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Different Modalities of Englishness in the Iqbals in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

제이디 스미스의 *White Teeth* 의 이크발 삼부자를 통해 보는 영국성의 다양한 유형들

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배 향 아

Different Modalities of Englishness in the Iqbals in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

by

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ABSTRACT

Zadie Smith, in her 2000 debut novel *White Teeth,* introduces new modalities of Englishness and the need to embrace cultural heterogeneity along with the blending process of Englishness and the imagined fantasy of origin. Among various topics related to the novel, this thesis aims to engage in the discussions reinterpreting contemporary Englishness. Special attention will be given to studying the characterizations of Samad Iqbal and his twin sons because interesting thematic insight can be uncovered by examining the failures of the Iqbal men. By showing how Samad and Millat struggle in their attempts to control their Englishness, Smith reveals the falsity of homogeneous identity. We see how Samad and Millat both unsuccessfully attempt to root out heterogeneous qualities and fail to reach their ideal Islamic state. Moreover, we are shown how Magid injudiciously embraces Englishness in order to exercise the authority to control other beings.

White Teeth exposes different shades of Englishness through the Iqbals; Samad and Millat demonstrate a form of everyday Englishness which has now become a normalized part of modern multicultural society. The tragic sense of defeat that Samad and Millat give off is due to their

fruitless attempts to cancel out their Englishness and maintain a pure homogeneous state of being. More specifically, they constantly experience internal conflict because of the inconsistency between their ideal state and their actual disposition. On the other hand, Magid embodies colonial Englishness in the context of Western-centrism. That is, he seeks to control other entities on the grounds of rationalism, superior intellect and economic power.

Smith tells the readers that nowadays it is nearly impossible not to be influenced by the widespread mixture of cultures; thus, we are led to celebrate everyday Englishness while being cautioned against unquestioning acceptance of Englishness. We are to welcome the mixing process of the imagined fantasy of origin and Englishness because current society requires contemporary creativity to go beyond the static and unchanged idea of origin. Yet previous reviews have viewed Englishness as fragments of colonial authority or focused on Smith's Caribbean ethnicity. Englishness and origin should not be dealt with as static concepts unchanged through time. More precisely, Englishness should not be merely treated from the viewpoint of opposing colonial masters against colonial subjects. Instead, it should be viewed as an inevitable and increasingly ordinary element in progressing postcolonial and post-national contexts.

By illustrating the different characterizations of the Iqbals, Smith announces the necessity of a new form of multiple-layered consciousnesses in contemporary multicultural Britain. The new model of Englishness that Smith proposes is Englishness as an everyday part of modern society where various cultures are harmoniously joined as current Londoners blend in their fantasy of origin. Cultural homogeneity is not realistic nor imperative in current cultural circumstances and by constructing a new model of Englishness in the contemporary imagination, we may transcend both locations of past and present.

Key words: Englishness, post-colonialism, post-nationalism, multiculturalism, hybridity, cultural homogeneity, cultural heterogeneity, diasporic migration

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Since the late 1940s the English novel was widely known to be in a state of crisis due to the deviation of the British post-war society from previous English traditional values. Thus, in the half-century leading up to the millennium, certitudes of Englishness itself and cultural identities were questioned as the island people faced unprecedented social changes. Then contrary to the state of the novel in the beginning of the twenty-first century, the English novel was gradually revived in the second half of the twentieth century as novelists began to readjust identities and concepts with their imagination. As the century progressed, the dismantling of social structures that once was an impediment to the novelists ironically became opportunities for writers to creatively intervene in the arrival of a reanimated culture and society. The English novels saluted a period of renaissance in the years 1950-2000 as they enjoyed a period of exceptional literary creations and the novels in Britain during that phase show unequaled insights about race, culture, and society.

Among the novels that defined the 2000s, Zadie Smith's 2000 debut novel *White Teeth* is critically acclaimed to have persuasively depicted the borderless, globalized post-colonial age where everything seems to be 'inter-' something. For many, the publication of *White Teeth* was the first major literary event for London[1] in the 21st century. Accordingly, *White Teeth* has been in the literary spotlight and media attention for its humorous and ironic delivery of how various rootless characters search for their places in what Smith calls "the century of strangers, brown, yellow, and white" (271). In fact, Smith's first book was much hyped even before its publication. There was the fascination with the talented author's youth and the intrigue in how Smith was paid an advance of quarter of a million pounds by a renowned agency for the opening pages of *White Teeth*, a rare occasion for a young first-time author. It was thus extremely well-received, decorated with multiple awards, and became a bestseller.

[1] As a city that has witnessed the postwar, postcolonial and post-racial adjustments, London has not only become the focus of imaginative energy for novelists but also been studied on how it has gone through different representations. For example, in *The Making of London*, Sebastian Groes analyzes how London has undergone complex transformations by different writers, tracing a major shift in the representation of the capital city.

The critical mood [2]for *White Teeth* can be exemplified by a review of the book by Caryl Phillips, an award-winning black British novelist and playwright. Phillips praised *White Teeth* in a review for *The Observer*, lauding the book's accurate depiction of the "dazzlingly complex world of cross-cultural fusion in modern-day London" ("Mixed"). Critical discussions about *White Teeth* have mostly dealt with how the novel portrays the new postcolonial structure of 21st-century lives focusing on issues such as Englishness, multiculturalism, race and hybridity. For instance, Laura Moss claims that *White Teeth* displays how the current state of diasporic migration and multiculturalism has led to a "normalization of hybridity" (12) in contemporary communities, which in turn causes the notion of cultural and racial hybridity to shift from desire for purity to current tolerance of diversity.

[2] In his review for the *Times*, Lev Grossman states that *White Teeth* "may be the first novel ever written that truly feels at home in our borderless, globalized, intermarried, post-colonial age" ("All-time"). Grossman praises Smith's playfulness and delights in how she revels in the novelistic complexities of a multicultural world. However, although the book was generally well-received, not all critics loved it. James Wood expresses his displeasure with *White Teeth* by coining the term "hysterical realism" ("Human") and arguing that the conventions of realism have been overworked in the novel. Emily Temple's reaction to this summarizes the critical mood: "If this is hysterical realism, Mr. Wood, I think I love hysterical realism" ("Century"). Twenty years after *White Teeth*'s publication, the book is still widely regarded as a novel that defined the 2000s and Sam Jordison reviews how the novel reads in the year 2020. Jordison reflects that "Smith might give us warnings, but she also gives us reason to hope" ("White").

Speaking of the 'desire for purity,' which signifies the racially homogenous model for national identity (i.e., Englishness), many critical reviews on *White Teeth* have analyzed how Englishness is at issue in the formulations of migrant revisionism. This thesis aims to participate in the discussions that try to rediscover contemporary Englishness; thus, I will focus on Englishness in order to uncover future-oriented Englishness that *White Teeth* provides. In this thesis, focus will be dedicated to studying the characterizations of Samad Iqbal and his twin sons. The Iqbal men are the subject of this thesis's focus because I attempt to claim that interesting thematic insight can be discovered by examining the failures of Samad, Millat, and Magid Iqbal.

White Teeth has brought about diverse discussions[3] on how the novel comments on the connections between multiculturalism, hybridity, and Englishness in different levels of communities in modern London—whether it be racial, cultural, or generational. Nevertheless, although the novel is linked to a wide scope of issues such as race, gender or genetics[4],

[3] Literary discussions on *White Teeth* have reviewed diverse topics, focusing on different characters. For instance, some studies have surveyed female narrative embedded in the novel. Characters such as Irie Jones and Alsana Iqbal present different insights on how female migrants in multicultural societies find their own identity and paradise.

[4] Although *White Teeth* gathered much critical acclaim for its convincing embodiment of post-racial London, some critics such as Ashley Dawson have focused on the genetic

most of the reviews have approached the novel from a particular postcolonial perspective that does not stray from the interpretations that criticize the traditional Western-centrism. Consequently, they have mostly viewed Englishness as remnants of colonial authority, focusing on Smith's Caribbean ethnicity and racial issues.

For example, Bénédicte Ledent regards *White Teeth* as a Caribbean literature, attempting a linguistic examination of the novel. According to Ledent, the language that Caribbean protagonists use is about "mental decolonization" and "establishing the heterogeneous character of London" (1). In the same light, Pilar Cuder-Dominguez aims to discuss Englishness in *White Teeth,* and yet she applies a radically postcolonial perspective by claiming that Smith "targets white Englishness and exposes its myths and prejudices" (185). Cuder-Dominguez views Englishness as a core element of colonial influence and states that in *White Teeth*, "white Englishness is dislocated and even close to complete erasure" as the characters fail to pass the test of traditional, Anglo-Saxon England" (183). In Cuder-Dominguez's view, the irony in *White Teeth* is found when Englishness, which the

revolution's social implications in the book. Dawson claims that "the intersection of genetics and race" (452) is a consistent theme throughout the novel. According to Dawson, *White Teeth*'s concluding scene where FutureMouse is announced is a scene that mirrors the Human Genome Project's announcement.

characters are in search for, remains “an elusive, disembodied ideal” (186). Therefore, Cuder-Dominguez concludes that the purpose of the novel would be to renounce Englishness along with its myths.

Most critics that have also read *White Teeth* at a postcolonial angle similar to Cuder-Dominguez generally viewed Englishness as the remains of colonial rule, focusing on racial issues. For instance, Phyllis Lassner perceives *White Teeth* to be a novel rooted in World War II, which declares emancipation from the war’s catastrophes and racist oppression. According to Lassner, *White Teeth* “liberates its characters from Britain's own racist barbarism” (196). Similarly, Raphael Dalleo claims that *White Teeth* is a Caribbean novel, rather than a British one, engaging with British multiculturalism and self-definition (93). Such postcolonial approaches to the interpretation of *White Teeth* are natural consequences of the book being marketed hard in terms of its ethnic identity and hybridity. However, such readings restrict the scope of the novel and its potential significance even though they may superficially appear to be in a rightful ground.

More significantly, they have led to the mainstream tendency to position subcultures and Englishness in opposing poles; that is, the tendency to view Britain or Englishness as merely negative elements to overcome or overthrow for the purpose of defeating their colonial natures. Yet

Englishness is not a fixed and immutable entity linked to a particular era; the concept should be examined in light of diverse social and cultural atmospheres that are perpetually in motion. Thus, pursuing a constant and 'uncontaminated' form of Englishness or insisting on translating Englishness as a force which subdues other cultures is irrelevant when the national identity has adapted to the modern multicultural world, being irreversibly remodeled in the process. I argue that it is necessary to go beyond seeing Englishness from the viewpoint of opposing colonial masters against colonial subjects and explore it instead as an inevitable and increasingly ordinary element in postcolonial and post-national contexts.

Whereas Cuder-Dominguez, Lassner and Dalleo maintain a postcolonial outlook in which Englishness is positioned in the context of Western-centrism as a colonial force, Philip Tew and Dominic Head behold Englishness as a fluid object that is placed in a more transformative context. Head indicates that the pursuit of a homogeneous Englishness is irrelevant in the post-national age where the national identity is irrevocably reconstructed. Tew also considers such specific responses centering on ethnic identity and hybridity to be a reductive reading of the novel; Tew

argues that Englishness is both examined and celebrated in *White Teeth* through Samad's "subtle inflection of various English traditions" (308). [5]

Therefore, Tew disagrees with Cuder-Dominguez's reading of *White Teeth***,** asserting that Cuder-Dominguez's "narrowing of focus" and "hyperbole" (299) overlook Smith's satirical engagement with multiculturalism and the reality of the actual cultural dynamics and balance. Thus, although Tew also recognizes "Smith's evocations of Englishness" (294) in *White Teeth*, he argues that *White Teeth* is not merely an "ideologically-driven polemic" (299) where Englishness is exposed and interrogated. Rather, the book reveals Smith's satirical engagement with multiculturalism through the various inflections of Englishness in different characters. Tew explains that class and paternal affinities, along with Englishness, form strong currents in *White Teeth* and that various inflections of Englishness in Samad (such as his typically English suburban qualities) are key to reading Samad's characterization and understanding the overall mood of the novel.

[5] Nicola Allen and David Simmons, experts in the field of twentieth-century writing, also discuss Tew's "dual celebration and interrogation of the complex muddle of contemporary British identity" (10). According to Allen and Simmons, Tew revisits *White Teeth* beyond the issues of ethnic identity that previous (primarily post-colonially) focused readings have encouraged.

Head also notices that Englishness is "the focus of critical migrant revisionism" (182) in *White Teeth*, considering the complexity of Englishness and national identity to be one of the principal themes of the book. In his view, although it may appear that much migrant writing in Britain seek to expand perceptions of 'Britishness' in quest of hybrids such as Black-British or Jewish-British, it is often the case that Englishness is really at issue. According to Head, *White Teeth* attempts to send the message that we are all biologically and culturally hybrid post-colonials and that the pursuit of pure Englishness would be an unnecessary obstacle to the inevitable new form of national identity.

Likewise, Nick Bentley states that *White Teeth* attempts to construct a new model of Englishness that is relevant to the current multicultural society. Bentley explains that (unlike other novels such as Julian Barnes's *England, England* which reveals the Englishness controversy ironically through the very absence of the issue) *White Teeth* offers a reframed model of Englishness by engaging openly with the debate between Englishness and multiculturalism. Ultimately, Bentley interprets *White Teeth* as a novel that

celebrates[6] a potential to realize "a harmonious range of new ethnicities under the umbrella of a new model of Englishness" (500).

As Tew points out, *White Teeth* has previously been misread due to "certain essentialisms concerning ethnic identity and hybridity" (294) while its actual mood and characters have been neglected. Therefore, in this thesis, a critical rereading of *White Teeth* will be attempted; I will venture beyond the issues of ethnicity or hybridity to provide space for reflection and commentary on the issue of 'Englishness' in the layers of the complex immigrant mind and survey the implications that *White Teeth* delivers for the future. I aim to construct a new model of Englishness as I locate different versions of Englishness in the characters Samad Iqbal and his twin sons—Millat Iqbal and Magid Iqbal.

The immigrant mind, mixed with different cultural and racial backgrounds, is like a fabric woven with multiple layers of consciousnesses. Here, Englishness is not viewed merely as an anachronistic residue of the

[6] Although many read *White Teeth* as a novel that shows the potential to reach polycultural harmony, some critics turn to a more pessimistic reading of the novel. For instance, Jarica Linn Watts troubles the notion of multiculturalism and interracial equanimity by claiming that although characters in *White Teeth* may overcome linguistic boundaries, "the cultural barriers they have to traverse are, for the most part, impenetrable" (853). In Watt's view, "the novel provides little evidence to suggest that the native English characters share in this vision of a Happy Multicultural Land" (870).

colonial days. Rather, it is an inevitable everyday part of the new consciousness that modern Londoners must adopt. *White Teeth* offers us more than "the racist tragedies of colonial history" (Lassner 195) and goes beyond "bemoaning colonialism's continuing influence" (Dyer 81) on contemporary Britain. Thus, I will argue in this thesis that the novel is not a story about discovering past influences or overcoming the past; rather, it is a story that equips us with an awareness that we need for the future.

To do so, the novel gives us a convincing portrayal of the complex immigrant mind (in which Englishness is both shunned and secured). We can observe an amusing portrait of how people unconsciously absorb Englishness (albeit with a mixture of shame) and suffer in their struggle to singularize their heterogeneity. Some critics, such as Bentley, have also noticed the attempt to design "a new model of Englishness" in *White Teeth* (501). Yet although the cultural anxieties in the construction of Englishness have been observed, the issue has not been thoroughly reviewed in terms of the characterization of the Iqbals. Therefore, this thesis will focus mainly on understanding and distinguishing how Samad Iqbal and his twin sons negotiate with the Englishness they face.

Bearing that in mind, I propose it necessary to differentiate the two different forms of Englishness in *White Teeth*—The Englishness that defines

Samad and Millat and the Englishness that characterizes Magid. In Samad and Millat's case, their struggles and ordeals reveal the internal conflicts they experience due to the co-existing desire to preserve their pure Islamic identity and the inevitable 'contamination' from other cultures they experience. The Englishness that Samad and Millat acquire is a form of 'everyday Englishness' [7]that has now been normalized for long in modern London society. Their Englishness is a cultural product of the diversified heterogeneous community that they are a part of. Nowadays it is nearly impossible not to be influenced by the widespread mixtures of cultures and races, and naturally Samad betrays "the English inflections of twenty years in the country" (Smith 336).

The Englishness that Magid exhibits, on the other hand, is a mode of Englishness that derives from the colonial frame of mind in the context of Western-centrism; Magid attempts to control other entities on the grounds of rationalism, superior intellect and economic power. With the financial

[7] Everyday Englishness refers to the normalized part of Englishness that has become an ordinary part of our daily lives. This term includes all aspect of English culture that modern people have acquired unconsciously such as accent or affinity for particular diet or movies. A similar term is "everyday hybridity" (15) used by Laura Moss when she explains the everyday nature of hybridity in *White Teeth*. According to Moss, Smith has installed various factors in the novel to signal the everydayness of the racial and cultural hybridity. For instance, Irie Jones, a character born of a black Jamaican-English mother and a white English father, indicates the everyday nature of hybridity in contemporary communities.

funding provided by the FutureMouse project, he and Marcus Chalfen are fully convinced they have the ability and right to eliminate the random[8], establish order and 'correct' other beings. That is, Magid and Marcus view accidental glitches and genetic disadvantages to be random errors of nature that needs to be eliminated. Yes, Magid does also embody the everyday Englishness through his manners, speech, dress, diet, and yet what decides his character is his intellectual confidence and way of thinking that lead him to mutual recognition with Marcus Chalfen.

Taking on the different variations of Englishness, Samad, Millat and Magid are central figures for understanding the overall mood and intention of *White Teeth* because the effect and outcome of the characters' Englishness convey a message that Smith tries to deliver. We are shown how Samad and Millat battle between their impulse to recover their Islamic 'purity' and their equally strong desire for the forbidden (such as masturbation or Hollywood films). All the same, we also witness how

[8] Benjamin Bergholtz also notices the movement trying to "eliminate the random and control the world" (541) in *White Teeth*. Bergholtz explains the causal relationship between fundamentalism and 'the random,' saying that the novel thematically "dramatizes the disastrous interplay of a series of competing narratives of fundamentalism" (541). According to Bergholtz, fundamentalism is irresistible to Smith's characters because it seeks to eliminate the random and control the world. Such control is attractive because it claims to overcome the uncertainty in modern London, which has become a postwar, postcolonial, and multicultural city.

Samad's futile attempts are mocked and how Millat's plan to assassinate Doctor Perret backfires. Samad and Millat both fail to separate the different identities within them, and they do not succeed in securing a pure, homogeneous Islamic integrity, either. Readers are invited to laugh at the Iqbal men and Smith does not hesitate to give Samad and Millat such misfortunes because cultural homogeneity is not realistic nor imperative in current cultural ecosystem.

In Magid's case, the core element of his Englishness is not the ordinary Englishness found in our daily lives; his Englishness not only influences him in the cultural sense, but more substantially, dominates his way of thinking. Magid, through his rationalism and his method of domination, demonstrates the colonial Englishness that Cuder-Dominguez, Lassner and Dalleo discussed. Yet although Magid does embody the colonial white Englishness, I believe Smith did not intend to mainly write about colonial Englishness in the purpose of exposing it, which explains Magid's relatively small appearance compared to Samad and Millat. Rather, Magid's fruitless attempt to engineer their life is designed to function as a caution against such outmoded ways of control.

This thesis will be divided into two parts; the first section will discuss how Samad and Millat are torn between their ordinary Englishness

and ideal homogeneous identity. It will investigate how Englishness has now become a part of the practice of everyday life and study how Samad wrestles between his double consciousnesses; that is, his Muslim consciousness and English consciousness. Samad's failed attempts to singularize his different layers of consciousnesses into that of a pure Muslim highlight the necessity of a new form of multiple-layered consciousnesses in contemporary multicultural Britain. Millat Iqbal's conflicted ways also reveal the plural consciousnesses in him, but his daily wrestles are projected from a different perspective—from that of a second-generation migrant. Millat's Englishness has a generational spin to it since he not only contains Englishness but absorbs American influence as well. His secret affinity for Hollywood gangster cinema and his equally passionate desire to belong to KEVIN (Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation), an Islamic Fundamentalist group with an acronym problem, send a message about Englishness similar to Samad's.

The second section will evaluate how Magid digests Englishness in a completely different way from his father and brother. If Samad and Millat reveal the necessity of a new outlook on Englishness, Magid Iqbal's attitude is designed to warn us about what to refrain from when constructing a new mode of Englishness. Magid embodies not only rationalism but the

motivation to control others on the grounds of superior intelligence and financial power (from the capital provided by FutureMouse project), which insinuates the colonial frame of mind that colonial authorities have been forming. What is more, Magid's unquestioning acceptance of and devotion to Englishness signal the need to be conscientious of what we accept or embody.

Throughout the book, several historical events such as the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and World War II are introduced and as a result the majority of critical discussions on *White Teeth* have also centered on the historical implications or interconnection between past-present rather than futuristic implications. Nonetheless, this thesis reads *White Teeth* as a novel that concentrates on transmitting Smith's outlook whose gaze is set on the future, not the past. Smith's intention can be read in the different tones of Englishness in Samad, Millat, and Magid; her intention lies not in exposing the white colonial Englishness. Rather, it lies in exposing the falsity of homogeneous identity; we are advised against expectation of homogeneity and non-compromising essentialism.[9] For this reason, I propose that there

[9] Bergholtz also reads *White Teeth* as a novel that warns its readers about fundamentalism and its insistence on a single narrative. Whether it is Magid's scientism, Millat's militant Islam, or Hortense Bowden's Christianity—such absolutist essentialism is incompatible with "the ambiguity inherent in a pluralistic society" (541).

should be a distinction between the 'Englishness' that is composed of anachronistic colonial qualities (demonstrated by Magid) and the 'Englishness' that has already been normalized and become an ordinary part of our daily lives (exhibited by Samad and Millat). Given these discrete Englishnesses, I will focus on demonstrating how the Iqbals are satirized throughout the novel to caution the readers not to resort to non-compromising essentialism or long-established attempts at control—whether it be ethnicity, religion, culture, and most of all, Englishness. Accordingly, I would like to claim that the Iqbal men's sense of defeat serves as a key to understanding the underlying message of the novel. I will attempt to see beyond Samad's tragic turn of events and read *White Teeth* as a novel that gives us insight to the multiple traits of contemporary immigrants in London. While doing so, the book ultimately embraces (not challenges) Englishness, as not the sum, but an immanent part of the new consciousness that modern Londoners must accept. We are thus invited to celebrate the heterogeneity, the random in current multiethnic Britain.

CHAPTER II

The Helpless Englishness in Samad and Millat Iqbal

The story of *White Teeth* follows three families living in multicultural Britain—the British and Jamaican Joneses, the Bangladeshi Muslim Iqbals, and the Jewish and Catholic yet atheistic Chalfens. Although the three families are all culturally diversified, the Iqbal family is the family that shows the most apparent and distinct struggle and negotiation with their own Englishness. The novel starts with the friendship of two seemingly banal World War II veterans—Samad Iqbal and Archie Jones, yet Samad differs from Archie in that he goes through a much more complicated conflict with the inner workings of his Englishness.

Samad and his son Millat both seek a pure ideal homogeneous Islamic identity, yet the novel continuously shows us how they unintentionally possess heterogeneous qualities. Samad, although a fierce Muslim traditionalist, struggles with the inevitable heterogeneous qualities and Englishness in him. Even though Samad goes through an arranged marriage with Alsana Begum, a Bengali Muslim who does not approve of the modern ways in London, and although he wishes his twin sons to

become exemplary traditional Muslim boys, the novel continuously shows us how his hopes are thwarted by their unintentional ordinary Englishness which pervades throughout the book.

We are presented with a clear clash between Samad's ideal vision of himself and his contradictory self as he struggles with his heterogeneous qualities (such as his lust for Poppy Burt-Jones, masturbation and English habits). The tragedy of Samad lies in his pointless attempts to purify and singularize his heterogeneity. Also, as the story unfolds, the cultural and familial history affects his London-born children in different ways. The Iqbal twins deviate from their father's plans as Millat becomes a teenage delinquent and joins KEVIN (a radical fundamentalist Muslim group) while Magid, although sent to Chittagong to respect the Islamic ways, comes back more English than ever to assist Marcus Chalfen with his FutureMouse experiment—the genetic experimentation of a mouse to control the 'randomness' of life.

The Englishness that Samad and Millat possess is an ordinary element that has become a part of their daily lives. Englishness has been soaked into essentially all parts of their day-to-day lives, as an ongoing element of everyday life in changing postcolonial contexts. They are increasingly ordinary because the turn-of-the-century hybridity in modern

society has led to integration and diversity, what Homi Bhabha calls a new 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' (Moss 12). According to Bhabha, the tendency to focus on issues such as identity regarding ethnicity, class, gender or nationality when discussing the cultural concerns in multicultural contexts causes people to miss a wider transformation of the public domain, which is an outcome of this new vernacular cosmopolitanism. In this aspect, people overlook the extensive and gradual normalization of heterogeneous Englishness in contemporary society.

This wider transformation of the social atmosphere tells us that we have reached the next phase of post-colonial state—a post-post-colonial state, a period when everyday Englishness and heterogeneity has become stabilized into our daily lives, along with cultural and racial hybridity. The ordinariness of Samad and Millat's Englishness is related to this 'post-post coloniality' of the novel because the normalized version of Englishness has transcended both history and post-coloniality. Englishness has become so prevalent and resides in practically all aspects of their daily lives—their language, way of thought, and culture. If post-coloniality deals with the aftermaths of colonial influence, consequences of history and interpretations based on colonial outlooks, post-post-coloniality oversteps such position to outstrip the existing interpretations based on postcolonial history. Post-post-

coloniality attempts to shift the focus from history to the present outcome; "it has shifted from 'the' colonial center to 'a' postcolonial center" (Moss 13). As Laura Moss says, whereas the post-colonial is fixated on history, "the post-post-colonial couldn't give an f-word for it" (11).

The characters in *White Teeth* are linked with the inescapability of history, reflecting the helpless heterogeneity in their subconscious (despite their struggles to reduce it), and yet such a portrait of the immigrant mind is drawn to depict the heterogeneity and Englishness as part of the practice of everyday life. The heterogeneous subconscious in Samad and Millat and their new blend of Englishness is celebrated through their trials as readers become aware of the new model of Englishness in their own practices of heterogeneity destined for the modern Londoners. Figures such as Samad and Millat should not be viewed as characters that live through in-between two cultures *per se*, but characters that simply are an embodiment of the cultures that they inherited and took in (either consciously or unconsciously) despite their attempts to reject them. In other words, Samad and Millat are figures that reflect the everyday nature of their Englishness more distinctly because of their very efforts to get rid of it.

Samad and Millat relentlessly attempt to singularize what is multiple and we are shown how characters unconsciously take in manifold layers of

consciousnesses. They struggle because of the disparity between their standard for model identity and the inevitable ordinary heterogeneity that includes not only Englishness but also Americanness (for instance, the Hollywood cinema that Millat watches) and other cultural elements. What is interesting is the characters' reaction to such a phenomenon; they react with a feeling of shame, showing tendency to eliminate what they consider corruptive 'foreign matter' in their identities. For instance, Samad often confesses his concerns about his purity to Archie. When Samad's moral crisis reaches its height, he consults Archie about his dilemma. He confesses his concerns about becoming more and more corrupt in a foreign land, believing that he and his family will burn in hell: "I am corrupt, my sons are becoming corrupt, we are all soon to burn in the fires of hell. These are problems of some urgency, Archibald" (161). He believes himself to be hell-bound and thus confides that he must at least focus on saving his sons. He feels fear for his sons' identity, telling Archie that there is rebellion in them, that "it is small now, but it is growing" (158). What Samad notices is the increasing amount of multiplicity in his sons; such growing tendencies of heterogeneity are threats to him as he also notices how his nieces become corrupt in his eyes:

> Well, take Alsana's sisters—all their children are nothing but trouble. They won't go to mosque, they don't pray, they speak strangely, they dress strangely, they eat all kinds of rubbish, they have intercourse with God knows who. No respect for tradition. People call it assimilation when it is nothing but corruption. Corruption! (159)

Samad sees the various modes of heterogeneity in others, the 'strange' way they dress, speak and eat which inevitably includes ordinary Englishness to be signs of corruption. Therefore, what others would consider as assimilations appears to be threats to his sons' purity, morality and soul. Such fear of his sons' heterogeneous state is what causes Samad to decide to send at least one of his sons back to Bangladesh (since he cannot afford to send them both). When Samad decides to send one of the twins, he spends several weeks debating over who to send. It seems appropriate to send Millat since "Millat was the one more in need of moral direction," and yet finally decides to send Magid because "Magid had the brains, Magid would settle quicker, learn the language quicker" (162). Samad chooses to send his first son to the East, investing all his hopes for purity in him.

Samad is a figure that is strongly characterized by his obsession with his pure Islamic identity. His pride for his claimed heritage to Mangal

Pande, an Indian soldier who played an important role in the outbreak of the Indian rebellion of 1857, stems from such obsession with his ideal state of being. To Samad, his ancestry is one of the key foundations that define who he is; sharing the story about his great grandfather is even the way he "cements his friendship with Archie" (83). Samad's strong attachment to the heritage is illustrated in the novel as readers are told that "there was no stronger evocation of the blood that ran through him, and the ground which that blood had stained over the centuries, than the story of his great-grandfather" (84).

Samad's desire for glory and honor in war is linked to his allegiance to his ancestor Mangal Pande; when Samad and Archie in the scout tank are assigned a "simpler task" of avoiding the civil war while making sure the roads of communication are intact, Samad shows his ambition to be noticed in "the real war," to be an important war figure like his great grandfather (74). Thus, when Archie informs Samad that the area they are heading for is unoccupied, he replies with dissatisfaction that "this is not war" (74). He tells others that he should not be there, and that he is educated and should be soaring with the Royal Airborne Force, mentioning his relation to Mangal Pande.

Throughout the novel, however, Samad's obsessions are continuously mocked, comically portrayed as his claims are not well

accepted by others. For example, when Samad refers to his ancestry saying, "My great-grandfather Mangal Pande" and looks around for the recognition the name deserves, he is met with "blank pancake English faces," and faced with only more silence and a "longer, denser silence" after adding his explanation to the name (75). Even Samad's compulsion to correct the kinship terminology of Mangal Pande has a comic tempo to the narrative. When Archie has been "suitably impressed" by the Mangal Pande story and asks "So, he was your grandfather? Your real, blood grandfather?" Samad never fails to continuously correct the term as "great-grandfather" (84).

Moreover, when the Iqbals find refuge at the Jones's as the storm hits Willesdsen and Alsana requests someone to tell a story for amusement, Archie asks Samad to tell the story about Mangal Pande, saying "Give us the one about Mangal Pande. That's always good for a laugh" (187). The comic reaction of others (e.g., clamoring Noos, miming slitting their throats and self-asphyxiation) is humorously contrasted with the serious refutation by Samad, who protests that the story of Mangal Pande is "no laughing matter" (188). Yet Millat goes on to make fun of the story by giving his own short version of the story, ending with "Whatever. End of story. Boring" (188).

Samad's comic obsession with Mangal Pande is no exception when he is at O'Connell's either. The process of Samad's petition to have Mangal

Pande's picture on the wall is comically shown to the readers. Mickey initially refuses, saying Mangal Pande's "eyes are too close together" (205). The dry factual narration on how Samad continues to "petition for the picture's installation" and how on New Year's Eve 1989, 10.30 p.m. Samad finally persuades Mickey to hang the portrait (albeit reluctantly) makes the whole situation even funnier (205). Mickey's discontent grumblings that the portrait "puts people off their food," (205) his suspicions about Mangal Pande's sexuality because of his earring, and Samad's defense that it wasn't unusual then for men to wear jewelry all add to the laughter.

What is more, Mickey, still reluctant to put up the portrait, suggests doing a public survey; the reactions from other customers as they make fun of the portrait further Samad's humiliation. Samad, having had enough of all the mocking remarks, angrily retorts that he should never have asked and that "it would be a dishonor, it would cast into ignominy the memory of Mangal Pande to have him placed here in this irreligious house of shame" (207). At last, Mickey agrees to leave the picture up, saying "Fuck knows, I've heard enough about him over the years. We might as well 'ave him up on the bloody wall" (208).

Such comic distress, humiliation and failings that Samad experiences are displayed in such deliciously hilarious colors that we are amused not only by his compulsion with his ancestry but also by his obsession with

purity and homogeneous state as his ways are met with other characters' annoyance or ridicule. For instance, Samad voices his opinion at a school council meeting despite Alsana trying to stop him; he demands an explanation on why "the Western education system privileges activity of the body over activity of the mind and soul" (107). The chairwoman and others are clearly exasperated by his motions as he continues to question the purpose of the Harvest festival as well. Furthermore, Samad's devotion to his religion (which is his strongest motive for homogeneity) is shown when he raises his voice to retort that "a man's God is his community" (109) when the headmistress tells him that they like to think of school festivals as more about community than religion.

Samad's obsession with a pure homogeneous state of being is strongly connected to his religious beliefs, as he devotes to abiding by the laws of his God. He believes that the ideal way of existence is maintaining the purity of one's mind and soul in a world where so many distractions are about to contaminate them. However, self-contradictory instincts, acts, and nature are dominant themes in the book as Samad and Millat experience contradictory feelings inside them.

What is amusing to observe is Samad's reaction when he is conflicted by two opposing natures in him. He is desperately committed to preserving his ideal state of being, and yet he cannot keep himself from

having opposing instincts as well. For instance, once Samad realizes that he has been distracted by the attractions of the flesh, he repeatedly recites two English phrases that he holds onto, words that he uses as a shield against the distractions that disrupt his pure and homogeneous state: “To the pure all things are pure” and “Can’t say fairer than that” (115). When Samad faces his instinct to masturbate that may threaten his religious purity, he proceeds with a self-contradictory method by employing a Western pragmatism and proceeding to masturbate against the advice of his religious advisor the Alim whilst reciting “To the pure all things are pure” (116). He is preoccupied with preserving his purity and homogenous quality of his soul while feeling tortured with fear that he is not pure, that his acts are not pure, and that God is sending him warnings. Therefore, he makes a deal with God by giving up masturbation in place for drinking.

Yet Samad is faced with another threat when he is conflicted by his instinctive desire for Poppy Burt-Jones, his sons’ music teacher. As he is flattered by Poppy’s attention, he sucks in “his well-toned 57-year-old stomach,” glancing around for his wife as he jangles his car keys nervously (111). He tries telling himself that it is unlikely for Poppy to have any erotic interest in him, but he cannot help feeling “a cold thing land on his heart” and knowing it is “fear of his God” (111). Nevertheless, he realizes that he lusts for Poppy “more than any woman he had met in the past ten

years" (112). His desire for Poppy is so strong that he feels as if God is punishing him with an undeniable temptation. When Samad confides in Shiva about the conflict that he is experiencing, he tells Shiva that he feels fear for his faith whilst being corrupted by England. Consequently, Samad ends up having an affair with Poppy but suffers from the guilt, and in the end ends the affair with Poppy over the phone. He then decides to send Magid to his home country, thinking that Magid will thank him in the end, saying "This country's no good. We tear each other apart in this country" (167).

Although Samad regards Englishness as an invasion into his identity, there are qualities in him that are composed of aspects of Englishness. Samad even despises the 'thank yous' that the English people use when purchasing the autobiography of Malcom X. He considers it not as 'English politeness' but rather as arrogance, saying that "the only being who deserves this kind of thanks is Allah himself" (292). Nevertheless, it is evident that even Samad is not immune to the Englishness that he tries to avoid; that is, he puts on "a cut-class English accent" (87) and instinctively recognizes a non-English phrase when he hears one. When Poppy says, "So what," Samad responds by remarking that the phrase is not an English phrase: "Only the immigrants speak the Queen's English these days" (151).

Samad's typically English suburban qualities have been noticed as well; there is a certain irony in Samad ending up as a typical English "suburbanite" (Tew 305). Despite criticizing Britain about its culture and weather ("Cold, wet, miserable, terrible food, dreadful newspapers—who would want to stay?" (Smith 336) he said) he nevertheless turns himself into the typical media sitcom representation of English men in the suburbs—i.e., men not responding well to the criticisms of their wives and plugging their attention to the television. When Joyce visits the Iqbals to confront furious Alsana, Samad happens to be in his "television mode" (362) and retreats into his tele world rather than dealing with his wife's acerbic remarks. He distances himself from his wife's complaints by plugging in earphones and "short-circuiting" the outside world. "Leave them to their battles," (362) he thinks.

What is interesting about Samad's demeanor is the dynamic between his Suburban and Muslim consciousness. He seems to possess a suburban desire to let go of his obsession for control, whether it is control over his Islamic identity, his purity, or his sons. He confesses this feeling to Mad Mary when he delivers the following speech: "We are split people. For myself, half of me wishes to sit quietly with my legs crossed, letting the things that are beyond my control wash over me. But the other half wants to fight the holy war. Jihad!" (150) Samad reveals his split consciousnesses,

saying that half of him wishes to retreat into his suburban mode while his other half wants to battle for his Muslim consciousness.

In his suburban-self, Samad is in his suburban 'television mode,' wearing a garish V-neck and a dressing gown. In this mode "action escaped him" as "the television sucked him in and sapped all energy" (362). Be that as it may, when he is his Muslim-self, Samad wants to fight the religious war—what Tew calls the "impulse to reaffirm his Islamic identity" (303). As one of these split people, indeed, Samad seems to be suffering a malady common among immigrants, being torn between his two consciousnesses. This internal battle between his split worlds, ideas, cultures, and voices can be observed when Samad writes his name with his blood on a bench at Trafalgar Square. Once he is finished and realizes what he has done, he weeps and prays to his God because he recognizes what he believes to be his 'English consciousness.' He notices his urge to write his name on the world; his urge to "presume like the Englishmen" (418). He then hears his Muslim consciousness warning him "Iqbal, you are becoming like them" (419).

In his review of *White Teeth*, Tew also locates a version of Englishness in the character of Samad Iqbal. Tew acknowledges that there is "a subtle inflection of various English traditions" (308) in Samad as his Englishness is both examined and celebrated in the book. However, Tew's

study of Samad is centered on the parallel between Samad and Tony Hancock, a character in a situation comedy called “Hancock’s Half Hour” (which Smith’s father was known to be obsessed with). Tew perceives Smith’s affinity for Hancock to be the key in reading Samad’s characterization. Indeed, Samad holds several “Hancockian qualities” (302) such as pessimism and the unsuccessful attempt to purify himself.

Nonetheless, Tew overlooks the reason behind Samad’s sense of tragic defeat. In short, Tew observes that *White Teeth* is a “celebration of human failings” (307) yet excludes explaining why such failures were brought about. What such failings tell us is the inevitable multiple consciousnesses of contemporary Londoners, as illustrated in Samad, Hortense Bowden, and other fundamentalists such as KEVIN (Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation) or FATE (Fighting Animal Torture and Exploitation). When have their non-compromising essentialism and attempts to engineer life been smooth sailing?

In “Speaking in Tongues,” a lecture that Zadie Smith gave at the New York Public Library in 2008, Smith illustrates her point about this multiple consciousnesses by explaining it in terms of biracial subjects aiming to singularize their racial consciousnesses. Smith, born between an English father and a Jamaican mother admits her double consciousness—

one white and one black. What is more, she confesses her tendency to singularize her consciousnesses into a black one. She admits to a certain pressure that makes her tick the box marked ‘black’ rather than the one marked ‘biracial’ for any questionnaire; she rolls her eyes when someone insists that Obama is not the first black president but the first biracial one.

Yet Smith also admits that there is undeniably more than one layer of consciousness. She asserts that biracial people unquestionably have more than one consciousness considering how it is not the case that one side of a person’s heritage removes the other. In *White Teeth*, we witness similar allusions to such multiple consciousnesses in several characters, but most dramatically in Samad Iqbal. Samad obsesses over his Muslim identity and yet “betrays the English inflections” (Smith 336) that he acquired during his twenty years of living among the English. Still, Samad is the most defiant character in terms of his own Englishness. The unfortunate turn of events for Samad Iqbal is triggered by his inability to accept the newly evolved concept of Englishness. In his fear of belonging nowhere, he continuously attempts to singularize what is double and thus misses his possibility of transcending his location or history.

Consequently, his refusal to accept the contingency of cultures causes him to be torn between the two worlds. He regards his Islamic self

not as a happy coincidence but as a natural law predestined by God. Therefore, he views Englishness as contamination, endlessly resisting ordinary Englishness and trying to control and eliminate English qualities in others. It is unfortunate that he does not listen to Mickey who says, "Accept it. He will have to accept it, won't he? We're all English now, mate. Like it or lump it, as the rhubarb said to the custard" (160). Though Samad is aware of the fact that he has no control, he always tries to control everything and Alsana thus tells Samad to "Let go" (240). In current multicultural society the fusing of different cultures is not one culture subduing the other, it is "a love affair between two countries" (Gerzina 267) as the two cultures become fixated on each other.

With the confusion between the two coinciding consciousnesses, Samad shows his fear of belonging nowhere when he gives his bitter assessment of his immigrant life in London to Irie. He feels like a "foreign man in a foreign land caught between borders" (Smith 148). He compares immigration to a "devil's pact," saying that "it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognizable, you belong nowhere" (336). This fear of belonging nowhere is what Smith calls "horror of the middling spot," the "dread of the interim place" (Smith, *Changing My Mind* 145). It is what Irie calls being "a stranger in a strange land" (Smith

222). This fear extends to the anxiety that contemporary hybrid beings feel. The sense of 'belonging nowhere' is what "the tragic mulatto," (Smith, *Changing My Mind* 145) transsexual, and contemporary immigrants feel.

Smith notes that, although such anxiety may be disguised as "genteel concern," it causes figures like Samad to be torn between the two worlds, two cultures (Smith, *Changing My Mind* 145). What will become of him if not a devout son of Allah? "In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated," (Smith 336) what will become of him if he becomes unrecognizable? Hence the tragedy of Samad Iqbal, his obsession with his 'fantasy root' of Mangal Pande, his futile attempts to control his and his sons' consciousnesses and make what is multiple singular. He pursues an "impossible vista," (Tew 299) the imagined origin as unchanged and static, and in doing so, he misses the possibility of solving the conflicts between his different consciousnesses—i.e., the ability to transcend both locations of past and present.

In a way, Samad's clutch on such unchanged and static notion is similar to how Samad and Archie love the changelessness of O'Conell's: "Everything was remembered, nothing was lost. History was never revised or reinterpreted, adapted or whitewashed" (Smith 161). He insists on a singular culture and cultural diversification is corruption to him; hence, his

obsession with purity, the idealized fantasy dream. He dreams of returning to his idealized origin and resorts to kidnapping his son Magid to send him off to make him a true Muslim boy. However, as a result, Magid turns up as a "pukka Englishman," (336) in the words of Samad Iqbal himself.

If Samad misses the possibility of accepting his heterogeneous qualities and transcending history by trying to singularize his multiplicity into a pure Islamic state, Millat shows a similar movement to singularize his various qualities, but he displays different cultural elements because of the generational difference. Of course, Samad refuses the generational difference, viewing such diversity as a threat to his idea of one pure homogeneous state and cries "don't speak to me of second generation! One generation! Indivisible! Eternal!" (241) to Alsana when she tells him that Millat is a second-generation immigrant and that he was born in London—"naturally he will do things differently" (240).

The parallel stories of Samad and Millat, with a generation apart, also show slightly different modalities of multiplicity and Englishness since Millat is more affected by the media in which the younger generation is immersed and is slightly Americanized as well. For example, when Poppy asks Millat what music he likes, he imitates the guitar movement of Bruce Springsteen and despite Samad's efforts to remind Millat of an Indian dance

"Bharata natyam," Millat replies that Michael Jackson's "Thriller" is the song that he likes. While Samad occasionally shows typically suburbanite qualities and English inflections in his language, Millat shows that he is influenced by Hollywood films and common teenage delinquent issues such as illicit smoking of weed or tobacco.

Moreover, Samad and Millat have different directions for their ideal singularization since Samad's goal is to reach religious Islamic purity with his faith while Millat mainly wishes to be a part of a clan rather than practice faith; he wants to be an approved Muslim member of KEVIN. Whereas Samad's motive for purity is his fear of belonging nowhere or the middling spot, Millat's drive for being a member of KEVIN is his desire for sameness within a group. Millat is aware of this difference between him and his father, as he acknowledges that his own "religion was not one based on faith not like the Christians, the Jews, et al" (367).

Also, Millat shows defiance to his father's mode as he thinks that "to rely on faith, as his own father did, was contemptible" (367). He calls his father a hypocrite, telling Irie and Joyce that Samad "prays five times a day but he still drinks, and he doesn't have any Muslim friends" (277). He states that he himself is more of a Muslim than Samad whereas Samad calls Millat a "fully paid-up green-bow tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist" (336).

Since Millat's motive for KEVIN is not religious faith like his father's but a sense of recognition and belongingness, he is content with the idea that KEVIN is "more than happy with his real forte, which was the delivery of the thing. The presentation" (367). His way with women and his good looks come in handy when recruiting new members for their organization. For instance, when a nervous-looking woman comes in the path, he would grab her hand and tell her that it is not faith but intellectually proving the existence of the creator that is important. He is also good at selling their organization's tapes and literature, causing everyone at KEVIN to be impressed with Millat. Then Millat would feel he has satisfied his need for admission and recognition by being "their great asset" (368).

Those differences between them cause Samad to feel strong disapproval of Millat. When the street people talk of the KEVIN clan, Samad is infuriated with how Millat belongs nowhere. In his eyes, Millat has not only been corrupted, but deviated from the right position of existence:

> He infuriated Samad beyond all reason. No, that's wrong. There was a reason. Millat was neither one thing nor the other, this or that, Muslim or Christian, Englishman or Bengali; he lived for

> the in between, he lived up to his middle name, Zulfikar, the clashing of two swords. (291)

Therefore, what angers Samad the most about Millat is not simply that he is rude or a delinquent teenager, it is that Millat is dangerously in the 'interim place,' a place where he belongs nowhere. Samad feels horror of the middling spot and fears that he and his son will lose themselves and become unrecognizable.

Millat's desire to feel a sense of belonging is connected to his anger from feeling alienated. The sense of alienation he feels causes him to lash out, even participating in 'the Satanic Verses controversy' by burning volumes of *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie. Yet Millat confesses not having read the book saying, "I haven't exactly read it exactly, but I know all about that shit, yeah?" (194). What he means is that he has not read a single page of the book, but he is aware of the anger that he feels because of the boundaries and assumptions with which he must bear to live in the country he was born. The fact that he not only has to endure prejudices but has no presence in the county where he grew up is the foundation of his anger and violence, which ultimately leads to his desire for a sense of belonging. Not having a face nor voice in the country, he chooses to grab onto the familiar anger that he notices in the KEVIN clan:

> He knew that he, Millat, was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelled of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people's jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave all the jobs to his relatives; that he could be a dentist or a shop-owner or a curry-shifter, but not a footballer or a filmmaker; that he should go back to his own country; or stay here and earn his bloody keep; that he worshiped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered. In short, he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country, until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every newspaper and they were angry, and Millat recognized the anger, thought it recognized him, and grabbed it with both hands. (194)

Millat feels helpless as he is aware of what he represents regardless of his actions. His face itself makes him a Paki even though he comes from Bangladesh, he feels limitations to what he can do and what is expected of him, and he feels no connections to the representative figures of the country. *The Satanic Verses* is a medium to which Millat projects his anger—i.e., the

anger at the alienation that he feels. The controversial book is also a tool for satisfying his need for a sense of belonging. Millat is aware of the anger in him, acknowledging that the anger inside him is "not the righteous anger of a man of God, but the seething, violent anger of a gangster, a juvenile delinquent, determined to prove himself" (369).

Be that as it may, Alsana notices Millat's way of channeling his anger, and strongly disapproves of his destructive actions. When she sees Millat burning books on TV, she screams "Oh dear God!" (196) not because Millat lacks religious faith or has unclear identity, but because he seems to have lost his sense of humanity. Thus, Alsana feels the need to teach Millat a lesson by burning his belongings such as albums, posters, collected club fliers, magazines, books, and even *Godfather* movies. Alsana tells Millat that "either everything is sacred, or nothing is. And if he starts burning other people's things, then he loses something sacred also" (197).

Millat possesses multiplicity in him different from Samad's such as his secret affinity for Hollywood gangster films, clubs, and other secular music and culture. However, like Samad, Millat also misses the potential to embrace his heterogeneous qualities and transcend the past and his circumstances. Millat attempts to singularize his state of being by trying to manipulate his subconscious and purge himself of the West. Millat's

unrealistic ideal for his state of being accelerates the confusion and chaos that he goes through, which Joyce Chalfen notices to be Millat's "mental scars," telling Alsana that "the whole world of his subconscious shows serious illness" (366).

It is indisputable that Millat is a delinquent figure infused with the uses of drugs, tobacco and women. Millat is described as a boy who lived his young life in "CAPITALS," a shining light of juvenile delinquency. He was "the BIGGEST and the BADDEST . . . he smoked first, he drank first, he even lost it" (181) aged thirteen. When Irie finds out that there is going to be a raid to catch all illicit smokers of weed or tobacco, she searches the school to warn Millat. Eventually, she finds him at the science block, listening to Hifan explain the workings of KEVIN while smoking tobacco. Here, Millat is not disturbed by Irie's warning at all as he is deeply engrossed in the idea of a spiritual war and becoming a part of a religious clan.

Just as Samad struggles because of the discrepancy between his pure ideal and his real self, Millat is also conflicted with the fact that his subconscious is "basically split-level" (366). One layer of his consciousness, governed by his absolutist certainty, tells him to live according to the laws that Hifan and other members of the KEVIN clan suggest. In order to do so

and become an ideal member of KEVIN, he must fulfill four main criteria. He must become abstinent and cut down the drinking, smoking and women. He must remember the glory of Muhammad, fully understand the theories of KEVIN, and most of all, "purge oneself of the taint of the West" (367). Millat wants to try his best at being fully accepted at KEVIN and thus tries to follow the organizational rules. He occasionally smokes or drinks but avoids the "evil weed" and "the temptations of the flesh" (367).

However, another layer of consciousness makes it difficult for him to fully obey the discipline required by KEVIN. This part of him is what makes his heart sink even while reflecting on his pride of being a great asset to KEVIN, "a man of action" like Brando, Pacino or Liotta (368). Ironically, his reflections on the pride that he feels in achieving recognition for his contribution to KEVIN trigger his inner motivation and imagery that make it difficult for him to purge himself of the West. His self-image thus formed functions as an inspiration that drives him to overlap his life with Hollywood gangster films that he has seen. Intellectually, he is aware that Hollywood cinema is "an example of the moribund, decadent, degenerate, oversexed, violent state of Western capitalist culture and the logical endpoint of its obsession with personal freedoms" (368). There even is a leaflet for it, called 'Way Out West.' He is also conscious of how Hifan

repeatedly told him that the ‘gangster’ movie and the Mafia genre are the worst examples of the Western corruption and “yet it was the hardest thing to let go” (368) for Millat.

Millat’s inner desire to be a part of something and another equally strong desire for engaging gangster culture are intertwined as he confesses that he had joined KEVIN because he loved clans, the outfit and the bow tie, and the clans at war. As to this, an analyst called Majorie shares her insight by suggesting that “Millat’s religious conversion is more likely born out of a need for sameness within a group than out of any intellectually formulated belief in the existence of an all-powerful creator” (365). Majorie’s analysis of Millat tells us that she has also noticed the motive for Millat’s participation in KEVIN activities, which is not religious faith but his desire for sameness within a group, his desire to feel a sense of belonging.

Millat’s attachment to this ‘gangster’ culture is shown when he confidently says to himself that he would rather give up every cigarette that he smoked and every experience he had with women if he could get back the gangster films that his mother had burned. In order to avoid temptation, Millat even tears up his Rocky Video membership and throws away the VCR at home. Nonetheless, his affinity for such films would arise yet again with the slightest encouragement such as a coincidental De Niro season

playing on Channel 4 or Tony Bennett's "Rags to Riches" playing at a clothes shop. When Millat hears Tony Bennett's song playing, he feels as if the song floats out of the shop and enters his soul.

The depth of Hollywood influence that is embedded in Millat's subconscious and frame of mind can also be observed when he confesses his way of thought. He reveals his most shameful secret, how his mind rolls like the workings of a Hollywood mafia movie:

> It was his most shameful secret that whenever he opened a door—a car door, a car trunk, the door of KEVIN's meeting hall, or the door of his own house just now—the opening of *GoodFellas* ran through his head and he found this sentence rolling around in what he presumed was his subconscious: As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster. He even saw it like that, in that font, like on the movie poster. And when he found himself doing it, he tried desperately not to, he tried to fix it, but Millat's mind was a mess and more often than not he'd end up pushing upon the door, head back, shoulders forward, Liotta style, thinking: As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a Muslim. (368)

Even the simplest daily act of opening a door would trigger his inner subconscious to imagine himself to be in a movie like *Goodfellas*; the opening of the movie would play in his mind and he would internally see sentences rolling in his mind like a frame of a movie. The two sentences with particular 'movie poster fonts' in his head represent the split layers of subconscious in Millat's mind. One part of his subconscious mirrors a part of him that wants to be a gangster, saying "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster" (368) whereas another part of his subconscious reflects his inner desire to be accepted as a member of the Muslim community, saying "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a Muslim" (369).

As Millat wrestles with the inconsistency of his subconscious, we witness how his attempts at control continuously fail. Though he desperately tries not to, he fails to get rid of his 'gangster movie frame of mind' or purge himself of the taint of the West. He also fails in maintaining abstinence from smoking or drinking. He even only half-succeeds in restraining himself from the pleasures of the flesh, which is displayed in an audaciously comic way. Millat, in order to give his best shot at being a model member of KEVIN, no longer sees female friends such as Alexandra Andrusier, Polly Houghton, or Rosie Dew, and yet it is mentioned that he pays occasional visits to Tanya

Chapman-Jones. Tanya apparently understands “the delicate nature of his dilemma” (367) and assists him so that he would not have to touch her at all.

Millat’s repeated deficiency in controlling his unruly tendencies and failures in cancelling out unremovable consciousnesses lead us to accept the notion of randomness and the inevitability of multiplicity. Smith leads us to a more flexible outlook on society, viewing it as the land of coincidences and accidents rather than a world requiring distinctions and control. The readers witness how the randomness trumps over the traditional mechanisms of control, whether it be religion, ethnicity, culture or identity. The Chalfenist attempt to control the random fails as the mouse gets away; Samad’s attempt to engineer his sons to become ideal Muslim boys backslides; the judgement day that Jehovah’s Witnesses wait for never arrives; and the protest plans of KEVIN and FATE at the announcement of FutureMouse project do not succeed, either. Archie ends up saving Doctor Perret twice “with no more reason or rhyme than the first time” and everything seems to be a matter of chance (447). Traditional attempts at social control become powerless in the unpredictability of the future and the acceptance of random, acceptance of the contingency of culture seem inevitable.

Not surprisingly, however, Samad looks upon the idea of 'random' or 'accident' as rootless ideas doomed to corruption. He shows his anxiety about the sense of 'non-belonging,' asserting that we are navigating in a predestined world. When Samad is distressed about the disappointment with Magid, he tells Irie about the terrible uncertainty he feels about his presence in England:

> "And then you begin to give up the very idea of belonging. Suddenly this thing, this belonging, it seems like some long, dirty lie ... and I begin to believe that birthplaces are accidents, that everything is an accident. But if you believe that, where do you go? What do you do? What does anything matter?" (337)

As Samad deplores over his thwarted attempts to reach his ideal state of purity for himself and his family, he explains a sense of loss that sheds doubt on the very idea of belonging. He then states that in such a state of loss, he starts to believe that maybe everything happens by chance. But he concludes that if everything is an accident, life would lose all meaning. The idea of a world made up of contingencies appears dystopian to Samad but has a different appeal for Irie: "the land of accidents sounded like paradise" and "freedom" to her (337). For Irie, a world with random contingencies without distinctions or predestined courses seems utopian.

In the same context, Smith chooses an acceptance of the random, of the contingency of culture as an answer for "decent human harmony" (Smith, *Changing My Mind* 157) in the contemporary multiethnic world. She expresses her hope that people born and raised between different cultures will know there exists no contradiction between two different cultures. To Smith, regarding one's own cultural belief as the ultimate truth set by natural laws is the seed by which unnecessary distresses or discords are repeatedly generated. Given this viewpoint of Smith, Samad's sense of defeat seems to stem from his unfortunate tendency to mistake his cultural conviction for a set of natural laws. He sees a contradiction between his two consciousnesses and his attempts to cancel out an unremovable part of him lead to continuous failures. Samad's sense of defeat serves as a key to understanding the underlying message of the novel: we are living in an age where acceptance of multiplicity (whether it is religion, culture, or identity) is a new form of necessary ideal.

However, Samad refuses multiple features in him and is distressed by Millat's interim state. As Moss points out, "The older generation of characters is most upset by the very ordinariness of the children's integration into a multiplicitous landscape. They remain in-between two notions of home" (14). By refusing the ordinariness that became a part of them in a

diversified social landscape and being opposed to the 'in-between' state of being, Samad and Millat neglect the possibility of acceptance or multiplicity, and most of all, the reinterpretation of their Englishness and state of existence.

What we can learn from Samad and Millat's unfortunate turn of events is that nowadays we do not just 'inherit' an idealized fantasy dream. *White Teeth* does not celebrate the ethnicity that is merely inherited, the ethnicity related to skin color. Rather, it celebrates the blending process of the imagined fantasy of origin and Englishness, that process of transcending both locations of past and present. We are led to construct a model Englishness in the contemporary imagination. On that account, Samad is more than "an archetypal hero" in the postcolonial sense (Tew 308); *White Teeth* both interrogates and celebrates the Englishness in him.

The notion of Englishness itself is also interrogated as the characters try to solve the meaning of their identity and culture. For instance, Irie initially wants to "merge" with the Chalfens; she wants their Englishness, their "purity" of it. (Smith 272). Ironically, the Chalfens are also immigrants themselves; Irie later concludes that the idea of belonging itself is a lie after she explores her 'roots' at her grandmother's house. In addition, Alsana states her conclusion about Englishness in a heated argument with her

husband. In their argument about culture and what it means to be a true Bengali, Alsana retorts as follows: “you go back and back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy-tale!” (196). Alsana tells Samad that in current hybrid society, it is nearly impossible to detect purity in faith or person; the idea of finding a ‘really English’ person is like a fairy-tale. We are thus encouraged not only to question the existing concept of Englishness but to diversify the idea of Englishness itself— i.e., to create "new Englishness" that embraces all the minds of current English people who are, indeed, dramatically different from each other[10]. This requires contemporary creativity to go beyond the fixed and unaltered idea of origin. Through the characterization of wounded and disordered Samad and Millat, Smith tells us that in the current world, layering Englishness in the complex cocktail of consciousnesses is inescapable.

[10] John Mcleod also observes the multicultural impact on twenty-first London literature and how polycultural narratives offer alternative models to older diasporic models of urban and individual identity. Mcleod detects that unlike the 1950s and 1960s, it is no longer the case that multicultural representations of London form a marginal strand in a wider literary landscape. According to McLeod, over 300 languages are spoken daily in London and polycultural narratives not only provide alternatives to older diasporic models of identity but offer “an optimistic sense of London as a site of transformative social and cultural encounter for all amidst the new prejudices of the 21st century” (242).

CHAPTER III

Magid Iqbal as a “pukka Englishman”

Whereas Samad and Millat display the inevitability of multiplicity and ordinary Englishness through their fruitless struggles and attempts to singularize their heterogeneous qualities, Magid does not show such endeavor to revise his state of being or battle with his self-contradictory traits. Rather, he is one of the few rare characters in *White Teeth* that demonstrate self-assurance. However, such solid certainty that Magid has for himself is what makes the readers question the reliability of his assurance. Unlike Samad and Millat who try to eliminate the normalized Englishness in them, Magid fully secures the Englishness in him.

The divergent ways the characters regard and manage Englishness is a testament to the complexity of Englishness itself. This is because there is a clear distinction between the Englishness that Samad and Millat have and the Englishness that Magid demonstrates. While Samad and Millat show everyday Englishness that is observed in their daily behavior through their habits, language and behavior, Magid embodies Englishness in a much deeper way that impacts his view of life. Magid’s Englishness is more

white-centered; he has a frame of mind that corresponds to the colonial way of thinking.

Therefore, I intend to differentiate the different modalities of Englishness in *White Teeth*—the everyday Englishness in Samad and Millat and the colonial, white-centered Englishness embodied by Magid. As observed above, Samad and Millat both struggle and experience internal conflicts to cancel out the multiplicity in them, including their ordinary Englishness. Magid, on the other hand, does not consider his Englishness as a contamination that needs to be purified. Thus, unlike Samad and Millat who strive to preserve their ideal Islamic purity, Magid focuses on maintaining and preserving the Englishness in him, even when he is sent off to Bangladesh.

Even before Magid is sent off to his home country, he shows strong attachment to his white-Englishness. In the spectrum of various modalities of Englishness with varying levels of reinterpretation, Magid's Englishness is at the extreme end of a white-centered Englishness. Magid's attachment to such Englishness is observed in the company he keeps as friends and the name he chooses for himself. For instance, he shows preference for a typical English name 'Mark Smith' as a group of "very nice-looking white boys

with meticulous manners" (Smith 126) come to visit Magid on his ninth birthday.

The whole scene is a dedication to the white-centered Englishness that Magid worships, as he calls Alsana as "Mum" rather than "Amma," telling her he is joining the "chess club" with his well-mannered "white friends." The shame he feels for his 'un-Englishness' is slightly hinted in the manner he ushers his mother out of view from his white friends. Given these situations about Magid, Samad is furious at him for abandoning his Muslim name, yelling at him that he is choosing an English name when he has given Magid a glorious name called Magid Mahfooz Murshed Mubtasim Iqbal.

Magid's preference for a white name and friends is "just a symptom of a far deeper malaise," however, since it is described that Magid really wants "to be in some other family" (126). Though Millat desires to be accepted and recognized to feel a sense of belonging, what Magid has aspired ever since he was a child is to be a part of a picturesque and ideal English family. Hence his ideal is at the extreme opposite end of the spectrum from that of Samad or Millat. While Samad and Millat's ideal state of being concerns their Muslim identity, Magid's ideal is to be an ideal member of the English empire, to fit in the 'civilized' community as an intellectual asset; he wishes to be an ideal Englishman. Hence Samad's

discontent inquiry to Magid, asking “Why are you always trying to be somebody you are not?” (126). Nonetheless, Magid wishes to cultivate his intellect, logic, and his ideal Englishness to manipulate other beings.

Magid’s inner desire to be a part of an English family, an ideal family constructed in his mind is shown as his preferences are aligned as follows:

> Magid really wanted to be in some other family. He wanted to own cats and not cockroaches, he wanted his mother to make the music of the cello, not the sound of the sewing machine; he wanted to have a trellis of flowers growing up one side of the house instead of the ever-growing pile of other people’s rubbish; he wanted a piano in the hallway in place of the broken door off cousin Kurshed’s car; he wanted to go on biking holidays to France, not day-trips to Blackpool to visit aunties; he wanted the floor of his room to be shiny wood, not the orange-and-green swirled carpet left over from the restaurant; he wanted his father to be a doctor, not a one-handed waiter; and this month Magid had converted all these desires into a wish to join in with the Harvest Festival like Mark Smith would. Like everybody else would. (126)

Here, all the characteristic traits of his family are replaced with what he considers desirable. Magid prefers cats over cockroaches, wants his mother to play the cello rather than work on the sewing machine, wants trash on one side of his house to be replaced by trellis flowers, wants a piano instead of a broken door of a car, and wishes his father to be a doctor rather than a waiter. As a child, Magid converts all these ideal desires into a different wish to channel out his frustrated aspirations. In this case, the desires are converted into a wish to join the Harvest Festival like what his ideal image of himself, Mark Smith, would.

When Magid becomes an adult, however, his desires are converted into a very different wish on a much bigger scale: successfully completing and announcing the FutureMouse project by controlling the genetic constructions of a mouse. Magid, armed with his superior intellect and economic enforcement from the funding provided by the FutureMouse project, aims to control and engineer life. It is not that genetic engineering itself is colonial, but that Magid's rationalization in controlling other life forms on the grounds of superior intellect is parallel to the logic behind colonial rule. Magid's intelligence (a trait that can be linked to the scientific and intellectual advances of the colonial empires) and 'gentlemanly' behavior stand out even as a child. Magid represents typical traits of an

English gentleman; Poppy tells Samad that she has never known a nine-year-old dress so severely. Even the wearing style that the Iqbal twins prefer shows the different qualities in them; Millat demands that he wears "red-stripe Nikes, OshKosh B'Gosh, and strange jumpers that had patterns on the inside and the out" whereas Magid wears "gray pullover, gray shirt, and black tie with his shiny black shoes and National Health Service specs perched upon his nose, like some dwarf librarian" (112), no matter what weather it is.

Magid's rationalism and scientific intellect are also shown when Alsana tries to persuade Magid to wear something other than the color gray by telling him that blue is the color of the sky; Magid replies with a scientific account of how the sky is not actually blue:

> "No, Amma. The sky isn't blue. There's just white light. White light has all of the colors of the rainbow in it, and when it is scattered through the squillions of molecules in the sky, the shortwave colors—blue, violet—they are the ones you see. The sky isn't really blue. It just looks that way. It's called Rayleigh scattering." (113)

The description of Magid as a child well describes the character of Magid: "A strange child with a cold intellect" (113). Intellect is one of the strong traits that is demonstrated by Magid; Poppy mentions to Samad how "Magid is so impressive intellectually for a nine-year-old" and how "He's like a little adult" (112). Ironically, it is these superior intellectual qualities in Magid that make Samad decide to send Magid to Bangladesh, hoping that the upbringing in his home country will modify his academic abilities to fit for an ideal Muslim boy.

When Samad goes through an internal identity crisis after his affair with Poppy, he decides that he must send one of his boys back to their home country so that one of them could be saved from the spiritual contaminations of the West. Even before Samad ends his affair, he constantly worries about the state of his family's purity, being concerned with everything that is not right with his sons. He is afraid of "Millat's passion for obscenities and a noisy TV show about an A-team" and worries about whether Magid got enough direct sunlight" (150). He keeps asking himself, "What was the country doing to his sons, he wanted to know, what was it doing?" (150).

Eventually, Samad is fully convinced that Magid would have a better life back home, thinking "This country's no good" about England (167).

Samad's conviction that Magid will be salvaged from the corruptions of England can be seen in his thought process as he unknowingly walks over at the restaurant to serve his ex-mistress. Once Samad has split the twins and ended the affair with Poppy, she visits the restaurant where Samad works and vindictively requests that Samad serves her. As Samad walks the twenty meters distance, through the cries of Englishmen and the clamor and demands of the restaurant, he thinks of how glad he is that at least Magid is flying east from "this place and its demands, its cravings, this place where there exists neither patience nor pity, where the people want what they want now, right now" (172).

Samad's hope for Magid is still unbroken when he and Alsana find out that Magid is fine seven days after the cyclone in Bangladesh. Magid has only suffered a broken nose, and Samad reacts triumphantly, proud of the news that Magid was in a mosque when his nose broke. Samad is certain that his first son is "learning the old ways" (178). His confidence in Magid's 'purity' can be seen when he shows off a letter sent by Magid to Clara and Alsana, excited that the letter seems to validate his unpopular decision to send Magid away. He notices "some change of tone, some suggestion of maturity, of growing Eastern wisdom" (179) in Magid's words and

proclaims with certainty that Magid is "not fearful to be a real Bengali, a proper Muslim" (180).

While Samad's expectations for Magid remain intact, Magid is treasured almost as the one who embodies religious ideals by his family back in England. Magid becomes a subject of his father's imagination, "invisible and perfect, frozen at the pleasant age of nine" (180). Magid "rose untouchable and unstained, elevated to the status of ever-smiling Buddha, imbued with serene Eastern contemplation"—in short, "nothing but apparition" (180). As Samad has long learned to worship what he cannot see, he worships Magid as a perfect embodiment of the ideal state of purity that he deems exemplary. Interestingly, however, as if trying to shed some light on what is to come, Smith also occasionally associates Englishness with Magid. For example, when seeing a picture of Magid with a broken nose in Bangladesh, Clara reacts by saying that "He looks like a little aristocrat, like a little Englishman" (180). Likewise, Smith links Magid with the idea of English colonial overseas civil service:

> This son stood silent, distant, and was "presumed well," like one of Her Majesty's colonial island outposts, stuck in an eternal state of original naivete, perpetual prepubescence.

> This son Samad could not see. And Samad had long learned to worship what he could not see. (180)

The imaginary figure of Magid that Samad idealizes is cleverly overlapped by the image of a member of Her majesty's colonial service and we are given a glimpse of the comic mood that Smith sets regarding Samad's overly confident worship of his first son. Sure enough, Samad faces disappointment as Magid presents his Western-viewpoint. Later, in his letter to his family, Magid celebrates meeting an eminent Indian writer Sir R.V. Saraswati, who Samad calls a "colonial-throwback, English licker-of-behinds" (239). In this letter, Magid shows his colonial frame of mind when he presents his intention to "make the Asian countries sensible places, where order prevailed, disaster was prepared for" (240). He writes that he wishes to study law and educate the Asian countries so that they would be more civilized. He also quotes Saraswati, who says "we must be more like the English" (240). Not surprisingly, Samad reacts furiously to such a letter, crying out that Magid learns nothing; he laments that Magid learns nothing from a man who knows nothing, that he has no beard nor khamise. Ironically enough, Magid is dressed in a tweed suit and cravat in the picture that he sent. Samad's hopes for Magid's pure homogeneity is then broken as

he realizes that Magid's mind has been "poisoned by a Rule-Britannia-worshipping Hindu old queen" (240).

To Samad's dismay, Englishness in Magid becomes more prominent as his path intertwines with Marcus Chalfen's. Even the chapter that introduces the intimacy between Magid and Marcus is called "More English Than the English," and the first lines of the chapter goes as follows: "In the great tradition of English education, Marcus and Magid became pen pals" (303). As their letters are filled with joy of recognition, Magid and Marcus share their mutual aspirations. Magid writes that he longs to "improve the lot of my poor country" to "make sense of the world, to eliminate the random" (304) and Marcus urges Magid to study law to support FutureMouse, to control the randomness in the world, to sort it out with their intellectual faith. Marcus gradually builds up great expectations for Magid and begins to believe that Magid would be a "beacon for right-thinking Chalfenism" (348).

When Samad hears of what Magid plans to do with Marcus, his disappointment escalates; he bemoans the fact that Magid has chosen the law rather than God, realizing how Magid has become more English than the English:

> "No, no. No, no, no. I wish that were the solution. Allah knows how I pinned all my hopes on Magid. And now he says he is coming back to study the English law—paid for by these Chalfen people. He wants to enforce the laws of man rather than the laws of God. He has learned none of the lessons of Muhammad—peace be upon Him! Of course, his mother is delighted. But he is nothing but a disappointment to me. More English than the English. Believe me, Magid will do Millat no good and Millat will do Magid no good. They have both lost their way." (336)

At this point, Samad acknowledges how he has pinned all his hopes on Magid and how none of his sons have reached his ideal Muslim state. He has awakened from his imaginary dream where he worshipped Magid as a distant yet untarnished version of a pure Islamic being. He finally accepts that Magid has become "a pukka Englishman, white-suited, silly wig lawyer" (336). Samad tells Archie that his sons have become "strangers in strange lands" (351). To Samad, his sons have become unrecognizable, he can no longer identify with who the twins are.

As if to prove that Magid has indeed become a stranger to Samad's eyes, Smith drops Magid's typical English qualities here and there, such as

the English public school style hair that Magid wears, the English-style tweed that he attires and the English speech that he uses, as Mickey notices, saying "Sounds like a right fuckin' Olivier. Queen's fucking English and no mistake" (371). Even Magid's diet has changed, as he eats a bacon sandwich, to which Samad explodes saying, "Go on, then! Munch on your pig in front of me! You are so bloody clever, aren't you? Mr. Smarty-pants. Mr. White-trousered Englishman with his stiff-upper-lip and his big white teeth. You know everything, even enough to escape your own Judgment Day" (375). Samad breaks out in anger because he considers Magid eating bacon to be a sign of his son's corruption and blasphemy. He is angered at the fact that his first son has lost his respect for the Eastern ways, believing that Magid will be one day judged by his God.

More importantly, a colonial English attitude is slightly shadowed in Magid's manners when he becomes Marcus's confidant, apprentice and disciple as he observes Marcus in his laboratory. Magid and Marcus both unknowingly show certain element of smugness and are confident that as intellectuals, their duty is to exercise control over other beings. In the FutureMouse project's case, the subject of their control is a mouse; they try to engineer the genetic makings of a mouse. However, although they do invest their time and energy to better the mouse's genetic constructions,

Smith depicts their research process in a way that makes the readers question their motive. For instance, Smith describes the family of Marcus Chalfen, who is the head of the FutureMouse project, as those who are bored, that need to be needed. The Chalfens undoubtedly show condescending mindset as they need their "gorgeous logic, its compassion, its intellect" (262) to be needed. The Chalfens reach out to help Magid and Millat with a manner that suggests the manners of a colonial empire that reaches out to 'civilize,' 'educate' and rule other countries. Such an approach is linked to a modality of colonial Englishness full of intellectual confidence, the need to be needed, and the drive to control the random.

Such a mindset is also illustrated in Magid when he aims to help Marcus eliminate the random and poses a certain air of condescending understanding, a "gesture of total forgiveness," (354) which Irie calls "an unbelievable pain in the arse" (354). Magid intends to help Marcus with the FutureMouse project, believing it to be a great project because it can correct the creator's mistakes. His fascination with this idea of correcting the random into order can be observed when he describes his involvement with the FutureMouse project:

> Magid was proud to say he witnessed every stage. He witnessed the custom design of the genes. He witnessed the germ injection.

> He witnessed the artificial insemination. And he witnessed the birth, so different from his own. One mouse only. No battle down the birth canal, no first and second, no saved and unsaved. No potluck. No random factors. (405)

Magid is engrossed in the scientific stages of the experiment as the genes are designed according to plan; the grand process of artificially designing the mouse reaches its zenith with the last sentence, "no random factors." Magid celebrates the control of the random that he witnesses, but Smith concludes the novel by showing how such an attempt at control is thwarted, as the mouse ends up getting away.

This FutureMouse project is a source of major conflict toward the end of the novel, dividing all three families. Whereas Magid becomes a collaborator for Marcus's project, Marcus's son, Joshua Chalfen, joins a radical animal rights group (FATE) to protest against his father's genetic experimentation on animals. The final twist of the book unravels when the past meets the future at the present—when all three families assemble at the announcement of FutureMouse project on New Year's Eve.

The characters face unexpected surprises as their agenda don't go according to plan and their wishes are overruled. Such finale of the novel is

critical in reading the authorial intention because the consequences that the characters meet make us question their motives—whether it is Samad's past insistence on Dr.Perret's death for glory in war, Millat's absolutist religious beliefs, or Magid's desire for control over the random. Archie is surprised to see Dr. Perret, who Archie didn't kill by going against Samad's wishes. Archie is even more shocked when he sees Millat targeting the doctor with a gun as a misguided attempt to protest with KEVIN. Archie instinctively gets between Millat and his target, ending up saving the same man twice "with no more reason or rhyme than the first time" (577). In this climactic scene, the mouse ends up getting away to the dismay of the FutureMouse project developers:

> Archie, for one, watched the mouse. He watched it stand very still for a second with a smug look as if it expected nothing less. He watched it scurry away, over his hand. He watched it dash along the table, and through the hands of those who wished to pin it down. He watched it leap off the end and disappear through an air vent. Go on my son! thought Archie. (448)

Archie watches the mouse as the mouse flashes a smug look and escapes all other attempts to catch it. The mouse seems to tease all previous attempts to design and control him. Smith not only knocks over Samad's endeavor to

correct the heterogeneity of his sons and overturns Millat's attempt to assassinate Dr. Perret, but she also overrules Magid's attempt to successfully launch the FutureMouse project. We are led to observe how non-compromising essentialism or long-established attempts at control finally fail—whether it be religion, culture, Englishness, or homogeneity. In brief, in this ironical last scene of final failures of the main characters, we are invited to celebrate the heterogeneity, the random and ordinary Englishness in modern multicultural society.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

All things considered, *White Teeth* does not focus on illustrating the aftermaths of the colonial past or indicting Englishness on charges of racial oppression. It aims to inform the readers of how the people of the multicultural 21st century should deal with their consciousness. Smith does not transmit the insightful message explicitly but conveys the idea indirectly by showing how different characters deal with Englishness.

In this thesis, two modes of Englishness have been observed in Samad Iqbal and his twin sons. Samad and Millat show everyday Englishness that has become an inevitable part of their daily lives; their Englishness is deeply rooted in their daily routines, their speech and the way they orchestrate their ways of life. Throughout the novel, Samad and Millat struggle in their attempt to singularize their consciousness. They try to cancel out their Englishness in order to reach their pure ideal Islamic state.

Magid, on the other hand, shows Englishness that is more white-centered. His Englishness is more strongly rooted in his way of mind and

view on life rather than his daily habits. Thus, as a second-generation immigrant, he not only shows English traits in the way he dresses, speaks and eats, but more importantly, embodies some principles that endorse the colonial rationalization used when controlling other countries. Magid and Marcus both wish to rectify other beings that do not seem befitting in their eyes. Here, the subject of their control is a mouse; they try to engineer the genetic makings of a mouse. They are assured that they have the intellect, resources, and the right to improve the order of other beings. With their FutureMouse project put ahead, they believe they can control other entities on the grounds of rationalism, superior intellect and economic power.

Samad, Millat, and Magid show different modes of dealing and negotiating with their Englishness. Given this difference, I argue that Smith in this novel expresses the necessity of fashioning and recognizing a new version of Englishness in the contemporary imagination through Samad, Millat and Magid Iqbal. Samad, with his unsuccessful attempts to singularize consciousness, unknowingly tells the readers that although one may experience anxiety or fear about the interim state, singularizing consciousness is not a solution. Therefore, discerning the different alterations of Englishness in Samad, Millat and Magid is significant in understanding the overall mood and authorial purpose of *White Teeth.* The

different negotiations that the Iqbal father and sons make with their Englishness and the outcomes they face all convey a message that Smith tries to deliver. In Samad and Millat's case, they struggle between their two opposing impulses. The problem is that they have the impulse to preserve their Islamic 'purity' while also desiring what is forbidden. For Samad, his self-contradictory desires include his impulse to mark his presence in the world and "presume like the Englishmen" (Smith 418). For Millat, his shameful impulses include his affinities for Hollywood gangster films. Whereas Samad and Millat continuously try to eliminate their Englishness and foreign contaminations, Magid fully welcomes the Englishness that he assimilates.

What this novel is trying to say about Englishness can be read in how the Iqbal men meet their ends. Samad's attempts to get rid of his Englishness and pursue an ideal homogeneous state are satirized as none of his endeavors succeed. Similarly, Millat's attempts at being an ideal Islamic soldier for KEVIN's religious war backfire as his plan to assassinate Dr. Perret fails. Ultimately, Samad and Millat both fail to singularize their consciousness and secure a pure, homogeneous Islamic integrity. They are given such endings because cultural homogeneity is neither achievable nor necessary in current multicultural society. In Magid's case, his version of

Englishness embodies the colonial white Englishness that rationalizes control and domination on grounds of superior capabilities. Although it is not Smith's main intention to expose white Englishness, Magid's unsuccessful attempt to engineer life serves as a telling episode to advise against such outmoded ways of control that is grounded in a sense of superiority.

As Samad obsesses over an unachievable state of Islamic purity, he holds onto his heritage linked to Mangal Pande. His obsession with Mangal Pande is one of the symptoms of his compulsion to maintain homogeneity; he tries to tell everyone around him about the greatness of his great-great grandfather, and yet such advertising of his kinship always meets ridicule. Samad's strong desire for a homogeneous Islamic state stems from his fear of the middling spot, where he believes he will become unrecognizable in his and his God's eyes. With such fear, he faces his worst temptations when he meets Poppy and, in the end, there is a sense of tragic defeat in Samad because none of his wishes come true. His first son, who he sent in the hopes that he would grow to be a proper Muslim, returns more English than ever. Even Samad himself fails to reach his ideal state of being as he occasionally shows English traits in his speech and manner. Millat also strives to become an ideal Islamic member, and yet he differs from his

father in that he is a member of KEVIN. More importantly, Millat's desire to be a soldier in the religious war does not derive from his religious faith but his desire to be included in a clan at war. Unlike Samad who has the compulsion to be an ideal servant for his God, what Millat wants the most is to feel a sense of belonging.

How Magid deals with Englishness in a completely different way from his father and brother has been observed as well. Magid accepts Englishness and strives to become an ideal member of FutureMouse project as a soldier would serve a colonial empire. Whereas Samad and Millat announce the inevitability and necessity of a newly constructed everyday Englishness, Magid's experience is designed to warn us about injudicious acceptance of Englishness or control of others on the grounds of superiority.

In conclusion, *White Teeth* is a novel that aims to deliver Smith's outlook on progressing society. The different tones of Englishness in Samad, Millat, and Magid expose the falsity of homogeneous identity. Homogeneity and non-compromising essentialism are presented as unachievable and unnecessary aims. We are invited to celebrate heterogeneity and honor the random in current multiethnic Britain. We are not only guided to make distinctions between different modalities of

Englishness in the Iqbals, but also to construct a new model of Englishness in order to accept the contingency of cultures in contemporary society.

We are living in a period of history where acceptance of multiplicity is a new form of necessary ideal. There exists no contradiction between two different cultures, and in *White Teeth*, acceptance of heterogeneity, the random and ordinary Englishness is presented as ingredients for decent human harmony. Since cultural homogeneity is neither realistic nor imperative in current cultural ecosystem, Englishness should also be treated as a fluid[11] object that is placed in a more transformative context. With novels like *White Teeth* that creatively engage with the contemporary topography of newly formed cultures and races, we are challenged to readjust cultural identities and racial concepts with our imagination.

[11] Irene Perez Fernandez also problematizes a homogenous view of British identity while celebrating the third space. In Fernandez's view, contemporary British society should be given a dynamic representation in a setting where "identities are presented as fluid and space(s) are continuously negotiated" (1).

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국문초록

제이디 스미스는 그녀의 2000 년대 데뷔작 『하얀이빨』을 통해 새로운 양식의 영국성(Englishness)과 문화적 이질성을 받아들여야 한다는 점을 알리며, 나아가 영국성과 태생(origin)에 대한 환상을 혼합하는 과정의 필요성을 얘기한다. 본 글에선 『하얀이빨』 과 관련된 다양한 주제들 중에 현대적 맥락에서 영국성을 재해석하는 논의에 참여하고자 하는데, 이크발(Iqbal) 삼부자가 보여주는 실패의 전형을 통해 소설의 주제를 재발견할 수 있다고 보아 사마드 이크발(Samad Iqbal)과 그의 쌍둥이 아들들을 집중적으로 다루고자 한다. 스미스는 사마드(Samad)와 밀라트(Millat)가 그들의 영국성을 통제하기 위해 고군분투하는 과정을 보여줌으로써 단일한 정체성의 허구를 드러내며, 우리는 사마드와 밀라트가 그들의 이질성을 제거하거나 그들의 이상적인 이슬람적 상태에 도달하는 것에 연이어 실패하는 것을 목격하게 된다. 그리고 마지드(Magid)의 경우, 우리는 그가 무분별하게 영국성을 받아들이며 다른 존재들을 통제하려 하는 모습을 지켜보게 된다.

『하얀이빨』 은 이크발 남자들을 통해 각기 다른 유형들의 영국성을 그려내는데, 사마드와 밀라트는 현대 다문화적인 사회의 한 부분으로 자리매김한 일상적 영국성(Everyday Englishness)을 보여준다. 그러나

사마드와 밀라트를 통해 독자들은 비극성을 느끼게 되는데, 이는 그들이 자신들 속에 내재된 일상적 영국성을 제거하려는 시도를 계속 실패하며 다른 문화로부터 오염되지 않는 순수한 정체성의 상태를 고집해서이다. 따라서 사마드와 밀라트는 자신들의 이상과 그들의 실제 성향 간의 괴리로 인해 내적 갈등을 지속적으로 겪게 되며, 이와는 달리 마지드는 서양중심의 제국주의적 영국성을 나타낸다. 그래서 그는 이성주의와 지적, 경제적 우월성을 내세워 다른 존재들을 통제하려 하는 움직임을 보인다.

결국 스미스는 독자들에게 다양한 문화들의 혼합이 만연한 현 시대에선 이질적 문화에 영향받지 않는 것이 거의 불가능 하다는 점을 짚어주며, 우리는 일상적 영국성을 찬미하면서 한편으론 영국성을 무분별하게 받아들이는 것에 대해선 주의를 해야 한다고 알리고 있다. 다양한 문화와 인종이 섞인 21 세기 현대 영국에서 영국성과 자신의 상상적 태생(origin)을 섞어 새로운 의식을 형성하는 것이 새로운 삶의 지향점이 된 것이다. 그럼에도 불구하고 기존의 비평들은 『하얀이빨』 에서의 영국성을 제국주의적 관점에서만 바라보거나 스미스의 민족적 정체성에만 기반을 두고 작품을 분석했는데, 영국성과 태생은 시간의 흐름에 불변하는 고정된 개념이 아니며 시대에 맞춰 현대적 상상력을 가미해서 이해하는 작업이 필요하다. 그러므로 『하얀이빨』에서 영국성은 단지 극복해야 할 대상이 아니라, 진보하는 탈국가주의적 맥락에서 점차 일상적인 요소로 비춰지고 있다.

이크발 남자들이 각기 다른 방식으로 영국성과 타협하는 모습을 그러냄으로써, 스미스는 현 시대엔 다양한 문화들이 층을 이루는 새로운 형태의 의식이 필요하며, 우리가 마주해야 할 새로운 영국성은 현대 사회의 지극히 일상적인 부분으로서 다른 문화들과 조화를 이루고 상상적 태생과 혼합된 정신이라는 것을 알린다. 결과적으로 『하얀이빨』 은 순수한 단일한 형태의 문화 혹은 사마드와 밀라트가 고집하는 이상화는 더이상 21 세기의 다문화 사회에선 현실적이지도, 필수적이지도 않다는 점을 시사한다.

주요어: 영국성, 탈식민주의, 탈국가주의, 다문화주의, 잡종성, 문화적 이질성, 문화적 동일성, 디아스포릭 이주

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