

## The Notion of “the Other” in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Hanif Kureishi’s *the Buddha of Suburbia*

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### Abstract

This article deals with the notion of “the Other” in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The notion of the Other has become a serious issue which has divided the world into two parts: the European world and the non-European world. They respectively represent the world of civilisation and the antithetic world or more specifically the barbaric world deprived of civilisation. The notion of the Other is an interesting theme which is treated by a lot of writers like Joseph Conrad and Hanif Kureishi in their novels respectively entitled *Heart of Darkness* and *The Buddha of Suburbia*. In these novels, Europeans characterise the Other by focusing their attention on religious, cultural, and racial differences. This characterisation is done through the use of a comparative distinction between the European and the Other. This characterisation has given birth to harmful consequences. It has led to the exploitation of the Other. The Other keeps on suffering from racism and discrimination which finally urges him to rebel against injustice. The objective of this work is to explain how by characterizing non-Europeans as the Other, the Europeans have created two antagonist worlds and to show how the Other is characterised in the West through the two novels. For this we can use Michel Leiris’s ethnological perspective. The work is divided into three sections: Section one deals with the way the Other as seen by the Europeans; section two highlights the way the Africans, Asians and Eurasians seen as the Other in the novels, and section three analyses the consequences of considering people as “the Other”.

**Key-words:** Africans, Asians, Differences, Europeans, The Other.

### Résumé

Cet article traite de la notion de « l’autre » dans *The Buddha of Suburbia* de Hanif Kureishi et dans *Heart of Darkness* de Joseph Conrad. La notion de l’Autre est devenue une question sérieuse qui a divisé le monde en deux parties : le monde européen et le monde non-européen. Ils représentent respectivement le monde de la civilisation et le monde antithétique ou plus précisément le monde barbare privé de civilisation. La notion de l’Autre est un thème intéressant qui est traité par de nombreux écrivains comme Joseph Conrad et Hanif Kureishi dans leurs romans intitulés respectivement *Heart of Darkness* et *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Dans ces romans, les Européens caractérisent l’Autre en concentrant leur attention sur les différences religieuses, culturelles et raciales. Cette caractérisation se fait par l’utilisation d’une distinction comparative entre l’Européen et l’Autre. Cette caractérisation a eu des conséquences néfastes. Elle a conduit à l’exploitation de l’Autre. L’Autre continue à souffrir du racisme et de la discrimination, ce qui le pousse finalement à se rebeller contre l’injustice. L’objectif de ce travail est d’expliquer comment, en caractérisant les non-Européens comme l’Autre, les Européens ont créé deux mondes antagonistes et de montrer comment l’Autre est caractérisé en Occident à travers les deux romans. Pour ce faire, nous avons utilisé la perspective ethnologique de Michel Leiris. Ce travail est divisé en trois sections : La première section traite de la façon dont l’Autre

est perçu par les Européens ; la deuxième section met en lumière la façon dont les Africains, les Asiatiques et les Eurasiens sont perçus comme l'Autre dans les romans, et la troisième section analyse les conséquences du fait de considérer les gens comme "l'Autre".

**Mots-clés** : Africains, Asiatiques, Différences, Européens, L'Autre,

## INTRODUCTION

The notion of the Other has become a serious issue which has divided the world into two parts: the European world and the non-European world. They respectively represent the world of civilisation and the antithetic world or more specifically the barbaric world deprived of civilisation. The explanation of such situation has to be found in Europeans' desire for creating a racial dichotomy. The existence of the opposite worlds is liable to lead to various harmful effects.

The “Other” can be defined as what is Other than the initial concept. The constitutive Other is often a person Other than oneself. So, the Other is identified as a different being. The use of the term “the Other” provides means of distinguishing between home and away. It also points out the demonization and dehumanisation of groups, involving a desire for civilising and exploiting the inferior Others. Otherness also involves religious, cultural, racial and behavioural differences.

The notion of the Other is an interesting theme which is treated by a lot of writers like Joseph Conrad and Hanif Kureishi in their novels respectively entitled *Heart of Darkness* and *The Buddah of Suburbia*. In these novels, Europeans characterise the Other by focusing their attention on religious, cultural, and racial differences. This characterisation is done through the use of a comparative distinction between the European and the Other. In this way, the Other is viewed as someone who is victim of cultural denial. He may also be seen as a person whose culture and civilisation are said to be barbaric and backward. He is a pure representation of the opposite race if the white one is taken into account. In his behaviour, the Other is barbaric, strange, and difficult to be understood by a European viewer. The problem of understanding is often occasioned by human behavioural differences which are liable to happen between two opposite racial groups. The Africans, Asians, and Eurasians are the people seen as Others because they meet European characterisation. They are part of the oppressed world dating from the imperial and colonial period up to present date. Yet, the existence of the term the Other is liable to create negative consequences such as racism, exploitation, and rebellion. These consequences are interrelated and successive. Rebellion mainly comes from the frustration resulting from the excessive exploitation of one's strength and body. Different types of rebellion are noticeable through people's ways of reaction against oppression, discrimination and Other related racial prejudices.

The analysis of the problematic of the Other leads to a radical questioning of the founding assumptions of Western thought. In fact, in the West, any approach to the Other requires a metaphysical apparatus which, has locked the problem into a vicious circle: it is impossible to speak of the Other without, at the same time, restricting him within the limits of

a representation that instrumentalises him. A representation that makes him or her, in short, the object of manipulation. The objective of this work is to show how the Other is characterised in the West through Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. For this we can use Michel Leiris's ethnological perspective.

Ethnology is the study of foreign cultures and the experience of otherness. An ethnological model that emphasises writing as construction rather than representation was developed by Michel Leiris. Leiris distinguishes between the exotic and the exoticism. The exotic is a distortion of the Other or its degradation as an object of projection. Leiris's ethnological analyses essentially call into question the place of Western culture and the consequences of its hegemony: The fact remains that even today, in the vast crossroads that the world has become thanks to the means of communication at its disposal, the white man of Western culture holds the upper hand, whatever the threats of upheaval that he feels are rising from without and within against a civilisation that he regards as the only one worthy of the name (Leiris, 1969: 10). Leiris then turns to a critique of the prejudices - which he defines as 'preconceived opinions' (1969: 14-15)<sup>2</sup> - of cultural origin that cloud our relationship with the Other.

This work aims to show the Other is portrayed in Western culture using Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. We can do this by applying Michel Leiris' ethnological perspective. The study of other cultures and the perception of otherness is known as ethnology. Michel Leiris created an ethnographic framework that emphasizes writing as production rather than representation. Between the exotic and the exoticism, Leiris makes a distinction. The exotic degrades the Other as an object of projection or distorts it. In essence, Leiris' ethnological assessments fundamentally challenge the dominance of Western culture and its repercussions: The fact remains that the white man of Western culture still holds the upper hand in the vast crossroads that the world has become as a result of the communication tools at his disposal, despite the threats of upheaval that he feels are rising from within and from without against a civilisation that he regards as the only one worthy of the name (Leiris, 1969: 10). The discussion of prejudices, which Leiris refers to as "preconceived opinions" (1969: 14–15)<sup>2</sup>, of cultural origin that taint our interactions with others. This work is divided into three sections: Section one deals with the way the Other as seen by the Europeans; section two highlights the way the Africans, Asians and Eurasians seen as the Other in the novels, and section three analyses the consequences of the use of the term "the Other".

### **1. The Other as seen by Europeans**

The use of the term "the Other" mainly comes from the imperial and colonial ideology. There are various characteristics or means of recognising the Other. Racial, cultural and behavioural features are taken into account by Europeans when they describe the Other. So, the Africans, Asians and Eurasians are the people mainly seen as Others in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. The African is the only being viewed as the Other in *Heart of Darkness*. The Other is generally seen as someone who is different from a group of people. The group is different from the Other under the pretext that the latter is not a complete person. In this way, the Other appears as someone who lacks some characteristics of the group. These characteristics are

various. So, the Other can be represented by strangers in a country or a community living in a society.

The colonial and imperial period has given birth to the colonial Other. This situation is often explained by the fact that the Europeans wanted to be separated from the colonised. Their aim was also to have power over the ruled in order to exploit them without any problem. The ruled were viewed as Others. They were expected to be subjugated to European rule. They were the Other because of their being different from the Europeans. For Europeans, the Other had neither culture nor civilisation. The Other was recognizable thanks to the colour of his skins which is still black or brown. In *Heart of Darkness*, the colonised Africans are the colonial Other according to European opinion.

In the imperial period, the Other did not represent the minority. It is clear that it is strange to agree to be considered as the Other when we are the majority. Yet, such a behaviour was caused by the fact that as the Europeans spread their civilising mission, the colonized agreed more and more to be viewed as the Other. The Europeans kept telling them that they were the Other because they were uncivilised. The ruled finally agreed to be the Other by wanting to be civilised. Their desire to acquire European culture and civilisation showed their approval of being the Other. Thus, the notion of the Other came from the Europeans during the imperial period. It emphasised European desire to be superior to the Other races. In this way, the world is separated into different groups. There are Europeans and non-Europeans, the civilised and the uncivilised, the white race and the black race, the oppressed and the oppressors etc. *Heart of Darkness* gives a clear representation of the colonial Other. In this novel, the colonial Other is recognisable through his black race, his so-called lack of civilisation and culture and his being inferior to British colonizers. In short, he is the Other because of his being different from the British.

The Other is also characterised by the fact that he is often in Europeans' favour. Colonial Others are supposed to favour the white race at the expense of their own race. Europeans are favoured in various fields. The European community in *Heart of Darkness* is favoured in the sense that the Congolese keep on exploiting their ivory for the British and not for their own country. Colonial mentalities are still alive in the minds of the ruled. In *fragments*, the Ghanaians keep on behaving as if they were still in the imperial period. They favour the Europeans. The whites have more power than Ghanaians. Brempong has told Baako that he will be confronted with problem when he applies for a Job. For Brempong, the white man will be favoured and Baako will have difficulty in having a job. Brempong states:

It's not like that at all. You don't understand. Look, you don't know those who decide. I know them. If you were an expatriate, a white man, it wouldn't matter. You'd have things easy, even without real qualifications". Brempong let out a long breath. "But when you present yourself with your black face like their own, there's no respect. You'll see. (Armah, 47)

Furthermore, the Other is characterised by his strangeness. For Europeans, the Other often provokes fear. The different features of the Other turn him into a strange human being. His behaviour is often difficult to understand. It is said to be barbaric. In *Heart of Darkness*, the

colonial Other is so strange in his behaviour that the Europeans see him as an animal. A lot of books written by Europeans give a description of the Other based on animal features. The Other is either given a name of animal or the behaviour of an animal. *Emperor Jones* is a play written by Eugene O' Neill. In O'Neill's work, the reader often notices that Smithers uses animal names when calling the black natives. Smithers calls the old woman black cow when he says "Pop orf then, if yer like, yer black cow." (O' Neill, 175). The strangeness of the Other is noticeable through the fact that Africans are described as cannibals in *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad is just a European describing a human being who is different from him. So, the partial aspect of his novel regarding the description of the Other and the European has to be explained by the ideas which have just been developed.

In *The Buddah of Suburbia*, the situation of the Other is a little bit different from that of the colonial Other. The living conditions of the Other are improved. Yet, Kureishi's Others are always seen as strange human beings. These people are always at the bottom of the social ladder because of their strangeness. They are endlessly in quest for identity. The fear of the Other is even noticeable through the refusal of Helen's father to let his daughter be with Karim. He does not want Karim to be the boyfriend of his daughter because Karim is the Other. He is strange.

The existence of the Other in *The Buddah of Suburbia* finds its origin from the colonial period. The way of calling the colonised and the way Europeans consider them continued after the colonial period. This phenomenon is emphasized in *Beyond the Horizon*. In this novel, the family of Gitte does not want the latter to marry Akobi because he is black. They have made up their minds to let Gitte down if she dares to marry Akobi. Gitte states: "My family didn't want me to marry a foreigner, and worse still, a negro, you understand? They said that if I married him they would have nothing more to do with me" (Darko, 123). Thus, the characteristics of the Other are various and a bit different in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Buddah of Suburbia*. These characteristics are to be taken into account in order to distinguish the peoples viewed as Others. So, in Europeans' eyes, the Africans, Asians, and Other mixed races such as the Eurasian one are the human beings peopling the "Other world".

## **2. The Africans, Asians and Eurasians seen as the Other in the novels**

The Africans, Asians and Eurasians are generally viewed as the Other in *The Buddah of Suburbia* and *Heart of Darkness*. *Heart of Darkness* is based on the imperial and colonial Other. The notion of the Other is more taken into account by the British colonialists. The African living in Congo represents the Other in Conrad's novel. This person is the Other because he is different from the British colonizer in the sense that their customs and religions are different. The Congolese is the Other because he is also superstitious. He believes in supernatural things. Joseph Conrad characterises the African as the Other because of the evil spells he often does. The existence of sorcerer in the African society is also put forward by Conrad in his novel. All these beliefs show a great difference between Europeans' Christian religion and African religions. The difference in the religious field urges the Europeans to see the African in *Heart of Darkness* as a colonial Other. The mysterious aspects of the African are illustrated in the following quotation: "a black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow. It had horns-antelope horns, I think on its head, some sorcerer, some

witch man no doubt” (Conrad, 233). This depiction is made by Marlow who is a European. It even highlights Marlow's difficulty in knowing who the man is. He does not know what the man represents. He does not really know if the man is a sorcerer or a witch. Therefore, the European is confronted with a problem of understanding in the sense that the African customs and beliefs are different from the European ones. The different and mysterious aspects of the African deepen his being considered as the Other.

*Heart of Darkness* presents a context which is different but the problem of behaviour is mentioned. The British colonizers are different from the ruled Congolese in their behaviour. The Congolese is the Other because he is savage. He behaves like an animal. He is strange. The description of the behaviour of the Other is dehumanizing which emphasizes European perception of the colonial Other. The African is funny, inhuman. He is often in the forest. He is a primitive being. The difference between the uncivilised behaviour of the Other and the civilised behaviour of the British colonizers brings about the existence of the notion of the Other.

The African is the Other because his behaviour is not understandable and cannot be accepted by the English society. Yet, the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* are not often confronted with a problem of identity in the sense that they are conservative. They do not often want to Europeanise their behaviours. They mostly remain primitive beings from the beginning down to the end of the novel. So, the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* do not often spend their time imitating European manners. The Europeans think that Africans are the Other because of their lack of intelligence. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad describes the Africans as people deprived of intelligence. The British say that they are intellectually superior to the Africans. They settle in Africa in order to rob their ivory and Other natural resources by using their intelligence. The British colonizers only need the physical strength of the Africans because they think they are not intelligent. So, in Conrad's novel, the Africans either exploit ivory or work in the construction of railway etc.

Unlike in *Heart of Darkness*, in *The Buddah of Suburbia*, Hanif Kureishi presents a space which is different from the colonial space found in *Heart of Darkness*. The Africans, Asians and Eurasians are the Other in London society. They are the Other because of their customs and religions. It is clear that migration urges different types of societies to live together in spite of their differences. The Indians leave the East and settle in the West. This travel does not only involve the body in the sense that by moving from one place to another, the Indians bring their customs and religions in London. London represents the white world or the English world. The English have their own customs and religions. Yet, the encounter between the East and the West often raises the notion of the Other that imperial ideology used to defend itself. The British imperial system used to hold this type of ideology. Being among the ex-colonialists, the British keep on considering the Indians as the Other because of their difference of religions and customs. The Africans are also considered in the same way.

The Africans, Indians and Eurasians are seen as the Other by the Europeans because of their being superstitious human beings. Superstition used to be one of the characteristics of the ruled. For Europeans, Africans and Asians believe in mystery and superstition. In *Kureishi's*

*Buddah of Suburbia*, Europeans go on holding the same perception of the Other. In this novel, the British still see the Indians as beings who like superstition and mystery. These beliefs are no longer considered in London. The English living in London centre everything on reason. For them, superstition has no place in England: "For Christ's sake, can't you cut down on the bloody mysticism we're not in Beckenham now. These are bright, intelligent people; they're used to argument, not assertion, to facts, not vapours." (Kureshi, 151). Here, Eva is angry with her Indian lover Haroon because the latter has just spoken about mysticism in front of the British audience. The British do not believe in such thing. Eva wants Haroon to get rid of mysticism because there are people gifted with reason in England.

*The Buddah of Suburbia* is a novel in which the British spend most of their time analysing the behaviour of the Other. This observation enables them to focus on the main queer aspects of the Other. The Africans, Asians and Eurasians are Others because they are individuals who lack humanity. They are funny people. The Others in the *Buddah of Suburbia* do their best in order to avoid showing to the British that the ideas they have about them are true. Tracey is an African who is one of the actors of Pyke's group. When Karim wants to play the role of Anwar, Tracey does not agree with Karim's desire. She does not want the British to think that what they say about Africans and Asians are true. Anwar's deeds show that the Other is funny and lacks humanity. Anwar would like his daughter Jamila to be Changez's wife by refusing to eat. His aim is to starve himself to death in order to create a forced marriage. This behaviour is funny and weird. Anwar has no humanity because he cannot help shouting at white boys. He threatens the boys with a stick. Anwar behaves in this way because one day the head of a pig was thrown through the window of his shop. The head was thrown there by one of their rival sellers. Tracey defends her ideas in the following way:

Your picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs. To the white we're already people without humanity, and then you go and have Anwar madly waving his stick at white boys. I can't believe that anything like this could happen. You show us unorganized aggressors." (Kureshi, 180)

This quotation is illustrative. For Tracey, the strangeness and the funny aspects of the Other can be seen in Anwar's behaviour. Anwar's behaviour is not European. It raises another difference which illustrates the notion of the Other in the novel. The Europeans separate themselves from the Other and denounce his negative behaviours. So, the negative is Eastern in European eyes. Yet, the study of the behaviour of the Other highlights the problem of the quest for identity in *The Buddah of Suburbia*. In this novel, the Other is in a perpetual quest for identity. In this quest, the Indian tries to copy the European behaviour and way of dressing. This behavioural imitation shows the desire of the Other not to be seen as the Other but as a European. In this way, the Other tries to create another perception of his being by imitating the European. Changez is Jamila's husband. Anwar has arranged his marriage with Jamila after his coming in England. Changez keeps on imitating the behaviour of the European. Changez minimises the behaviour of his fellow countrymen. They are Others. For Changez the Pakistanis and the Indians suffer from discrimination and racism because of their bad behaviours. Changez thinks that THEY must adopt European manners in order to be accepted in the European society. The following quotation highlights Changez's idea:

And Changez, if I knew my Changez, would be abusing any Pakistanis and Indians he saw in the street. 'Look at that low-class person,' he'd say in a loud voice, stopping and pointing out one of his fellow countrymen[...] To be accepted they must take up the English ways and forget their filthy villages! (Kureishi, 210)

The moral values of the Other can disappear because of the imitation of the British manners. In fact, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, England is a country of vices. The country is insane in the sexual field. The sexual atmosphere of England is unveiled by Changez in the following terms: "Oh God, this whole country has gone sexually insane," he said. "Your father should go back home for some years and take you with him. Perhaps to a remote village." (Kureishi, 97). Changez is surprised at seeing Karim undressing his shirt in the street and talking about the love relationship between Eva and his father. The Africans and Asians become sexually insane because of their imitating the Europeans. Karim has sex with men and women. Jamila also has sex with men and women. Karim and Jamila have sexual intercourse with people wherever and whenever they want. Such a situation, illustrates the degradation of the moral values of the Africans, Asians or even Eurasians. Thus, imitation can be positive and negative.

The Africans, Asians, and Eurasians are not also given jobs which require the use of the mind in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. In fact, they are often businessmen. Most of them have shops. They are sellers who are often confronted with problems of competition. Anwar and his wife have a shop but it sometimes fails because of the competition of Other Easterners such as the Bengalis and Pakistanis. The Asians, Eurasians, and Africans are also actors in the field of cinema. Karim Amir is an actor. He was first engaged by Shadwell before being employed by Pyke. The Indians, Asians and Eurasians are Others. The types of activities they have illustrate the fact that they are viewed as people who are different from the Europeans. The jobs which require intelligence are for Europeans. Karim is Eurasian. He is surprised when he discovers the world of Eleanor and her family. Eleanor is rich. Her world is composed of people gifted with intelligence. The people in Eleanor's world can write books. It is not easy to write books because it requires a lot of intelligence. Eleanor's people write books with ease. They are used to writing books. Karim illustrates these ideas in the following ways: "But now I was among people who wrote books as naturally as we played football." (Kureishi, 177). Writing books is a kind of play for the Europeans. Europeans consider that they are superior human beings. Superior human beings should be given jobs which require high level of intelligence. Thus, the Africans, Asians, and Eurasians are seen as the Other in the Buddha of Suburbia and in Heart of Darkness for many reasons. The notion of the Other leads to various consequences. These consequences are either harmful or contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the Other.

### **3. The Consequences of Considering People as "the Other":**

The notion of the Other has given birth to harmful consequences. It has led to the exploitation of the Other. The Other keeps on suffering from racism and discrimination which finally urges him to rebel against injustice. The Other in Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* is less confronted with racial prejudices than the colonial Other in *Heart of Darkness*. This situation can be justified by the difference of historical contexts.



The notion of the Other leads to consequences such as racism. It is clear that all men are equal. Yet, a lot of people are used to thinking that they are superior to Other races. The feeling of superiority urges them to hate people of different races. Racism was more frequent during the colonial and imperial period. This does not mean that racism does not exist in the world anymore because Africans and Asians still suffer from racism throughout the world.

*The Buddah of Suburbia* and *Heart of Darkness* are two novels whose contexts are different. They both highlight the existence of racism in men's world. *Heart of Darkness* is a novel where racism can be seen through the way Joseph Conrad describes Africans. The way Africans are treated by the British is also meaningful in the sense that it shows British colonialists as racist human beings. In *Heart of Darkness*, Africans are depicted as cannibals. Cannibalism provokes the fear and lack of humanity. Cannibalism is the symbol of extreme savagery. Conrad is so racist towards Africans that he often refuses to give speech to the Africans or the Other. Africans yell or produce sounds that sound like that of the animal. They wear loin clothes or are naked. The Africans are often in their specific place which is the forest. The place chosen by Conrad is meaningful because animals are expected to be in the forest. In short, for Conrad, Africans are animals living in the forest. Conrad's racist depiction of Africans can be seen in the following statement:

Instantly, in the emptiness of the landscape a cry arose whose shrillness pierced the still air like a sharp arrow flying straight to the heart of the land; and, as if an enchantment, stream of human beings\_ of naked human beings\_ with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields into the clearing by dark faced and pensive forest. (Conrad, 223)

It is clear that Africans are described in a racist way. Conrad considers the Other as a different creator. For Conrad, the behaviour of the Other is far different from that of the European. Moreover, *Heart of Darkness* is a novel in which the Other is difficult to be understood by Europeans. This difficulty often leads to racism. The African is part of the obscure world. Europeans' problem of understanding the behaviour of the Other is caused by the difference of behaviours between Europeans and Africans. Europeans focus their attention on this difference of manners to minimise and hate the African behaviour. Racism is noticeable through the fact that Africans are often shown as people who spend their time entertaining themselves. The noise of the drums is often heard in Conrad's novel and it gives a negative image of Africa. The noise of the drums is original and presents the place where the story takes place. Africa is well known thanks to her drums.

The way Africans are described in *Heart of Darkness* appears in a lot of imperial novels such as *Burmese Days*. In this book, Orwell denounces colonizers and colonized. The Other in *Burmese Days* is savage. He is often shown as a human being without speech. He is often in the dark. Darkness is meaningful in the sense that the Burmese have black skins. They are used to darkness. They are not afraid of it because of the colour of their skins. The colonial Other in *Burmese Days* has the system of communication of the animals. He also behaves as an animal. The following statement can shed light on these ideas:

The early topic night settled down, and the train jolted on, slowly, stopping at little stations where barbaric yells sounded from the darkness, half naked men with long hair knotted

behind their heads moved to and fro in torchlight, hideous as demon in Elizabeth's eyes. (Orwell, 98)

The depiction of the Burmese is racist because it comes from a racist European. The observer is Elizabeth who does not respect the people of black skins. European perception of the Other often results in negation, dehumanization, fear and misunderstanding. The Burmese who are depicted in the quotation are not perceived as human beings in Elizabeth's eyes. They are like “demons” in her eyes. Elizabeth's fear can be seen through the fact that she sees the Burmese as some supernatural beings. The demon is liable to do something bad to individuals. Elizabeth's fear may also be provoked by her difficulty in accepting the aspects and behaviours of the Other.

The notion of the Other in human world has given birth to the exploitation of specific groups of people. The oppressed races are the Asians, Africans and Eurasians. In the first place, the imperial and colonial period is characterized by the exploitation of the ruled. *Heart of Darkness* is a significant book which deals with the exploitation of colonized Congolese by the British Empire. Being viewed as the Other, the Congolese is exploited in an inhuman way. The British imperial ideology is based on the so-called desire for civilizing the Congolese. Nevertheless, this ideology is false' and hides another reality which is the exploitation of the colonized. Africa is a country which is rich in ivory. In this way, the British settle in Africa in order to steal its ivory. The exploitation of ivory cannot be done without Congolese labour. The Europeans represent the minority. They keep on exploiting the Congolese in the exploitation of ivory.

*In Heart of Darkness*, the Africans are not only exploited in the exploitation of ivory, they are also needed in the construction of railway and Other infrastructural constructions. The following statement depicts how Africans are treated and used during the colonial era:

Six black men advance in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their loins and footsteps, black rags were wound round their loins and the short ends behinds, waggled to and fro like knots in a rope, each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swing between them rhythmically clinking. (Conrad, 154)

The way these Africans are working shows that Europeans are pitiless. They do not respect the Africans. The African workers are chained like slaves because Europeans do not want them to run away. They are so tired that their way of walking is too slow. They are so thin which mentions the fact that they are not well fed. The Africans are physically exploited and their aspects even emphasize this physical exploitation. They suffer mentally and physically.

The Other in Conrad's novel is not only exploited physically, he is also exploited sexually. Kurtz is one of Conrad's Characters. Kurtz has an African lover in the book. Kurtz's lover is sexually exploited. Sexual exploitation is noticed in a lot of imperial novels. *Burmese Days* is an imperial novel which deals with the sexual exploitation of the Burmese by British colonizers. Ma H'La May is a Burmese woman who is sexually exploited by Flory. Flory has robbed her youth before letting her down. Ma H'La is treated as a whore in the novel because she keeps on

receiving money after having sex with Flory. Other Burmese women also suffer a lot from sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation gives birth to the existence of people of mixed races in Orwell's *Burmese Days*. Therefore, the Other is supposed to be exploited sexually and physically.

In *The Buddah of Suburbia*, the Africans, Asians and Eurasians suffer from racism too. They are the Other because of the colour of their skins. For Europeans, there are two different worlds which are the European world and that of the Other. In this way, the Other should stay in his world and avoid joining the European world. In fact, During Eva's party, one of the guests is surprised at seeing the Indian named Haroon doing his Yoga Session. Haroon is among Europeans. The presence of Haroon is not accepted by the guest who expresses his disdain in front of everybody. He complains by saying "Why our Eva brought this brown Indian here?" (Kureishi, 12). It is clear that the guest cannot tolerate Haroon's presence because he is the Other. European desire to be separated from the Other is mentioned in *Burmese Days*. The European community are separated from the Burmese because the latter are viewed as people without culture and civilisation. The European club is a place where the British colonizers stay in order to be away from the black Burmese. Furthermore, the Other has difficulty in having good results at school because of racism. The British students are too racist toward the Other because of his black skin. Karim is Eurasian. He keeps on speaking about the problems he faces at school. Students use verbal racism by calling him "Shift faces and curryface". Some students spit or blow their noses at him. Racism becomes more violent and dangerous when students use physical racism. Students often threaten Karim by holding chisels to Karim's throat. Karim is fed up with school because of the existence of racism. Karim knows that it is very difficult to succeed at school when someone is confronted with this kind of situation. Students sometimes try to mark his body as if he were an animal. They also piss at his shoes. The following statement highlights this idea: "One kid tried to brand my arm with a red-hot lump of metal. Someone else pissed over my shoes, and all my dad thought about was me becoming a doctor." (Kureishi, 63). The dream of Karim's father is bound to fail in the sense that the environment does not enable Karim to be a doctor. So, it is not easy for Karim to be a doctor.

Racism does not only exist in the field of education. The Asians, Africans, and Eurasians suffer from racism in the streets. They are in perpetual danger when they are out of their homes. They are victims of verbal and physical racism. This situation has urged Jamila to learn karate and judo in order to defend herself. Europeans often attack the Other. Jamila thinks that there will be a day when Europeans will try to put them in gas chambers. Jamila's feeling and preparation are expressed in the following statement: "She was preparing for the guerrilla war she knew would be necessary when the whites finally turned on the blacks and Asians and tried to force us into gas chambers".(Kureishi, 56).

Verbal racism can be noticed through Europeans' consideration of the Other. In the street, the Other is always viewed as wogs, Pakis, and nigs. Karim speaks about this fact in the following way "The thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it" (Kureishi, 53). The existence of these ways of calling the Other highlights Europeans' desire to show the difference between the white and the black race.

Physical racism is also presented in Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. The behaviour of the Other is hated. His skin is said to be ugly. Changez is Indian. He has been attacked by a gang. He had gone to see Shinko, and on his way back, they attacked him. They kept on calling him Paki whereas he was Indian. They beat Changez and drew with a razor the initial of the National Front into Changez's stomach (Kureishi, 224-225). This scene shows the physical violence the Other keeps on suffering from. The Europeans do not only hate the Other, they also provoke his sufferance by using physical violence.

Racism in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is also seen in the professional field. In fact, the Asians, Eurasians, and Africans have difficulty in progressing in the professional field. Europeans do not want the Africans, Asians and Eurasians to have important jobs. They feel a real pleasure in laughing at the people of black race. They do not want to see them as human beings whose intellectual and behavioural level is equal to that of the Europeans. Their aim is to create a big gap between the Europeans and the Other. This gap must show that the Other is inferior to the Europeans because of his limited intelligence and his problem of behaviour.

Karim is a character who suffers a lot from problems of evolution in his job. He is an actor. The various roles he has played are often centred on the world of the Other. He often plays the role of some backward black people. In Karim's role, the black person is considered as a funny and primitive being. The behaviour of the Other is liable to disturb Europeans. His behaviour is inhuman. Karim is urged to play roles in which he behaves as Europeans expect the Other to behave. He is obliged by his boss Shadwell to play the role of Mowgli. Shadwell is racist in the sense that he wants Karim to play the role of Mowgli because he is Eurasian. He belongs to the world of the Other. Being part of this world, Karim can only play savage role. The following statement sheds light on the savage roles white men expect from the black: "What puzzlement there'd be. Everyone looks at you, I'm sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting. What stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear now from him. And you're from Orpinton" (Kureishi, 141). In this statement, Shadwell also tries to anticipate European reaction after seeing Karim.

Shadwell's racist attitude can even be noticed through his saying that Karim is wanted nowhere because he is an outcast. His father is Indian and his mother English. For Shadwell, Racism prevents Karim from belonging to the British society. This idea can be illustrated by this statement: "But she didn't give you the book. She's trying to protect you from your destiny, which is to be half-caste in England. That must be complicated for you to accept belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism." (Kureishi, 141). Eva has not given the racist book to Karim in order to protect him against racism. Karim is supposed to play a part in that book. His part is that of Mowgli. Thus, racism is a social phenomenon which has existed for a long time.

## **Conclusion**

The notion of the Other results from the imperial ideology which has provoked the division of the world into two opposite worlds. There is the European world and the world of the Other or the Other world. Europeans give some characteristics which enable them to distinguish the Other from their own group. In the racial field, people belonging to the black race are viewed as the Other. The cultural and religious dimension of the Other is based on

animism, superstition, and the belief in witchcraft. The Other has a behaviour which is different from European behaviour. The behaviour of the Other is strange and difficult to understand. The intellectual level of the Other is said to be limited. Three categories of people are generally seen as the Other: the Africans, Asians and Eurasians. They are called the Other because they have the characteristics of the Other. Therefore, they are the antithesis of the Europeans in the racial, cultural, religious, behavioural and cultural fields.

*In Heart of Darkness*, the colonial Other is found in his own place which is Africa or more specifically in Congo. In *The Buddah of Suburbia*, the Other is presented in a context in which the British Empire has lost its power. The Other is not in his own place. He or she has joined the western world. He is evolving in the western society. Yet, Conrad's colonial Other and Kureishi's Other share some similarities. They are both beings whose cultures and religions are based on things like animism, mysticism, witchcraft and so on. Their behaviours are similar because of their strangeness and their difficulty to be understood by Europeans.

In their novels, Joseph Conrad and Hanif Kureishi have ways of depicting the Other which are sometimes similar and sometimes different. They both positively and negatively depict the Other. Conrad's positive description of the Other is centred on the Other's hard work and dignity. Kureishi casts a positive eye on the Other when he mentions the Other's humanity and his belief in his cultural values. Conrad and Kureishi share the same viewpoint in their description of the Other as a hard-working person.

Conrad's negative depiction of the Other has a dominant place in his novel. In Conrad's eyes, Africa is a prehistoric earth or a place of corruption and negation. The African is a prehistoric creature whose culture and civilisation are denied to him. Conrad's global perception of Africa and Africans seems to be the representation of the global imperial and colonial perception of the Other. The important part of the negative aspects of the Other in Conrad's novel has to be explained by the context in which this novel is written. As for Kureishi, his negative depiction of the Other seems to be one of the smallest points dealt in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. The Other's sexual perversity and his rejection of his culture to copy another one in the wrong way are often denounced. The cultural rejection only involves some members of the Other world who are often in a perpetual quest for identity. The existence of the notion of the Other has led to various consequences. Two groups are noticed in the world. They are the oppressed meaning the Others and the oppressors meaning the Europeans. The notion of the Other has given birth to racism.

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