THE CONFUSION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION REFLECTED IN HANIF KUREISHI’S THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA (1990):
A SEXUAL ORIENTATION THEORY

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THE CONFUSION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION REFLECTED IN HANIF KUREISHI’S THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA (1990): A SEXUAL ORIENTATION THEORY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to analyze how the confusion of sexual orientation expressed in the novel, to analyze the cause of the confusion expressed in the novel and to analyze the confusion of sexual orientation by using a sexual orientation theory. This research is a qualitative research. Technique of analyzing data is descriptive analysis. The method of collecting data are (1) reading the novel repeatedly and understanding the content. (2) Giving marks to particular parts both primary and secondary data sources. (3) Taking notes for important parts both primary and secondary data sources. (5) Classifying the data into categories and developing them into a good unity. (6) Drawing conclusion and formulate its pedagogical implication. Based on the sexual orientation theory analysis, it can be concluded that the major character often find the confusion in determining his sexual orientation whether homo, hetero or bisexual. There are some expressions of the confusion sexual orientation seen from homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual perspective. The confusion caused by environment, divorce, religion and spirituality

Key word : Confusion, Homosexual, Heterosexual, Bisexual, Environment, Divorce
A. Introduction

Sexuality has become the important part in our life. In our religion, sexuality just for they who have been married but in modern era sexuality becomes needs not only for adult but for young too. In other hand, sexuality becomes the part of society. That is the reason why the writer wants to propose this issue. Sexual behavior of people is both normal and abnormal. Normal behavior of sexual orientation is hetero sexual, and abnormal are lesbian and homo sexual. According to Simon Levay in his book the science of sexual orientation 2011, he stated that both men and women, heterosexuality means attraction to the other sex, homosexuality means attraction to the same sex, and bisexuality means attraction to both sexes. Sexual orientation has to do with the sex of our preferred sex partners. More specifically, it is the trait that predisposes us to experience sexual attraction to people of the same sex as ourselves (homosexual, gay, or lesbian), to persons of the other sex (heterosexual or straight), or to both sexes (bisexual).

Homosexuality is abnormal aspect of human behavior, and become the lifestyle in modern era. According to Boswen (1980) homosexuality is naturally occurring phenomenon that has existed throughout the history. That phenomena caused by race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender expression, and sexual orientation. In our society based on religion and bible, a people who an abnormal has judged immoral person, because in our religion and our bible never recommended loving same-sex relationship.

According to Freud in gay theory in (David Charter, 2006: 125) stated that not all men had a sexual interest in the opposite sex. The young individual male or female is capable of all possible forms of sexual pleasure. The choice of sexual object is narrowed in the course of individual development. Sexual orientation might be the result of repetition of specific acts. Heterosexual or gay or lesbians acts are copies of which there are no originals, like gender sexuality is a social construction (David Charter, 2006:
According to Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick in (David Charter, 2006:129) she stated that heterosexual/homosexual has had profound effect on modern modes of thought. In *the Buddha of Suburbia* novel, the major characters are identified as a bisexual person. He confused to determine his sexual orientation. He has experienced to be homosexual, heterosexual and both of them. He was young, handsome, charismatic, talented but no education well or science or sex. He had the absolute authority to choose his sexuality based on his intuition, pleasure and his happiness.

According to Simon levay (2011:1) Sexual orientation has to do with the sex of our preferred sex partners. Heterosexuals are the majority, the people who are commonly perceived as “normal,” and in sexes, homosexuals (and perhaps bisexuales) is a small and often stigmatized minority. There is physical attraction, meaning the desire to engage in actual sexual contact, and romantic or emotional attraction, which is a desire for psychological union that need not always be expressed in sexual contact. In *the Buddha of Suburbia*, Amir Karim had experienced to be heterosexual person, when he started to school he has sex with Helen and Jamila. Then, when he was in workplace environment he fell in love with Eleanor. Because of liberated environment in his workplace and being hurt by Eleanor, he started to confuse again.

According to Freud and Wilhelm Reich (in David P. McWhirter, 1990) had believed that sexual behavior was shaped by a combined development of biological and environmental factors. Homosexuality is a lifestyle choice rather than an innate orientation. Additionally, gay and lesbian people are physically, mentally, and emotionally as normal as heterosexual people. In *the Buddha of Suburbia* environmental factors become the whole factor in shaping the confusion.
Two people of the same sex in a relationship play out masculine and feminine roles. This myth is based on the stereotype that one person has to adopt “the male role” and the other “the female role” whenever two people are in a relationship together and on the heterosexist assumption that only a man and a woman can form an intimate relationship. Same-sex couples tend to be far less likely than heterosexual couples to adopt specialized gender-defined roles within their relationships (Hyde, 1994; McCammon, Knox, & Schact, 1998). Same-sex couples do not develop long-term committed relationships. In *the Buddha of Suburbia*, Karim plays masculine and Charlie plays feminine role when they had sex. Karim attract Charlie first, then Charlie just follow and received Karim’s attraction. They pretend to be heterosexual partner.

The development of heterosexuality involves a psychological process in early life by which establish a sense of our own sex as male or female, and then exclude people of this sex from the real of attractive sex partners. (David P McWhirter, et. al, 1990). Bisexual person more physically attracted to men and more romantically or emotionally attracted to women (Simon Levay, 2011). In the *Buddha of Suburbia* novel, Karim as the bisexual person attracted to men physically such as the strong body, the muscles, and the back of men, but Karim also love the women bodies, the breasts, legs, and the massage.

The confusion of sexual orientation caused by many factors such as the environment, divorce, religion and spirituality. The environments start from home environment, school environment, society, and workplace environment. Home environment is the first place where people got education in their early life. School environment is the second place after home where people got education. Society is the place where someone lived. Then workplace environment is the place where someone worked.

The major character is Karim Amir who lived with his English mother and Indian father in the routine comfort of suburban London, enduring his
teenage years with good humor. He was always lookout for adventure and sexual possibilities. He met and had sex with several boys and girls likes Helen, Eleanor and Marlene, Charlie and Pyke. Life gets more interesting, however, when his father becomes the Buddha of Suburbia, beguiling a circle of would-be mystics. And when the Buddha felt in love with one of his disciples, the beautiful and brazen Eva, Karim is introduced to a world of renegade theater directors, punk rock stars, fancy parties, and all the sex a young man and women. His father Haroon had a close friend named Anwar who had a daughter named Jamila. Karim and Jamila became close friend and they had close relationship. Anwar planned to marry Jamila with changez, a husband from Bombay. Because of Haroon affair with Eva, Karim saw his family was broken apart, his dad leaved his mother. It made him depressed and leaved school. In Eva house he met Charlie, a son of Eva who was a year older than Karim. Karim also had a special relationship with Charlie. Eva introduced Karim to Shadwell, a theatre director, then in the end of novel Karim became famous actor.

Hanif Kureishi was born on December 5, 1954 is an English playwright, screenwriter and filmmaker, novelist and short storywriter. The themes of his work have touched on topics of race, nationalism, immigration, and sexuality Kureishi was born in South London to a Pakistani father and an English mother (Audrey Buss).

His book The Buddha of Suburbia (1990) won the Whitbread Award for the best first novel, and was also made into a BBC television series with a soundtrack by David Bowie. The next year, 1991, saw the release of the feature film entitled London Kills Me; a film written and directed by Kureishi himself. His novel Intimacy (1998) revolved around the story of a man leaving his wife and two young sons after feeling physically and emotionally rejected by his wife. This created some controversy as Kureishi himself had recently left his own partner (the editor and producer Tracey Scoffield) and two young sons; it
was assumed to be at least semi-autobiographical. Kureishi is married, then have twin boys.

The writer uses a sexual orientation theory as an approach to analyze this novel, because the story of the novel about the confusion of sexual orientation so, it is appropriate with sexual orientation theory as an approach. By so doing, the writer gives the title: THE CONFUSION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION REFLECTED AT HANIF KUREISHI’S THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA (1990): A SEXUAL ORIENTATION THEORY.

B. Research Method

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. The data sources are library and literary data. It proposes to analyze novel using a sexual orientation theory. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining techniques of data analysis.

The object of this study is the confusion of sexual orientation reflected in Hanif Kureishi’s the Buddha of Suburbia novel (1990) by using a sexual orientation theory.

There are two data sources in analyzes this study namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data source is Hanif Kureishi’s the Buddha of Suburbia novel (1990). Secondary data source are from other sources related to the study, such as journal, dictionary, and some related books that support the analysis. The techniques of analyzing data is descriptive analysis, (1) Reading the novel repeatedly and understanding the content, (2) Reading some other resources related to the novel and the theory, (3) Giving marks to particular parts in the novel, which are considered important for the analysis, (4) Taking notes for important parts both in primary and secondary data sources, (5) Classifying the data into categories
and developing them into a good unity, (6) Drawing conclusion and formulate its pedagogical implication.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Structural Analysis

The researcher analyzes the structural analysis of the novel, and a sexual orientation theory analysis. Hanif Kureishi’s draws the character and characterization in such way to brings many problems in the novel. The major character is selfish, ambitious, never fear for everything, so why the confusion was developed. Hanif Kureishi’s also brings the whole setting in London, because in order to make the story clear and influence the confusion. The setting of time is about 1960s up to 1970 because to tell the life story of Amir Karim. Every year brings the novel more clear. The plot of the novel also contributes in sending message to the reader. Hanif Kureishi’s uses the first person point of view, because he is someone who knows the whole story, everything, and anybody in the novel. The theme of the novel is the confusion of sexual orientation is determined by the environment. The author also uses the combination both standard and non standard grammatical structure in order to make the reader easily understand about the story. The sentence construction in the novel is consists of narration and dialogues. It brings in such way because containing the explanation the story of the novel. The diction and figurative language in the novel make the story more meaningful, beautiful and easy to read. The structural elements of the novel are unities and related to each other in one composition of the story. Each completes each other in built a good story.

2. A Sexual Orientation Theory Analysis
The researcher classifies the sexual orientation theory into three parts are as follows:

a) **Homosexuality**

Homosexuality is same sex relationship. Homosexuality is shaped by biological and environmental factors. When Karim was childhood, Haroon teach Karim to approach every boys and girls he met. From Haroon’s education, biologically the behavior of Karim would shape to interest in both women and men. So, the sexuality of Karim is homosexual, in his puberty. Karim loved his step brother, Charlie. Karim really wanted to be like Charlie, as clever as him, as handsome as him. He really desired Charlie.

Liberated environment in London shaped Karim’s confusion in determining his sexual orientation. Homosexual partners plays masculine and feminine role. It happened in Karim and Charlie relationship, they pretended themselves men and women, but in reality they are men and men. Same sex relationship is not developing long-term committed relationship, because they reject the norm and become the minority in human diversity. Karim stated that he would not be in love in Charlie again, because Charlie loved anyone else, a girl’s model, Charlie ignored Karim. It became the evidence that the relationship of homosexual partner has no longer committed. Some of homosexual people prefer back to their normality and become the majority in their society.

According to Freud (in David Charter, 2006: 125) stated that not all men had a sexual interest with opposite sex. It reflected in the Buddha of Suburbia novel in Karim’s puberty he love Charlie, he was not interest his opposite sex. He interested in Charlie. But their relationship has no longer committed. According to Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick in (David Charter, 2006:129) she stated that...
heterosexual/homosexual has had profound effect on modern modes of thought. Karim’s behavior as homosexual person can also include one of modern effects in British culture.

b) Heterosexuality

Heterosexuality involves someone psychological process in their early life when they feel sense in sex. The psychological process of Karim sexes is when he faced several girls in his life. Psychological process means what his known, his taught, and his knowledge about sex itself. In this case, the major character, Amir Karim had no knowledge about sex. Her father taught him to approach girls as well as boys. So, Karim didn’t know what the meaning of sex which normally did by men and women or heterosexual. Then, in puberty Karim met with a girl in the occasion in Carl and Marianne house named Helen. Karim was desired by Helen, but Karim feelings was still on Charlie. Then, Karim became heterosexual when he and Helen made love in Anerley Park.

Karim often visited Paradise stores where Uncle Anwar, Princess Jeeta, and Jamila lived. Their family as an alternative family for Karim because Jeeta and Jamila were the special place for Karim to ‘taking a bath’. In this case, Karim felt a sense of his sex. Then, the heterosexuality of Amir Karim was when he met and had sex with a girl named Eleanor. Between homosexual and heterosexual has relation. A homosexual person certainly has a dilemma, because homosexual as a “rebellious” where homosexual partner reject the norm in the society. Heterosexual as “conformist” where the partner of heterosexuality are accepted in the society because their norm cultural sex. Karim started to get dilemma in the beginning of his twenties, he never fear anything including sex intimacy. So, when he was twenty
he realizes that his body is growing up, he become puberty. And he wants to repair his guilt. Then, he tried to love someone girl, Eleanor.

c) Bisexuality

Bisexuality is significant attraction both sexes, men and women. Bisexual person more physically attracted to men and more romantically or emotionally attracted to women. In the Buddha of suburbia, Karim was hard to decide between men or woman. Karim was like both boys and girls. He was like physic of the men, the strong bodies of men, and the man’s back. But he was also like women breasts, women’s long smooth legs. Karim loved the softness of the women, her massage and her touch. So, it means that Karim like women emotionally, and romantically.

3. The Expression of the Confusion

The researcher also classifies the expression of the confusion of sexual orientation reflected in Hanif Kureishi’s the Buddha of Suburbia novel (1990). It will prove by the table below:

a) Homosexual Perspective

Homosexual perspective said that the word choice “Buddhist” to named the homosexual person. The phrase “Sexual interest” means Karim had the absolute authority to choose the sexual orientation that he wanted. “Wear-less, Dress-less” means the interaction between Karim and Charlie to start their activity in sex. The phrase “Pearly Queen” in homosexual perspective means Charlie was clever and cool in every part of Charlie’s soul. Homosexual people saw their partner of sex was perfect, handsome face and style.

b) Heterosexual Perspective

Heterosexual perspective chooses the phrase “Happy fucker” to explain Karim which always had regular sex with women happily. “Greedy Pleasure” means the desires of Karim’s sex which always
greedy. “Fucking doctor” means if Karim would be a doctor as his father suggested to, he would be the fucking doctor. “Real shaker” means another name of Karim that given by Jamila. The symbol “Baby face” means the prostitute women around Anerley Park, “footballer” means another name of Karim. The image of “gift” in the novel means Marlene, Pyke’s wife. Heterosexual was when he felt enjoy, strong emotion, physical feeling that never felt like that before. In Karim’s perspective about heterosexual, he argued that felt in love with boys or girls were easy but not to fall out love. In bisexual perspective, people like the strong bodies of men, his back, but he also likes the women breasts, touching, and long smooths legs. The sentences: “And Charlie, my love for him was unusual as love goes; it was not generous. I admired him more than anyone but I didn’t wish him well. It was that I preferred him to me and wanted to be him. I coveted his talents, face, and style. I wanted to wake up with them all transferred to me.” (P: 15) That sentence means that Karim loved Charlie, and to be homosexual person because he thought that Charlie was perfect, talented, handsome face and style. Karim wanted to be like him. The sentence: “He was a boy upon whom nature had breathed such beauty-his nose was straight, his cheeks so hollow, his lips such rosebuds-that people were afraid to approach him, and he was often alone. Men and boys got erections just being in the same room as him.” (P: 9). That sentence means that the Karim perspective about men is the men has beauty if he has pointed nose, hollow cheeks, and sexy lips as rosebuds.

c) Bisexual Perspective

The sentence: “It was unusual I knew the way I wanted to sleep with boys as well as a girls. I like strong bodies and the back of boys necks. I like bring handled by men, their fists pulling me;
and I liked objects-the ends of brushes, pens, fingers-up my arse. But, I like cunts and breasts, all women softness, long smooth legs and the way women dressed (P: 55).” means that the Karim perspective about his confusion as a bisexual person. He liked the strong bodies of men, his back, but he also likes the women breasts, and her long smooth legs. The sentence: “It was unusual I knew the way I wanted to sleep with boys as well as girls.” (P: 55) means Karim knew the way when he slept with boys and girl. Sleep in this case means the sex. The sentence: “..But my mind was still on Charlie and I couldn’t think of anyone else not even Jammie. I felt it would be heartbreaking to have to choose one another When I did think about it I considered myself lucky that I could go to parties and go home with anyone from either sex.” (P: 55) means the confusion of Karim had shown, in his bisexual perspective he argued that he cannot decided one another. His heart would break if he should choose one. It was so difficult for him. He believe that, if he love both men and women, he could go all parties with anyone either boys or girls and getting his self lucky. But actually, he wanted to get treatment into his brain, because he pretended that he was pervert, and abnormal.

4. The Causes of the Confusion of Sexual Orientation

   All of confusion above caused by several factors, based on primary data source, the researcher mentions the cause of the confusion of sexual orientation that happened in the major character, Amir Karim.

   a) Environment

   The first cause is the environment. The environment classify into 4 parts; home, school, society and workplace. Home environment of Karim is shaped Karim confusion. In his childhood, Karim should flirt boys and girls. He suggested by his father to be an actor. In adolescence he became an actor and its support Karim’s confusion,
because the workplace of Karim was full of sex, gay and lesbian pubs, drugs, and money. In home environment he also met with Charlie, a boy he fell in love with.

In Karim’s puberty he was in ‘sexual school’, when full of sex too. Karim had squeezed many penises at school. In the society he met several boys and girls, so it made Karim more confuse, he would be in love with men or women. In London, when Karim started to adult in his twenties, he wanted the city belonged to him, so, his follow the people activity in his society. As explained before, that London is city where full of pub and parties. In the parties, there were boys and girls would fuck each other whether did not met before.

In the workplace environment Karim met with Eleanor, an upper class girl who he fall in love with, but because of the differentiation of society class, their relationship was not going on. His confusion arose again.

b) Divorce

The second cause is divorce. The family’s condition also has important role in shaping people to get confuse about his or her sexual orientation. The family consists of heterosexual members. The family is recognized as the primary group to which individuals turn for emotional and financial security as well as safety and comfort when facing negative pressures from the larger society. In the novel the Buddha of Suburbia in Karim’s family, his father and his mother, not had emotional feeling again. It is began when Karim puberty, when he was seventeen years old. It happened because another women, Eva. Karim difficult to accept that the father is really love in Eva. The illness in Karim’s family was well on into Karim’s adult. Family is safety place where people feel under pressure, have many problem, doubt, confusion. Karim’s family was not safety again; it cannot be a
safety place when Karim got confusion in his life. The divorcement of Karim’s parents made Karim more on under pressure. His family was isolated each other. He wanted to leave home again. So, it made him never fear of everything, including his intimacy, he look for the happiness by following his feelings and desires.

c) Religion and Spirituality

The last causes are religion and spirituality. Religion and spirituality are major constructs in virtually any culture. Try to think of one argument that exists against extending the full rights and benefits assumed by homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual people to that is not rooted in a religiously based belief. That theory reflected in the Buddha of Suburbia, Amir Karim who bisexual person was not rooted by religious as based belief. In the age over twenty, indicated that Karim was not rooted by any religion. Haroon is Muslim, but in the novel cannot be seen that Karim profess the father’s religion. Karim rejected the religion because he thought that everything the people did in life should be responsible after the people died. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual person rarely rooted by religion, because they reject the society’s norm, prohibition and command in religion. Religion and spirituality is the main aspect of human life. Without both of them the human life is not well-directed. Karim argued that 99% of human religion have decayed and irrelevant. He believed that religion can be replaced by materialism.

D. Conclusion

Based on structural analysis, it showed that the all of structural elements in the novel have the message for the reader, the confusion of sexual orientation is determined by environmental factor. Hanif Kureishi brings the characters and characterization in such way to prove the confusion of sexual orientation. The author brings the setting of place in London, because London
society is appropriate place to support Karim’s confusion. Setting of time is in 1960s up to 1970s because, in that time London was bombing, so, there are limited education and free of sex. The author draw plot in such way to make the story clear from the story began and developed, the conflict raised, up to climax. All of stories in the plot draw the development of Karim confusion in determining his sexual orientation. The author takes the first person point of view because he is as the person who knows everything in the story. Style is bring in such way because makes the story of the novel more beautiful in language, interesting and meaningful.

Based on a sexual orientation theory analysis, it is evidence that in determining sexual orientation, people find the confusion. Human has their own authority to choose their sexual partner in their sexual orientation. In choosing the sexual orientation sometime people got the confusion, as the condition of the major character in the novel. Karim got confuse to determine his sexual orientation. Sexuality is took the important part in human life. Human sexual orientation is divided into three parts; hetero sexual, homo sexual and bisexual. Each of sexual orientation has the different perspective. Homosexuality of people is shaped by biological and environmentally factors.

Heterosexuality is the majority of human sexuality. Heterosexuality is the psychological process when people establish their real normal sex partner which consists of male and female. Bisexual people more physically attracted to men and more romantically attracted to women. In Karim case, He attracted to the physic of men, but also he attracted to the softness of the women.

The confusion of sexual orientation that expressed in the novel also had shown that Karim cannot decide his sexual orientation. The decision is so hard for him. His confusion caused by many factors; environment, divorce and religion. Environment consist of home environment, school environment, society and workplace environment, start from childhood until adolescence.
In puberty he school at sexual school. In the university, the girl around Karim more talked about prostitution, abortion, heroin, sex and drugs. In the society, liberated environment which free and full of gay-lesbian pubs and drugs can be the cause of the confusion sexual orientation. Karim’s workplace environment as an actor also was not far from sexuality. Family is primary group where individual turn for emotional and financial security, but it was not same with Karim’s family. Karim’s family was divorced, not save, full of suffer, and had isolated. It happened since Karim puberty, until adolescence his family was still in suffer then divorce. Karim’s confusion cannot solve.

In Karim’s view religion just inexplicable, childish and it just make self destructive and terrified. It proved that Karim as bisexual which confuse his sexual orientation is not rooted by any religion.
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