



THE LAST WORD ON BIOGRAPHY: AUTOCRITOGRAPHY OF KUREISHI¹

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Abstract – Hanif Kureishi is an author of multicultural origin with multi-layered cultural accumulations. He takes up various identity issues in his works through a kind of hybrid storytelling mingled with numerous autobiographical references. His fictional characters bear great similarities not only to himself but also to his family members. This characteristic of his fiction is observed in his latest work *The Last Word* (2013) as well. In this novel, some specific events and memories can be related to his individual experiences. However, these are in disguise either as the memories of Harry, a would-be biographer who pins his hopes on a biographical work, or Mamoon, an eminent postcolonial author who is losing his fame. Kureishi cryptically confesses his own experiences in his novel, which makes this novel autocritographic in nature. Autocritography is briefly defined as a self-reflexive discursive strategy. There is a general sense of autobiographical references in such works, and thus it has a crucial narrative potential, especially for those marginalized and cast out of the society. It allows Others to narrate their stories. They voice out their stance and identity in society. This study will analyse Kureishi's specific tale-telling as an autocritography by which he voices out his concerns, which will also contribute to our understanding of the novel.

Keywords: Autocritography, Kureishi, other, cryptical disguise, identity, *The Last Word*.

BİYOGRAFİ ÜSTÜNE "SON SÖZ": KUREISHI'NİN OTOKRİTOGRAFİSİ

Özet – Hanif Kureishi, çok katmanlı kültürel birikimlere sahip çok kültürlü bir yazardır. Eserlerinde çeşitli kimlik meselelerini, sayısız otobiyografik referansla harmanlanmış bir tür melez hikâye anlatımı üzerinden tema olarak alır. Kurgusal karakterleri sadece kendisiyle değil, aile üyeleriyle de büyük benzerlikler taşır. Kurgusunun bu özelliği, son eseri *The Last Word* de(2013) de görülmektedir. Bu romandaki bazı özel olaylar ve anılar onun bireysel deneyimleriyle ilişkilendirilebilir. Bununla birlikte, bunlar ya umutlarını biyografik bir çalışmaya adanmış bir biyografi yazarı olan Harry'nin ya da ününü kaybetmekte olan seçkin bir sömürge sonrası yazar olan Mamoon'un anıları olarak gizlenmiştir. Kureishi, romanında kendi deneyimlerini şifreli bir şekilde itiraf eder, bu da bu romanı doğası gereği otokritografik hale getirir. Otokritografi kısaca özdeşimsel bir söylemsel strateji olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu tür eserlerde genel bir otobiyografik gönderme duygusu vardır ve bu nedenle özellikle marjinalleştirilen ve egemen toplumun dışında bırakılanlar için çok önemli bir anlatı potansiyeline sahiptir. Ötekilerin hikayelerini anlatmasına izin verir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, Kureishi'nin endişelerini dile getirdiği bir otokritografi olarak kendine özgü hikâye anlatımını analiz edecektir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Otokritografi, Kureishi, öteki, kriptik gizlenme, kimlik, Son Söz.

Introduction

The novelist and playwright, Hanif Kureishi skilfully mixes different genres and the elements of popular culture in his works. His engagement in various formal expressions creates a single context for his fictional characters with diverse backgrounds and from distinct parts of society (Kaleta, 1998: 254). He “laces his stories with music, sex, and drugs among the yuppies, buppies, immigrants, fundamentalists, feminists, racists, idealists, terrorists and families who are his characters” (Kaleta, 1998: 247). The main reason behind this diversity could be explained regarding his multicultural roots and hybrid identity. Born and bred in London, he has lived in England with a hybrid identity because of his hybrid parentage; an immigrant father and an English mother. His multicultural origin and his life “under a reconstituted colonialism [...] dominated by white political, social, and cultural power” have led him to have a sight on the various identity issues and layered cultural accumulation (Kureishi, 2013: 107). His work is important as it, drawing from first-hand experience, analyses the working, maintenance, and reproduction of the dominant power that secures a superior status to white Britishness inured to historical changes (Sharmani et al, 2012: 4).

Kureishi’s hybrid identity makes him open to racial discrimination not only from the white population but also from other groups. Thus, he “offers a hybrid storytelling of today’s myriad realities” as an indispensable result of his ethnic roots and his being a second generation (Kaleta, 1998: 254). Yet, “there was no mistake about [their] not really belonging in Britain” (Kureishi, 1986: 134–35). With his parental diversity and early experiences in a colonial world, he “identifies immigration as a central theme of his writing” (Kaleta, 1998: 195). Thus, he has always been an unconventional writer in his writing style. His hybrid identity and ambivalent stance in society lead him to write sometimes with biographical and/or autobiographical references through his characters. The main point of this article is, likewise, to identify his recent work *The Last Word* as an autocritography by which he voices out his thoughts and emotions through his fictitious selves. He disguises himself after his characters of the story; both as an eminent postcolonial author who is losing his fame and as a would-be biographer who pins his hopes on a biographical work. His hybrid storytelling indicates autobiographical references I am suggesting the idea that this practice can be an example of the term autocritography.

Beginning from his early works, Kureishi has drawn heavily on his personal experience in his fictional narratives. There are striking similarities in his works both to himself and to his circle of family and friends,

although these similarities are not favoured by his family members. The most indignant of them is his sister: Yasmin Kureishi. Quite clearly and repeatedly, she has complained about her brother’s extensively deliberate characterisation of his relatives and even intimate relationships. In an interview, she explicitly declares the similarities in his works, for instance, the parents in *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Uncle Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), an ex-girlfriend, Sally, in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1988), an ex-partner and the mother of his two children, Tracey Scoffield, in *Intimacy* (1998), and herself, portrayed as a two-dimensional character in the film *The Mother* (2003).²

These works and most of his literary career reflect the issues and problems of class, race, and identity, and indispensably, there are (auto)biographical references. In *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), the first novel by Kureishi, Karim is, for example, depicted as the symbolic embodiment of the cultural synthesis of two countries, namely Britain and India, and searches for an identity and attempts to actualize himself in London (Bağlama 2019:85). Obviously, Karim is a character like its creator. Besides, in the struggle for an identity, Karim and his father’s relationship is also at work and there appear parental references. Likewise, in *The Black Album* (1995), the focus is on the projection of cultural dislocation, confronting not only a postcolonial immigrant but also keeping the following generations of his/her British-born offspring in the loop to reflect on complicated lives again like theirs. *My Beautiful Laundrette*, his screenplay, challenges the cultural differences under the aegis of cultural diversity with a character- so-called Uncle Omar – “portrayed as an alcoholic in a bedsit” (Yasmin Kureishi, 2008). *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1988) gives the search for the lives and loves of Sammy, his wife Rosie, and his father Rafi. While Sammy and Rosie are like Sally and Hanif, the father figure, again, is a complex one. As can be inferred, Kureishi uses his family members, especially his father. Moreover, his “generically hybrid memoir”, *My Ear at His Heart: Reading My Father* (2004), narrates an ambivalent relationship with his father (Ranasinha, 2018: 4). Putting all these references concisely, Kureishi has materialised his life and his memories. His works contain extensively autobiographical features. Perhaps, *Intimacy* (1998) reveals Kureishi at his most naked and complex confession about his sexual desires, infidelity, and break-up of his wife and two children. The novel has been categorised as a memoir doubtlessly (Thomas, 2005: 139–45; Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 171–79). They have highlighted their claim with the plot in disguise of Kureishi’s life. However, Kureishi has protested this claim:

² (<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/keep-me-out-of-your-novels-hanif-kureishi-s-sister-has-had-enough-790839.html>).

I consciously wrote *Intimacy* in the form of a confession and was also aware that it might be read as “Hanif Kureishi telling the truth about a relationship break-up.” That too is a literary construct: it is artificial. All of one’s work is autobiographical to the extent that it reflects one’s interests. [...] It operates as a construct – written in the first person, constructed as a confession [...] I wanted a book people would play within that way. It is a text, not me. I am not the text. (Yousaf, 2002: 25)

For the hotbed of discussions, it is possible to figure out the question of pure reflection of the writer or a fictionalised life of a middle-aged man as follows: Jay is like an alter ego of its creator and/or he is a mouthpiece of its creator’s thoughts and feelings sprang from the mind of Kureishi who is quite familiar to such due to his life experience at his present psychic position. In this sense, it quite sounds like an autobiography. To pick up on discussions on familial references in the works of Kureishi, numerous articles and interviews have discussed the autobiographical elements in his works. Moreover, his family has had word on this issue, and they even have condemned Kureishi for his excessive, exaggerated, and misuse of autobiographical elements. His sister’s conflicting claims about this is that he has left a “false impression of [their] family life” and has asserted that their grandfather “was not a cloth cap working-class person but owned three shops and her parents were well off enough to send her to ballet school” (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 15). Kureishi’s mother endorsed Yasmin’s account after a while: “I suppose it’s trendy nowadays for an author to pretend they had a working-class background, but Hanif had everything he wanted as a child” (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 15).

As pointed out by Kureishi’s mother, it may seem trendy to write about oppressed and dark memories, and it seems that he distorts the reality, but “not every act does what it seeks to do, or does anything at all” (Huddart, 2007: 15). In other words, as “a writer [who] is loved by the strangers and hated by his family”, he writes with his skilled storytelling techniques in his works in which he mingles autobiographical elements and his storytelling techniques (Kureishi, 2014: 92). Through the transition from autobiographical elements to differential subjectivity and denial of reality, Kureishi writes his hidden personal issues embedded between the lines and other characters’ lives. Through this, Kureishi explores his selfhood and identity. His reconstructed identity results in a hybrid and an ambivalent identity as a response to his ethnic diversity. Hence, his works bear autobiographical elements but within a blurred frame of narration.

According to Huddart, “if the fictive qualities of autobiography have been blurred ever more productively, its theoretical qualities have also come in for increased exploration (2007: 14). Therefore, Kureishi’s works resist the easy categorization as autobiography. Especially, *The Last Word* is distanced from the autobiography genre but nonetheless bears autobiographical references that are projected onto other characters. In this context, *The Last Word* has more of an autocritographical nature than autobiography. He wants to say what he desires to say under the technique of autocritography. The main reason behind this may be the fact that he is a postcolonial writer who is born and bred in London. As explained earlier, with his parental diversity and early experiences in a colonial world, he experiences the sense of immigration and reflects the very same theme in his writing. “He dreams of someplace better burns in his character and the quest to find the dream dominates his stories” (Kaleta, 1998: 195). His hybrid identity and ambivalent stance in society lead him to write in the characteristics of autobiography through his characters and that makes his recent work an autocritography by which he voices out his thoughts and emotions:

I come from two worlds [...] there was my Pakistani family, [...] Then there was my English family [...] And having an Indian father [...] so finding my way through all that [...] I wrote all those books to make sense of it (Leith, 1997:8).

Such confessions “might encourage one to read Kureishi’s work as a species of autobiography, a temptation which is encouraged -wittingly or not — in a number of other ways” (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 14). However, it is necessary to note for the latest novel that “much of it describes experiences similar to the author’s” (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 14). In this novel, some parallel events and memories can be related to the experiences of Kureishi, but all of them are disguised as either the memories of his fictional characters; Harry or Mamoon. Kureishi does not use the narrator as his voice and does not use Harry’s thoughts with the pronoun ‘I.’ Rather, he uses a third-person narration which is close to the characteristic of his storytelling. He cryptically communicates his own experiences through his characters. Therefore, as claimed earlier in this study, Kureishi’s specific tale-telling in his latest novel can be seen as an autocritography.

Last Word: Autocritography?

The term, autocritography, is coined by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Michael Awkward defines it as a discursive strategy based upon “an autobiography of a critical

concept” (1999: 7). It takes on a different shade of meaning in the context of how one uses and represents it: Autocritography is a self-reflexive, self-consciously academic act that foregrounds aspects of the genre typically dissolved into authors’ always strategic self-portraits. Autocritography in other words is an account of individual, social, and institutional conditions that help produce a scholar and, hence, his or her professional concerns. Although the intensity of investigation of any of these conditions may vary widely, their self-consciously interactive presence distinguishes autocritography from other forms of autobiographical recall (Awkward, 1999: 7).

Influenced by Henry Louis Gates Jr., Awkward situates that the term implements autobiographical recall, textual criticism, and institutional analysis in a *self-reflexive, self-consciously academic* manner bridging the personal, social, and institutional conditions supporting to produce of the *scholar*. Wenshu Lee, “utilizes autocritography to create a layered reflection of her marginalities and privileges as she negotiates and turns them into scholarly inquiry” (2003: 164). I attempt to apply autocritography as a codification of literary stance and personal dilemmas in the depictions of the experiences giving a shape to the academic life of a postcolonial writer. My primary interest is in how the cryptical confessions are disguised in sentences in the re-telling of the experiences of Kureishi’s fictitious selves. Since the word choices about how to talk are important in building unique identities, via autocritography technique, Kureishi’s self-reflexive words drawing on his memories and experiences influence the perception of both reader and himself. However, telling and retelling his problematic memories create tension in the atmosphere of narration. This tension that reflects the frustration of Kureishi unblocks his hidden biography.

Therefore, his latest novel is also ostensibly more personal than his previous works. He combines his artistic storytelling with his talented third-person narrative of his autobiographical elements under the domain of autocritography to reflect the situation of a postcolonial writer. At this very point, it is highly necessary to mention the rumours about the novel. It is believed that Kureishi’s novel is about V.S. Naipaul and his biography writer Patrick French in the disguises of Mammon Azam as ageing and a once famous writer and Harry Johnson as his young biographer respectively. The references in the novel are quite applicable to Naipaul and his stance in the literary world. Among many, the admiration of the young writer, Harry’s, of Mammon bears the autobiographical references (Tekin, 2020: 52): “Indian-born Mammon Azam, a novelist, essayist and playwright Harry had admired since he was [...] a kid for whom writers were gods, heroes, rock stars” (Kureishi, 2014: 2).

Although the novel is believed to be a disguised narration of Naipaul under the name Mammon who is not as popular as used to be because of his “too cerebral, unyielding and harrowing” attitudes and ruined economy and “fiscal turnaround”, the focus is on the character of Harry who is going to write a “controversial biography” to revive success for everyone (Kureishi, 2014: 5). As suggested by *Guardian*, “Harry [...] often seems to merge with aspects of Kureishi’s public persona” and this biography of him “would be an ‘event,’ a ‘big bang,” and thus with these rumours about Naipaul, Harry – Kureishi – will be on “television documentary, interviews, a reading tour” (Kureishi, 2014: 4).

To begin with the novel, Kureishi as a hybrid writer criticizes the idea that immigrants spoil England and her environment. He reflects his disagreement with the colonial ideology toward non-English residents of England. He “anatomises the quasi-colonial attitudes, institutional structures and social hierarchies which subordinate such minorities within contemporary British society” (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 3). He achieves his critical voice through autocritography by which he creates “an account of individual, social, and institutional conditions that help” him to reveal his “professional concerns” through his persona Harry (Awkward, 1998: 7). On the very first page of the novel, it is stated that:

Peaceful England, untouched by war, revolution, famine, ethnic or religious disturbance. Yet if the newspapers were correct, Britain was an overcrowded little island, teeming with busy immigrants, many clinging to the edges of the country, as on a small boat about to capsize. Not only that, thousands of asylum seekers, and refugees, desperate to escape disturbance in the rest of the chaotic world, we’re attempting to cross the border. Some were packed in lorries or hung from the undercarriages of trains; many were tiptoeing across the English Channel on the tightropes slung across the sea, while others were fired from cannons [...] Yet, to Harry now, it seemed as if the government was deliberately injecting a strong shot of anxiety into the body politic because all he could see was a green and pleasant England: healthy cattle, neat fields, trimmed trees, bubbling streams, and the shining, early spring sky above. It didn’t even look as though you could get a curry for miles (Kureishi, 2014: 1-2).

Revealing his professional concern about the social and institutional account of England at the beginning of the novel, Kureishi expresses his real thoughts on his major preoccupations as a hybrid writer. He identifies a serious malaise in national life and self-image, reflected primarily in the difficulties that Britain has experienced in adapting to a diminished status in the modern world and in

throwing over anachronistic attitudes towards the nation, race, ethnicity, and cultural difference (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 4). He implies his major preoccupations in the post-colonial period with his sarcastic tone projected as a conspiracy theory of English politics.

Beginning with deduction, at the very beginning, Kureishi signals that he personalizes the fictional world of Harry and Mamoon. From the social account, he shifts to personal accounts because Harry “had been chosen to tell the *whole* story” (Kureishi, 2014: 1) of himself, and he asserts that “it’ll be *my* book” (Kureishi, 2014: 17). Indeed, these are the codes of autocritography because italicised words are one way of telling an authentic voice. Not only are these hints but also their undeniable references to his own life exemplified through the Mamoon’s life. It is written that Mamoon’s financial problems pushed him into unyielding, the process of selling his archive to an American university” (Kureishi, 2014: 4). As can be remembered from the headlines of the newspapers, in 2013, Kureishi lost his life savings. He intended to cover “the ups and downs of being a writer”³ with his decision to sell his archive to the British Library at his 60. In 2014, the British Library gave the announcement of acquiring the archive of Kureishi’s documents spanning 40 years of his writing life. These documents include diaries, notebooks, and drafts of Kureishi. Meanwhile, Kureishi declared that the British Library announced it had acquired his literary archive for £100,000, including the diaries he has kept since he was a teenager.⁴ Thereby, through autocritography, Kureishi reveals his own life by “diverting games of I-spy-Naipaul in *The Last Word*”. It bears deeper hindrances to the career of Kureishi but again with a diverted angle. He hides his fears and hesitation about his professional writing career through Harry. It is the most challenging hint of his biographical element that is exemplified as his self-destruct. Harry is on the verge of teaching creative writing if he could not achieve success as a biography writer.

So, reach the new level, man, or you’ll be so fucked you’ll have to get work as an academic. Or even worse...’ ‘Worse? what could be worse than a former polytechnic? Rob paused and glanced out of the window before delivering the news. ‘You’d have to teach creative writing.

Please, no! (Kureishi, 2014: 9).

While describing his career as a creative writing teacher, Harry is identified as Kureishi. The autocritographical

hint is given through Harry’s fear of a might-be lecturer of creative writing. This fear is supported by another one; the failure of Mamoon’s biography project. These fears given are actually problematised by Kureishi because of a hidden – cryptographical – scream of its writer. This condition also reflects Kureishi’s biographical note about being a professor of creative writing at Kingston University where he is a writer in residence in 2013⁵. These masked confessions are not limited to the financial crisis of the writer, besides these explicit ones there are the new additions to old accusations related to family ties discussed at the very beginning of the article. He hides his intimate relationship with his family members between the lines once more.

Since *autocritography* is a *self-reflexive, self-consciously writing style that typically dissolved into authors’ always strategic self-portraits*, Kureishi disguises his very intimate memories as the stories of Harry and Mamoon. He projects his relationship with his father onto the memories of Harry and Mamoon. In fact, “the father-son relationship is a central theme of Kureishi’s work, partly reflecting his complex relationship to his father, himself a frustrated writer of fiction”, and likewise, in this novel, he writes about his relationship with his father (Moore-Gilbert, 2001: 13). He questions their relationship through autocritography. He crypticises the influence of his father through both the fathers of Harry- who despises his son for being a writer: “Harry, you’d have become a politician, a diplomat, an economist or a banker” (Kureishi, 2014: 31), and of Mamoon whose “schoolteacher father had trained him hard to win scholarships, [was traumatised by being] sent to an English public school and then to Oxford” (Kureishi, 2014: 43). Although we follow the two polarised influences of the fathers on their sons, it is the Kureishi’s father-son dilemma questioned implicitly. Made public by the interviews he gave, Kureishi’s father is quite determinant in his proficiency:

My dad wanted me to be a writer. He was a novelist himself; [...] He told me that being a writer was the best job you could have. That’s what he wanted me to be, and I wanted to be that too (Kaleta, 1998: 19).

Kureishi expresses this situation in his interviews and in the novel, he recaps this parental influence: “Dad educated us. He called it his only duty. It is commendable” (Kureishi, 2014: 56). However, this attitude is distorted by the problems and crises of his mid-age period. In fact, concerning the family issues, Kureishi puts forward the ageing issues of both Harry and Mamoon. In his analysis of the unhappy mid-age days of

³ Brignall, Miles; Jones, Rupert (3 May 2013). “Author Hanif Kureishi loses life savings to suspected fraud”. *The Guardian*.

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/22/hanif-kureishi-archive-acquired-british-library>

⁵ “Q&A with Hanif Kureishi”, *The Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 14 November 2013.

his characters, he wonders “if his weird adolescent sexuality was a picture of his father’s confusions” (Kureishi, 2014: 167) or a subliminal hatred “to infuriate [his] father who never let [him] go with his expectations (Kureishi, 2014: 135). Under the influence of the father-son relationship, he moves towards growing up and relatively personal issues.

The pains of ageing (and growing up) are most apparent in Kureishi’s treatment of personal relations. [...] the mid-life crisis is often expressed in the breakdown of long-term relationships. (Gilbert-Moore, 2001: 154-5).

As a characteristic of Kureishi, towards the end of the novel, these ageing issues and the breakdown of long-term relationships are revisited in parallel with Kureishi’s own life story. In the novel, Harry breaks up with his long-term relationship and leaves his twin boys behind. There is a direct reference to the wife and twin sons of Kureishi whom he broke with and to his new love affair. He revisits and interrogates his mid-life crises once more: “what was a person then, but a self which travelled between private fantasy and public recreation?” (Kureishi, 2014: 61). Through these questionings of self, Kureishi gives hints from his own life, however, “he would not present the only facts; he wanted a more novelistic, personal tone, presenting the writer in his later years, puffed with success and honours” (Kureishi, 2014:107).

Conclusion

With the autobiographical elements embedded into the novel with the third person narration, Kureishi puts a distance between the autobiographical novels and then turns the novel into an autocritographical novel. He projects his memoirs and reveals the stance of a postcolonial writer in England and “in the shadow of Mamoon’s personality, he had allowed his identity to be attacked” (Kureishi, 2014: 147). Moreover, by using Harry as his literary mouthpiece of himself, Kureishi fulfils the requirements of an autocritography, because using a western originated mouthpiece implies the “self-reflexive and self-consciously academic act that foregrounds aspects of the genre typically dissolved into an author’s always strategic self-portraits” (Awkward, 7). It is necessary to stress the uniqueness of Kureishi in the field of autocritography since he puts forward the characteristic of autocritography via the pen of a Western biography writer. As stated in the novel clearly: “biographer – someone who sought the truth of another and wished to remake them in his own words” (Kureishi, 72). Therefore, this novel may not be a biography of V.S. Naipaul as claimed by many critics, it is not an autobiography of Kureishi obviously, but it is a postcolonial autocritography through which Kureishi writes an account of a postcolonial writer and his social conditions, and literary stance of a postcolonial writer in England to produce his professional concerns. As Kaleta asserts, “literary tradition gives him resonance. Honesty

in storytelling gives him a vocation. His hybrid aesthetic gives him the goal. Hanif Kureishi sees his world in jump cuts and rapid tracking shots writes with poetic rhythm and composes life in language” (1998, 255). Kureishi’s unique, honest and hybrid storytelling gives him enough artistic creativity to compose autobiographical elements of a writer with poetic rhythm to reveal the post-colonial world of postcolonial writers. He turns to “be ghostwriting the autobiography of” (Kureishi, 2014: 282) himself. Evoking the uncanny with ghost reference, Kureishi depicts the repressed past that entails a “narrative struggle” (Bhabha, 1990: 295) between subjective experiences which have been repressed and cryptographic purgation attributed to words to create reality. Thereby, this autocritographic narrative of his identity reflects an even more impressive and persuasive experience. As an “outsider insider,” Kureishi will always be dangerously enigmatic and playful in his style. As seen in his creative motto: “No secrets were safe from me” (Hall, 2015: 449).

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The novelist and playwright, Hanif Kureishi skilfully mixes different genres and the elements of popular culture in his works. The main reason behind this diversity could be explained regarding his multicultural roots and hybrid identity. Born and bred in London, he has lived in England with a hybrid identity because of his hybrid parentage; a Pakistani immigrant father and an English mother. Kureishi's hybrid identity makes him open to racial discrimination not only from the white population but also from other groups. Thus, he "offers a hybrid storytelling of today's myriad realities" (Kaleta, 1998: 254) as an indispensable result of his ethnic roots. His hybrid identity and ambivalent stance in society lead him to write sometimes with biographical and/or autobiographical references through his characters.

Beginning from his early works, Kureishi has often drawn from his own life experience in his fictional narratives. There are striking similarities in his works both to himself and to his various relatives, friends, ex-partners, and parents, although these similarities are not favoured by his family members. In other words, as "a writer [who] is loved by the strangers and hated by his family" (Kureishi, 2014: 92), he writes with his skilled storytelling techniques in his works in which he mingles autobiographical elements and his storytelling techniques. Through the transition from autobiographical elements to differential subjectivity and denial of reality, Kureishi writes his hidden personal issues embedded between the lines and other characters' lives. Through this, Kureishi explores his selfhood and identity. His reconstructed identity results in a hybrid and an ambivalent identity as a response to his ethnic diversity. His recent novel, *The Last Word* is distanced from the autobiography genre but nonetheless bears autobiographical references that are projected onto other characters. In this context, *The Last Word* has more of an autocritographical nature than autobiography. He wants to say what he desires to say under the technique of autocritography.

To sum up, Hanif Kureishi is an author of multicultural origin with multi-layered cultural accumulations. He takes up as themes various identity issues in his works through a kind of hybrid storytelling mingled with numerous autobiographical references. His fictional characters bear great similarities not only to himself but also to his family members. This characteristic of his fiction is observed in his latest work *The Last Word* (2013) as well. In this novel, some specific events and memories can be related to his individual experiences. However, these are in disguise either as the memories of Harry, a would-be biographer who pins his hopes on a biographical work, or Mamoon, an eminent postcolonial author who is losing his fame. Kureishi cryptically confesses his own experiences in his novel, which makes this novel autocritographic in nature. Autocritography is briefly defined as a self-reflexive discursive strategy. There is a general sense of autobiographical references in such works, and thus it has a crucial narrative potential, especially for those marginalized and cast out of the society. It allows Others to narrate their stories. They voice out their stance and identity in society. This study will analyse Kureishi's specific tale-telling as an autocritography by which he voices out his concerns, which will also contribute to our understanding of the novel.