeds in representing the father figure in different places around the world. These portrayals are the major reason that positioned fatherhood in a particular image in societies (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Respectively, Gregory and Milner (2011) argue in “What’s New About Fatherhood? The Social Construction of Fatherhood in France and the UK” that, fatherhood appears pessimistically in newspapers and how it was responsible for both family disintegration and values non-continuations (Gregory & Milner, 2011).

Add to that, Catherine Sellene in her book “*Les pères vont bien! Comment les hommes affirment et assument aujourd’hui leur paternité*” (2005), contextualizes the father figures in relation to war and post war atmosphere. She considers that the war is the main reason that results father’s lacking. In other words, she confirms that after the war, the traditional father who was the symbol of power is diminished and personified as brutally abusive and alcoholically addicted (Sellene, 2005). Furthermore, in “Masculinity and Child Care: The Reconstruction of Fathering” Brandth and Kvande (1998) note that, fatherhood has something to do with masculinity, unlike Sellene who connects fatherhood with war and post war contexts; here, they integrate fatherhood with masculinity. They argue that being patriarchal and powerful is parental role, yet, masculinity is juxtaposed to fatherhood. They proceed to discuss the role of the father in the nuclear family as being the good provider (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). However, in this context of masculinity and its relation to fatherhood, Butler (1988) in her article “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” argues that “gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all (p, 522). In other words, being masculine is a matter of acts and being a father also is a matter of acts, but the absences of those acts differentiate gender, such acts as power for instance shapes the masculine and, thus, fatherhood. If the mother performs acts of power and dominance it will be positioned as masculine. Vis a vis, if the father who is biologically masculine performs less acts of power and being less dominant, at that point he is feminine. Thus, by saying the father is dysfunctional means that the father is gaining new identity (Butler, 1988).

Some critics assert that the growing movement of loving oneself causes a diversity of family forms which leads to reversal of roles inside the family. Lee (2008), for instance contends in “Fragmenting Fatherhoods? Fathers, Fathering and Family Diversity” that the father becomes dysfunctional through loving himself more than he loves his family members, in this case his wife and his children. The child disrespects the father and enjoys more the company of his friends than his father. All this disequilibrium is fractured on children’s encounter with the outside world. More importantly, he adds that the no role of the breadwinner, or what this article argues, this dysfunction results in the displacement of the father from the family, yet, according to Ehrerreich and Popenoe this becomes an argument for fathers to escape family responsibilities or as Kerry Lee calls it “a flight from commitment” and thus, the father sets himself up as a dysfunctional figure” (p, 37). In addition, Finch (2007) contends in her article “Displaying Families” that modern families are much more doing than being. In other words, members of the family are just performing what they should; for instance, a phone call between sisters, or the father doing his tasks as a father, the mother feeding and cleaning. All these tasks are considered as doing; however, *being* means to be a real father, a father that truly cares about his family and about the unity of the family.

III. DISCUSSION

Having defined what is meant by family and family members, the discussion will centre on Kureish’s novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) to shed light specifically on the father and what may be considered his dysfunctionality through a close reading of the text. The novel depicts the life of an Indian family living in the suburb of the city of London. The character of Haroon, who is the main concern of this study, is dysfunctional in different ways. First of all, he is an Indian living in London, considered as other for British citizens; he is a doctor with a wife. At the very beginning of the novel we notice the first encounter between the father and his son Karim who acts, as the narrator of the novel. Karim reports: “On this day my father hurried home from work not in a gloomy mood. His mood was high, for him” (TBS, 1990, p.8). This quote shows the mood of the father at that moment, but Karim ends the sentence with the words “his mood was high, for him,” which indicates that the “high” mood of the father does not mean the same as when applied to the rest of the family, this is how Karim shows the difference. We come to the conclusion that Karim himself does not share the good mood or he wants to say that, though the breadwinner is in a good mood this does not mean that the son or the family is as well. Ideally, the mood of the father spreads out among all family members and not for him only. In other words, positive vibes should include all of them and not only Haroon, but, significantly, this what Karim is hinting to. Moreover, by the time Haroon starts to behave awkwardly, only his wife noticed that, so, as the narrator mentions: “Soon, my mother, who was in the kitchen as usual, came into the room and saw Dad practicing for the yoga Olympics. He hadn’t done this for months, so she knew something was up” (TBS, 1990, p.8). This indicates that the mother is designated as “Mum” in the novel; she starts to feel something suspicious with her husband. He did not practice Yoga for a long time, so why at that moment. It is true that Yoga is commonly considered as a sport that is something good for the health of the body and for the mind; yet many see it as a sport for women and not for men, which makes Haroon’s behavior, in the eyes of his wife, rather weird. From this incident and from the reaction of the mother, one gets the impression that Haroon’s image is that of a dysfunctional father in the sense that he performs acts mainly related to females. Furthermore, the narrator/son confirms the claim of Yoga women’s sport; he reports that

“When Dad spoke his voice came out squashed and thin. ‘Karim, read to me in a very clear voice from the yoga book.’ I ran and fetched Dad’s preferred yoga book — *Yoga for Women*” (TBS, 1990, p.10). Hence, not only the Yoga business but also the father’s voice that Karim describes as “squashed and thin” which is strange for a male of that age.

In addition, one notices that Haroon wants to be young not for his family but for Eva, his mistress. He wants to fulfill her sexual desire that’s why he is doing Yoga; however, all what Haroon does show him as a dysfunctional person in the eyes of his family. Indeed, Eva who is an English woman with whom Haroon fell in love. Thus, this requires that the dysfunctionality of the father be examined from two sides: the first is the inside dysfunctionality and the second is the outside dysfunctionality. In other words, Eva is an outsider who makes Haroon behaves that way, which means she is the one responsible for his dysfunctionality. In this sense, the narrator explains:

I feel better. I can feel myself coming old, you see.’ He softened. ‘By the way, Margaret, coming to Mrs Kay’s tonight?’ She shook her head. ‘Come on, sweetie. Let’s go out together and enjoy ourselves, eh?’ ‘But it isn’t me that Eva wants to see,’ Mum said. ‘She ignores me. Can’t you see that? She treats me like dog’s muck, Haroon. I’m not Indian enough for her. I’m only English. (TBS, 1990, p. 10)

This reveals Eva’s intrusion in the family and her impolite treatment of Mum sometimes, while Haroon is always excited to see her. Also, we notice that Haroon does not feel angry when Eva treats his wife badly and compares her to a dog. Mum thinks that, Eva like Indian much more than English. Haroon, in this context, wants to be like an Englishman and to forget his ethnicity. Karim states that

Maybe there were similarities between what was happening to Dad, with his discovery of Eastern philosophy, and Anwar’s last stand. 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. (TBS, 1990, p. 75).

What contributes to Haroon’s dysfunctionality is his desire to be an Englishman. He forgets about his origin and about being Indian. He, or his ancestor, migrates from India to Britain, and just by this attempt to become someone else he is bound to fail and turn dysfunctional in comparison to the native Englishman. Not only that, Karim declares that both his uncle Anwar and Haroon appear to be rerunning internally to India, which is a sign of some inner resistance to Englishness. However, Karim’s declaration is ambiguous, he feels puzzled because both of them do not show any desire for their origin which makes them losing both, Englishness and Indianness.

In their unique article, “TAMING TIGER DADS: Hegemonic American Masculinity and South Korea’s Father School,” Kim and Pyke (2015) contend that masculinity is related to ethnicity, with supremacy given to the white man. Non-European citizens tend to seek such masculinity. If they could not reach it, they must be not fully masculine. Without fulfilling this sense of masculinity, fathers become dysfunctional. Thus, masculinity is related to fatherhood and plays a central role in marking the father as functional or dysfunctional. Thus, they think that the failure of accomplishing the American or western hegemonic masculinity results in a masculinity crisis, as evidenced in the case of Haroon. The main argument here is that fatherhood is strongly connected with masculinity as an act and performativity. Respectively, Haroon as dysfunctional does not stop in being an Indian or English but he proceeds to the matter of clothes. In this sense, the narrator reports:

Dad waited at the door for me, his hands in his pockets. He wore a black polo-neck sweater, a black imitation-leather jacket and grey Marks and Spencer cords. When he saw me he suddenly looked agitated. ‘Say goodbye to your mum,’ he said” (TBS, 1990, p. 12).

Here it can be noticed that Haroon is wearing youngish clothes not suitable for his age. One may think that Haroon is changing his identity, but in the context of this research, Haroon is dysfunctional, in the sense that he tends to hide his real age. In other words, instead of looking as a good provider or a breadwinner for his family, he wears something not suitable to his age and clashes with his position in the family.

The significance of clothes in literature is highlighted in “Reading Clothes: Literary Dress in William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell” by Cook (2013) contends that, clothes in literary works enlarge the novelists’ scope of thinking and provide them with different interpretations about the strong relationship between dress and social status, character and ideas. Also, McIntosh (1968) in her article “Pamela’s Clothes” throws light on the symbolic function of Pamela’s dress and how it reflects her social position. She adds that Pamela is fully aware of her clothes and how they show her femininity. She is “self-conscious of her social position” (p. 75). However, here in Kureishi’s novel Haroon is not self-conscious of his social position which makes him dysfunctional to some extent. He wears Marks-and-Spencer corduroy trousers more fit for young adults. In this quote also the father uses a harsh tone and raises his voice at Karim unnecessarily. It was uncalled for, but he has done this to show his dominance in the family; however, for Karim it is a demoralizing act by the father because the situation does not require that much firmness.

Furthermore, the dysfunctional acts by Haroon never stop at the level of verbal abuse but they extend to a high level of irresponsibility. Karim reports that, “When I was small and the two of us sat in Lyon’s Corner house drinking milkshakes, he’d send me like a messenger pigeon to women at other tables and have me announce, ‘My daddy wants to give you a kiss’ (TBS, 1990, p. 13). He uses his little son to communicate with women in order to fulfill his whimsical needs, abusively exercising his paternal authority upon the child in a provocative manner; to put his own son

in such dubious atmosphere. Added to that, Haroon did not stop at that point; he urges with his son to convince him to drink alcohol. Karim narrates:

Dad and I had a pint of bitter each. I wasn't used to alcohol and became drunk immediately. Dad became moody. 'Your mother upsets me,' he said. 'She doesn't join in things. It's only my damn effort keeping this whole family together. No wonder I need to keep my mind blank in constant effortless meditation.' I suggested helpfully, 'Why don't you get divorced?' 'Because you wouldn't like it.' (TBS, 1990, p. 13, 14)

Haroon, thus, resorts to alcohol in order to free his mind from the problems of the family but Karim gets drunk as well. However, Karim thinks of being helpful but it is totally the opposite, it is used ironically because being drunk may lead the family to destruction. Immediately Karim offers his father to divorce his mother because as a child under the influence of alcohol, he finds it so easy to say to his father you should divorce my mother. It is ironic that Haroon has to remind him of the seriousness of the matter; nevertheless, the whole situation confirms that Haroon is dysfunctional in the sense that he endangers his son and his whole family.

In addition, we go back to Eva and how she makes Haroon dysfunctional. In this respect, Karim reports that "When the front door was safely shut and we'd moved into the darkness of the hall, Eva hugged Dad and kissed him all over his face, including his lips. This was the first time I'd seen him kissed with interest" (TBS, 1990, p. 14). This illustrates how Eva is an intruder; she is like the poison that will disintegrate the family. She is a strong factor that causes Haroon's dysfunctionality as father; by being with Eva, Haroon will forget his responsibilities towards his family in the first place particularly towards his wife, because Eva takes her place, she is much prettier than her, and younger.

From the beginning, Karim also reports that "She frightened me; she excited me; somehow she had disturbed our whole household from the moment she entered it" (TBS, 1990, p. 17). It seems that Karim is taking the role of the father, he is aware enough of the danger that may result from the relation between Haroon and Eva, Karim as well is astonished of Eva's beauty that's why he said "she excited me". Because when she has come to pick up Haroon, she enters Karim's room and talks to him about literature, at that moment Karim becomes fully aware of the beauty and the danger of Eva at the same time. Thus, Kureishi uses the son to speak the voice of a father, though, he is too young. Afterwards, the dysfunctional father's effect starts to appear on Karim. He continues:

Our house was dark and cold as we crept in, exhausted. Dad had to get up at six-thirty and I had my paper-round at seven. In the hall Dad raised his hand to slap me. He was drunker than I was stoned and I grabbed the ungrateful bastard. 'What the hell were you doing?' 'Shut up!' I said, as quietly as I could. 'I saw you, Karim.

My God, you're a bloody pure shitter! A bum banger! My own son — how did it transpire?' (TBS, 1990, p. 24)

Haroon raises his voice at Karim, then tries to slap him, it does not matter what Karim really does; what matters is the verbal attack by the father to impose power on Karim; thus, in this respect, in "*Power in Family Discourse*", Watts (1991) contends that using language in a specific, socially acceptable forms permits the interlocutor to occupy a position of power and dominance; exactly what Haroon does to his children. So, by raising his voice and calling his son names, he renders himself even more dysfunctional; Karim in that situation feels humiliated by the nearest person to him, supposedly. Also, it may damage Karim psychologically as this is one of the reasons that make Karim seek an alcoholic and profligate life. Ultimately, the father pushes the son towards a new way of immoral life. Furthermore, Karim reports that "Dad went into the toilet without shutting the door and started to vomit. I went in to him and rubbed his back as he threw up his guts. 'I'll never mention tonight again,' I said. 'And nor will you'" (TBS, 1990, p. 25). This quote is about post- Alcohol effects, Haroon vomits in the toilet and Karim helps him, then they discussed what they did the night before, it indicates that both Karim and Haroon are in equal power, and what makes them equal is Haroon's weakness recognized by his son, and his dysfunctionality which makes Karim the powerful decision maker; it is like a covenant between them; don't tell mum, and I will not. Meanwhile, post effect of the dysfunctionality of the father, starts to fall heavily on Karim's thinking. He relates what has happened:

When I'd made the bed and she'd got herself into it — and it was far too narrow and short and uncomfortable for her — I told her something. 'I'll never be getting married, OK?' 'I don't blame you,' she said, turning over and shutting her eyes. I didn't think she'd get much sleep on that couch, and I felt sorry for her. But she angered me, the way she punished herself. Why couldn't she be stronger? Why wouldn't she fight back? I would be strong myself, I determined. (TBS, 1990, p. 25)

All these words from Karim towards his mother reveal the consequences of his father; Karim told his mother that he will not marry at all, because he does not want to be dysfunctional like his father. Karim is fully aware of what his father does to his mother and to the family. He urges his mother to fight back which conveys the meaning of a deterring strategy: dysfunctionality of the father should be encountered by the functionality of the mother. Consequently, when Haroon plans to meet with Eva he seeks help from Karim; he uses him as a cover. The narrator reports "One Saturday morning a few weeks later he called me to his room and said mysteriously, 'Are you on for tonight?' 'Tonight what, God?' (TBS, 1990, p. 28). Here we notice that Karim is naming his father as God, which is used ironically, for "god," mostly functions as "God Almighty." However, it seems that Haroon is using his son Karim not for the sake of accompanying him, but for the sake of protecting himself from his wife. In other words, when Haroon takes his son with him, Mum cannot think of her husband cheating behind her back, and may not think that Haroon is going to do commit adultery next to his son. It is like a planned dysfunctionality. Then, Haroon adds "But don't mention anything

to your mother. She doesn't understand my appearances at all, or even, for that matter, my disappearances. Are we on?' (TBS, 1990, p. 28). We see here that Karim is probably not aware enough of his father's plan, he is behaving innocently.

Later, however, we recognize that Haroon is not so close to Karim, only when he plans to meet Eva; that is why Karim enjoys the company of his uncle Ted. Thus, in this context of less being together, Lee (2010) asserts that the father in psychology has different roles to perform, he should engage, be available and be responsible. In this sense, Karim reports "Ever since I was tiny I'd loved Uncle Ted, because he knows about the things other boys' fathers knew about, and Dad, to my frustration, didn't: fishing and air rifles, airplanes, and how to eat winkles (TBS, 1990, p. 41). Here Karim is talking about his uncle Ted, comparing him to his father. He seems to resent the ignorance of his father, Karim is complaining and questioning the fitness of his father to be a father, to begin with. The father Haroon is not fulfilling his duty to be there for his children. He fails terribly. In the meantime, we are allowed more insight into Haroon's psychological state at a particular moment that summarizes his dysfunctionality. Karim speaks about his father saying:

Tonight Dad didn't linger over Gin and Tonic. The room was still and silent. Dad went into a silence too, looking straight ahead of him. At first it was a little silence. But on and on it went, becoming a big silence: nothing was followed by nothing, which was followed quite soon by more nothing as he sat there, his eyes fixed but full of care. (TBS, 1990, p. 43)

This quote indicates what is happening to his Dad; he repeats the word silence and not only that, he tries to explicate what the word silence mean. First it is silence then it becomes a big silence after that, it precedes to nothing then more nothing. All these explanations paint a picture neither of the powerful father nor the functional one, but completely the opposite. Simultaneously, Haroon is the center of all the dysfunctionalities of the family, though Mum is English, she feels herself out of place and even Haroon as well feels out of place according to Karim. Thus, in this sense, he reports, "Mum and Dad always felt out of place and patronized on these grand occasions, where lives were measured by money" (TBS, 1990, p. 51). He declares that both of them feel out of place, but if the father Haroon, a British Indian, should be feeling out of place, why should the mother, a British citizen, feel the same. She is out of place probably because of Haroon, who is directly responsible for making her feel that way. Accordingly, the house is experiencing an interval of turmoil, no one is happy; but the only person not caring is Haroon, though; he is the cause of that entire messy atmosphere. Karim at certain moment starts to imagine what would happen if his parents murdered each other. He contemplates:

It was as if only one more minor remark or incident were required for them to murder each other, not out of hatred but out of despair. I sat upstairs in my room when I could, but kept imagining they were going to try and stab each other. And I panicked in case I wouldn't be able to separate them in time. (TBS, 1990, p. 61)

This is terrifying for the son, a state negatively reflected in his thought and behavior. Karim cannot help but imagine that his father might beat his mother, and ponder on what he should do to prevent him from doing that; or where he should position himself, whether to protect the mother from the abusiveness of the father or try to convince his father not to harm her. This is the result of what a dysfunctional father does to his family. He leads his son to an extreme case of psychological agitation which may cause him mental illness and emotional disturbance. Hence, in this sense, Karim's imagination about what his father would do reflects the father's anxiety about his power and authority, leading him to failure in consequence. In other words, what would lead the father to beat his wife, from Karim's perspective, is his fear from appearing weak in the eyes of the whole family; Haroon thinks he will do well by beating his wife, but in fact he would be destroying his role and father-image. In this context, Segal (2007), in her book *"Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men"* asserts that, what a woman needs is a non fierce male and a good provider. She adds that women's resisting traits are juxtaposed with the father's fear from losing his power which leads him to suffer from an insecure masculine identity. Thus, violence conceals this kind of insecurity and the father moves from the state of functionality to a state of dysfunctionality. On the other hand, the man, or rather, the father's fear from weakness makes him dysfunctional, aggressive, and obsessed by means and methods to restore his threatened masculinity. In the novel, we encounter Haroon's conversation with Karim; he says:

Have you told Mum all this?' I said. 'No, no.' 'Why not?' 'Because I'm so frightened. Because she will suffer so much. Because I can't bear to look at her eyes as I say the words. Because you will all suffer so much and I would rather suffer myself than have anything happen to you.' (TBS, 1990, p. 77)

Haroon here is confessing to Karim about what he has done to the family. It is a conscious declaration from him about his loss of control; he knows that he has caused a lot of trouble for his family. Add to that, Haroon becomes dysfunctional not only for the family but for himself as well. Karim states, "I could see the erosion in the foundations of our family every day. Every day when Dad came home from work he went into the bedroom and didn't come out (TBS, 1990, p. 101). Haroon is losing it; he becomes voiceless, and prefers to be silent rather than speaking to his family members. In this case, the voice or language is paradoxically both power and feebleness. In other words, at the very beginning we notice that Haroon is dysfunctional because he uses harsh words towards his children and sometimes towards his wife, however, at that later moment he is silent; and yet, he is dysfunctional in the sense that there is no interaction between him and his sons and prefers to stay silent all the time. He even never has eye contact with them. In this respect, Clapton (2017) in "Scottish Fathers and Family Services" situates fatherhood with profession and class in society, and differentiates between middle class father and working-class father; with the last one considered more

tolerant and more caring for one's children. Nonetheless, Haroon is presented as a working-class father but never acquire these traits of being lovable, tolerant and caring. Also, Segal (2007) in her book "*Slow Motion Changing Families Changing men*" asserts that, the necessity of seeing fathers in the house may result in a good way for the children, even though they are deprived from having access to their homes as a consequence of their unacceptable behavior towards family members.

Towards the end of the novel, Karim, unlike his father, worries about his sibling, wondering about the far-reaching results of the dysfunctionality of his father. He fears that it will simply fall upon his younger brother Allie. He elaborates:

In some ways it was worse for little Allie, as he had no facts about anything. For him the house was filled with suffering and fluffed attempts to pretend that suffering didn't exist. But no one talked to him. No one said, Mum and Dad are unhappy together [...] Whatever was happening at this time, we were all isolated from each other. (TBS, 1990, p. 101)

It is obvious that Karim is assuming some sort of social responsibility, making up for the father's destructive behavior. He is thinking about his little brother Allie and how he might be affected by what is happening around him. Allie is still too young to understand or grasp the reality in front of him. Karim is thinking about his brother in anticipation of the effects Allie will suffer from as an adult, when he is old enough to decipher the situation. Karim knows that Allie does experience some suffering during that time, but he is still not confronted with the huge problems between his father and mother. He concludes his thoughts with the realization that the family members are isolated from each other; all as a consequence of the father's dysfunctionality. One may say that the mother too is responsible, but in this case the mother is struggling to keep a peaceful relationship with her husband first and to prevent him from divorcing her. She would rather keep the wholeness of the family or the unity of the family despite the fact that was aware of the affair her husband had with Eva. She is smart enough not to extend the problem to the children, knowing that if Allie in particular knew about the true state of affairs, it would scare him forever; which happens to Karim who has found himself in the middle of all that, and aware of the repercussions.

IV. CONCLUSION

To some up, the most obvious finding to emerge from this study is the dysfunctional father or, rather, the dysfunctional father figure in Kureishi's Novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). Haroon, like some fathers in some communities, fails to be functional in both private and public spheres. He blackballs himself first and secondly his family. Haroon in the novel thinks that being abusive or less caring towards his family are normal and tolerated ways in society, but things turn out to be completely the opposite. His failure issues from the fact that he thinks only for himself and never took into consideration what may result from letting down his responsibilities. Besides, his situation worsens when he resorts to alcohol to free himself from domestic problems, preferring escape over reasonable, realistic solutions. Consequently, his dysfunctionality is doubled when an outsider, Eva, contributes to his abandonment of duties, rendering him blinded by love and desire. Kureishi's main concern, as evidenced through the choice of narrator, Haroon's son Karim, seems to be with the devastating psychological and mental wounds and scars ensuing from the father's dysfunctionality left to damage the wellbeing of the children.

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