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Visions of a New Britishness: Race, Class, and History

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Abstract

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Why is it important to explore the exclusion of black British individuals in the 21st century? Some would say that in an age where London houses millions of immigrants, black individuals are very much part of a British identity. However, by looking at the representation and illustration of racial exclusion in Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Suburbia and Zadie Smith's White Teeth, it becomes clear that the hisrotic exclusion of black individuals has persisted in British culture in a way that is unlike any other country. This paper is committed to exploring the ways in which both Kureishi and Smith's novels work to expand the existing essentialized narrative of history. This expansion is a way of creating space where black individuals are included into a national identity. By looking at the literary and structural aspects of each novel, we can see what an inclusive Britishness might look like for both authors. While the analysis of these novels does not totally push these de-racialized space into fruition, they certainly take steps toward visualizing a future in which racial differences are not at the forefront of identity creation.

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Introduction

> *This book has placed an implicit emphasis on the exclusionary effects of racism. This position must be modified, for though blacks are represented in contemporary British politics and culture as external to and estranged from the imagined community that is the nation, those representations are, like the "racial" essences on which they rely, precarious constructions, discursive figures which obscure and mystify deeper relationships.* (Gilroy 153)
>
> *Blacks born, nurtured, and schooled in this country are, in significant measure, British even as their presence redefines the meaning of the term. The language and structures of racial politics, locked as they are into a circular journey between immigration as problem and repatriation as solution, prevent this from being seen. …* (Gilroy 155)

In *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Paul Gilroy outlines the central points from which the exploration of the relationship of race and nation begins. These two quotations serve as a basis for an exploration of race relations in 20th century Britain. In the first quotation, Gilroy identifies racism's power to exclude certain persons from British nationalism. Furthermore, he notes that black individuals are excluded in terms of constructed stereotypical identities. There is an essentialism that remains within racism and exclusion. Secondly, Gilroy notes the transformative nature of the black individual within British culture. While the black immigrant is indeed transformed by attempts at assimilation, he or she also has the ability to transform this imagined community or nation. According to Gilroy, these transformations are initially apparent through African and African American influences on "musics, dress, dance, fashion and language" (155). He also claims that this power to alter and change the notion of an essential British identity on a larger scale is continually ignored and minimized by any official or authoritative narrative voice in regards to the nation.

A history of imperialism and colonization has caused black immigrants and resulting generations of black British individuals to be excluded from a British national identity. In regards to British majority culture there seems to be an inability to attend to this exclusion with

hyphenated identities, as has happened in the United States. In Britain, language, history, classism, and general social structure endeavor to keep the marginalized within the margins. Gilroy claims that currently, the only way that black individuals enter into the arena of Britishness is by conforming to predefined constructions and essentialized characterizations of blackness. Yet, he goes on to insist that it is necessary and inevitable for blacks to be included within a British national understanding.

The relationship between racial and state identities that Gilroy amplifies became a point of interest as I became familiar with the works of black British authors. Black British literature by definition not only deals with the experiences of those who came from former colonies and their descendents but it also deals with the society that they continue to shape. Black British novels are transformative in that they "portray and purvey the transformation, reformation, and the repeated coming of age of British culture" (Stein xii). For my exploration of this relationship, I chose to closely study Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. Each novel focuses not only on the growth of adolescent protagonists but on the evolution of the racial landscape of London in the late 20th century. However, these novels do not focus entirely on the formation of individuals; instead the text works to symbolically create a space or sphere in which these black individuals belong and from which they begin to invoke a new British nationalism. As these individuals grow, change, and fight it become clear that their environment is also growing, changing, and fighting around them. According to Mark Stein, Kureishi and Smith represent a new wave of postcolonial writings. They are among the generation of writers that came after the first wave of postcolonial migrant writers like V.S. Naipaul or Salman Rushdie. As individuals born in Britain, not direct immigrants, their attachment to Britain is apparent while their origins are less so. This uncertainty or blurriness in

regards to origin layers onto their works, inviting the need for an understanding of race that is not strictly defined in terms of histories or places of origin. This attachment to Britishness also propels Kureishi and Smith to create a kind of imaginative intervention in their fiction. Their novels highlight the potential of the British narrative and imagine what it could be like to have a culture of inclusion.

It is necessary, before further outlining the project, to define several terms that are used sometimes in ways that depart from a conventional meaning. "Black," as in black British or black individuals, does not only refer to individuals of African heritage. Blackness designates a common experience of racism and marginalization. While these marginalized individuals often have darker skin tones, "black" can be used to describe anyone who is actively excluded from majority culture in Britain. Diaspora is a term that has become very important to the project as well, both in a historical sense that refers to dispersal by means of migration, immigration, or exile, but also in terms an inability to return to a homeland. Diaspora is a concept that has the power to place competing narratives together with regards to identity and origin. Through the juxtaposition of narratives we can contemplate and consider the answer to questions like: what is identity, what is home, and what is origin. Finally, we must look at a presentation of the normative frame of Britishness. The authors present a framework of Britishness created by essentialized narratives and then they have characters move through the framework and outside of it. Other times they directly comment on this framework and it causes the reader to notice it.

However, why study this exclusion now? Why is it important to explore the exclusion of individuals in the margins now? Some would say that in an age where London houses millions of immigrants, black individuals are very much part of a British identity. Yet, in looking at the representation and illustration of racial exclusion in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *White Teeth* it

becomes clear that the historic exclusion of non- Caucasian individuals from national identity has existed and persisted in British culture, in a way that is unlike any other country. It seems strange that in the country that abolished slavery first, and that has had colonies all over the globe, there should persist a reluctance to include certain individuals. However, early abolition is held as proof of a kind of liberalism in Britain. Also, there is nostalgia and mourning for the historic imperialism in which British men held some kind of racially based benevolence. This benevolence of missionaries teaching savages about Christianity, or introducing natives to industrialization and organization. There is a longing for the ordered world of imperial Britain and for the exoticism of non- white individuals. Both novels acknowledge this nostalgia as elderly white characters reminisce about colonial times. Britain is unique in the persistence of racial exclusion because it values these three things: the apparent liberalism that came with early abolition, their colonial benevolence and a historic ability to acquire exotic peoples and colonies. There is not another place that seems to have this combination of benevolence, liberalism and historical nostalgia to fuel race relations. Britain is different than South Africa where there is no benevolence, and the United States, where there was less of a push for the acquisition of colonies.

The presence of this unique circumstance for exclusion offers Kureishi and Smith the ability to create a new way of looking at race. These novels illustrate the need for individuals to find some place within society. Each creates a space in which individuals might find themselves outside of strictly defined and identitarian ideals of race. Kureishi's protagonist, Karim, and Smith's adolescent protagonists, Irie, Magid, and Millat, find there are multiple narratives and identities that can come from a black British experience. Both authors argue that the existence

and recognition of multiple narratives and a plurality of national existence in regards to race is the first step to exploring inclusion.

Unlike history, or philosophy, or other cultural forms, fiction is able to illustrate the ability of multiple narratives to interact with an overarching and authoritative majority narrative. Fiction, in literary form, can move away from streamlined, progressivist narratives to show more reflexive and circular narrative arcs. Fiction has the ability to play with time and depict alternate as well official scenarios. While film could have been used as a supplemental tool for this project, I found that close readings were necessary to fully explore the relationship of race and nation in Britain. Without words on a physical page syntax and diction can be lost and this is problematic because these are tools I used to study these particular works. Words on a page can also clearly depict interplay between old and new narratives in a way that is not explicit in other art forms. Fiction also creates a reflective distance between the issues raised and the readers. As readers we remain separate from the events in the text even though the text represents things that regularly happen. This separation is important because the reader is no longer a part of the problem but an observer who is able to dissect scenes and draw parallels. These insights can then be applied to scenarios in reality.

To prepare for this project, I took insights from several different fields. First, I looked to cultural studies, or the study of the intricacies and trends of contemporary mass culture. I researched issues that were brought to the field by Rita Felski, Paul Gilroy, and Stuart Hall. Felski claims that exclusion from nationalism was often based on race as well as class, and shows that many times race and class are closely related. Gilroy spoke of racial exclusion and Hall spoke of an understanding of diaspora in which history or homeland is not the primary focus.

Also, in my studies I realized that I needed become familiar with the development of postcolonial theory. To ground myself in this theory, I read essays by Homi K. Bhabha, Benedict Anderson, Nick Bently, and Mark Stein. Bhabha holds claims for the subversive power of the black man against the hegemonic majority. From Anderson, I learned about the "imagined community" that is the nation. Bently calls for a de-colonizing of the very language of the English, and Stein insisted that black British novels have the power to transform the majority narratives that surround them.

From these works I was able to create an archive from which I started to orient myself within the world of black British literature. In order to further ground my research, I conducted historical research on Enoch Powell, Jamaica, and Mangal Pandey. To this archive I added additional essays by Kureishi as well as biographical information regarding both authors. The intersections of cultural studies, postcolonial theory, and history highlighted topics that are prevalent in the novels. Across the disciplines there was much discussion of the exclusion that affects marginal British individuals. The research grounded and authorized the issue that I had first recognized within the literature. This archive I created serves as a foundation and explanation for the analysis and exploration I offer in the following pages.

Return to Sender

The term diaspora is etymologically linked to the dispersion of the Jews among the gentiles. It highlights a displacement from a native homeland or place where persons of the same race or ethnicity reside. It evokes an idea of a place where the group or even the individual is together and whole, while at the same time describing its opposite. More recently, the term has been used to refer to groups displaced from a homeland through " migration, immigration, or exile" (Braziel and Mannur 1). Diaspora is often ideologically linked with individuals who historically have had their cultural identities fragmented because of their dispersion.

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall suggests that diaspora and the cultural identities that result from it can be approached from two distinct veins. First, the articulations of a cultural identity can be seen as the excavation and discovery of one essentialized and collective history or heritage. He insists that this first understanding of identity is governed by a very superficial and artificial understanding of shared history. This history is fixed, stable, and unchanging: a history essentially isolated from other narratives. It is a somewhat limited in the creation of a personal racial identity because it only tends to imagine a single racial experience. However, Hall offers a second understanding of cultural identity that recognizes that despite the many points of similarity in the lives of minority individuals, there is a myriad of "deep and significant points of difference" (Hall 236). This understanding of cultural identity or diaspora opposes understanding of racial identities that are governed by racial binaries and essentialism, both of which produce an "inside" identity that excludes outsiders and others. For Hall, Diaspora becomes much more than a history, a heritage, or a homeland to look back upon. Instead it is the ability to recognize points of similarity within racial experiences with the understanding that

similarities cannot be considered without an acknowledgement of the many differences and discontinuities that exist within the same experience.

This second understanding recognizes that the power imperialists have had to frame blackness. Framing blackness refers to the process by which a "white" majority places parameters and specific definitions on minority populations; these parameters keep individuals within specific societal roles without any kind of overt rulings. This framework relies on the tendency of othered individuals to internalize exclusion and to gaze upon themselves as societal outsiders. The history of black individuals has been irrevocably influenced by an internalization of otherness and the young black individual in quest of a racial and cultural identity is unable to completely remove, or abstract, himself from a white consciousness. A black individual can neither adhere to the heritage presented within the transparent and normative frame of a white majorities' definition of blackness, nor can he avoid his heritage either. Thus, he reaches back for a shared communal history, or Hall's first understanding of diaspora. However, given the limitations of this understanding he is left with the second: a recognition of differences.

In, *The Practice of Diaspora* (2003), Brent Hayes Edwards agrees with Hall's valuation of a shared history within the term diaspora. He speaks at length about the surge of black internationalism after the First World War and how newspaper articles and black publications that were read widely strengthened the collective culture that displaced blacks wanted to create. These publications served to create a shared heritage that was ideal but not altogether realistic. He insists that diaspora is the creation of an imaginary community. Instead of treating the act of displacement as a great equalizer, which makes all black experiences similar, Edwards argues that diaspora should be looked at through a lens of unevenness. The lens offers individuality in narratives with points of collusion.

Edwards insists, like Hall, that while this "scattering" or dispersal seems to offer a principle of unity, a basis or homeland, it gives way only to difference (Edwards 12). These differences actually serve to multiply the narratives that the diasporic community has created. The diverse experiences of the black diaspora with regards to nation, class, and gender are not only dividing within the diasporic community but also divide families and even individuals. Within this second definition there is no one voice, but a multiplicity. Even as persons in diasporas may cling to the first definition of diaspora there is always a proliferation of difference and multiplicity.

Notions of homeland and history are so strongly linked with diaspora that some have insisted that those considered diasporic must have specific claim to a place of origin, as if return were something possible and expected. If one looks at Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement or the surge of Afro-centrism in the American African diaspora during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it becomes clear that the existence of a collective diasporic identity in areas with such a recent history of slavery is questionable because of the different countries from which black individuals were taken as well as the different experiences of those enslaved under British, U.S., French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch colonialism. However, the social appropriation of African things by descendents of slaves in the Americas and a general desire to physically or mentally return to an African state coincides with the early movements of diaspora, which often are closer to Hall's first concept of diaspora.

Edwards is quick to define diaspora as not grounded on return at all. He insists, like Stuart Hall, that diaspora is " a frame of cultural identity determined not through 'return' but through difference" (Edwards 12). Diaspora highlights characteristics that make those in the diaspora unique. This uniqueness is not only expressed in relation to the white majority but also

in relation to those who still remain in the homeland. Edwards finally suggests that the term "diaspora" does not offer any comfort in abstraction (the use of the term to found identity claims or creating a unifying principle), nor does it guarantee any type of anti-essentialist moves with regard to race or the return to a collective homeland. Diaspora only forces discourse through difference.

I begin with this critical account of diaspora because Zadie Smith is very interested in exploring a diasporic discourse of difference as well as the integral relationship of history and diaspora in her novel, *White Teeth*. As Smith takes us through her novel, we see her young protagonists search for some kind of fundamentalism, or home, or essential identity. Whether it be scientific truth, blinding anti-colonial solidarity, or family history, her three young protagonists, Magid, Millat, and Irie reach back (either temporally or geographically) from their respective places in British society in an effort to find a founding truth that might root them in the present and also give them a more definite and unifying identity through history. Magid physically reverses the trip his father and mother made from Bangladesh to England many years before. Irie is only able to return to Jamaica through books and photographs. Finally, Millat takes his own journey eastward through his involvement in a Muslim extremist group and a rejection of "western" principles.

The reader follows each adolescent on as he or she attempts to produce history, identity, and other grounding "truths," but just as Hall and Edwards propose, they find diaspora is not an articulation of history or location. Successful return and identification are not possible. An attempt to understand diaspora in terms of a true, official, or essential narrative proves futile. It seems that for Smith there is nothing unifying or fundamental that can come from expressions of diaspora. In fact, the desire for fundamental identities, histories, and other grounds only offers

only offers false faith, false hope and false associations. By the novel's close, Smith makes it clear that there is only the painful history (and the repetition of that same history) that brings to light an impenetrable feeling of difference, of strangeness, or otherness.

In the following pages, I want to use the multiple narratives that Smith creates using her younger protagonists to show how they reinforce and also elaborate upon Edwards' claims. It will become important to look at narrative illustration and the way Smith uses diaspora as a reflection of the fracturing that happens not only within the community but within the body as well. The shards of her characters and their families reflect the fragmentation that happens in association with the doublings of diaspora.

A Compilation of Certain Narratives

The narrative action of *White Teeth* develops through an intricate web that twines the stories, actions, and histories of three families. It chronicles their actions and often the reasons for these actions are provided in almost encyclopedic side notes. The text is riddled with excerpts, letters, and pamphlets that provide a full account of the cultural landscape of lower middle class, diasporic persons within late 20th- century Britain. The reader is privy to very real moments in history including the fall of the Berlin wall and the book burning that followed Rushdie's publication of *The Satanic Verses*. Each family is linked and rooted to real historical events and instances: Samad Iqbal's great grandfather was real life revolutionary Mangal Pande, and Hortense Bowden was born in the middle of the 1907 Kingston earthquake. Yet throughout the novel, individuals, both from the "majority" and the "minority" cultures, reject these histories of peripheral spaces and persons, make them comical, or believe them to be farce. Regardless of whether this culture Smith creates is completely reflective of a Britain that once existed, or still

continues to exist, the novel effectively addresses the exclusion, racism, and national identity issues that are central to contemporary British culture.

The novel begins as a middle-aged, weary, white, British man, Archie Jones, is trying to commit suicide. He almost succeeds but is then prevented by the community's only halal butcher, who shrieks that if anyone is going to die he will have to be thoroughly bled first. As Archie revels in his new lease on life he happens upon a road he has never taken before and comes upon a commune. In the hours he remains there he is able to "unhook" his old life and in that moment he meets Clara, a toothless girl of nineteen, whose mother was born in Jamaica. After they meet, they marry quickly and Smith introduces Archie's best friend Samad Iqbal and his wife Alsana, both immigrants from Bangladesh. Soon both Clara and Alsana become pregnant. The women become friends in retaliation against the secretive nature of their husbands' relationship, a friendship founded on horrendous war stories. At this point, because of the wealth of characters in Smith's novel, I want to focus intensively on the narrative arc that involve the three children born into the Jones and Iqbal families.

Irie Jones grows up with Magid and Millat Iqbal. They form a core group travelling through a British schooling and navigating the exclusion that they face every day. Magid becomes close to Irie as both thirst for knowledge and Millat remains the child aloof and removed in a world of video games. Their lives become more complicated and difficult as the values of British schooling begin to overshadow the cultural values their parents endeavor to place upon them.

In 1984 when the children are about nine years old, Samad, as penance for an affair with the children's white music teacher, decides he must save one of his children from the infection of Western values. After much deliberation and without Alsana's knowledge, Samad sends Magid

to the hills of Bangladesh, where he remains for eight years. In Bangladesh, Magid does not pursue religion and local traditions like his father imagines he will. He instead begins to study law and rejects deity for the strength found in words, philosophy and science. When he returns to England, Smith's narrator describes him as "more English than the English," a hyper-realization of Britishness. As the novel draws to a close we see Magid working with Marcus Chalfen, a scientist, who is creating a mouse that is genetically predestined to contract cancer and die on a known date. The mouse is called FutureMouse and Magid's work on the project alienates him from his brother and family.

Millat and Irie remain in north London public school. Millat is a nonchalant, unimpressed, and rebellious teenager voraciously sampling drugs and women. He is both drug dealer and ladies man, a fan of hip-hop and De Niro. During his last year of school, he and Irie (who follows him everywhere) and a boy named Josh Chalfen (Marcus Chalfen's son) are charged with possession of marijuana. The headmaster sends both Millat and Irie to Josh's house for extra study sessions with his scientist father and botanist mother. Millat has no intentions of studying and uses his excursions to the middle class Chalfen's to load up on free food, money, and sympathy. He allows Josh's mother Joyce to insert herself into his life and openly blame his culture and parents for a myriad of behavioral and psychological problems. In a haze of dope and women, Millat joins a Muslim Extremist group named Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation or KEVIN for short. Millat's brothers in KEVIN insist he relinquish all Western things. He responds by creating a doubling of identity; a layering of Western things onto KEVIN's extremist ideals. Millat begins to completely confuse Western culture and Islamic values; lines of hip-hop become Qur'anic verse. As the novel culminates, we find Millat

extremely high, with a gun in his pocket, ready to attack the FutureMouse and the symposium in the name of Allah.

Irie also is sent to the Chalfen's for extra study. She falls in lust with the dynamics of the Chalfen household: their liberalism, their openness, their confidence, and their level of education. She is intrigued by the clarity of their historical lineage and their middle classness. As she spends more time with the family she works for Marcus, whom she admires. She believes his FutureMouse project is inspired before he begins correspondence with Magid Iqbal. As the two men's friendship grows, Irie finds that Marcus places no value on her intelligence and she becomes disillusioned. After her relationship with the Chalfens sours, Irie begins to search for her own identity. Initially, she wants to find this identity through a gap year travelling around Africa. However, her mother, Clara will not allow it. Upset, Irie flees to her highly conservative and religious grandmother. In the childhood bedroom of her mother, Irie begins to create an idealized vision of Jamaica and her ancestors. She consumes books and concentrates on portraits that seem to create some semblance of home, past, and identity. As she grows closer to this romanticized Jamaica she moved further from her parents, her friends, and her own time.

However, as far as Irie would like to run, she remains rooted in nineties London because of her relationship with Magid and Millat. In an attempt to get the boys to communicate, Joyce Chalfen insists that Irie talk to each of them. In an unexpected turn of events, Irie, a chubby girl with zero love interests, sleeps with both Millat and Magid. As the novel ends, a pregnant Irie sits with her parents and the Iqbals at the FutureMouse symposium wondering who might be the father of her baby and whether she should tell either of them.

In this final scene, Smith brings all the characters into the same space, the FutureMouse convention. As the scientific mouse is unveiled, Millat pulls out a gun and takes a shot. Archie

dives in the way of the bullet, which lodges in his leg. The FutureMouse escapes and the reader is left to figure the ending from a listing of ruminations and possibilities. The effects of Irie's, Millat's, and Magid's creation of idealized diasporas become apparent when reviewing their experiences. The importance and valuation of their individual experiences serve to call a pluralistic understanding to history and narrative within diasporic communities.

Pamphlet Propagations of A Shared Experience

Edwards suggests that black internationalism and the perpetuation of the idea of a black diaspora are created within a thoroughly literary space. He argues that the emergence of black publications in the early 20th century, especially periodicals and newspapers, were able to create and solidify a feeling of shared experience across distances of time and space. This ability to share stories with a certain immediacy began to create an essentialized narrative of the state of black individuals worldwide. This account, or archive as he calls it, is one that furthers the fantasy and romance of an African diaspora that links all individuals with dark skin, regardless of history or location. According to Edwards, assuming this narrative is a major misstep in the creation of racial identities among black subjects. He insists that the narrative that is perpetuated is not an account of an actual black history or heritage but the reinforcement of a Western frame for blackness. This is because this framework is built from and thus reinforces the structure of racial binaries constructed by and beneficial to white colonial cultures.

Smith investigates both of these ideas: that diaspora is grounded in print culture and that pursuing fantasies of diasporic identity only perpetuates an imperialistic version of blackness. First, she traces the literary grounds of diaspora through Millat Iqbal's experiences with KEVIN. As Millat becomes more involved with the organization, the reader can see the way his

immersion in pamphlets causes him to begin to affix racialized generalizations to all individuals. He becomes unable to separate the single and unified experience of race and nationality created by the pamphlets from the multiplicity of experiences in reality. It is important to recognize the collusive nature of this idealized diasporic community. KEVIN's notion of community reinforces a separation and distinction from the majority culture. It also encourages a further essentialization of a black experience and the belief that all marginal experiences as similar. After Millat is exposed to KEVIN's pamphlets he begins to approach other black individuals expecting that they share the same experiences.

Millat's transformation by a diasporic pamphlet culture is easily tracked through his feelings and interactions with his white girlfriend Karina Cain:

> Millat Iqbal's main squeezes were almost all exclusively size 10 white Protestant women aged fifteen to twenty-eight, living in and around the immediate vicinity of West Hampstead…His school was full of girls who fitted the general description. By the law of averages—as he was the only guy worth shagging in Glenard Oak—he was going to end up shagging a large proportion of them…Karina Cain was different. It wasn't just sex with Karina Cain. He liked her and she liked him, and she had a great sense of humor, which felt like a miracle, and she looked after him when he was down and he looked after her too…It was both the law of averages, and a lucky, random thing that made him happier than he usually was. So that was that. (Smith 306-7)

Karina Cain is a different experience for Millat. She is someone for whom he actually cares. There is a connection within their relationship that is different from his other relationships with

women. It is very apparent that his feelings for her include sexual ones but they include much more. Karina clears out much of his angst. Things are straightforward and transparent in regards to their relationship. There is simplicity and clarity in his words because he can define what they mean to each other and who he is when he is with her. The ease of their relationship is reflected in the language of the passage. In his description of Karina, he uses short clauses that contain only subject, verb, and object, for example "he liked her and she liked him." The simplicity of these sentences reflects a kind of fundamental knowledge or understanding.

In this description the narrator is also careful to highlight that their relationship is random in its origin, by invoking the law of averages. Used commonly, the law of averages is the belief that future instances will be reduce any large deviation from past ones (for instance Millat's consistent and regular sex life changes after he meets Karina Cain) but also it can be the belief that given enough time a rare and random occurrence will take place. Millat and Karina's loving relationship is that rare occurrence. It seems to happen by chance. It is a relationship entered into without any preconceptions or self-conciousness. He consciously describes the relationship as a lucky thing. Both luck and randomness are valued within the text. Millat's happiness within the relationship seems contingent on them. This happiness is something that has not been explicitly mentioned within the narrative before this point.

However, the brothers of KEVIN take no notice of Millat's future happiness and its link to Karina Cain. Like the pamphlets they distribute, they only see a Muslim boy in a relationship with a white woman. In an effort to indoctrinate Millat, they urge him to read three pamphlets in succession: *Who is Truly Free? The Sisters of KEVIN or the Sisters of Soho?*, *Lycra Liberation? Rape and the Western World*, and *The Right to Bare: The Naked Truth About Western Sexuality*. The reader is not allowed to experience these pamphlets firsthand, but it is clear from the titles

and Millat's actions that they propagate an understanding of white culture that is based on essentialism and opposition. By exposing British majority culture the very inverse of marginalized cultures KEVIN's pamphlets reinforce racial and cultural binaries. There is also an overt condemnation of Western sexuality. After Millat reads the first two pamphlets his relationship with Karina and his conceptions about himself begin to lose clarity and definition. This loss of clarity is ironic because the pamphlets are intended to clarify and define his identity as a Bengali Muslim in KEVIN:

> "Is the light broaching your darkness, Brother Millat?" asked Brother Tyrone eagerly…"Are things becoming clearer?"
>
> "Clearer" didn't seem to Millat to be exactly the right adjective…In three short days Karina Cain, a darling of a girl, a truly good sort who never really irritated him (on the contrary made him feel happy! Chuffed!), had irritated him more than she has managed in the whole year they'd been shagging. And no ordinary irritation. A deep unsettleable unsolvable irritation, like an itch on a phantom limb. And it was not clear to him why. (Smith 307)

The vocabulary of this passage illustrates the irony of Brother Tyrone's actions. His use of the image of illumination becomes ill fitting because in all respects Millat is moving away from any type of clarity or illumination. Previously, Millat was happy and in love, things that are associated with brightness or light, yet because of this pamphlet he is disconcerted and confused, both things that are associated with darkness. He is not coming out of darkness but moving into it.

One can also see the narrator's aversion to this path Millat is being pushed down. Yet Millat is subconsciously reluctant to be submerged. Millat's internal narration reaffirms what initially was definite and clear: his understanding of Karina Cain. She is "a darling of a girl, a truly good sort…" and she "made him feel happy! Chuffed!" (307). He seems to battle with these two different Karinas, the real and happy one versus the essentialized white woman announced by the pamphlets. This battle manifests itself as an imaginary but very physical irritation. The pamphlets create a narrative that endeavors to create a deep emotional connection between members of an othered population. This connection creates a shared imaginary history and implants itself within the body, it is unreachable because it is fictional, a "phantom" narrative.

Yet, as this narrative invades Millat, he starts to accept it as truth as well as expect all others to subscribe to the same ideals.

> There was something welcoming about Karina Cain's little belly. She hated it but Millat loved it. He loved it when she wore things that revealed it. But now the leaflets were making things clearer. He started noticing what she wore and the way other men looked at her. And when he mentioned it she said "Oh I hate that. All those leery old men." But it seemed to Millat that she was encouraging it; that she positively wanted men to look at her, that she was—as *The Right to Bare* suggested—"prostituting herself to the male gaze." Particularly white males. Because that's how it worked between Western men and Western women, wasn't it? They like to do it all in public… "I can't respect you," explained Millat carefully, making sure he repeated the words just as he had read them, "until you

> respect yourself." Karina Cain said she did respect herself, but Millat couldn't believe her. Which was odd because he'd never known Karina Cain to lie, she wasn't the type…When thy made love he said, "Don't do that…don't offer it to me like a whore. Haven't you heard of unnatural acts? Besides I'll take it if I want it—and why can't you be a lady, don't make all that noise!" Karina Cain slapped him and cried a lot. She said she didn't know what was happening to him. Problem is, thought Millat, as he slammed the door off its hinges, *neither do I*. (Smith 309)

This final scene with Karina illustrates the end of Millat's initial submersion in the collective narrative created by the pamphlets. It begins with the narrator going back to a time before the pamphlets. Once again the sentence structure is clean and definite, "She hated it, but Millat loved it." His logic and thought processes are clear. Within these few initial sentences there is no questioning, no internal dialogue, just recognition of what was. It is important to note that Karina's exposed skin drew Millat to her. This image creates further opposition between the happy carefree Millat and the Millat that exists presently within this scene.

However, as Millat consciously brings the pamphlets into the scene, his sentences become more complex and convoluted. Even though he insists the pamphlets are responsible for his new clarity, his clauses become longer and his thought processes and logic are hindered by questions. There is a great deal of contradiction between Millat's thoughts and the voice of the narrator, as images of the real Karina interrupt the words of the pamphlet. As he internalizes this essentialized and basely sexual representation of white Western women, he begins to treat the

real Karina like the women described within the pamphlets. On some level there is a refusal to remember his relationship and understanding of Karina before KEVIN interfered.

Millat quotes entire sentences from the pamphlets and over these sentences the narrator layers information he once believed. But now he is unable to accept his memories. Simultaneously, he expects Karina to understand and agree with the logic of the pamphlets, as is evident when he begins speaking to her using terms found in the pamphlets. He becomes angry and conflicted when she doesn't respond in a way that affirms the messages of the pamphlets or when she can't represent herself like a version of a conservative black girl (like the sisters of KEVIN).

His anger is fueled by an insistence upon superimposing this broad and essentialized narrative framework upon all "Western" individuals. He rationalizes her actions by saying "that's how it worked between Western men and women, wasn't it? They liked to do it all in public. The more he thought about it the more it pissed him off." His anger is heavily ironic because the "Western" system that he is criticizing is one in which he is also heavily invested. Only a few pages before, the narrator mentions that Millat often deals with sexual things in very public places. He has more sex than Karina Cain, but she is the one he calls a whore.

In the final sentences of the scene, it is apparent that Millat has chosen to honor the pamphlet collective, but he is unable to reconcile his former conceptions with his new "clarity." Karina does not understand what it happening to him, and at the same time we see that Millat does not recognize himself either. This move from clarity to confusion is one Smith uses to illustrate the counterfeit identity that results from diasporic pamphlets' promotion of a collective experience of racial identity. The reader can see a correlation between the change in Millat's understanding of himself and his introduction to this literature of imaginary diasporic

community. There is a violation of innocence in a group's insistence that their young recognize and participate in stereotyped identities. There is a destruction of the happiness found in living life in randomness and lucky spots. By being introduced to the imaginary diasporic community he is introduced to absolutes and essentialized narratives, his once laid back and secure identity is now murky. After this Millat is undeniably the most troubled of Smith's young protagonists.

This literary propagation of diasporic narrative not only fantasizes a community where there is none, but also reinforces imperialistic notions about spaces and people outside of the West. The literature works in collusion with a white normative framework in further promoting people of color's self-exclusion from the British culture, through vilification and allusions to the sexual deviance and perversion of the supposedly white majority.

Simultaneously, the pamphlet promotes an Orientalist view of eastern women. Millat, the boy who was once attracted to white females, begins to sexualize the brown women he passes in the street. We hear Samad say to Millat," you do not know the meaning of the erotic, Millat, you do not know the meaning of desire, my second son, until you have sat…using all the powers of imagination to visualize what is beyond the four inches of skin hajib reveals" (311). The veil brings a kind of eroticism that is has been absent in from his previous encounters with women. He has been unaware of this sexuality until he enters the pamphlet world and its values are reiterated by his father, whose erotic desire is as confused as Millat's. In the following scene, the reader sees Millat approach a woman assuming that because of her skin color she is also part of KEVIN's pamphlet community. However, instead of agreeing with him, she cuts him off and asks him to leave her alone.

That evening after work, Millat saw a moon-faced, demure-looking Indian woman through the window of a Piccadilly café who looked, in profile, not unlike youthful pictures of his mother. She was dressed in a black turtleneck and long black trousers and her eyes were partly veiled by long black hair, her only decoration the red patterns of mhendi on the palms of her hands. She was sitting alone.

With the same thoughtless balls he used when chatting up dolly birds and disco brains…Millat went in a started give her the back page of *The Right to Bare* pretty much verbatim, in the hope that she'd understand. All about soulmates, about self-respect, about women who seem to bring "visual pleasure: only to the men who love them. He explained: "It's the liberation of the veil innit?...That's what we think," he said, uncertain if that was what he thought. "That's our opinion," he said uncertain whether it was his opinion. "You see I'm from this group—"

The lady screwed up her face and put her forefinger delicately across his lip. "Oh darling, she murmured sadly, admiring his beauty. "If I give you money, will you go away?"

And then her boyfriend turned up, a surprisingly tall Chinese guy in a leather jacket. (Smith 310)

This interaction illustrates Millat's desire to live within the idealized diasporic community, and his inability to do so. The narration is inside Millat's consciousness so the reader sees things as he does. He creates an ideal image of this woman before he even speaks to her by using images and allusions that recoil from the Western pamphlet perspective. For Millat the girl is "moon-faced" which can be connected to Islam and the crescent moon. Next, he insists that in profile she looks just like his mother, further idealizing her existence as something that is good, eastern, and in some way pure. Then he describes her physically, saying her clothing is all black and covers the majority of her skin and her eyes are "veiled by long black hair. " This description invokes the women in "full purdah" that Millat likes to watch (311). While the woman is not wearing a veil he gives her one and acts as if she has chosen to wear a scarf, saying, "it's the liberation of the veil innit?" The veil he gives her sexualizes her, just like the veiled women that pass on Edgeware road.

The essentialized nature of Millat's new mentality is present in his use of the plural first person. Multiple times he employs the pronoun "we" to link his actions and ideals with those he presumes are shared by this woman. Millat tries to hide behind this "we" he uses it as an explanation or validation of his new world outlook. However, the pronoun also shows Millat's remaining separation and confusion about the changes in his mentality. He is still unsure of his motivations and ideas, because he never professes them with his own singular pronoun.

His hesitation, if not highlighted by the multiple use of the word "uncertain" within the prose, is illustrated in his actions. The narrator describes Millat as approaching this woman in the same way he used to approach "dolly birds" and "disco brains." While he talks about avoiding visual pleasure, his initial interaction with her is based on her beauty that is on display in the window of the café. The vision of the woman in the window is reminiscent of a voyeurism

and observation of the work of early anthropologists of writers about the Eastern world. They too, made generalized observations and attributed a kind of erotic quality to the women of these regions. This connection is one of the ways that this created communal culture reinforces a white normalcy in addition to creating generalized and identitarian conceptions of race.

Interestingly enough, as the scene ends, the woman destroys the pamphlet's community in a way Millat's love for Karina Cain could not. She rejects him and runs to the arms of her very tall Chinese boyfriend. This image is destabilizing to the world the pamphlets have built for Millat. It is clear that the woman in the window would rather not don a "hajib". She has more in common with the so –called "Sisters of Soho" than the representatives of women found in Kevin. When she quiets Millat she does so in a delicate fashion. She seems to pity Millat, and his idealized world of social binaries. At this point, the reader realizes the futility of Millat's pursuit of this imagined black consciousness and he is moved to pity Millat as well.

This rejection, his first from a woman, sends Millat into a tailspin that lands him, not in a KEVIN meeting, or in his parent's house, but in Joyce Chalfen's living room. He tries to return to a space of randomness, the space where he was last happy, but the need for a shared black consciousness haunts him. He cannot reconcile the world that he once existed in and the world he pursued so intently. So he looks to another source, Joyce, who unfortunately is there to greet him with even more essentialized statistical accounts of black men in Britain, because she knows that "60 percent of Asian men did this…and 90 percent of Muslims felt that…it was a known fact that Asian families were often…and hormonally boys were more likely to..." (Smith 311). Millat realizes that he may never be able to return to his happy state of randomness and he gives up any hope of recapturing it. He also releases his happy memories of Karina Cain. He says that both are "distant now like conker fights and childhood. And that was that" (311). For the rest of

the novel, Millat balances between extremist Islam and American Mafioso. He is never fully himself or anything else ever again.

An English Education and the Privileged Narrative

Who gets to tell stories within a nation? What persistent narratives are accepted and incorporated into the official history of a nation? In British culture, certain narratives have always been deemed more official or authoritative, while the multitude of related narratives are brushed aside or considered idle gossip. In historical narratives the white British voice is usually the loudest. The white majority's voice reduces and essentializes the narrative of the entire nation. There is a move to hide the contributions of others and to hide colonial violence. The simple linear history that a white majority provides is not as difficult as telling a multi-modal story. Simplicity on the level of narrative seems to make things work seamlessly it helps minimize violence and negotiate circular and encompassing narratives. A straightforward narrative is able to exclude a lot. Smith's novel highlights and exposes the white frames of narratives, by placing them in contention with alternate stories. Whether reinforcing class values or excluding the racialized "other," the white normative frame is produced through essentialized histories. By teaching these histories in an educational system, these frames are reinforced every generation. Thus education becomes a way of mental exploration but also a way of keeping knowledge within the parameters of specific narratives.

White Teeth, offers an investigation of excluded narratives. Whether this exclusion comes through the narrow lens of a British education or the poor reception of alternate histories and narratives, Smith illustrates the way authoritative narratives strive to remove the voice of marginalized counter histories and counter educations. Through stories of education of the

Bowden clan and the reception of Samad's Mangal Pande stories, the reader sees marginalized voices are often silenced and sometimes remain in silence based on the insistence of other marginalized individuals.

Within the novel, education seems to be a thing that is at once valued and held suspect. Education is seen as necessary and progressive but at the same time there is a loss associated with British education. At one point Alsana states, " The English are the only people…who want to teach you and steal from you at the same time" (295). Learning requires a relinquishing of some other knowledge. Often the things forgotten or let go are narratives that come from the margins of society. This sentiment is built upon as the reader becomes more acquainted with the Bowden family tree. An association of English education with thievery is especially prominent in the story of the education of Irie's great grandmother Ambrosia by Captain Charlie Durham. The narrator explains that Captain Durham was not only interested in sleeping with her but decides she must be educated also. Being educated as a black individual is linked to a kind of loss or a removal of dreams of a bright future because Durham and Ambrosia's subsequent educator, Sir Glenard, continually steals Ambrosia's body, her kisses, her virtue.

In the following passage, one can extract some of the specific qualities and values that an English education seems to offer to the educated. Durham relies heavily on these qualities for his own functionality as they support and influence his perception of the world. Initially, I will look at the passage as a way to identify and define these qualities, and then examine the scene as the narrator indicates that these qualities Durham values are ineffective outside of an official authoritative British narrative.

Captain Durham has just returned to Kingston after the earthquake:

> He still thinks of the land as his, his to help or his to hurt, even now when it has proved itself to have a mind of its own. He still retains enough of his English education to feel slighted when he spots two American soldiers who have docked without permission…It is a strange feelings feeling this powerlessness; to discover there is another country more equipped to save this little island than the English. It is a strange feeling, looking out on to an ocean of ebony skins, unable to find the one he loves, the one he thinks he owns…If he knew her last name, God he would call it out. But in all that teaching, he never learned it…
>
> …. He found out soon enough where she was… Durham walked calmly, thinking that the last act was done, to King's House, the residence of Sir James Swettenham, governor of Jamaica. There he asked him to make an exception for Ambrosia -------, an "educated Negress," he wished to marry. She was not like the others. (Smith 300)

This image of the earthquake's aftermath through Durham's eyes is especially telling in regards to what an English education supposedly provides. Although the passage is not explicitly about education it bears evidence to what an English education provides. It outlines specific rights that an English education affords and promotes. Education becomes a method of promoting a frame of whiteness

Initially, the narrator describes Durham as "thinking" he still owns the land. This thought process illustrates the first privilege of English education. It is the right to take and invade. It is the right to imperialism. Here there is a repetition of what seems to be a specific Western heritage of imperialism that deems it acceptable for educated men to travel abroad in order to

make discoveries and claim land and women. Education reinforces this narrative of unchecked imperialism, encouraging men to do with found land what they want and what they will.

The narrator first explicitly mentions education when Captain Durham sees the American soldiers who are docked without permission. Authority is another thing that an English education provides. It gives Englishmen the right to stand above other men and give them instructions or permission. Smith connects education and authority very strongly, saying that Durham had retained enough of his education to feel slighted by the arrogance of the docked Americans. His education causes him to recognize the breach of authority and causes him to feel insulted by it. This sense of his own authority confirms his distinction. An English education allows an individual to retain and incorporate his heritage into a national identity. For example, after he begins Ambrosia's lessons, Durham insists that Ambrosia is now a lady on the inside and "a maid no more" (296). Education seems to promise a kind of elevation within social hierarchy. Those who are educated are not like others; they are elevated and made distinct because of their education.

The third right an English education seems to offer is ownership. During the scene Capt. Durham scans the sea of faces in search for " the one he thinks he owns." This sense of ownership stems from Durham's own education, which allows him to believe that has ownership over the land, over the culture, and over Ambrosia.

Education does not only offer the ownership of material things; it also allows for the ownership of narrative. Educated men are given the ability to manipulate and create authoritative narratives from which to educate people. This ownership allows him to create standard stories as well as exceptions and alternate narratives that continue to promote a normative frame of whiteness. One finds that the English education is not adaptable; it is not porous and cannot

absorb information into its strictly defined narratives. Captain Durham, in all the time he spends teaching her, fails to learn the name of the mother of his child, let alone her thoughts or feelings. There is not collaboration or reciprocation of information, just an unyielding oration.

As Smith illustrates all the things that an English education provides there is a simultaneous revelation of the ruptures in English education and on a lager scale the English official narrative. Authority, any sense of ownership, and entitlement that Durham had or assumed that Ambrosia could acquire because of her education is ripped away by Sir James Swettenham, who is, for all intents and purposes the figurehead of the white majority. The reader is witness as Durham finds he has no claim to Jamaica as a place anymore. The earthquake reveals that the land has "a mind all of its own"(300). The land effectively renders the English powerless and they can no longer control it. A "strange feeling" overtakes Durham as he realizes that another country is better prepared to handle such a disaster. English authority is lost. Durham is also rejected in his request to bring Ambrosia with him to safety. He looses control of the narrative and is not allowed to make an exception for his lover, and any distinction Durham insists that she has because of her education is disregarded. Lastly, Durham is unable to control his pupil. Despite his pedagogy, Ambrosia has a mind of her own as well. She refuses Captain Durham's proposal for a life together.

The end of Durham's story illustrates that while the perpetuation of essentialized narratives offers benefits that seem to elevate the educated individual, when dealing with spaces outside of the empire, these benefits are rendered powerless. A certain education only has power within the narrative it promotes, i.e. the promotion of a specific national identity and historical narrative will only provide power within that specific narrative and identity. The earthquake forced Durham to recognize the limits of his Britishness. This recognition disrupts the authorized

narrative and gives rise to other narratives. This disruption allows individuals, like the American sailors and even Ambrosia, to act outside of the authoritative narrative and Durham's world ends up crumbling. He ends up a "fool bwoy" because of his reliance on an idealized and white-framed narrative and his ignorance of any other.

There is certainly no shortage of alternate narratives. However, there is one specific narrative that appears multiple times, becoming a textual obsession: that of Mangal Pande. While this story appears important because of its repetitions, no character ever receives it with reverence or even with any interest. The only protagonist who believes that the story is important is, the one who tells it, Samad Iqbal, the great-grandson of Mangal Pande. Everyone else deems the story "a palaver nuffin" or a lot of idle chatter (Smith 208). Smith uses Samad's obsession with his ancestor to show the way white- framed narratives of Britishness despite their limits, often override and influence the smaller histories that have their genesis within the margins. Mangal Pande is never called a fictitious character, and the majority of the narrative validates his story; however, his story has been altered and influenced. According to Samad, the story of Mangal Pande looses its subversive power by removing the heroism from an Indian revolutionary.

The story of Mangal Pande (or Mangal Pandey as it is usually spelled) is one that has been greatly debated in recent scholarship. Though Pande's origins and family are unknown, he did create a name for himself on March 29th 1857. At the time he was a sepoy (or Indian soldier) in the British army in India. There had been rumors among the sepoys that the new bullets they had been issued were greased with pig and cow fat. This was worrying because in order to load the gun the soldiers had to rip the casing with their teeth, and the sepoys being either Muslim or Hindu could not ingest either animal. This change in manufacturing was seen as blatant disregard

for the culture of the sepoys and it angered many. On the 29th Mangal Pande emerged from his tent with his rifle loaded and his talwar (a sharp curved sword). He encouraged his fellow soldiers to revolt. Unable to silence him or to motivate the regiment to subdue him, several British officers attacked and Pande injured them. A fellow sepoy, Sheikh Paltu, then restrained him but Pande was able to keep fighting. Finally, General John Hearsey was called to the scene and he shot at Pande but missed. As Hearsey approached Pande to engage in another shot, the sepoy turned his gun on himself and shot himself in the chest. The shot was not fatal, thus Pande was arrested, tried, and hung several days later.[1]

While this is the outline of the events that took place, there are several points that remain contested within the novel as well as in history, more generally. The British government insisted that the bullets were not greased with any kind of animal fats. Moreover another sepoy, who was in great favor with the British general, accused Pande of being under the influence of bhang (a drink made from cannabis leaves) when he staged his revolt. Millat in response to his father's threat to tell the story inserts his own version. He states that Pande simply decides "To rebel against the English, all on his Jack-Jones, spliffed up to the eyeballs, tries to shoot his captain, misses, tries to shoot himself, misses, gets hung—" (Smith 188). This is the first time the reader is introduced to Pande's story within the narrative. This reduced version seems to reflect a kind of official account of Mangal Pande. Millat's account makes it seem as though Pande attacks the regiment on a whim, and he references the rumor that Pande was not in control of his thoughts and actions. This account seems to invalidate Pande and makes him out as foolish. The official story does not attend to Pande's revolutionary actions. It lacks the grandeur and revolutionary tone that Samad deems necessary in retelling his ancestor's story. Sadly, Samad is one of

[1] For a more complete history of Pande look in to the works of Misra and Mukherjee.

Pande's only advocates. He insists that if he does not tell the story, no one will. But the reader can see the pain and confusion that his advocacy inflicts. His friends, family, and any one who has heard his story, believe that he is crazy.

> Samad looked deep into his great-grandfather's eyes. They had been through this battle many times, Samad and Pande, the battle for the latter's reputation. Both knew all too well that modern opinion on Mangal Pande weighed in on either side of two camps:
>
> | **An unrecognized hero** | **A palaver over nuffin'** |
> |---|---|
> | Samad Iqbal | Mickey |
> | A.S. Misra | Magid and Millat |
> | | Alsana |
> | | Archie |
> | | Irie |
> | | Clarence and Denzel |
> | | British scholarship from 1857 |
> | | to the present day |
>
> Again and again he had argued the toss with Archie over this issue…but ever since Archie found out the "truth" about Pande, circa 1953, there was no changing his mind. Pande's only claim to fame, as Archie was at pains to point out, was his etymological gift to the English language by way of the word 'Pandy,' under which title in the OED the curious reader will find the following definition: **Pandy** /pandi/ n. 2 colloq. (now *Hist*) Also **–dee**. M19 [Perh. F. the surname of the first mutineer amongst the high-caste sepoys in the Bengal army] **I** Any

> sepoy who revolted in the Indian Mutiny of 1857-9 **2** Any mutineer or traitor **3** Any fool or coward in a military situation. (Smith 208-9)

This passage illustrates the central issue of Samad's struggle for Pande's legitimacy. Pande is someone with whom Samad seeks to align himself. The narration uses war imagery to illustrate Samad's allegiance to Pande. Looking at the listings under the two camps it seems that in the battle for Pande's honor not many feel like taking up swords. Few besides obscure authors are interested in this narrative; just like British scholars, Samad's family and friends, have decided that Pande is not worth any time or energy. Still the narrative itself stands behind Samad and Pande. While the tone does seem bemused by Samad's stories and antics, it does not abandon Samad. There is a certain sympathetic lens the narrator views Samad especially as he faces the others ridicule. This sympathetic depiction subtly supports Pande's narrative. The novel makes clear that Mangal Pande is worth mentioning.

Smith inserts the actual definition from the Oxford English Dictionary (the authority of all English words) and there is suddenly a clear motivation in discrediting Pande's narrative. The authoritative narrative takes a victory or history away from individuals of Southeastern Asia. By making Pande synonymous with "fool" he is kept in a subordinate place and looses the subversive power of a revolutionary. This concept of truth is reminiscent of Tracey's identification of white truth in Kureishi's novel. Truth, or all encompassing truth does not seem to exist because official and authoritative narratives always have agency and agenda; in order to be official these narratives must be essentialized and exclusionary. The clean linear progression of these narratives seems to be easier, clearer, and even more powerful, but as we saw earlier with Captain Durham, this reduced narrative has very apparent limits. Smith takes a story that

does not seem official and makes it official. She fills in gaps and extends the limits. The definition also places a context on Samad's obsession with Mangal Pande, looking back to Samad's days in the army with Archie, it would seem that his actions after the end of the war were erratic and drug induced just as those of Pande, according to official British history. It seems that Samad is invested in Pande's reputation because he imagines it is a reflection of his own. If Pande was indeed any lesser of a man, it would seem that Samad would decide that he too would be less of a man.

Placing both the official and the alternative narratives of Pande in the novel emphasizes the normative frame that has been placed on history. Everyone, besides Samad, is eager to accept the fact that Pande isn't important, regardless of what Samad says. No one pays him any attention. Samad's alternative narrative is easily disregarded. This disregard for alternate narratives lies at the heart of the novel. Samad insists that even though Archie knows the "truth" he does not know the entire story. He insists that "full stories are as rare as honesty, precious as diamonds…they are difficult. They are long winded. They are epic" (Smith 209-10). This is the heart of the novel: a critique of truth and history and any sort of reliance or search for either. Smith seems to be insisting that as individuals, marginal or otherwise, there is a pressure to look to the authority of history or to build a foundation on short and clean definitions. Yet, this foundation breeds exclusion. Whether this exclusion is of alternate narratives, classes, or races it does not create a real image of what it is to be a part of the British nation.

In this moment, Samad's voice joins Smith's. His insight does not carry the usual chuffed tone that permeates Samad's thoughts and actions. By stepping back and looking at the structure of the novel it becomes clear that it is Smith's attempt to tell the full story, her attempt to encompass a story created from multiple narratives. Each and every person seems to have a

history extracted from him. What results is a large, long-winded, and epic story of alternative British identities and histories.

Fill in the Blank

Smith's novel is very much preoccupied with blankness. The title itself, "White Teeth," is a reference to the straight false teeth that Clara Bowden inserts into the gap of her mouth every morning. She fills the emptiness ritually every morning, but never fills the gap permanently. The space remains blank indefinitely. Ideas of emptiness and blankness permeate the novel in two distinct ways. Firstly, one must consider physical spaces void of physical things. Smith's narrator and protagonists contemplate empty cavities, neutral spaces, and clear surfaces. Consistently, blank physical spaces are found, utilized, and valued as places of discussion, confrontation and negotiation. Secondly, the genealogical unknown becomes a beacon for another type of blankness. Multiple times within the narrative, characters consider the ramifications of releasing historical and genealogical ties diving into an unknown or un-plotted future. Lack of history leaves individuals with an emptiness or a blank spot where something should presumably exist, but these spaces seem to offer a kind of freedom in return. The uncertain future, a potential emptiness is also an idealized space of collaboration and negotiation for Smith's protagonists.

By following the proliferations of moments where individuals contemplate these two separate kinds of blankness, I hope to offer a comprehensive and workable idea of what possible power these areas of blankness provide. Through readings I wish to determine whether this idea considers a kind of blankness in which characters can escape history in a physical space or considers escape or freedom in the form of genealogical uncertainty. In the following section, I

will explore specific instances in which individuals contemplate blank spaces, both physical emptiness and genealogical uncertainty.

As the novel draws near its close, all of the characters in the novel are destined to gather in one single room. This is how Smith's narrator describes it:

> The final space. A big room, one of many in the Perret Institute; a room separate from the exhibition yet called and Exhibition Room; a corporate place, a clean slate…used for the meetings of people who want to meet somewhere neutral at the end of the twentieth century; a virtual place where their business (be that rebranding, lingerie, or rebranding lingerie) can be done in an emptiness, an uncontaminated cavity; the logical endpoint of a thousand years of spaces too crowded and bloody. This one is pared down, sterilized, made new everyday by a Nigerian cleaning lady with an industrial Hoover and guarded through the night by Mr. De Winter, a Polish night watchman…he can be seen protecting the space, walking the borders of the space with a Walkman playing Polish folk tunes; you can see him, you can see it…the acres of protected vacuity and a sign with the prices per square foot of these square feet of space of space of space longer than it's wide and tall enough to fit head-to-toe three Archies and at least half an Alsana…fortunately after years of corporate synesthesia…people can finally give the answers required when a space is being designed, or when something is being rebranded, a room/furniture/Britain (that was the brief: a new British room, a space for Britain, Britishness, space of Britain, British industrial space cultural space space)… (Smith 428-9)

This passage works on two levels. One considers the function of blank spaces within the logic of the story. In the physical description of the venue for the FutureMouse exhibit. The other considers the desire for a-historical existence that results in the novel. It simultaneously focuses upon the particular coordinates of space as well as retracting its gaze in order to provide a larger picture of where the space fits into the contextual narratives of racial and national identity.

Firstly, the narrator charts the physical location describing what the space is (a room) and where it is located (the Perret Institute). Next, the reader is told how and when the room is used. Simply said, the room is for corporate meetings in which individuals attempt to escape the mess of the outside world. It seems to be a place where individuals can escape the resonances of the past so that something new can be created or recreated. This is where the passage shifts from the description of an idealized space to describing the realities of its upkeep. This space of supposed blankness and neutrality is cleaned every night by a Nigerian cleaning lady. She works to keep the blank space clear while her race and class standing reinsert racial and class histories into the space. The same neutral space is guarded by a Polish immigrant. His presence also inserts alternate and othered narratives into the space. The existence and maintenance of the room are irreconcilable with its idealized neutrality. The irony of the neutral room lies in an inability to remove human histories from the space. Even the description's account of the dimensions of the area is not in terms of feet or inches but Archies and half-Alsanas. The space is ideal but impossible to keep blank or clean in actuality or metaphorically. Human problems and messes are always present or being introduced into the space. This space is tempting as possible space to remedy or remake understanding of race and national exclusion. But, the narrative insists that this empty space outside of history cannot be actualized. The Exhibition Room is separated from

the real exhibition rooms. It is a kind of imitation that is set apart from actuality; it does not exist in reality. It is an idealized corporate space.

The room is often used for rebranding, a process in which companies endeavor to convince consumers to trust in the future of an item regardless of its past. Rebranding provides an allusion to the past while simultaneously endeavoring to create a completely separate identity for the product. With rebranding, the corporate sphere imagines that somehow they can manipulate and package history as a product. However, a gathering in this blank room could not accomplish a redesign of history or a complete transformation of nationality or race relations. It would be foolish to treat negotiations of race and nation as though they were corporate products. Indeed, while those who gather in the blank space hope for the potential creation of the final British identity, the narrative suggests this corporate approach to identity would not be effective in reality.

As individuals move toward the Exhibition room the other understanding of blankness begins to emerge. While still closely linked to the first understanding of physical blankness this next passage illustrates a move from empty rooms to genealogical uncertainty. The reader finds Irie moving toward the exhibition space with her parents and the Iqbals who are arguing, like always. Quite suddenly, Irie reacts, insisting that there are families who embody a respectable British identity. She claims that these families are quiet, normal and neutral. They exist without histories or skeletons.

> "What a peaceful existence. What a joy their lives must be. They open a door and all they've got behind it's a bathroom or a living room. Just neutral spaces. And not this endless maze of present rooms and past rooms and the things said in them years ago and everybody's old historical shit all over the place…They don't

> do public performances of angst on public transport. Really, these people exist…The biggest traumas of their lives are things like recarpeting. Bill-paying. Gate-fixing. They don't mind what their kids do in life as long as they are reasonable, you know, healthy. Happy. And every single fucking day is not this huge battle between who they are and who they should be, what they were and what they will be…No attics. No shit in attics. No skeletons in cupboards. No great-grandfathers…Because it doesn't fucking matter. As far as they're concerned, it's the past…They just get on with it. Lucky bastards…" (Smith 426)

This outburst is interesting in that it comes from the narrative's favored character. Nonetheless, Irie's description of a neutral family space is highly idealized and subtly criticized by the narrator. Irie begins her tirade by invoking the physical vein of blankness in her description of the quiet family house. She illustrates the space of the house as an entity that can be emptied of history in some kind of hypothetical spring-cleaning. The air of this perfect house is not layered with past arguments and the rooms are easily simplified and reduced to contain nothing but physical furniture. It is a space where individuals can move forward without a backward glance. They are free from the ties that seem to root her parents and the Iqbals so firmly to unhappiness. This clean house and neutral life is equated with happiness and normalcy.

She clings to this rejection of history that offers happiness. But this happiness is something that she cannot truly experience. She has based her analysis upon fictional families in literature and upon the Chalfens. However, the reader knows as well as Irie that the Chalfens are very concerned with history. Marcus Chalfen proudly displays his family tree and notes that "the Chalfens have always written things down" (280). He is not only concerned with the

preservation of his own family history, but he is eager to create a history and a future for FutureMouse. While the Chalfens are what Irie might consider a neutral family, they are still preoccupied with history and roots. For example, Joyce Chalfen is very interested in plant genealogy and often applies her plant findings to human specimens. Even the Chalfens cannot escape the epic battle between who they are and who they imagine they should be. Joyce Chalfen constantly insists that her youngest, Oscar, loves "brown strangers" or that he "finds brown strangers stimulating" (Smith 271). But the young boy consistently negates everything she says. He insists that he hates brown strangers. Joyce makes an effort to get her son to perform what she believes socially acceptable. But even as she insists on this performance, it illustrates her own inherent racism. This interaction with her son highlights her own struggle to act as she should and not as she actually is (for all intents and purposes, racist).

The irony of Irie's outburst is almost overwhelming once the reader finds that she is pregnant. She argues that the central problem in her own family and the Iqbals lies with their valuing of essentialized history. Difficulties arise from an awareness of a historical racial identity and an identity that carries over into the present. She insists that problems would be nonexistent within the Jones and Iqbal families if they simply eschewed the histories, complications, and secrets that fill their lives. Yet, Irie is actively participating in a complicated life. She is carrying a baby of unknown origin and is keeping his or her existence from the father. As Irie screams about self-indulgence and public displays of angst she is performing exactly these things.

The most interesting part of Irie's tirade however, is her use of the pronoun "they." In doing so, she moves toward a fantasized and essentialized picture of the majority culture. The "they" becomes formulaic, a representative image of what, for Irie, British families should be. She imagines how families who do not have to deal with race, history, or diaspora live. This

generalization of Britishness points to a problem within Irie's own understanding of racial and national identity. She assumes that there exists an essentialized version of Britishness. She idealized this kind of Britishness and promotes it in her tirade. However, as the majority population propagates the same idea of an essentialized Britishness, she remains categorized as marginal and excluded from this essential British nation. This fantasy family is the very thing that causes her own family's exclusion from Britishness. Again, the reader sees how these perfect idealized blank physical spaces are unobtainable.

After this diatribe, the narrative delves into Irie's consciousness, allowing the reader to see Irie's confusion and apprehension about having a child of unknown origin.

> The enormous adrenaline rush that sprang from this particular outburst surged through Irie's body…and tickled the nerve ends of her unborn child, for Irie was eight weeks pregnant and she knew it. What she didn't know, and what she realized she may never know (the very moment she saw the ghostly pastel blue lines materialize on the home test, like the face of the Madonna in the zucchini of an Italian housewife), was the identity of the father. No test on earth would tell her. Same thick black hair…Same deoxyribonucleic acid. She could not know her body's decision, what choice it had made, in the race to the gamete, between saved and the unsaved. She could not know if the choice would make any difference. Because whichever brother it was, it was the other one too. She would never know… At first this fact seemed ineffably sad to Irie; instinctively she sentimentalized the biological facts, adding her own invalid syllogism: if it was not somebody's child, could it be that it was nobody's child? She thought of those

> elaborate fictional cartograms that folded out of Joshua's old sci-fi books… That is how her child seemed. A perfectly plotted thing with no real coordinates. A map to an imaginary fatherland. (Smith 426-7)

A good deal is crammed into this half page of realization. The text is straightforward and frank as Smith moves quickly from describing Irie's moment of discovery to the realization that she will never know the paternity of her baby. There is an explicit movement from the known world to that which is unknown and unknowable. A juxtaposition of what she knows and what she can never know. This realization is jolting for Irie because she is undoubtedly the most inquisitive protagonist. She has the most invested in knowing. However, in this passage it becomes clear that she will never be afforded the opportunity to know something so basic as knowing the father of her child. Irie's inability to have a clear narrative about the paternity of her child runs parallel to a broader inability to know a clear and inclusive British identity, with regards to race, history and nationality. Understanding these concepts, both paternity and identity, seems so basic, but Irie does not have the privilege of knowing.

With its move from the known to the unknown, the passage also carries the air of moving from the definite empirical knowledge of science to a more uncertain and mystical understanding. When talking about the impossibility of genealogical knowledge, the narrator states, "She could not know her body's decision, what choice it had made, in the race to the gamete, between saved and unsaved." One can see this transition fully in the sharp progression of this sentence. The vocabulary moves from science and its "gamete" to invoke of a kind of religious salvation of the "saved and unsaved." This mention of salvation coupled with the earlier reference to the Madonna pulls the reader further from the definite nature of empirical

data to a space of uncertainty and mysticism. The body itself becomes a place of mystic uncertainty. Irie "could not know her body's decision" (Smith 246). Her body itself enacts mysterious volition and she cannot know its choice. As her body becomes a place of mystic choice, biology and genealogy begin to move away from an empirical scientific model. Her body has its own logic that cannot be completely explained by facts and figures.

This progression from empiricism to mysticism parallels a move from a preoccupation with a knowable future and a complete understanding of the past (like the life of FutureMouse) to a notion of history where individuals move away from the future and knowing. Smith seems to value a mystic relationship with the future. There is a value in not knowing, something wonderful in possibility and imagination. There is freedom in being unable to try to envision a future that models the past.

Irie seems unable to succeed in disregarding the importance of historical narrative when it comes to her unborn child. She desires a conventional understanding of genealogy. She wants to be able to pinpoint a definite heritage for her child and this reflects her own search for homeland. However, these attempts to return, like Irie's or Magid's, never yield the desired result, perhaps because the homeland that exists within the mind of those in the diaspora does not exist in reality. Irie's daughter is free in a sense; she flies "free as Pinocchio, clipped of paternal strings," because of her genealogical uncertainty (Smith 448). She becomes a third kind of blankness. This blankness is not concerned with an erasure of escape from history nor an ability to predict how history will manifest itself within the present body. Through physical blank space and genealogical uncertainty, Smith creates a character that embodies possibility and imagination born of a plurality of histories and places.

Past in Present

In regards to the diasporic movement, a definitive historic experience has been greatly valued. Individuals of diasporic communities clung to specific instances, which bound them to others in the diaspora. This history also was supposed to afford a connection to a homeland and the peoples that existed there. The ability to return was something that was valued as it would further the creation and understanding of cultural and racial identity.

Yet, as we move through the works of Brent Hayes Edwards, Stuart Hall, and finally Zadie Smith, models of diaspora that depend upon a definitive and singular history are proven problematic. Essentialized historical narratives evoke some kind of definitive and final narrative of past actions. Currently, this historical narrative has been placed within a normative frame of whiteness, reflecting the ideas and exclusions of the imperial West. Numerous narratives are excluded and the ones that remain become essentialized, strictly defining racial and national identity. To heavily identify with this history is to collude not with a narrative of homeland and belonging, but one of exclusive nationalism. Edwards insists that this common narrative is not reality, but only a propagated essentialized story that is circulated through periodic literature. As characters begin to travel down these paths guided only by essentialized narratives, they become lost and disoriented. Valuing historically influenced identities fails to create or explore what racial and national identities really are: a compilation of all of the narratives of ancestors and of individuals presently within the nation.

In her book Smith, attempts to explore the necessary mess that results from attempting to capture all possible narratives. While the result is overwhelming and at times complicated, it seems at times more favorable than essentialism that reduces race and nation to stereotyped stock identities. The novel, through fiction, breaks up these essentialized narratives and creates a

comprehensive version of history. This fiction is based on both an erasure of narratives and an imagining of too many narratives. However, the narrative cannot exist in only a space of too much or a space of complete erasure. Through her novel she shows how narratives that are unknown (or ones that have been silenced) can broaden the essentialized white narrative history in order to create a new understanding, in order to create a new kind of identity.

A Plurality of Identity

> *On the flight [back] to London I had a painful toothache, and on my first day in England I arranged to go to the dentist…As the dentist's nurse led me to the dentist's chair and I nodded at him in greeting, he said, in a South African accent, 'Does he speak English?'*
> *'A few words,' I said.*" (Kureishi 258)

Kureishi's depictions of late 20th century London continually prompt his reader to focus on the ways Britain's racial ideologies impact interpersonal relationships. The scene above, like many in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, is important because Kureishi uses it to illustrate a stranger's first impression of his protagonist, Karim. The dentist's reaction is ironic because the reader is told on the first page that Karim's mother is British and he has lived in London for his entire life. The recognition of this irony is central to the novel. It introduces the racial framework of 20th century Britain and the desire of individuals to categorize strangers, acquaintances, and family members according to skin color. If we look at Kureishi's protagonist through the lens of the white majority, Karim can only be half of himself and this is problematic. Within a reductive black/white binary, Karim cannot easily be categorized. He is neither completely Anglo-British nor "other." Kureishi uses the multiplicity of Karim's racial identity to highlight the inability of 20th century British racial ideology to consider individuals outside of a black/white binary. He also illustrates Karim's confusion and uncertainty in cultivating his own identity because of his exclusion from either side of the binary. As Karim searches for a place where he belongs, Kureishi introduces the reader to the ways that other individuals who are unhappy with the current racial framework seek to destabilize or evade it.

Throughout his novel Kureishi explores possible representations of marginalized people outside the boundaries of the categories of the white majority prescribes by introducing multiple and competing approaches to race. Karim is suspended between two racial ideologies that both

seek to destabilize the white majority narrative. The first, and perhaps most prevalent ideology, gestures toward the importance of class-consciousness and mobility. There are many characters within the novel that choose to concentrate on their class identity as a means of relieving their exclusion from the white majority. Rita Felski, in "Nothing to Declare: Identity, Shame, and the Lower Middle Class," emphasizes the interrelation of racial and class discoveries. She shows that individuals in the lower middle class attempt to cover over racial differences by aspiring to upper class status. Felski notes that generally people consider class boundaries more permeable and therefore, socioeconomic mobility could be considered one of the easiest roads to inclusion in majority culture. Felski states that a fear of shame permeates mobility. This fear is linked to an inability to keep up appearances and can hinder individuals from feeling completely comfortable in other class cultures. She likens this discomfort to the use of a consciously acquired second language. Yet despite this fear, Felski maintains that the lower classes are more preoccupied with reflecting the values of the upper class than with harnessing subversive or disruptive power. Felski believes cultural theorists need to look at class-consciousness in the lower classes as a way of contemplating and disrupting current racial relations because of its prevalence and representation throughout history.[2]

Kureishi uses Felski's sketch of socially mobile marginal individuals to illustrate the evasion and delusion that can come from using class to navigate racial identity. As we will see later in the chapter, Kureishi illustrates the problems that stem from ignoring race completely. He also highlights the issues that black individuals encounter once they enter the upper classes. While Felski argues that class is a viable way to deal with racial problems, Kureishi illustrates the problems of attempting to erase racial identity solely through class-consciousness.

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[2] See Felski's article, especially pages 36-41, for a more in depth analysis of class-consciousness in the lower middle class.

The second racial ideology that Kureishi illustrates into *Buddha* predates Homi K. Bhabha's outline of two competing narratives that he calls the pedagogical and the performative, but both works seem to be related. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha explains that the pedagogical is the hegemonic voice of the white majority. It promotes homogeneity in its view of nationalism and supports the exclusion of non-white individuals. The pedagogical's power is rooted in historical imperialism and colonialist ideology. The pedagogical has the power to build a racial ideology founded upon an essentialized and identitiarian racial identity. Bhabha goes on to describe the antithesis of the pedagogical, which is the performative. The performative articulates a multiple and pluralistic view of nation. It also seeks to illustrate the existence and power of minority populations and tries to erode the stronghold the pedagogical has over narrative history as well as the present. The work of the performative is to disrupt the majority through the performance of imitation. Mimicry is what Bhabha suggests is the performance of the marginalized. Through imitation an ambivalent space is created because the mimic imitates a narrative in which he cannot be represented. Mimicry highlights the pedagogical's inability to represent the people on the margins of the nation.[3]

The de-stabilizing ambivalence rendered by performance shapes Kureishi's novel. In the following chapter, while exploring the different racial ideologies articulated by the characters Karim encounters, I also want to trace the workings of both the pedagogical and the performative in Kureishi's novel so as to chart the potential for the performative narrative to disrupt a mono-cultural narrative. Moreover, I want to explore the limitations that Kureishi places on approaching racial narratives only using the ideology of the performative.

[3] For a more at length analysis see Bhabha, especially chapters four and eight.

Kureishi offers multiple characters that align themselves with the racial ideologies outlined above. By placing these individuals next to Karim, whose racial ideology is not fixed, prompts the reader to confront his or her own ideas about race. Through Karim's uncertainty, Kureishi calls for a redefinition and reexamination of the basis on which racial identity is founded. By revisiting this foundation Kureishi wishes to explore a more pluralistic understanding of race and racial ideologies. He wants to offer an understanding that breaks down an essentialized racial binary as well as one that expands the scope and definition of the racial ideologies that are already in existence. The following chapter will explore the ways in which different points of the narrative reflect Karim's movement from avoidance of racial discourse to the creation of his own racial understanding. It will also look at Kureishi's dissection of these two racial ideologies and will work to uncover the way they lie in opposition to the racial ideology that Kureishi's protagonist finally constructs.

The Evolution of a New Kind of Englishman

The Buddha of Suburbia documents the adolescent and young adult life of Karim Amir, a young boy with a white English mother, an Indian father, and a younger brother. The novel follows Karim through his travels and experiences in London as well as a brief stint in New York. As the novel progresses, we see how his identity is shaped by his experiences of racism, classism, and nationality. The story begins as Karim's father, Haroon, performs as a master yogi for a party of rich suburbanites interested in "Oriental" things. The reader learns quickly that this is quite humorous as Haroon is not a Buddhist but a fair-weather Muslim. Karim enjoys these parties because he gets to see his father's white lover Eva and her son Charlie, with whom Karim falls in love.

As Karim's parents' marriage ends, the reader sees another one begin. Karim introduces us to his Uncle Anwar, his Aunt Jeeta, and his cousin Jamila, another family in turmoil. Anwar has initiated a hunger strike in order to coerce Jamila into an arranged marriage to a man from India. While he wastes away, Jamila talks to Karim about the consequences of any actions that she might take. In the end she agrees to submit to her father's will, but the groom who arrives from India, Changez, is a childish man with a crippled arm. Changez is unwilling to help in his father-in-law's shop and Jamila will not allow him to touch her, so he simply lays about reading P.G. Wodehouse and Conan Doyle, the authors he believes to be the epitome of Englishness. Karim comes to regard Chagez as both a friend and a form of entertainment.

Karim nomadically wanders between his mother and her sister's family, his father and Eva, and Jamila and Changez. Soon enough, Eva finds him an audition for a production of *The Jungle Book*. Karim is cast as an extremely racialized and stereotyped Mowgli. His appearance in a tiny red bikini bottom with dark colored make-up covering his body shocks his family and friends, but Karim's caricatured performance leads him to another acting opportunity with renowned London director Matthew Pyke.

In preparing for Pkye's play Karim encounters Tracey, a young opinionated black woman, as well as Eleanor, an upper class English rose, with whom Karim begins a relationship. Being cast in Pyke's play causes Karim to confront ideologies of class and race as the actors are instructed to improvise and imitate individuals from different class backgrounds. Dating Eleanor further exposes Karim to an elite social and cultural life a he follows Eleanor from house to house and party to party.

Soon after, the play travels to New York City and Karim goes with it. After the play closes, Karim begins to live with Charlie, now an international rock sensation. Karim begins to

heal as his heartbreak over the collapse of his relationship with Eleanor. As Karim leaves the play and continues to live with Charlie, with whom he is still in love, Karim struggles to find what he wants out of life. After witnessing Charlie in demeaning sexual acts, Karim promptly falls out of love. He then decides to return to England where things are more familiar. Once there, he lands a part on a television soap opera. During the last pages of the novel, Karim notes the changing landscape of London. He notes the evolving buildings as well as the evolution of the people, and in his comments the reader can see the subtle evolution of Karim, as well. In the novel's final scene Karim, his extended family including, his father and his suburbanite fiancé Eva, his younger brother Allie (who is a fashion designer) and Allie's girlfriend (a thin black model), and even Changez and his Japanese prostitute/friend Shinko, are seated around a table. Each of the individuals around the table is a different shade and from different rungs of society. He notes how he loves them and Kureishi leaves the reader with a picture of a new diversified Britishness.

Tracey versus Karim: A Black and White Reality?

As a teenager, Karim is reluctant to recognize race as a social structure in British society, because he feels like he does not have a place within this structure. Karim consistently avoids discussions of race and is quick to describe people in terms of class or sexuality before ever mentioning their race. Kureishi uses Karim's avoidance of the topic of race to construct situations where he is pitted against individuals with strong racial conceptions.

Karim's refusal to consider his own race is especially clear as he begins to work with director Matthew Pyke. Karim and his fellow actors are asked to select individuals from different class backgrounds to improvise. Initially, Karim selects Charlie to imitate, but he is discouraged by Pyke, who goads Karim into picking someone "black" with skin colored like his own. Karim

selects his uncle Anwar to imitate. He creates a monologue in which Anwar talks about the hunger strike he used to coerce Jamila into an arranged marriage and tells an anecdote about trying to attack the young white boys who harass his family daily. Karim offers a very accurate imitation of Anwar's experiences and struggles. However, Tracey, a fellow actor, thinks his project distasteful, inappropriate, and a caricature of blackness.

Tracey is the only other "black actor" in the company. She is also the only character Kureishi allows to speak after Karim's impersonation of Anwar. As she begins to speak, the reader gets an in depth description of Tracey from Karim. His description reflects his reluctance to mention race forthright. He notes that Tracey is "not fashionable, like a lot of middle-class kids who fancied themselves actors, Tracey was respectable in the best suburban way…"(Kureishi 167). Karim highlights class qualifiers first. He comments on the fact that she isn't like the middle-class actors, and that she is inescapably suburban. Her suburban origin (not her blackness) is the only reason Karim seems to feel related to her, noting he is "more beige than anything" (179). He relates to her suburban-ness because he views himself as product of the suburbs.

Karim only begins to mention Tracey's race in order to explain why Tracey might reject his portrayal of a non-white individual. Karim mentions teasingly, almost condescendingly that Tracey "was bothered by things: she worried about what it meant to be a black woman"(179). He furthers his analysis, noting her quiet passive behavior around white people as well as her extroverted and passionate personality in the presence of black people. Karim dissects Tracey's double consciousness and insinuates that her awareness, her concern with issues of race causes her to be unable to be an entire Tracey at any one time. Karim relates Tracey's performance of double consciousness to his own inability to fit easily into a racial category. His critical tone

stresses his displeasure with the girl who was "shy and ill at ease in the world, doing her best to disappear from a room…" and he is surprised by the wild energetic individual that Tracey becomes in a room full of black people (179). Karim does not like that Tracey chooses to disengage parts of herself in certain social situations. Her resolve to conform to different identities when she is with different groups of people makes him uncomfortable. He is critical of her actions and this criticism reflects his own refusal to explore his own racial identity.

Another manifestation of his unease or recoil is present in Karim's description of Tracey. Before he finishes describing Tracey's double consciousness he reverts to a discussion on class, noting that Tracey's mother is a cleaning woman. Class discourse is an important tool for Karim; it is a comfortable platform from which he can make social observations. Race is something he cushions or hides between issues of class. He never leaves it exposed or fully acknowledged. It bothers Karim that Tracey is so upfront about racial issues. Kureishi illustrates the depth of Karim's unease as their argument progresses. Karim becomes short and unreceptive to Tracey especially as the rest of the majority chatter falls away and the argument becomes a one "between 'minorities'" (Kureishi 179).

Tracey does not appreciate Karim's improvisation of Anwar and they argue:

> "Two things, Karim," she said to me. "Anwar's hunger-strike worries me. What you want to say hurts me. It really pains me! And I'm not sure that we should show it!"
>
> "Really?"
>
> "Yes." She spoke to me as if all I required was a little sense. "I'm afraid it shows black people—"

> "Indian people –"
>
> "Black and Asian people--"
>
> "One old Indian man –"
>
> "As being irrational, ridiculous, as being hysterical. And as being fanatical."
>
> (Kureishi 180)

In this scene, it is clear that Tracey has internalized the racial binaries and structures that existed in 1970s London. Her argument reflects the white majority's racial binary of white/black. In the argument above, Tracey use personal pronouns to describe how the performance made her feel, not how it might make Indian males feel. Though Karim is presenting one black man in a negative light she feels personally affronted. The hurt is personal because Tracey believes in an essentialized racial experience. She understands race to be a common and shared experience. This singular experience has heavily influenced her identity. Her understanding causes racial discourse to become formulaic: all non-white individuals become black.

Because she is active and concerned about racial things, she stands in stark contrast to Karim's attitude. She is a foil to Karim's racial attitudes. She struggles to incorporate Karim into the identity by employing "we" during their argument. But their differences in understanding are apparent when the dialogue becomes short. Tracey generalizes the improvisation and Karim repeatedly individualizes it, insisting that his imitation is representative of "one old Indian man" (180).

This brief dialogue represents how Karim and Tracey approach the issues of race they encounter daily. Tracey wants to use her acting, her performance as a way to fight against the pedagogy of the majority. For Tracey, Pyke's play is not about class, but is about race. Karim's

impersonation of Anwar, and his attitude frustrate her. She deems his approach hateful and insists on his inclusion into her racial identity by inquiring, "why do you hate yourself, and all black people so much, Karim?"(180). This statement illustrates one of the central conflicts in the novel: if race is approached as from an essentialist or identitarian standpoint is there a place for individuals who are from a mixture of backgrounds? Is reconciliation possible for these multiple histories?

For Tracey, it seems reconciliation is not possible. She, like the majority, insists that individuals must take their place according to the shade of their skin regardless of mixture. But Karim does not want to overlook his British mother, so he remains placeless in his effort to be both black and British. He remains a hybrid who is looked over, something special and different that is continually overlooked, undervalued, and incorrectly defined. Tracey continues the conversation by asking him why he hates all black people including himself. Tracey does not see Karim's need for racial definitions that recognize plurality. For her, there is no need for opportunities to be both; there are no opportunities for people like Karim to truly exist outside of the binary. In her eyes he must give up his claims as anything British and embrace his marginal status, based on his skin. She believes that only then can he begin to fight for inclusion.

Tracey's ideology is founded on her belief in the existence of a "white truth" (Kureishi 181). She claims that Karim's portrayal of Anwar is an unfathomable production that reaffirms a white impression of all non-white people. For Tracey, truth begins to represent white Britishness, whether an account is factual or not. White truth is related to Bhabha's pedagogical. It is the version of the truth used to strengthen a hegemonic view of Britain and nationalism and this is where Kureishi rejects a performative understanding because it plays into the pedagogy. While Anwar's story is quite ridiculous, the reader remains witness to its validity. Tracey's disbelief

and her argument against Karim's refusal to adhere to identitarian understanding of blackness illustrate the extent to which her reality is racialized. The other actors reaffirm her claim as they view her as a racial authority (because she *is* black). They support Tracey's statement and Karim is ordered to rethink his work.

However, Karim believes that there is a truth that is not racialized and must exist outside of the black and white binary. He insists that having to change is work is "censorship" because he believes that the truth is being silenced. He argues that Anwar's story is true and devoid of racial implications because he believes that there has to be a reflection of actual reality. Tracey's idea of white reality causes her to disregard the complexities of race because any representation, especially representation of black individuals must be judged to stand for the whole. Karim argues for the ability to account for things that he has witnessed without emphasis on race and on racial ideology. He argues for the ability to regard complexities. His argument for colorless truth becomes synonymous with his need for an existence without binaries. Karim highlights the limitations of Tracey's racial ideology. In this moment Kureishi illustrates the inability of a strictly performative understanding of race to deal with more complex models of mixed race and heritage.

In Pursuit of the English Rose

As Karim matures, all of his actions, reactions, and interactions change. Some of these changes are drastic and some only minute. In order to chart Karim's changing understanding of race and class we must look at his relationship with a character he has never met and who is also physically absent from the novel: Eleanor's deceased ex-boyfriend Gene.

Gene is mentioned several times in the narrative before Karim finds out who he was, and what occurred that causes Eleanor so much pain on an almost daily basis. During dinner at Pyke's mansion, Marlene Pyke informs Karim that Gene was a young, very beautiful, and very talented West Indian (Caribbean) actor. He was highly cultured, often proclaiming poetry loudly at parties, and was a master of African music. Pyke had claimed Gene" the best mime he ever met" (Kureishi 201). Despite all of his talent, Gene never attained any prominent acting roles, people constantly disrespected and discriminated against him, and he was unreasonably suspected of criminal activities on several occasions, all because of his dark complexion. Marlene notes that he "lived in a bad world in nice old England"(201). According to Marlene, after a while Gene couldn't withstand the exclusionary nature of the racial social structure. He took his life in an effort to escape. Eleanor had found his body and never truly recovered. As Marlene finishes the story we see Karim's reaction.

> "…She came home and found him dead. She was so young then."
>
> "I see."
>
> "That's all there is to it"
>
> Marlene and I sat there a while. I thought about Gene and what he'd been through; what they'd done to him; what he'd allowed to happen to himself…
>
> (Kureishi 201)

The solemn tone of his narration illustrates how Karim feels about Gene but especially how he feels about Gene as a minority individual. For the first time, Karim thinks about Gene in terms of his race. In the moment he considers what happened to Gene because of his race. Gene could

never play in "Chekov or Ibsen or Shakespeare" even though he deserved the roles (201). The last clause Karim devotes to Gene becomes paramount in understanding Karim's relationship to his own minority status. Karim consciously believes that somehow Gene has permitted society to treat him poorly, that he had allowed himself to be swept up, angered, and defined by society. Karim believes Gene had accepted and internalized British culture's binary understanding of race and allowed his life to be dictated by it. Karim imagines Gene had identified too much with a black identity, seemingly the same identity that Tracey is trying to protect, and the same identity Karim tries to ignore. The tone of the last clause highlights Karim's hope that he is in some way better than Gene. He hopes that the same thing will not happen to him and that perhaps he will be able to replace Gene in Eleanor's eyes.

After Karim and Eleanor go for dinner at Pyke's mansion, Karim realizes that he has been passed over by Eleanor, who has been secretly sleeping with Pyke for quite some time. When he confronts her, their relationship as lovers ends quite abruptly on a train running the Bakerloo line. As the relationship ends Karim reflects:

> It was over, then, my first real love affair…She preferred Pyke. Sweet Gene, her black lover, London's best mime, who emptied bed-pans in hospital soaps, killed himself because everyday, by a look, a remark, an attitude, the English told him they hated him; they never let him forget they thought him a nigger, a slave, a lower being. And we pursued English roses as we pursued England; by possession these prizes…we stared defiantly into the eyes of the Empire and all its self-regard…We became part of England and yet proudly stood outside it. (Kureishi 227, my emphasis)

Karim's heartbreak seems to bring forth a small amount of suppressed acknowledgement of his racial marginality. In this passage, Karim identifies the ways in which the white majority mistreated Gene. Even though he heard his story second hand, Karim specifically lists the ways Gene was treated by the English. The reader gets the sense that Karim is not talking about Gene but describing his own experiences. Halfway through the passage Karim connects himself to Gene using the pronoun "we." At this moment, Karim not only joins Gene as one of Eleanor's former lovers, but also as one of Eleanor's black former lovers. Here, Karim identifies with blackness, which he never has before. He acknowledges that as someone who is considered non-white he, like Gene, pursued England (or Britishness) in a very specific way. He observes that by loving white English women, especially those of the upper class or "English roses," he and Gene were actively pursuing inclusion. Through social and class mobility, this pursuit of Britishness disrupts the white majority narrative of inclusion through social mobility. His tone becomes defiant and accusatory as he realizes that this inclusion is not permanent or long lasting.

Dating a woman of Eleanor's class standing allowed Karim to imagine himself on somewhat equal footing with non-marginalized, white upper-class British individuals. Karim attends elegant dinners and is exposed to languages, art, and food that he never knew existed because of his relationship with Eleanor. In these instances Kureishi illustrates how affiliations and relationships with wealthy white women wield the ability for the marginal to be placed on equal footing. However, this footing is not permanent, in fact, it is easily lost.

Karim is also quick to notice that a tour of the upper class is not a replacement for equality, and certainly does not offer true inclusion. The inability of social mobility to produce true inclusion is evident when Karim talks about Eleanor's friend Heater who is an individual

from the lower class who is given space to pontificate on Beethoven or Huysmans. While Gene and Karim are forced to leave, Heater remains. It seems that his invitation into the upper class comes with different terms because of his skin color. Karim proclaims that he and Gene had become "part of England and yet proudly stood outside it" and that their separation brings defiant freedom as well as bitterness and resentment. This bitterness enters the narrative anytime class and race intersect. Eleanor even mentions bitterness after Karim asks her for money for a political party, that supposedly supports the racially marginalized. Eleanor is against the party and says, "This is the point. They are not a Party for black people…I'm not giving a bean to that kind of apartheid thing." Then she tells Karim "Don't get bitter" (Kureishi 239). This quotation shows how bitterness appears when race enters class conversations. Karim asking Eleanor for money for the party is one of the only times the pair openly talk about race. Karim's narration also notes that Eleanor's comment is out of kindness. Eleanor asks Karim not to go down the same road as Gene but it seems inevitable.

How does this bitterness affect black individuals, especially those who are trying to gain inclusion through class mobility? Karim ponders both his and Gene's positions in an attempt to make sense of the continuing exclusion, "to be truly free we had to free ourselves of all bitterness and resentment, too. How was this possible when bitterness and resentment were generated afresh every day?" (227). Karim connects the bitterness with the inability of black individuals to be included in Britishness. Karim equates his opportunities with Eleanor to freedom or inclusion into Britishness. However, after the breakup he realizes that freedom or inclusion cannot be produced by class mobility alone, because attitudes and actions persist in excluding black individuals from a national narrative. As Kureishi depicts Karim's recognition of this bitterness

his is highlighting the limitations of Felski's approach to racial issues from solely class-conscious ideology.

The freedom Karim is really searching for is incapable of existing without eliminating the bitterness and resentment that marginalized characters feel. This resentment and bitterness cannot be eliminated without the elimination of the white majority's exclusionary actions. The pride of the outsider, that Karim references, is short-lived and bitter resentment is regenerated continuously. In this moment of recognition Karim comes closer to recognizing himself as marginalized individual.

Like Looking in the Mirror

By the close of the novel, Karim has travelled, worked, and lived in America. Once he returns from his travels, he wishes to return to things that are familiar. As this somewhat older Karim returns to his family and friends, it is easy to compare the attitudes and beliefs of the younger Karim with those of an older Karim. His evolution could go completely unnoticed (due to his nonchalant narration) if he didn't have a conversation with his opinionated younger brother, Allie. Allie's ideas regarding race and Britishness are especially interesting to pit against Karim's because he is the only character in the novel who has the same mixed heritage. His sentiment reflects a stronger articulation of Karim's earlier aversion to racial discourse, however through this conversation Kureishi illustrates Karim's final feelings on race.

Until this point, Allie hasn't actually spoken in the novel; he is only shown screaming as his father leaves his mother. As Karim enters his mother's house, he describes Allie just as he describes everyone, noting the way he carries himself, the cut of his clothes, and the make of his shoes. Karim mentions only things that point toward his socioeconomic standing. He makes a

comparison between Allie's newly elevated class standing with his old one describing the way his bright shoes looked against his mother's ratty Oxfam rug, completing the description by stating "Allie had money…"(Kureishi 267).

After they exchange niceties, their conversation turns increasingly to race and class issues. Allie starts to comment on Karim's acting in Pyke's play.

> "It was idealistic. The politics got on my nerves. We all hate whingeing lefties, don't we?
>
> "Do we? What for?"
>
> " Oh yeah. Their clothes look like rags. And I hate people who go on all the time about being black, and how persecuted they were at school, and how someone spat at them once. You know: self pity."
>
> "Shouldn't they—I mean, we—talk about it, Allie?
>
> "Talk about it? God no." Clearly he was on to a subject he liked. "They should shut up and get on with their lives. At least the blacks have a history of slavery. The Indians were kicked out of Uganda. There was reason for bitterness. But no one put people like you and me in camps, and no one will. We can't be lumped in with them, thank God. We should be just as grateful we haven't got white skin either. I don't like the look of white skin, it—" (Kureishi 268)

Allie starts by calling Pyke's play about class was hippie and idealistic. He dismisses the leftist's focus on class and race in England as whining. He also assumes that everyone agrees with his sentiment because pluralizes rhetorical questions saying "we all" instead of "I." As the scene

progresses it becomes clear Allie discredits that problems of black individuals in Britain. He maintains that incidents in the schoolyard or on the street are minimal compared to what Africans or Indians went through in history. He insists that race is something that should not be discussed ever. He likes racial of commentary to "self- pity" (Kureishi 267).

Allie consistently separates himself and Karim from the racial minority and refers to black individuals as "they." He claims he and Karim should not be "lumped in" or identified with the racial minority. He maintains that while they should not be considered black they also should not aspire to be white either. Allie simultaneously dismisses the idea of identitarian blackness and any sort of mimicry of whiteness. In one conversation, Allie refuses both Tracey's appeal for a collective racial identity and Gene's attempt to be included through socioeconomic mobility. Allie's own form of racial ideology is avoidance. He ignores the racial issues that occur and the structures that keep these issues relevant. At the end of their conversation, Allie says, " Let me say that we come from privilege. We can't pretend we're some kind of shitted-on oppressed people. Let's just make the best of ourselves" (268). In this statement, Allie insists that if he or Karim were to identify with a kind of oppressed or marginalized blackness the act would be pretense. He assures Karim that they are privileged because they can avoid the white majority's categorizations of white or black. Instead they can concentrate on being themselves. Allie's tone in this sentence insinuates that he thinks to insert oneself into racial discourse would be a waste of time and failure to relinquish untapped potential.

Allie's looks to self-regard above any discourse, including discourses related to class that are found earlier in the novel. At the beginning of Karim's relationship with Eleanor, Jamila comments that Eleanor is vain and self-obsessed proclaiming, "that's exactly what they are like, these people, actresses and such-like vain fools. The world burns and they comb their

eyebrows"(176). Allie's ideas on race seem very similar to those of an eyebrow combing fool. Like Eleanor, Allie also instructs Karim not to become bitter. This bitterness, as mentioned before, enters the narrative anytime class and race intersect. Earlier I spoke about Karim's feelings and his own movement through class postitions. Now I wish to articulate what the upper classes receive from a black individuals temporary inclusion.

Eleanor and other rich individuals like her understand marginalized people as exotic, fashionable and collectible items. She acquires "black" gentleman because their differences from the majority culture interest her. She engages with them until she is forced to confront any political or social implications that spring from the racial position of the white majority. That she turns from racial issues so easily suggests that recognizing and attending to the social effects of racism by well meaning white individuals amounts to the bitterness of people of color. For Eleanor, this bitterness is also associated with the loss of her own commodities. It is very interesting to see Allie mimic her. This mimicry illustrates his obsession with class outside of racial inclusion because he, like Eleanor, considers his class standing outside of the implications of race.

Allie is very much preoccupied with class and aesthetics. Kureishi begins to illustrate this preoccupation as Karim marvels at the appearance of Allie's strikingly perfect ensemble. Allie is thrilled that Karim finally has a high profile television-acting job, no matter the work's lack of artistic value or its collusion with commodity culture. He openly admits that he hates leftists and their ideals, mostly because their clothes look like rags. He is obsessed with the way things appear, making something out of himself, knowing as many people as he can, and being young and talented. His attention to aesthetics is connected to the sort of class-consciousness that is shared by all of the upwardly mobile in the novel; Eva is very ambitious in terms of class and

consequently she is a decorator, someone hired to make dwellings aesthetically pleasing. Allie is the same way; he is in the business of making women pretty via their clothing. His need for a world without a coming together of the marginalized and/or racialized springs from his need to be upwardly mobile and aesthetically attuned.

His preoccupation with aesthetics permeates the novel. Not only do characters motivates by their desire for upward mobility, like Allie and Eva, embrace blackness or whiteness as is seasonable and fashionable, the upper-class white British use this appreciation of aesthetics as a means of diverting and deferring a focus on the effects of racism. As stated earlier in the section, Eleanor seems to collect black men as if they were commodities but she is not alone in her collecting. We see that Pyke and his wife Marlene also do this. These characters seem to experience marginal cultures and attitudes through their sexual ownership of individuals who are racially marked. Kureishi draws Pyke and his wife as sexual explorers; they sample and collect all sorts of different people for different sexual experiences. This sexual exploration and ownership offers individuals a marginal experience without acknowledgement of the political and social implications that plague any real kind of racial awareness of discourse.

Awareness of aesthetics and appearances of things does not stop with character's actions and interactions; it extends to the narrative itself. Details in the narrative that seem insignificant carry an attention to the visual. Karim's nickname "Creamy" creates a visual image every time it is uttered by his close family and friends. Possibly born out of the addition of a "y" to his name as a boy (Karim+y), the name Creamy connotes a light color. In conjunction with Karim's description of his own skin as beige, the reader gets a visual confirmation of Karim's light skin each time his nickname is used. Because cream is a color that is not completely specified (it lies

on the light end of the color spectrum) the nickname also refers to a racial fluidity Karim comes to articulate by the end of the novel.

Understanding Kureishi's position on race becomes simpler if we look closely to the relationship and racial positions of Karim and Allie. They are the only two individuals in the novel who are marginalized in same way. They come from the same family, have the same socioeconomic background, and are the same gender. It seems that a younger Karim would have partially agreed with Allie's call for color-blindness and his phobic recoil from any conversations relative to race. For the younger Karim, conversations about any kind of racial identity were ridiculous. However, as Karim matures he seems to accept a pluralized idea of blackness, or marginality. During his conversation with Allie, Karim does not agree with him. Karim questions him saying "Shouldn't they—I mean, we—talk about it [race], Allie?"(267). This statement is important for two reasons. Firstly, Karim directly addresses racial identities breaking from his history of recoiling from his own racial marginalization. Secondly, Karim integrates himself into a "we," in doing so accepting that he is part of a people who are continually marginalized and persecuted because of their outsider status. While Karim is not invested in any type of monolithic black identity (illustrated by earlier conversations with Tracey), it seems that he has adopted a racial ideology that recognizes certain points of shared experience within the black marginalized community. He questions Allie assuredness that all people hate whining leftists and also tries to tell Allie about his experience with the dentist. For the first time we see Karim aligning himself with a marginalized experience. Because he knows that despite the fact he is the son of both and Indian man and an English rose, will still be considered black at many times during his life. As their conversation changes topics Karim notes "the things he [Allie] was saying were strange" (Kureishi 268). With these words the reader can

see the final shift in Karim. There is a break from of his phobic recoil concerning racial discourse.

A pluralistic approach

Throughout the novel, the reader is exposed, just as Karim is, to several different approaches and reactions to racial discourse. Firstly, we are introduced to Karim's refusal to acknowledge the existence of race or his involvement in any sort of racial discourse. As he grows and matures, it becomes clear that Karim becomes more comfortable, more accepting, of the role race plays in society as well as in his personal life. He begins to identify with a definition of race that recognizes the differences that exist within a group of marginalized individuals. He rejects any kind of identitarian idea of race and looks for a racial understanding that encompasses all types of individuals. His search seems to end with the novel because in the last scene Karim is surrounded by his family, and individuals from all different walks of life.

We have seen Karim defining his own ideas and racial identity; Kureishi places his ideas against the ideologies of several other individuals. Tracey chooses to fight against marginality by presuming an all-encompassing marginalized black identity. Gene tried to survive by obtaining an English rose, and living in upper class England but hauntingly outside of it. And Allie insists that he is not marginalized in any way, focusing only on elevating his class position. By depicting the failures and limitations of characters that have a specific approach to race, Kureishi highlights the limitations of using one racial discourse to approach the complexities of race issues. Like Karim's acceptance of a plural definition of race, perhaps Kureishi's narrative advocates a need to deal with the institution of race individually and pluralistically. Karim's viewpoint is the one that reflects Kureishi's and it is the one that remains in the final pages. The first two, Tracey and Gene, do not have any continuous presence in the narrative. Once they

appear and lie in comparison to Karim, they disappear from the narrative. While Allie does remain in the narrative, in the ending scene, where Karim's family and friends comes together in a combination of many colors Karim admits, "Allie kept his distance" (Kureishi 282). With Karim, Kureishi shows the reader that there is no single way to effectively deal with issues of race. He calls for a combination or a multiple understanding. As Karim is surrounded by his friends and family of all colors, Kureishi illustrates the way Karim believes racial ideology should look like.

Conclusion

This thesis was an attempt to explore the way in which both Smith and Kureishi work within their novels to expand essentialized historical and racial narratives to create a new area of definition of Britishness. By creating a space in which all narratives can be evaluated and heard, all of their marginalized protagonists can fit into British national identity. Through the work of their novels, Smith and Kureishi posit that a collection of different and competing narratives will provide a space for a new kind of British man.

However, where will this space leave us? At the en of each novel, the author has left the reader in a sort of liminal space. There is a rejection of what was but at the same time a hesitancy to move forward. There is no clear picture of what a world without race will look like given the history of race throughout the world. We also must look to see if other groups could be included in this analysis, for instance how do lower class whites fit into this picture? The addition of groups would also play a role in shaping what life might look like once we cross the liminal space.

In the future I would like to try and work through this space and see if there are indeed definite hints to what this world or new Britishness might really entail. There seems to be a need for further exploration of what makes a British sense of race unique. By combining both of these studies I look forward to creating a more full body of work.

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