Hacettepe University
Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature

CONSTRUCTIONS OF NEW BRITISHNESS IN WINSOME PINNOCK'S *TALKING IN TONGUES*, *MULES*, *CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET?* AND *ONE UNDER*

Banu ÖĞÜNÇ

PhD Dissertation

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KABUL VE ONAY

Banu ÖĞÜNÇ tarafından hazırlanan "Constructions of New Britishness in Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues*, *Mules*, *Can You Keep a Secret?* and *One Under*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 17 Haziran 2016 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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17 Haziran 2016

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ÖZET

ÖĞÜNÇ, Banu. Winsome Pinnock'ın *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret?* ve *One Under* Başlıklı Oyunlarında Yeni Britanyalılığın Yorumlanması. Doktora Tezi. Ankara, 2016.

Winsome Pinnock'ın ilk dönem oyunları kendisinin Siyahi Britanyalı oyun yazarları arasında değerlendirilmesini sağlarken, ikinci dönem oyunlarında ırk açısından belirsiz karakterler tercih etmesi, ve beyaz Britanyalı kimliğiyle birlikte siyahi kimliğinin de temsil edilişi sorgulanmaktadır. Bu tezde, Pinnock'ın çağdaş teorik tartışmalar bağlamında ırk kimliğindeki belirsizliği ortaya koyan *Talking in Tongues* (1995), *Mules* (1996), *Can You Keep a Secret?* (1999) ve *One Under* (2005) başlıklı oyunları irdelenecektir. Pinnock'ın oyunlarındaki ırk temsili, ki genel olarak belirsiz bir temsil olarak nitelendirilebilir, çağdaş Britanya'daki çok kültürlülük tartışmasına da hizmet etmektedir. Bu durum aynı zamanda Pinnock'ın toplumu gözlemleme ve sosyo-politik gelişmeler çerçevesinde ırk kavramının nasıl bir değişim içerisinde olduğunu algıladığını ortaya koyar. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma değişmekte olan Britanyalılık kavramını Winsome Pinnock'ın ikinci dönem oyunlarında nasıl aktarmış olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlar. Bu çalışma Bhikhu Parekh, Paul Gilroy ve Stuart Hall gibi çok kültürlülük üzerine çalışan kuramcılar ışığında, Pinnock'ın ikinci dönem oyunlarında temsil edilen çağdaş İngiliz toplumunda Britanyalılık ve siyahilik kavramlarını sorgulamakta ve bu kavramların toplumsal süreçteki oluşumlar üzerine etkilerini tartışmaktadır.

Bu tez Giriş bölümü, dört ana Bölüm ve Sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümü eski sömürgelerden gelen siyahi vatandaşların durumunu açıklamak için art alanla ilgili toplumsal ve politik bilgiler içermektedir. Bu bölümde siyahi göçmenlerin oluşturduğu Siyahi İngiliz edebiyatı hakkında tiyatro alanına yoğunlaşarak kısa bir inceleme yapılmıştır. Birinci bölümde Winsome Pinnock'ın ırksal kimliklere ve siyahiliğe dair yaklaşımının değişmeye başladığı *Talking in Tongues* başlıklı oyunu incelemektedir. Bu bölüm hem politik hem de toplumsal ve biyolojik açıdan duruma bağlı olarak yorumlanabilen siyahiliği ele alır. İkinci bölümde *Mules* oyunu uyuşturucu konusunun yalnızca ırkla ilgili olmadığını ortaya koymak amacıyla incelenmiştir. Bu oyunda

yoksulluk ve uyuşturucu ticareti gibi toplumsal problemlere dikkat çekmek için Afrikalı-Karayipli karakterler haricinde ırk kimliği belirsiz karakterlere de yer verilir. Irk kimliklerindeki belirsizlik sayesinde bu oyundaki karakterler daha geniş bir toplumsal bakış açısıyla incelenebilir. Üçüncü Bölümde siyahi bir gencin beyaz bir genç tarafından öldürülmesi gibi güncel bir konunun sahteye aktarılması *Can You Keep a Secret?* başlıklı oyun üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. Bu oyunun çözümlemesi karakterlerin ırk konusunda nasıl toplumsal bağlamda yaklaştığını ve tek taraflı oluşturulmuş ırka dair problemlerle nasıl mücadele ettiklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Dördüncü Bölüm belirli bir ırksal problemi öne çıkarmak yerine çağdaş çok kültürlü toplumu yansıtan *One Under* başlıklı oyuna odaklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda oyun siyahiliğin biyolojik anlamının altını çizer ve siyahilikle beraber Britanyalılık kimliklerini de taşıyan siyahi karakterleri sahneye taşır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tez Winsome Pinnock'ın ikinci dönem oyunlarında siyahi ve beyaz karakterlerin çok kültürlü toplumu yansıttığını ortaya koyar. Bu açıdan Pinnock'n oyunları, *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret?,* ve *One Under*, 1980'den beri Britanya'da yaşanan toplumsal ve politik gelişmeler çerçevesinde değişmekte olan Britanyalılık kavramının şekillenmesine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma Pinnock'ın ikinci dönem oyunlarında toplumsal kimliklerini tek bir açıdan ziyade daha çoğulcu bir anlamda ifade eden beyaz ve siyahi karakterler sunduğunu gösterir. Böylelikle Pinnock'ın ırki kimlikleri belirsiz karakterleri toplumda yerleşmiş olan klişe tiplemeleri sorgular ve yeni yüzyılda oluşturulmakta olan çok kültürlü sosyal yapıya katkıda bulunur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Winsome Pinnock, *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret?, One Under*, Siyahi İngiliz tiyatrosu, Yeni Britanyalılık, siyahilik, çok kültürlülük, ırksal belirsizlik

ABSTRACT

ÖĞÜNÇ, Banu. Constructions of New Britishness in Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues*, *Mules*, *Can You Keep a Secret?* and *One Under*. PhD Dissertation. Ankara, 2016.

While her early plays classify Winsome Pinnock as a Black British dramatist, she prefers racially ambiguous characters in her second phase plays problematising the representation of blackness as well as whiteness and Britishness. This dissertation analyses Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues* (1995), *Mules* (1996), *Can You Keep a Secret?* (1999) and *One Under* (2005), highlighting the ambiguity in racial identities in relation to the contemporary theoretical discussions of multiculturalism. Racial representation in Pinnock's plays, which can be generally defined as ambiguous, is an embodiment of the discussion of multiculturalism in contemporary Britain. This also proves her ability to observe the society and to understand how racial concepts change in line with socio-political developments. Consequently, this study intends to demonstrate that the changing nature of Britishness can be observed in the second phase plays of Winsome Pinnock. This dissertation uses theoretical discussions in multiculturalism, such as Bhikhu Parekh's, Paul Gilroy's and Stuart Hall's views, to argue that Pinnock's second phase plays question, and shape the meaning of "blackness" and Britishness in contemporary British society.

This dissertation consists of an introductory chapter, four main chapters and a concluding chapter. In the Introduction, the socio-political background is presented as a framework for the condition of Black immigrants that came from former British colonies. A brief survey is also conducted regarding Black British literature, especially focusing on the formation of Black British drama. In Chapter I, *Talking in Tongues* is analysed as the play in which Pinnock's approach towards racial identities and blackness began to shift compared to her first phase plays. The chapter highlights the situational understanding of blackness that can be interpreted not only politically, but also socially and biologically. In Chapter II, *Mules* is studied to demonstrate that the drug business cannot be understood as a racial issue. Apart from African-Caribbean characters, *Mules* also introduces racially ambiguous characters in order to draw

attention to the social problems of poverty and drug trafficking. The characters in this play, through ambiguous representation, can be read within a wider social context. In Chapter III, *Can You Keep a Secret?* is examined as a representation of a contemporary issue which is the murder of a black teenager by a white teenager. It is argued that characters in the play approach racial issues based on their established racial prejudices, which are against the idea of a contemporary multicultural society. In Chapter IV, *One Under* is focused on as a reflection of the contemporary multicultural society rather than stressing a specific racial problem. Hence, the play underlines the biological meaning of blackness and represents black characters that adopt British identity along with their blackness.

This dissertation concludes that in her second phase plays Winsome Pinnock reflects a multicultural society in which white and black characters represent a model citizenship. In this regard, Pinnock's plays, *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret?* and *One Under*, contribute to the definition of Britishness which is a changing term in line with political and social developments in Britain since the 1980s. This study shows that Pinnock succeds in reflecting white and black characters who define their identities in a plural sense. Hence, her racially ambiguous characters question the established stereotypical racial understandings and cherish multiculturalism formed in the new millenium.

Keywords: Winsome Pinnock, *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret?, One Under*, Black British Drama, New Britishnes, blackness, multiculturalism, racial ambiguity

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INTRODUCTION

When the *Empire Windrush* arrived at the port of Tilbury on 22 June 1948, the demography of Britain, along with its culture and literature evolved into a new stage on defining Britishness as Julios refers to: "In spite of the political backlash that followed mass arrivals of West Indians and South Asians in Britain, New Commonwealth migration had a profound effect on the demographic and social landscape of the country. Over the course of the twentieth century, their presence would furthermore affect public perceptions of national identity and citizenship" (87). As anticipated by Julios, immigrants from the former colonies altered the society of Britain defining it as a multicultural community. While scholars and theoreticians continue to debate on defining multicultural Britain and the sense of Britishness in the core of the twenty-first century, Winsome Pinnock, a significant representative of Black British drama, carried the social changes experienced by the *Windrush* generation to contemporary society onto the British stage. Of Afro-Caribbean descent, Pinnock's career sheds light upon the historical and literary developments observed in Britain since the 1950s, along with her black characters. The Afro-Caribbean characters of Pinnock represent the changing face of British society in terms of race and Britishness as experienced by immigrants politically and socially in Britain. Moreover, Pinnock's stand through her black characters also indicates the progress made in the literary field by Black immigrants. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to dissect the history of African-Caribbean immigration and to analyse its sociological outcomes throughout the second half of the twentieth century as a means of analysing Pinnock's drama. In addition, it is crucial to establish a working definition of some key concepts, such as black and Black British, as some concepts have evolved within time as Hawkins and Morgan also assert: "[...] [W]hat it meant to be black or African was something that changed a great deal over time and depended on context" (3). Since Pinnock's emphasis is on the changing attitude towards race as reflected in her plays through her racially ambiguous characters, it is significant to observe the change in these key concepts.

Although West Indians came to Britain with the hope that they would be welcomed into the country as British citizens, they found themselves defined as Black British. Acting

as an umbrella term, the word "Black" began to be used for non-white immigrants regardless of their race. In the *IRR Briefing Paper Now* by the Institute of Race Relations published in 2007 the usage of 'Black' is defined as following: "The term black is used here in the all-encompassing sense that it was used by many immigrants from the West Indies, Asia and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, to denote their shared experience of colonialism 'at home' and racial discrimination in the 'mother country'. Black was the colour of their politics not of their skins" (Bourne 3). It can be argued that Black British is a fabricated label that signifies a group of immigrants from the former colonies regardless of their race and ethnicity. Rather than referring to a certain ethnicity or nationality, it has been formed as a political term. Thus, the usage of the term Black British has a political connotation which is used by many scholars, politicians, and theorists. Johnson also breaks down the meaning of "Black" from a sociological point of view arguing that "[a]lthough the term 'black' encompasses the experiences of non-whites, ranging from those who were 'preserved in all ... [their] opaque purity' to those of mixed race (some of whom looked white), it most often described those at the base of the social structure" (317). Webster also points out such usage as "[t]he term 'Black' with an upper-case 'B', was adopted to signify a shared political identity based on common experiences of colonialism and racism, and often a shared experience of post-war immigration" (155). Thus, from this point on, throughout the discussions of Pinnock's plays and multicultural theories, "black" with a lower case "b" will refer to biological understanding of race, considering the colour of the skin. "Black" with an upper case "B", on the other hand, will refer to political and social understanding of Black as a group of immigrants from former colonies including West Indians and Asians. Although it is possible to make a similar distinction between "White" with an upper case "W" and "white" with a lower case "w", this study will use the word with a lower case as influenced by colonial discourse. Naming can be traced back to colonial times as a way of signifying the West's superiority over the conquered land and people. The term Black is also a result of the West's justification of their power. Hence, a distinction between "Black" with an upper case and "black" with a lower case is significant for the aim of this study, along with the thematic changes in Pinnock's plays. Since black characters are judged and categorised from the perspective

of the white society, there will not be any distinction between "White" with an upper case and "white" with a lower case.

To be referred to as Black British was a new experience for the immigrants who could not make sense of the meaning of the controversial, since British is a term that is associated with being white, words "Black" and "British" which can be observed in the personal experience of Hesse:

> When I was an undergraduate I found myself regularly teased by a Nigerian, an overseas student, who whenever he saw me would shout out, 'Black British, Black British!' It was an extraordinary feeling. I hated the epithet and yet I could not deny it. I opposed it but could not undermine its imposition. I knew I was Black, I valued that social identity; I also knew I was British, I had abandoned myself to that contingency of birth. But when you put them both together, 'Black British', I was mortified. [...] Along with many of my generation, any ideas of national identification were submerged beneath investments in elective diasporic affiliations, the particular Caribbean or African countries our families had migrated from and the distinctive, unquestionable attachments to the British cities we grew up in. Yet this still left undissolved an indelible, cultural birthmark that regularly induced others, if not ourselves, to question the *meaning of* and the *connection between* our Black and British identities. ("Diasporicity" 96)

The experience Hesse shares reflects the confusion the immigrants experienced through artificial labelling of their position in Britain as a British subject. Not aware of its political and social connotations during his undergraduate years, Hesse cannot make sense of how he differs from the Nigerian student with whom he shares the same biological blackness. Nevertheless, the history and shared social experience of black immigrants in Britain shape the category of Black British as Hesse realises. It was especially a challenge for the second generation immigrants to give a meaning to their Black British identity, in a social atmosphere in which they struggled to comprehend their hybrid identity. Moreover, it also exemplifies the situational understanding of race as Ann Morning discusses throughout her study conducted through in-depth interviews with more than 50 American college students. Morning aims to point out the variety of race concepts from a biological to a social understanding of black identity. While "the constructionist concept of race" (1177) as Morning discusses in her study will be discussed extensively, the change in the understanding of race from a biological to a social concept contributes to the shift in the understanding of blackness in the case of the experience of the immigrants from the former colonies. From such a perspective, it

can be argued that blackness is not an indication of race as immigrants perceived; rather blackness stands for their social, as well as political, position within the British context.

In this regard, along with the classification of "Black" within the discussed concept, "blackness" and "whiteness" have opposing meanings that define stereotypical characteristics of British people and the immigrants. The connotations of these words, once again, depend on political and social developments as will be laid out in detail. Fryer, on the other hand, traces the connotations of the words "black" and "white" contributing to the understanding of blackness and whiteness in British society:

> The very words 'black' and 'white' were heavily charged with meaning long before the English met people whose skins were black. Blackness, in England, traditionally stood for death, mourning, baseness, evil, sin, and danger. [...] White, on the other hand, was the colour of purity, virginity, innocence, good magic, flags of truce, harmless lies, and perfect human beauty. (135)

Thus, both words correspond to fixed understandings even outside of the race concept. Along with such connotations, blackness has been reinterpreted in relation to the deprived position of the black immigrants. As put forward previously, blackness, therefore, is another encompassing term that is associated with the lower social position of immigrants from the former colonies. Julios describes the categorisation of their Blackness based on their social position as follows: "Even so, New Commonwealth Immigrants seemed to share certain common characteristics: they were typically poor, typically unskilled and to varying degrees non-white" (80). Whiteness, in this respect, is interpreted referring to the empirical power of Britain contributing to the need to redefine Britishness. With the arrival of the immigrants from the former colonies, English people, together with Scottish and Welsh people, began highlighting their own whiteness in order to separate themselves sociologically and culturally from the newly arrived Black subjects. Webster differentiates between waves of immigrants from Europe and those from the former colonies defining whiteness and blackness as follows:

> The late 1940s could be regarded as a traditional period between a focus on an 'immigrant' who continued associated with migrants from Europe, particularly with Jews, to an identification of 'immigrant' as black or Asian in the 1950s. This produced a characteristic opposition between Britishness as white, and

> 'immigrants' as 'coloured' in which migrants from Europe became increasingly invisible. (141)

Furthermore, Britishness began to be associated with the British Empire which began to draw a wider line between the mother country and the former colonies, further associating the status of being an immigrant with being Black. Julios defines Britishness from such a perspective as "[f]rom the outset, a by-product of Britain's colonial past, the notion of 'Britishness' became intrinsically linked with the legacy of Empire. Forged by the forces of war, territorial and commercial expansion as well as religion, Britishness became synonymous with the Union, the monarchy, the Church of England and Parliament" (89). This perspective, likewise, outcasts the immigrants and juxtaposes them as Blacks versus whites and the institutions of the British Empire. Moreover, denying their identity as British and forcing the arbitrary definition Black British impacted the social position of the immigrants from the West Indians as well as those from other former colonies which will be evaluated in detail.

A strong emphasis on whiteness and Britishness in relation to the empirical power of Britain lead to the renaming of the immigrants by casting them out and imposing on them new identities. James highlights this underlying that "[t]hey left British Guiana and British Honduras as proud black Britons and arrived in Britain as niggers. The shocking discovery of their inferior status profoundly affected the self-conception and political consciousness of the black settlers. Jamaicans in Britain became more than Jamaican; they became 'West Indian', 'Afro-Caribbean', 'black'" (379). Thus race, in the case of the immigrants from the former colonies, loses its significance since political and social connotations gain more importance: "Caribbeans from the different islands come from quite distinctive racial and ethnic mixes, though they all tend (wrongly) to be seen as 'Jamaican'" (Hall, "Conclusion" 220). Just as the category Black British was formed in order to comprise a wide range of people who share the same social exclusion in Britain, and just as Britishness and whiteness were redefined as binary oppositions, the empirical superiority aimed to be preserved through the naming of the immigrants via a shared political identity regardless of race and ethnicity. "Thus people who had thought of themselves as British in the Caribbean increasingly came to think of themselves as West Indian in Britain" (151) as Webster indicates. McMillan also asserts

that "[p]ostwar immigrants from the Caribbean only began to call themselves 'West Indian' when they arrived in England and realized that they would fair better together, than apart, in the face of racism" (132). Accordingly, it is significant not to evaluate immigrants from the Caribbeans together with Pakistani, Indian and other immigrants from east Asia and west Africa. Thus, to be politically correct the terms African-Caribbean, or Afro-Caribbean, should be used in order to refer to the group of immigrants who are subjects in the plays of Winsome Pinnock.

The so-called "coloured" problem for British people began with the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948. The name "Windrush" turned into commemorating the race problem in Britain as Hesse also underlines: "For forty-nine years *Windrush* signified in the public sphere the problem of 'race' and the racialized other" (98). Nevertheless, black people are a reality of the British Empire whose history goes back as far as the beginning of the slave trade. As Fryer also states "[t]here were Africans in Britain before the English came here. They were soldiers in the Roman imperial army that occupied the southern part of our island for three and a half centuries" (1). Therefore, as the backlash of the colonisation and the slave trade, black people from former colonies came to Britain in larger numbers. Although an overview shows that Britain's colonial history is mainly ignored and 1948 is referred to as the beginning of the colour problem, historians and scholars trace the existence of black people back to the seventeenth century. With the slave trade, black people were moved from Africa to be used in the newly-established plantations. Some selected black people were also carried to Britain to be employed as servants. Fryer specifies this fact stating that "[t]he majority of the 10,000 or so black people who lived in Britain in the eighteenth century were household servants – pages, valets, footmen, coachmen, cooks, and maids – much as their predecessors had been in the previous century" (72). While house servants mostly remained unseen by British society, it was mostly the seamen who constituted the black population of the Empire in Britain especially in the port cities. Winston James records that "[g]iven Britain's imperial network of maritime commerce with its African and Caribbean colonies, the primary sites of residence of Africans and Caribbeans in early twentieth-century Britain were the port cities – Liverpool, London, Bristol, and Cardiff" (349). As the capital of the Empire, London, on the other hand, has been the main port

for students and the intellectual blacks which Fryer defines as “the luckier minority” compared to subjects of slavery: “Before the war, black students and Pan-African activists had been a relatively fortunate minority within the community” (295). Moreover, seamen, butlers, and domestics have constituted the black population of Britain up until the First World War (James 350).

The First World War became an opportunity for the black citizens of the Empire to prove themselves as loyal servants while supplying military force for Britain. Citizens from the West Indies, in the same manner as the soldiers from New Zealand and Australia, voluntarily enlisted to be a part of the army of the British Empire. The First World War also became an opportunity for the black people already settled in Britain to be employed in the country upon their slavery past as Fryer argues: “The outbreak of war in 1914 brought dramatic changes for black workers in Britain. Now there was well-paid work for them to do. Their help was needed for the war effort” (295). Nevertheless, the war also marked the hostile attitude towards blacks as more severely expressed ignoring their respective rights as British subjects. Howard Johnson points out what the black soldiers experienced because of the unexpected exclusive attitude of the white British during the war:

> Participation in the First World War by black subjects tested their loyalty to the British Empire and dispelled previously held notions about the benevolence of British rule. Once enlisted, the members of the British West Indies Regiment were subjected to blatant racial discrimination. They were prevented from holding commissions, for the Army Council opposed officers being appointed ‘who are not of unmixed European blood’. West Indian battalions were, moreover, used primarily for the hazardous task of ammunition carrying and for labour services. (599)

Johnson highlights the discrimination soldiers from the West Indians faced based on their skin colour. Averting their expectation of serving their mother country, Britain, the war became an indication for the upcoming problems that would arise with Black immigration in the 1950s. Johnson further refers to a letter written by a black soldier who experienced racial discrimination and the disappointments related to this: “The disillusionment of black soldiers with their treatment was expressed in a 1918 letter by a Trinidadian sergeant: “We are treated neither as Christians nor British Citizens, but as West Indian ‘niggers’, without anybody to be interested in or look after us.

Instead of being drawn closer to the Church and Empire we are driven away from it" (599). The letter he cited, also, contributes to the perception of race from a political perspective by the white British citizens by putting forward blackness as opposed to the shared identity of Christianity and the legacy of the Empire. As Webster states, the aftermath of the First World War witnessed the first flames of the strife between the black communities in Britain and British people:

> […] Black soldiers and war-workers in Britain in the First World War were initially welcomed for their contribution to the war effort. But in the aftermath of war, between January and August 1919, there were riots against black communities in several seaports and cities – the most serious in Liverpool and Cardiff where demobilized soldiers from the British West Indies Regiment as well as black seamen were attacked. (139)

In relation to contemporary discussions on multicultural Britain and the sociological problems led by this, Parekh argues that "Britain was now judged to have a 'colour' problem and, since colour was taken to signify a distinct racial group, a 'racial' problem" ("Integrating Minorities" 13). However, as Webster signifies in the previous quotation, the racial issues began to appear in the society in disguise of the "colour" problem as early as 1919.

Although riots held after the war against black seamen and former soldiers in some port cities, black citizens from the West Indies were accepted into the country as workers. Hawkins and Morgan indicate that

> [w]ith the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940, London saw Africans and West Indians as part of the same colonial people for the first time, and the social existence of workers in both areas was finally acknowledged. Education, housing, and nutrition were suddenly factors that the Colonial Office concluded were crucial to a modern labour market. (10)

Different from the times of slavery, however, the basic needs of black citizens and their rights as human beings such as housing were taken into consideration. The decade, meanwhile, witnessed another world war in which black soldiers from the West Indies were once again proudly involved with the British army. While black soldiers had to endure being labelled as the "other" rather than enjoying their British identity, British people also witnessed the end of an era as Mandler states: "Over half a century after the

end of the Second World War, it is widely felt that 1945 marked the last point at which Britain enjoyed true national unity" (197). National unity, in line with the concept of Britishness, was disrupted by the arrival of the first major wave of immigrants who hoped to help their mother country to recover from the war.

As Julios describes, "[o]n 22 June 1948, the merchant vessel *Empire Windrush* sailed into Tilbury Dock in England carrying 492 passengers, most of whom were ex-servicemen from the Caribbean who have fought for Britain during the Second World War. They had come to Britain to assist with the post-war reconstruction effort" (84). Although the term "immigrant" was, and in fact is, used to describe their position in Britain, they arrived at the country holding British passports since "[t]he Nationalities Act of 1948 specified the legal right of West Indians to enter Britain [...]" (Hawkins and Morgan 22). James also indicates this as follows:

> It should be pointed out at the outset that it is preferable to use the terms 'migrants', 'settlers', and 'black Britons', as opposed to 'immigrants', when describing black people in Britain, because that is precisely what the vast majority were. Strictly speaking, there have been relatively few black immigrants to Britain. Most of those who entered Britain in the twentieth century, including the post-war years, were simply moving from one part of the British empire to another as *British citizens.* (349)

For black citizens, their arrival was more about coming home as fellow British citizens and it was not any different from travelling within the Caribbeans. Moreover, Britain was also in need of her black citizens to form a significant workforce along with establishing stronger ties between the Empire and its colonies. Modood specifically underlines this:

> The post-war migration to Britain from the Caribbean and the South Asian sub-continent, while based upon imperial ties, was very much driven by economic imperatives. The rebuilding of the war-shattered economy created a demand for labour that could not be satisfied by the British population alone. [...] Early studies of these migrants in the British economy show that, regardless of their social origins and qualification levels, Caribbean and Asian people were largely confined to low-paid manual work, and that racial discrimination in recruitment was widespread, even after being outlawed. ("Ethnic Diversity" 53)

Thus, the hostile attitude in the form of racial discrimination towards blacks after the First World War, continued with the arrival of the *SS Empire Windrush*. Upon their arrival, black citizens were forced to work in lower positions in the most unwanted types of work while "[a]mbitious, energetic and in the prime of life, they came disproportionately from the skilled proletariat, the black artisanry – carpenters, electricians, masons, mechanics, dressmakers – many of whom had served a long and arduous apprenticeship in their country of origin" (James 373). The quality of the incoming blacks is highlighted by Fryer as well: "The great majority of the West Indian settlers were in their twenties. And they had plenty to offer Britain. [...] In fact, one in four of the men, and half of the women, were non-manual workers. And almost half the men (46 per cent) and over a quarter of the women (27 per cent) were skilled manual workers" (374). Clearly, the discrimination in British society and their prejudices about black subjects forced the immigrants to get the most unwanted jobs.

Although mass immigration of black citizens from the colonies was marked with the coming of *SS Empire Windrush* in 1948, their arrivals continued until the 1970s. Fryer marks the numbers of the incoming immigrants especially from the West Indies as follows:

> A few hundred came in 1950, about 1,000 in 1951, about 2,000 in 1952 and again in 1953. Larger numbers arrived in the next four years, including many wives and children of men who settled here: 24,000 in 1954; 26,000 in 1956; 22,000 in 1957; 16,000 in 1958. Ten years after the *Empire Windrush* there were in Britain about 125,000 West Indians who has come over since the end of the war. (372)

According to FitzGerald,

> [t]he main primary immigration of the post-war period from former colonies in the 'New' Commonwealth took place in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; but the timing both of primary immigration and of immigration for family reunion took place at different times and different stages for different groups. The result of this is, broadly speaking, that groups with origins in the Caribbean are the longest established of the ethnic minorities from the New Commonwealth. (159)

Hence, the arrival of the immigrants continued in waves after 1948 for different reasons such as family reunion. And, as early as the 1950s, the beginning of harassment towards the black citizens by the police and the riots by the black citizens against the

discriminatory acts started to be observed. These riots, meanwhile, were taken as a warning by the government for possible upcoming problems between the black and white British citizens. Parekh specifies this arguing that

> [i]nitially successive governments thought that the British tradition of tolerance, the economic ambitions of the immigrants, and the booming economy would ensure that the migrants would find an appropriate niche in British economy and society. The widespread resentment and discrimination and the riots of 1958 in Nottingham and Notting Hill shattered the illusion. ("Integrating Minorities" 13)

Under these circumstances, the dream for the black immigrants began to turn into a source of tension. It was observed that the existence of black immigrants in the society was considered as a threat by the white citizens. Goulbourne draws attention to the discrepancy between the black youth and the police force which occurred as a result of the tension in the society:

> Confrontations between black youths and the police occured in Toxteth in Liverpool, Moss Side in Manchester, Handsworth in Birmingham, and in Wolverhampton and Smethwick. The events served to highlight a number of problems that Caribbean and Asian communities had long faced in the decaying inner cities. These included severe tension between the Caribbean communities and the police in the inner cities, where community spokespersons had long blamed the police for harassment and brutality particularly against young men. (183)

Aside from the discriminatory acts within British society, especially the organised defence of the black youth forced the case of Black immigrants to become political material both for the Labour and the Conservative Party. Solomos explains the seriousness of the black riots that affected national policies as follows: "The 1958 race riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill are commonly seen as an important watershed in the development of racialised politics in Britain. It is certainly true that the events in these two localities helped to bring to national prominence issues that had previously been discussed only locally or within government departments" (54). This is also underlined by Fryer: "Immediately, [after the 1958 Nottingham riots] as if they had been waiting for the signal, the two Nottingham MPs – one Tory, the other Labour – raised the cry that no more black people should be allowed to enter the country and that new deportation laws should be passed" (377). Hence, the political parties realised the extent of the problem leaving aside their predictions on the integration of black

immigrants. Eventually both parties began to introduce new immigration acts that limited the right to enter Britain from former colonies. Solomos states that "[b]oth the Labour governments of 1945-51 and the Conservative governments of the 1950s considered various ways of stopping or reducing the number of black migrants arriving and settling in Britain" (53). Additionally, the need to reduce the number of black immigrants introduced an official discourse towards the race problem. As Parekh signifies, "[...] from the late 1950s onwards there was a national consensus that Britain had a racial problem and that it should aim at 'good race relations'" ("Integrating Minorities" 19). Hence, a consensus that it was black immigrants who disrupted the social order in Britain was reached.

Eventually, as a result of these riots and violence that carried onto streets, the "colour" problem began to be viewed from two different sides. On the one hand, it was realised that the number of immigrants had to be restricted, especially Black British citizens from former colonies such as the West Indies, India and West Africa, in order to prevent their increasing number. Solomos points out that

> [t]hroughout the 1950s the debate on immigration in parliament and the media focused on the need to control black immigration. Although in public debate and private policy discussions attention was sometimes focused on the behaviour of 'undesirable' black immigrants, such as those involved in crime or prostitution, most of the political debates throughout the 1950s were about the desirability of letting into Britain a sizeable number of West Indian or Asian migrants. (53)

Without pronouncing "race" as the core of the problem, Black immigrants were regarded as a threat to the Britishness of the white society and their numbers were intended to be limited.

On the other hand, it was agreed that legal regulations had to be introduced in order to keep the social disputes between black and white citizens under control while the image of Britain as a civilised Western country respectful of human rights could be preserved. In this regard Parekh indicates that "[t]he mid-1960s marked the beginning of the public debate on the appropriate model of integration. Britain began to appreciate that its immigrants were not just 'black' or 'coloured' but distinct social groups with their own cultural identities, and that it was now a culturally diverse or plural society"

("Integrating Minorities" 14). Since British people preferred to label the black immigrants as "West Indians" or "Jamaicans" ruling out their Britishness, it was also realised that their cultural identities should be respected in the multicultural society Britain had evolved into. Nevertheless, the problem mostly turned into an electoral issue, which continued as such until contemporary times, as the Labour Party began passing legislations against discrimination in favour of getting the votes of the immigrants. Thus, "[...] it was under a Labour government in 1965 that the first legislation against racial discrimination was introduced. The law was strengthened under Labour in 1968, and again in 1976" as Goulbourne points out (194). While the conflicts between the white citizens and the Black citizens continued in British society for decades through black riots and official discriminations towards black citizens, politicians perceived these as an opportunity to gain electoral support from Black immigrants.

The first step towards acknowledging the racial discrimination of the Black citizens began with the 1965 legislation which "[...] made it unlawful for any person to practise discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, or ethnic or national origins against anybody seeking access to facilities or services at restaurants, cafes, pubs, theatres, cinemas, dance halls and all other places of public entertainment or recreation" (Childs 148). Nevertheless, according to Lester, "[t]he first Race Relations Act [...] did not deal with the worst problems of racial discrimination, and its conciliation machinery lacked teeth" (24). The Race Relations Act of 1976 that took significant steps towards preventing racial discrimination in the public domain. Childs further indicates that

> [t]here were fears that Black youths, living in the decaying ghettos of the inner cities, undereducated, unemployed and dispirited, could become a permanent pool from which the criminals and subversives would be recruited. This was one of the main reasons for the Race Relations Act, 1976, which attempted to deal with discrimination over a broad field, and established the Commission for Racial Equality. (188)

Besides encouraging Black citizens to vote for the Labour Party to end discrimination in public, the Race Relations Act of 1976 officially acknowledged Black youth as a threat towards British society and the values it represented. Nevertheless, the act did not offer satisfying solutions to end social disputes. Instead, it just pointed out Black youth as the

target to put the blame on for social disruption. Sanders also specifies why the 1976 act was inadequate to regulate the relations in a multicultural society:

> In general the Race Relations Act 1976 makes discrimination in the public domain unlawful but not discrimination in the private domain. It covers most of employment, housing, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services to the public, but not the ways in which individuals conduct their private lives. While private discrimination can be wounding and embittering, it does not strike directly at people's rights as citizens and it has never been seriously argued that it should be made unlawful. (37)

Thus, the act aimed to regulate relations between Black immigrants and the white society, especially taking into consideration of the benefits of British society. It might be put forward that the relations with black citizens were shattered for the sake of the benefits of the political parties. Primarily the political aim was not to establish a multicultural society based on consensus of different cultures, but to keep a racial distinction in the society in order to practice their political power.

Along with the Race Relations Acts, the parliament also passed a series of immigration acts restricting the rules and regulations of immigration to the UK to prevent more serious problems with the black population whose number was considered to have already outgrown by that time. As touched upon briefly, controlling the number of incoming "coloured" immigrants began to be discussed from the 1940s onwards, and a bill controlling immigration from the Commonwealth countries was passed in 1962. The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 introduced new immigration measures on the citizens of Commonwealth countries. According to Julios,

> [o]n the whole, New Commonwealth immigration can be divided into two periods: before and after the implementation of the *Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962*. This piece of legislation, which was mainly aimed at managing growing migration into Britain, had three core objectives: firstly, 'to make temporary provision for controlling the immigration into the United Kingdom of Commonwealth citizens'; secondly, 'to authorise the deportation from the United Kingdom of certain Commonwealth citizens convicted of offences and recommended by the court for deportation'; and thirdly, 'to amend the qualifications required of Commonwealth citizens applying for citizenship under the British Nationality Act, 1948'. (80)

The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 was introduced as a milestone both in the immigration policy of the UK and in the internal affairs regarding Black British

citizens. The justification for the incoming citizens depended on the fact that they had British passports and legal citizenship of the UK, whereas the Act aimed to repeal these rights. From then on they were accepted not as a citizen of the country but as a temporary worker who was subjected to different rules and regulations. Being classified and accepted as a worker was reregulated as well. With the Act, as Childs indicates, "immigrants were admitted as one of three categories. There were those who had been offered definite jobs (Category A), and those who had certain specific skills which were in short supply (Category B). There was also Category C, made up of those who did not qualify under the other two. This third category was dropped in 1964" (147). Moreover, being qualified as a British citizen was altered for Commonwealth citizens, and it continued to be tightened further in the upcoming years. Besides, the Act enabled convicted blacks to be deported from the country as a solution to discarding black youth since "[...] *black* people were disproportionately criminal, as the police figures and sections of the media suggested" (FitzGerald 162). Consequently, "[t]he controls introduced by the Bill [the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Bill] were justified by the argument that there was a need to halt black immigration because of the limited ability of the host country to assimilate 'coloured immigrants'" (Solomos 57-58). Ethnic minorities and the multicultural structure of the society were over passed by the government through the act.

The Conservative government of 1962 aimed to preserve the national identity of Britain which was reaffirmed by Enoch Powell when he delivered his notorious landmark speech "Rivers of Blood," at a Conservative Association meeting in Birmingham on 20 April 1968 as a member of the opposition party. Drawing attention to the colour problem in Britain, Powell suggested that control of immigration could not be presented as a solution. On the contrary, repatriation of Black citizens should be pursued. Powell announced the solution for the urgent problem of coloured immigration stating that "[t]he answers to the simple and rational question are equally simple and rational: by stopping, or virtually stopping, further inflow, and by promoting the maximum outflow. Both answers are part of the official policy of the Conservative Party" (Powell). By naming the Conservative Party, Powell made it an official statement that immigration of Blacks was an official problem that had to be handled by the party. Thus, "[t]he

nationalistic rhetoric used by Enoch Powell, Conservative Shadow Defence Spokesman, not only acted as a focus for those calling for tighter controls in immigration, it helped to popularise the common racialist sentiment against New Commonwealth immigrants" (Julios 92). Powell's speech contributed to the nationalistic discourse which led to further restrictions on black immigration. Hesse comments on Powell's discourse in this speech as follows: "Enoch Powell's public rearticulation of Britishness portrayed it as terminally, culturally threatened and incapable of assimilating 'alien' people who were capable of embodying only socially corrosive 'alien' cultures" (7). The negative attitude towards Black citizens, as spoken out by Powell, was to be observed not only in the upcoming immigration acts, but in social areas of life such as education and other public services.

Thus, the discourse that Powell established can be taken as one of the reasons why the relations with black citizens have not improved in the 1970s as Sarah Spencer also questions:

> The first reason that immigration policy has not contributed to an improvement in attitudes towards members of minorities is that the message of immigration policy – that black and Asian people should be kept out of Britain where possible – blatantly contradicts the message of race relations policy, that they are welcome members of British society. ("The Impact" 83)

The upcoming decades, especially the 1970s and 1980s, were troublesome years due to black riots, educational failure, and police discrimination of black citizens. Solomos states that "[o]verall it seems clear that during the 1970s and early 1980s black and ethnic minority workers remained in a relatively restricted number of occupational areas, were overrepresented in low-paid and insecure jobs, or were working antisocial hours in unhealthy or dangerous environments" (86). The national curriculum introduced by the Thatcher government in education, which gave particular significance to the mastery of English and the subject of history that emphasised the superiority of whites within the context of empirical Britain, also problematised the adaptation period for the immigrant families' children. In addition, the black youth felt that they were still discriminated against by the police because of racial prejudices as Childs indicates: "Race relations presented the police with a special problem, as surveys indicated that

young immigrants felt they were likely to be unfairly dealt with the police" (197). Turned into scapegoats, Black citizens were more likely to be offended by the police force when approached with prejudice that they were undereducated and not socially adapted to British society.

Meanwhile, restrictions on immigration were further increased by the Immigration Act of 1971. According to Julios,

> [t]he *Immigration Act 1971*, in turn, created categories of citizenship claims based on the degree of 'Britishness' of the origin of the person; in particular, the Act removed the right of those born in Britain to have an automatic claim to citizenship. From 1971 onwards, the right of abode was therefore limited to those with a prior link to the UK, such as a parent or grandparent who was born in Britain. This ultimately had the effect of virtually ending primary immigration. (86-87)

Through this act, a definite line was drawn between white and non-white citizens of the Commonwealth setting forth the "institutionalisation of racist immigration controls" (Solomos 64). Thus, it can be established that Britain was hostile towards non-white immigrants and that the British did not want a black community settled in Britain larger than already settled. Eventually, the immigration acts, which aimed to handle the race issue, began to be discussed openly in public after Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech. Solomos points out that

> [t]he racialisation of the immigration issue was, in other words, done through coded language: Commonwealth immigrants were seen as a problem, but race itself was not always mentioned as the central issue. The politicisation of such terms was later to lead to a situation where, despite the continuation of large-scale white immigration, all immigrants were visualised as black and immigration became a coded term for racial questions. (56)

This standpoint can be traced in the immigration acts since each proposed act intended to focus on the restrictions of non-white immigrants from the West Indies, India and other former colonies.

The same attitude was preserved in the Nationality Act as well. Childs remarks that

> [t]he British Nationality Act, 1981 was also meant to clarify and restrict citizenship to those with close ties with the UK. Those seeking naturalization would have to meet a language standard, and foreigners marrying British citizens would have to wait three years before they could gain naturalization. The minorities felt the new restrictions discriminated against them. (225-226).

This act served to fulfil the aim of restricting Black immigrants through the immigration acts. Moreover, it can be stated that "[t]he 1981 British Nationality Act signalled a further stage in this strategy. The government argued that by introducing the Act it was rationalising the existing nationality and immigration legislation in order to create a British citizenship with automatic right of abode in Britain" (Solomos 64-65). With each act, rather than gaining recognition as British citizens, Black immigrants were discriminated against even further by being denied of rights by the British state.

The passing of the Nationality Act of 1981 corresponds to the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher. As Thatcher ran for the 1979 election, she used the immigration problem, more significantly the colour problem in Britain, as a propaganda material for her campaign. Ian R. G. Spencer indicates that "[...] Margaret Thatcher, in the run-up to the 1979 election, in her famous 'swamping' statement made known her sympathy and understanding for what she believed were 'people's fears on numbers'" (147). Through her discourse, Thatcher incited a hostile attitude in British society towards black citizens. Upon Thatcher's warning of British citizens against the "alien cultures" of the immigrants, "[a]n opinion poll taken after the broadcast revealed that the percentage of the public who thought that immigration was an 'urgent issue facing the country' rose from 9 per cent to 21 per cent" (Sarah Spencer, "The Impact" 80). Mandler also specifies how Thatcher depended on the immigration problem to get the votes of the British citizens:

> Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979 with, apparently, such a mandate to restore to the British people their 'national identity' that she gave them a choice of three. Although there was not a lot of evidence that the electorate had this particular solution in mind – more immediate economic and political problems were pressing in 1979 – nevertheless Thatcher herself had a strong conviction that Britain needed a kind of cultural revolution in which a restored national identity would play a leading role. (231)

Hereby, Thatcher put forward that while her Conservative Cabinet was in power, strict measures would be taken against the groups classified as Black British as well as restricting non-white immigrants to enter the country. The hostile attitude towards non-white immigrants and the perception that they posed a threat to the national identity of British people had in fact turned into a strategy of the party leading to the conclusion that "[emphasis for tight immigration measures by Thatcher] allowed the idea of blacks being the 'enemy within' and a threat to social stability to become more deeply rooted" (Solomos 66). During the Thatcher period, race continued to be a political issue which Conservatives held on to.

As opposed to the hostile attitude towards immigrant communities by Thatcher and her conservative policies, riots by the immigrants continued to force the government to change their policies. In this regard, the 1985 riots can be marked as a significant incident similar to the riots in 1951: "Horrific rioting broke out again in the Handsworth district of Birmingham and, a few weeks later, in Brixton in the summer of 1985. In the first case (mainly) Black rioters smashed, looted and destroyed Asian shops, killing two traders. In the second, (mainly) Black rioters took to the streets after the police had shot a Black mother by accident during a house raid" (Childs 226). While institutionalised racism continued to be practised against blacks and Asians, the government was forced to adopt a much more multicultural approach especially in education. The publication of the Swann Report entitled "Education for All" changed British education policies. Blackstone indicates that

> [a]t the time of the Swann Report in 1985, the last major review of the educational experiences and achievements of ethnic minority children, it was generally accepted that African-Caribbean children were 'underachieving'. Indeed, the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups set up in 1979, originally under the chairmanship of Anthony Rampton and later Michael Swann, was established because of concern about 'West Indian' pupils' academic performance and adjustment to school. (97)

Thatcher was forced to adjust her insistence on a national education with emphasis on English and history, when it was accepted that the underachievement of the immigrant children under a national curriculum that required mastering of English primarily was one of the reasons. In this respect, Blackstone asserts that

> [d]uring the 1980s a number of local authorities developed what became known as anti-racist policies in schools. These were designed in part to counter violence and harassment in schools and in part to incorporate the culture of the ethnic minority communities into the school through what became known as multicultural approaches to the curriculum and multifaith approaches to religious education and to the daily act of worship required by law in our schools. Both had the broader object of supporting black and Asian pupils and of securing the best possible levels of achievement from them. (106)

It can be argued that, while Margaret Thatcher defended strict immigration rules perceiving non-white immigrants as a threat to her sense of Britishness, she had to change her conservative policies in the presence of the deteriorating condition of the immigrants. The British politicians managed to limit the number of non-white immigrants into the country, including the spouses and the family members; yet, they eventually changed their education policies for a more multicultural approach towards different ethnic groups in order to regulate race relations with already settled down immigrants. Solomos evaluates the Conservative governments that dominated British history from 1979 to 1997 arguing that

> [i]n summary the Thatcher and Major eras can be seen as a time in which concerns about immigration, asylum seekers and refugees became entangled with wider preoccupations about the social and cultural impact of migrant communities, leading to the institutionalization of an exclusionary framework that sought to restrict immigration. This way partly due to the growing influence of new right politics in the Conservative Party. The necessity of keeping out 'undesirable immigrants' became an integral element of the Conservatives' strategy during this period. (68)

Consequently, it can be claimed that it was the 1980s, the Thatcher period, that witnessed a growing concern about immigrants from the former colonies. As Sarah Spencer indicates "[c]abinet discussions in the 1950s released under the thirty-year-rule, have revealed the more candid discussions which were then held in private" ("The Impact" 78). On the contrary, race was included on the political agenda of the Conservatives overtly in the 1980s mainly targeting the black and Asian immigrants. While supporting more restricting immigration policies, the hostile attitude of the Conservative governments of Thatcher and, later, of John Major triggered uneasiness in the society towards the Black British citizens.

When the Labour Party came into power in 1997 under the leadership of Tony Blair, racist discrimination had already turned into a serious problem in British society:

> A survey in May 1996 found that 59 per cent of black people and 39 per cent of Asians had experience of racism, over one-fifth of them experiencing physical rather than only verbal abuse. One-third of white, Asian and black people thought racism more of a problem now than it was five years ago. Of white people, 31 per cent admitted to being at least slightly prejudiced, 4 per cent (representing 1.5 million people) to being very prejudiced, and 28 per cent thought 'most' white people would mind if an Asian person moved in next door. Although it has become less socially acceptable to express negative views about black and Asian people within the United Kingdom, fewer inhibitions constrain expression of such views about immigrants, foreigners and, in recent years, refugees. (Sarah Spencer, "The Impact" 75)

In such a hostile atmosphere, Tony Blair came to power with a revised political agenda known as New Labourism. Nevertheless, rather than promoting their Labour ideology and challenging the Conservative policies of the past decades, the Labour Party exchanged their leftist politics with a much more rightist discourse by aiming at middle-class voters rather than the working-class. Serving for three consecutive terms from 1997, "Blair's government has pursued a centrist course, adopting the term New Labour to distinguish their policies from the Marxist influenced philosophy of Labour's past and proclaiming the intent to find a 'third way' alternative to oppositions between left and right" (Kritzer 169). According to Lee, the reason for the success of the Labour Party was that "[the Labour Party] had a corporate identity and had refined its use of creative and professional public relations and marketing systems to convince a nation that it was electable" (457). Thus, the New Labour leadership turned into an image-promoting era rather than taking realistic steps towards the race problem. The showpiece acts of the Labour Party were defined by Goulbourne as follows:

> For example, when Tony Blair's New Labour launched a party manifesto document in July 1996, a member of the Society of Black Socialist within the party attacked it for showing too few black and brown faces, and likened the pictures to that of the car company Ford, which had earlier whitened black workers' faces in a brochure for distribution in East Europe. It was said that of 230 faces only six could be recognised as black in the party's brochure, and although the party denied any intention of excluding African Caribbeans and Asians, the Society feared that Blair's New Labour was keen to show the party to be representative of white middle class Britain. (199)

In this regard, although the policies of the previous Conservative Party were softened along by adopting a more multicultural approach in the society, the Blair government could not provide the ease the black and the Asian immigrants hoped for. Fryer discusses that "[i]ronically, since 1997 New Labour has proved as keen to be seen as tough on immigration and asylum issues as were the Conservatives. Despite Labour's opposition to the Conservatives' policies on immigration and asylum during the 1980s and early 1990s, when it took power it offered no radical alternative to these policies" (253). The Labour Party continued to follow the policy of gaining the votes of the black and Asian immigrants as it was argued that they could soften the harsh immigration and race relation acts. Nevertheless, the Labour Party still failed to fulfil the expectations of the immigrant community due to their change of focus in their policy. These developments will be further analysed laying out the socio-political atmosphere of each play's background. In the subsequent chapters the discussion of political developments and their reflection on British society will resume from the Thatcher government to the end of Blair's third term in office in a chronological order.

During Blair's third term as the prime minister, the colour problem was carried into a new phase as a result of the political and social issues. At the beginning of a new millennium, the race problem was replaced by the faith problem. First, the 9/11 attacks in the USA and later the London bombings on 07 July 2005 led to the discussion of Islam as a threat to Western societies. Rather than the multicultural aspect of British society, it was the multi-faith Britain that was placed at the heart of the discussions. One can relate the immigration and race policies of the 1980s, as well as their outcome, to the attacks in London.

Nevertheless, what is significant for the discussion of the plays of Winsome Pinnock, in terms of the representation of African-Caribbean characters in her plays, is the re-evaluation of Britishness that was brought onto the agenda with the political developments that occurred during the Blair government. In order to prevent discrimination against black and Asian citizens, the Labour government intended to emphasise Britishness as a uniting label for all UK citizens. As opposed to Thatcher's emphasis on Englishness, white middle-class society, as well as national identity put

forward as opposed to non-white immigrants, the Labour governments held onto Britishness as a unifying term for a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society. From this perspective, Mandler points out that

> [s]ince 1997, New Labour governments have offered their own national identities, again in multiple varieties. Just as convinced as was Thatcher that Britain 'needed' a stronger national identity, but at the same time seeking to distinguish theirs from hers, New Labour's leaders have punched away hard at 'national identity' from the beginning. Like Thatcher, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and their think-tanks believed that an upbeat characterization of the nation was practically a good thing in itself: it provided a 'story' linking the people and the public sphere, which might help make people feel good about their politicians by making them feel good about themselves. (234)

The search for a collective identity led to the evoking of Britishness as an umbrella term for all citizens regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. The purpose was to form a regenerated identity given through the revised meaning of Britishness. Furthermore, this led to new debates about the meaning of Britishness. Thus, the scholars began discussing multiculturalism and the construction of Britishness in the light of recent political developments apart from what had been said on the multicultural nature of British society throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

The theoretical discussions on the changing society of Britain with the arrival of immigrants from former colonies began in relation to postcolonial studies. From Frantz Fanon to Gayatri Spivak, to Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Chinua Achebe and Edward Said, outstanding critics addressed issues such as hybrid identity, the empirical power of Britain, colonial discourse and postcolonial rhetoric in their studies paving the way for the discussion of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the postcolonial studies cannot account for the problems and experiences of the third and even the fourth generation of immigrants who hold on to their hyphenated identities that constitute British society. Hence, scholars, along with non-governmental organisations, aimed to discuss multiculturalism as observed in contemporary British society in addition to redefining Britishness. In this sense, Pitcher refers to the necessity of discussing multiculturalism as follows: "The politics of multiculturalism can accordingly be said to signal an incipient realism in state practice, a recognition that the 'multicultural' is not a transitory phase or optional component of twenty-first-century society, but an integral

and defining feature of life in Britain today" (164). In this regard, re-evaluation of British society as a multicultural society with its changing dynamics accelerated with the publication of *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, known as the Parekh Report, commissioned by Runnymede. Chaired by Lord Bhikhu Parekh, twenty-five distinguished specialists on race-related issues worked two years to come up with suggestions for the future multicultural and multi-ethnic Britain. Parekh states the different backgrounds of the members of the commission in order to draw attention to the importance given to this study:

> The Commission on The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain […] was made up of 25 individuals, including seven well-known academics, three distinguished journalists, two senior police officers, representatives of different communities, one senior and recently retired civil servant, and several distinguished public figures, including the President of the Liberal Democratic Party, and two retired chairs of the Commission of Racial Equality. ("Reporting" 691-692)

Accordingly, the commission was formed in order to represent the microcosm of multicultural British society. The report, defined as "a groundbreaking report that shaped much of New Labour's policy on multiculturalism" (Hill), laid out the racial problems that British society had been facing for decades and provided practical suggestions for the betterment of some racial problems. Thus, it aimed to fight against racial discrimination and its disadvantages by a comprehensive analysis of the contemporary multicultural society. In order to propose solutions for the regularisation of race relations in Britain, the commission contemplated on questions about "the best way to read its history; how to deepen its collective self-understanding so as to make it hospitable to the presence of ethnic minorities; the appropriate language to describe the contemporary state of race relations; the nature of racism; how to balance the demands of social cohesion with those of cultural differences; the limits of permissible diversity" (Parekh, "Reporting" 462). Following such brainstorming, the report questions the understanding of the term "ethnic minority" as a political term. The report argues that "ethnic group" should be defined as a non-racial term referring to the common historical past, shared beliefs and customs, collective consciousness of belonging together as well as considering each ethnic group as distinct from the other groups. The non-political approach to ethnicities, from the perspective of the report, classifies Britain as a multi-ethnic society even before the arrival of the immigrants from the former colonies. Due

to the fluidity of an ethnic group, since an individual may marry outside of his or her ethnicity, or prefer to adopt conventions and habits of a different ethnicity, the report argues a much more complicated web of relations: "Even as Britain is a community of communities, it is also a community of individuals" ("Reporting" 694).

Consequently, the report draws attention to the fluidity of identities along with the importance of each unique identity that constitutes the whole. According to the *Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* report, "[p]eople have competing attachments to nation, group, subculture, region, city, town, neighbourhood and the wider world. They belong to a range of different but overlapping communities [...]. Identities, in consequence, are more situational" (25). This brings the study conducted by Morning in mind in which she comes to the conclusion that understanding of race is conceptual based on the situation race is considered (Morning 1172). Morning further points out that "[...] there is no all-purpose definition of race, and no single type or degree of difference that consistently delineates every race from every other. Race is not a uniform metric" (1186). Moreover, this indicates failure of the political terms in the new millennium. Homogeneous identities, such as Black, which was a political indicator of immigrant problems during the 1950s and 1960s, cannot be applied to the third or fourth generation immigrants who have already formed their unique plural and fluid identities. According to Modood, "[t]he plurality [of identities], then, is ever present and each part of the plurality has a right to be a part of the whole and to speak up for itself and for its vision of the whole" (126). Hence, the contemporary society rejects stereotypical identification for the sake of political negotiation as can be observed in the social and political history of race in Britain from 1948 to the 1990s. On stereotypical identification, Alibhai-Brown explains that "Black Britons can only really be muggers, under-achievers, rapists, part of some sordid underclass, anti-racist 'thugs and militants', drug dealers, sexual incontinents, good sports people and great singers" (139). The new approach towards multiculturalism aims to demolish such common acceptances through acknowledging the plurality and fluidity of identities.

Further, the report draws attention to the need to reconsider Britishness as well. According to a research conducted for the Camelot Foundation by Ipsos MORI in 2006,

"Britishness does not feature on the list of personal traits which helps define personal identity" ("Young People" 4) among the youth. For the participants of the study, "Britishness is [...] a myth of unity, not a reality. This collective identity highlights difference rather than brings people together" (7). One particular reason for this outlook is the association that was established between Britishness and the empirical history of Britain. Since Britain contains different nationalities, it is their common history that unites them as British according to one perspective. This perspective, which supports colonisation and the discriminatory acts towards the immigrants from the former colonies as well, disinclines people who come from the line of former immigrant communities and have hyphenated identities from adopting British identity. Alibhai-Brown overtly ask for white British people to take responsibility for the empirical history: "We, black and Asian Britons, are here because of you, white Britons, did not resist the temptation to go out to the rest of the world, to see and trade and conquer. Knowing our common historical bonds – even if they were ultimately based on inequality – is a contractual responsibility" (45). Associating Britishness with the empirical history goes back to the national discourse of Margaret Thatcher who campaigned for the Conservative Party clinging to the past while promising British people that she would bring back that historical glory. The bitter experience of Black immigrants from 1948 to contemporary times also uploads negative meanings to Britishness aside from the empirical history of Britain. However, this backlashes with the contemporary youth in Britain who finds Britishness an empty shell since they cannot associate themselves with British history. Nevertheless, as touched upon previously, the New Labour government chose to highlight Britishness as opposed to Englishness which was the term favoured by the Conservatives to unite all citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. The current Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, on the other hand, in his speech to the Scots at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh on 10 December 2007 given to underline the importance of Scotland to be a part of the United Kingdom, also expressed the common identity of Britishness: "Not just English; not just Scottish; not just Welsh; not just any regional or religious identity. But British. That is because being British is one of the most successful examples of inclusive civic nationalism in the world. We are a shining example of what a multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multi-national society can and should be" (Cameron). His speech exemplifies how the

Conservative Party, following the footsteps of the Labour Party under the leadership of Tony Blair, stuck to Britishness as a political campaign.

Beyond being a political research, the Parekh Report discusses the meaning of Britishness highlighting the importance of re-evaluating the term beginning with its historical basis. The report states that "[n]otions of Britishness originated in the 18th century, were developed in the 19th century, and were cemented through much of the 20th century" (Parekh 4). Yet, the twenty-first century challenges the notion of Britishness through political and social developments. Along with empirical history, understanding of race, that is equating whiteness with Britishness, also complicates the meaning of Britishness. Thus, according to the report, in relation to hyphenated identities "Britishness is not ideal, but at least it appears acceptable, particularly when suitably qualified [...]" (38). Accordingly, within the terms of the report, Britishness was brought closer to the understanding of multiculturalism. As Morrell summarises, the intention in the contemporary society "is [to establish] a version of multiculturalism that goes beyond race, practiced by a generation that is comfortable with, not phased by, race and ethnicity" (16-17). In this respect, Britishness in the contemporary society should not be an identity imposed on the youth. On the contrary, it should be taken as a collective identity that can only be formed by individuals' endeavour similar to how Parekh perceived culture in his study *Rethinking Multiculturalism*: "The term 'our' culture refers [...] [to one] in terms of which we understand and organize our individual and collective lives. 'Our' culture is one we live, which has shaped us, and with which we identify" (155). Consequently, Britishness, as a notion that the new century intends to offer to the contemporary multicultural society in Britain, is a concept that appeals to everyone. This can be observed as the main tendency in the theorists and academicians who discuss the multicultural society and redefinition of Britishness which is also expected to have reflections in literature as well.

For black immigrants, it took decades to make white British people embrace their existence and contribution to society whereas their contribution to literature immediately began with the arrival of *SS Empire Windrush*. Nevertheless, similar to the confusions and discussions on the proper labels of Blackness, the label Black British

literature remains controversial. Walters provides a very wide definition of Black British literature,

> […] as literature written by people of African descent who were both born and reared in England, literature written and published by expatriate writers from Africa and the Caribbean who published on both sides of the Atlantic (e.g., V.S. Naipaul or Christine Qunta), literature composed by authors who did not necessarily establish literary careers in England but published in England, and, lastly, literature written by people who are simply dark in color, such as East Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and other Asians, Near Easterners, and North Africans. (172)

Walters also provides a highly politicised definition of Black British literature undermining the differences between the writers from different generations along with differences between the genres. Sesay, in return, challenges such a definition that

> [f]or a growing number of new black British writers, the definition of "the black British writer" cannot be clear-cut. A singular definition would need to demonstrate the difference between the earlier generations and the latest one, made up of writers who have probably never been to Africa or the Caribbean, much less spent any significant part of their lives there, who cannot write about those places from a stance of reminiscence or remembrance, but write about Britain from a distinctive viewpoint all the same. (106)

Therefore, a brief examination of Black literature will be conducted in line with the political definition of Black British in order to highlight the significant changes in Black British literature that occurred along with the political and social changes in society. Since the scholars tend to consider blacks, Asians and their literary works within the category of Black British, Black British will be used as the appropriate label in the discussion of their brief literary history. Nevertheless, the focus of this study will be on Winsome Pinnock who will be specifically referred to as African-Caribbean.

The first generation immigrants, as discussed previously, was composed of skilled and educated people including writers. Brought up within the British educational system, well read in British literature, coming to the motherland was an opportunity for them to be able to publish their works and make their voices heard. Thus, it can be argued that Black British literature first flourished among the first generation of immigrants who were male and mainly novelists. The male-dominated world of Black British literature

is expressed by Courtman as follows: "Yet, in spite of women's uncontainable creativity and the blossoming corpus of Caribbean literature, there are virtually no black Caribbean women publishing in Britain in the years between the 1950s and early 1980s" (52). Thus, the black literary tradition began with male immigrants and was sustained by males for almost two decades. Among the significant representatives of Black British literature in these decades, we can mention "[w]riters, like Sam Selvon, George Lamming, Andrew Salkey, V.S. Naipaul and Edward Kamau Braithwaite arguably [who can be referred to as defining] a tradition of Anglo-Caribbean-British literature for themselves and for the generations of writers who followed" (Courtman 50). Among them, McLeod points out Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* as "the quintessential novel of black Britain in 1950s" (101). The first generation Black British writers mainly reflected their experiences in Britain as Wambu indicates: "So the first wave of writers naturally concentrated on the themes of home, the journey, and while settling in Britain, the obstacles that confronted people, such as race prejudice, marginalization and rejection" (27-28). In this respect, the importance of the first generation Black British writers who composed during the 1950s and 1960s comes from the themes they preferred to deal with in their works. Through their works, they shed light upon the problems the black immigrants have experienced in British society.

The novel tradition, furthermore, continued with other writers such as Salman Rushdie, Ben Okri, Mike Phillips, Timothy Mo, Buchi Emecheta and Caryl Phillips, all of whom were widely read by British people along with international readers. Nevertheless, these second generation novelists became more critical about both their native countries, and its culture and traditions, and Britain in their works. In this sense, "[by the 1980s] in order to make sense of the present, the British-born generation began to find their voice in novels. […] They also began, uniquely, to map out the contours of their own identity as Black British people, not as rejected outsiders, but critical insiders. We moved from post-colonialism to multicultural Britain" (Wambu 28). Thus, these second generation writers mainly began to explore themselves and their identities within British society as different from the first generation representatives who expressed the problems of the immigrants.

This changing attitude in the Black British novel cannot be observed in poetry. As Dabydeen signifies, "[t]his exciting progress of theme, vision and form in the West Indian novel has not always been matched in the region's poetry. In the 1940s and 50s West Indian poets and dramatists clearly lagged behind the novelists" (19). For Black poetry to be flourished in Britain it took another decade: "[…] It was not until the 60s with the poetry of Louise Bennett, Eric Roach, Derek Walcott and Edward Brathwaite that these forms and themes began to be handled with maturity and complexity" (Dabydeen 19). Nevertheless, it can be argued that Black British poetry was more revolutionary in form and more political in tone, especially during the second half of the 1970s and 1980s. The Afro-Caribbean Linton Kwesi Johnson, in this respect, is a significant name who carried Black British poetry onto a new level through his introduction of dub-poetry and usage of substandard English. The poetic development of Johnson in relation to the legacy left by Brathwaite is explained as follows: "Brathwaite called for a new aesthetics of poetry, centred on the language and music of Africa and the Caribbean. […] Significantly, *Linton Kwesi Johnson*, perhaps the best-known political artist/activist of the 1970s and earliest 1980s, was influenced by the [Caribbean Artists Movement] sessions" (Procter 97). Johnson's poetry can be taken as a representative of the social and political atmosphere of his time dominated by streets riots, institutional racism and harsh Conservative politics on immigration and immigrants. Black British poetry turned into a tradition that enriched contemporary British literature while highlighting the multicultural and multi-vocal features of Britain in the following decades. Names such as Patience Agbabi, Maud Sulter and SuAndi along with Fred D'Aguiar, E. A. Markham, James Berry, Mervyn Morris, David Dabydeen (Ramey 113-114), represent the settled tradition of Black British poetry through second and third generation poets. Similar to the second generation Black British novelists, Black British poets such as Fred D'Aguiar, Grace Nichols and Jackie Kay gained international recognition as well as acting as the voice of the Black British community in the 1980s and 1990s.

On the other hand, the development of the Black British theatre, like poetry, has taken some time compared to the productivity of the Black British novelists. In a quick review of the history of theatre in Britain, it is common to come across black characters that are

mostly represented as stereotypes by white characters who wear black paint on their faces. For example, Shakespeare employed black characters such as Othello as being the most famous one and Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*. Godiwala also specifies "Ben Jonson's The *Masque of Blacknesse*, John Marston's *The Wonder of Women*" as carrying black characters to the stage through Renaissance representation of "the tournament of the wild knight and the black lady" (8). Existence of black characters on the stage continued in the following centuries: "Black characters featured in several 18th century plays, some contributing to the debate about slavery, a fiercely-argued political topic until the abolition of the slave trade in Britain in 1807" (Haill). Nevertheless, the opportunity for black actors and actresses to be able to appear on the stage representing developed and individual black characters did not occur until black dramatists began writing new plays in the 1960s. The appearance of Black British actors and actresses on the stage up until the 1960s is indicated by Thomas: "Although the Unity Theatre had a significant activist history in casting black actors in roles, and staging anti-colonial plays, up until the late 1940s, any sense of black theatre in Britain had mainly been represented by African American theatre […]. Black parts were usually given to black Americans rather than Black British subjects" (18-19). Hence, the 1960s has become a turning point for black theatre.

Different from other genres, the development of Black British theatre has been a collective issue requiring not only black actors and actresses along with black dramatists, but directors, suitable venues, a certain budget, and audience, as well. Thus, it took decades for Black theatre to find the right medium to emerge in Britain. Similar to the emergence of the Black British novel, drama was at first mainly dominated by males. Deirdre Osborne marks the landmark for Black British theatre as follows: "It was not until Trinidadian writer Errol John's *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* (1956) was staged at the Royal Court (and won the *Observer* play competition) that a play by a black writer was performed in Britain" ("Writing" 73). By the end of the 1960s, the British stage had already met with the names such as Errol John, Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott. Goddard points out the following venues supporting black theatre: "In the 1970s venues such as The West Indian Students' Centre and Keskidee served as focal points for black theatre. Since the 1980s venues such as The Tricycle Theatre and

Theatre Royal Stratford East in London and various producing venues or touring arts centres throughout the country have contributed to the rising visibility of black theatre" (*Staging* 22). The appearance of this first wave Black British dramatists continued with the Afro-Caribbean Mustapha Matura in the 1970s.

Matura has proved himself a success since "[i]n the early 1970s, the Royal Court promoted the work of [Mustapha] Matura, and his colleague Michael Abbensetts, and its production of the former's *Play Mas* (1974) was the first transfer of a play by a Caribbean playwright into the West End" (Megson 57). In addition to providing new plays and giving a voice to the immigrant community, Mustapha Matura also contributed to the development of Black British drama by establishing the Black Theatre Co-Operative: "[It is i]n 1979 [that] Matura established the Black Theatre Co-Operative, later called Nitro, to create more opportunities for black theatre artists" (Megson 57). The Black Theatre Co-Operative is one of the black companies among other black theatre companies such as Temba Theatre, the Asian company Tara Arts, Black Mime Theatre, Strange Fruit and Talawa which contributed to the development of Black British theatre giving opportunity to new playwrights as well as actors and actresses. In this respect, black theatre companies marked the 1980s which is also the decade that witnessed the emergence of Black women playwrights. Moreover,

> [a] number of theatre companies run by white artists also began turning their attention to work by black playwrights: Foco Novo, the English Stage Company at Royal Court, Oval House and Tricycle Theatre took on plays by Mustapha Matura, Ikoli, Alfred Fagon, Winsome Pinnock, Fred D'Aguiar, Maria Oshodi and Michael J. Ellis. The Women's Theatre Group introduced a multi-racial policy in 1985. (Ponnuswami, "The Social" 82)

Hence, the late 1980s and 1990s witnessed the emergence of Black British theatre.

The Black women playwrights started a new phase in the representation of black identity and culture in British drama with their stance towards the contemporary political, social and racial issues. Starck argues that "the emergence of plays by Black women writers in Britain is a later phenomenon in the context of 20th century dramaturgy" (229). According to Ponnuswami, "theatre of Black Women, 'Britain's first Black Women's Theatre Company', was founded in 1982 by Patricia Hilarie,

Paulette Randall, and Bernadine Evaristo. This was, interestingly, the same year that Yvonne Brewster became the first black woman drama officer in the Arts Council, a position she would hold for two years" ("Small Island" 218). Along with racial issues, Black women dramatists had to fight with gender inequalities, too. Since their fellow white dramatists failed to support them in gaining a voice in British drama, it was only during the 1980s that Black women dramatists found a place in fringe companies. Respectively, "[…] coinciding with the theorizing of issues of national, cultural, sexual and ethnic identities in cultural, literary, lesbian and feminist studies, Black women in Britain started finding 'stage voices' of their own only from the 1980s" (Starck 230). The social atmosphere of the 1980s was carried onto the stage through the multi-racial politics of black companies. Some of the significant black theatre companies might be listed as follows:

> Black women's theatre groups that emerged are, for example, The BiBi Crew (women comedians), The Women's Troop (formed by the Black Mime Theatre and emphasising the explicitly Black British experience in their work), Imani-Faith (founded by Jaqueline Rudet), Sistren (originating in Jamaica and, according to Lizbeth Goodman, in their practical social action comparable to Clean Break Theatre Company), Talawa (directed by Yvonne Brewster and drawing on West Indian and African traditions), and Theatre of Black Women. (Starck 231)

Nevertheless, the main point for the survival of these theatre groups was the availability of funding. In this respect, Milling draws attention to the importance of the Greater London Council as a significant financier of black companies:

> Although not strictly regional, the Greater London Council had operated as an important founder of suburban theatre, offering key financial support for gay and lesbian activist art initiatives and developing funding for black arts from £ 400,000 in 1982 to £2 million by 1985, for the work of black and Asian theatre groups like Temba, Tara Arts, the Black Theatre Co-operative and Talawa. (47)

Thus, the financial cost of a play to be commissioned and to be staged can be pointed out as the major difficulty for the development of Black British theatre as opposed to the novel and poetry, while the financial support of the Greater London Council, which was unfortunately abolished in the mid-eighties, was a crucial step in establishing a black theatre tradition in Britain. The second half of the 1980s, meanwhile, witnessed another development for Black British drama. Upon finding a stage voice, the plays by

black dramatists were published in an anthology by a black woman: "Mirroring the slow emergence of opportunities for Black women playwrights is also the fact that it was only in 1987 and 1989 that the first two volumes of Black British plays, edited by Yvonne Brewster, who in 1982 became the first black woman drama officer at the Arts Council, were published by Methuen" (Starck 231). Within this tradition, Winsome Pinnock, Maria Oshodi, Kwame Kwei-Armah, Rukhsana Ahmad, Zindika, and Trish Cooke can be named as playwrights who contributed to the development of Black British drama from the 1980s onwards. Similar to the themes handled by the first generation Black British novelists, these playwrights dealt with the issues of Black diaspora such as displacement, hybrid identity of immigrants and discrimination as Thomas indicates:

> The creative practice by black dramatists during the 1950s-80s focused specifically upon discrimination and/or individual, familial and cultural fragmentation within the context of postcolonial Britain. Many highlighted the difficulties of self-articulation and realisation at the margins and within the parameters defined by historical, cultural and racial discourse. (29)

Griffin also asserts that "many of the plays by contemporary Black women playwrights, especially of the 1980s and early 1990s, which focus on what have been termed first-generation migrants, bear witness to their histories of coming to Britain in an effort to better their economic circumstance" ("Theatres" 14). These dramatists, through these themes, also successfully represented the political and social history of the race issues in Britain.

Unlike the Black British novelists and poets, Black British dramatists still needed to prove themselves since the 1980s and the quality of their works. In novels and poetry, representatives of Black British literature had turned into internationally acknowledged figures whose works were considered to be a significant contribution to the British literary tradition. Dramatists, on the other hand, required more vigilant attempts to achieve recognition in the international mainstream. Since theatre is a collaborative work, the blacks and Asians, along with other ethnicities, needed to support theatrical activities to be able to have a say in the British theatre tradition. In spite of the Black British playwrights who contributed with new plays on blacks and Asians, the number

of directors who preferred to stage these plays, and venues were inadequate. David Lane, in this respect, states that "[l]ack of visibility is not restricted to the number of productions achieved or the level of representation within staffing infrastructures; recent theatre histories have also been criticised for their lack of focus on Black and Asian work" (109). Thus, Black British drama requires more attention from the scholars. On the other hand, it is considered to be a necessity for Black British theatre not only to be for Blacks, but for the multicultural society, adopted by both blacks and whites. The director of Eclipse Theatre Dawn Walton points out this boldly: "There are more black British playwrights, directors and actors than ever before and we are in a city near you. Black theatre doesn't need any more defining. It needs embracing" ("Stop Trying").

Among Black British dramatists who contributed to the development of Black British drama, Winsome Pinnock is defined by Deirdre Osborne as "the godmother of black British playwrights" ("Writing" 97). Pinnock is a significant playwright who began her career in the 1980s and has continued to write plays for mixed casts (both black and white actors and actress) which reflect the changes in British society. Pinnock was born in 1961 and raised in London by first generation immigrants from Jamaica ("Winsome Pinnock"). Thus, she represents the second generation immigrants who were stuck between the traditions of their families and the British way of life as well as experiencing the fierce racial discrimination and fights during the 1970s and 1980s. Pinnock, beside her identity as a playwright, is also an academician who holds an M.A. degree in Modern Literature from Birkbeck College and currently works as a lecturer in the Department of Creative Writing at Kingston University, London ("Winsome Pinnock"). Her success as a playwright is asserted by Goddard as follows: "She won the George Devine award for *Leave Taking* in 1991, was the first black British woman to have a play put on at the National Theatre when *Leave Taking* was revived at the Cottesloe in 1995, and her career often included commissions for well-established theatre companies, television, and radio" ("West Indies vs England" 23).

Winsome Pinnock is a dramatist who got a chance to find her stage voice through the workshops designed by the black companies in order to encourage Black women playwrights to produce new plays. In this respect, her theatre career began as she joined

the Royal Court's Young Writers Group and supported by other black companies. Aston points out that "[The Women's Theatre Group] introduced its multi-racial policy in 1985 and in 1988 commissioned Winsome Pinnock's *Picture Palace* (which treats the subject of male violence against women, especially in the media), and *Zerri's Choice* by Sandra Yaw in 1989" (125). Pinnock's second play, *A Hero's Welcome,* was staged at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs as a rehearsed reading and later "[t]he first full production of *A Hero's Welcome*, set in the West Indies in 1947, took place at the Royal Court in 1989 through the auspices of the Women's Playhouse Trust" (Aston 129). Pinnock became a recurrent name to be staged at the Royal Court as Goddard also points out: "The Royal Court Theatre has by far been the most consistent in staging black British women's theatre, hosting productions by several of the key black theatre companies in the theatre upstairs and commissioning and producing Winsome Pinnock's plays" (*Staging* 23). *A Rock in Water* in 1989, *Talking in Tongues* in 1991 and *Mules* in 1996 were staged at the Royal Court Theatre as examples of Black British theatre.

Besides her staged plays, as will be referred in detail, Pinnock also has taken place in the project produced by Talawa's Writer's Group *Unzipped* (2009) with her play *Touched*. The play reading of *Touched* was conducted on 16 April 2009 at the Young Vic Theatre. Moreover, she has extensively written radio plays for BBC Radio 4 throughout her career. *Let Them Call It Jazz* was aired in 1998 which is an adaptation of Jean Rhys' short story. It is followed by *Her Father's Daughter* in 1999, *Lazarus* in 2013, and *Clean Trade* in 2015. Her radio plays will not be included in this study. However, her recent work for BBC Radio classifies her as a prolific writer.

The plays of Pinnock, who is mainly classified as a Black British playwright, describe "a journey of exploring identities, which attempts to map the process of interculturalism and change" (McMillan 137-138). Komporaly argues that "Winsome Pinnock, on the other hand, aware of her emblematic position as a successful black woman playwright, voices issues rooted in the experience of immigrants from the Caribbean and discusses cultural hybridity" (3). Hence, Pinnock's plays, respectively *Picture Palace*, *Leave Taking*, *A Rock in Water*, *A Hero's Welcome*, which will be grouped as her first phase

plays throughout this study, reflect the common themes of the black diaspora such as sense of identity and belonging. As will be discussed in detail, her early plays are concerned with how black identity was discussed and aimed to be formed within the social and political context of the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, she writes her plays for all-black characters in her early phase indicating that she is more interested in reflecting the problems of the black immigrants from the perspective of the black diaspora.

Not published as a text, *The Wind of Change*, staged in 1987, was "commissioned by the Half Moon Young People's Theatre for their community tour" (Susan Croft 90). The play is introduced by Susan Croft as follows:

> *The Wind of Change* […] is also effectively punctuated by the letters home of Ruth, a trainee nurse who wants 'to be the best Jamaican nurse since Mary Seacole' but is forced by the system to train at the lower SEN grade rather than the SRN. Failed unjustly, like other black girls, she learns to confront racism in hospital and the streets during the 1958 anti-black attacks. (90)

Nonetheless, it was *A Hero's Welcome* that brought critical attention to Winsome Pinnock's works and was considered to be the beginning of her successful career. In the play, Len, returning from fighting for the empire in the Second World War, is welcomed on the island as a hero for his contribution to his homeland. Experiencing the disappointment of being racially discriminated by the British, Len's limping leg as a mark of the war also marks his degraded position as a black subject among the whites. The female characters around him, on the other hand, yearn to escape from the West Indies and their lifestyle on the island. Minda, Ishbel and Sis, who are customers of Len's grandmother Nana to perform magic for them, dream about getting married which, as they assume, would brighten their lives. As opposed to working at low-skilled and low-paid jobs, they perceive marriage as the best alternative. The only white characters of the play are Mr. and Mrs. Walker who are depicted as almost stereotypical white colonisers. While Minda has a sexual relationship with Mr. Walker hoping that he would marry her one day, she also steals from the family and has a secret relation with a black islander, Stanley. Upon Mr. Walker's death and being fired by Mrs. Walker, she has no choice but to marry Len. Yet, the frustration of married life leads her to continue her relation with Stanley who impregnates Ishbel. At the end of the play, Minda and

Stanley, along with Sis, leave for Britain to satisfy their expectations for life in the homeland. It is only at the end of the play that Len reveals his secret of not being a war hero but having worked and injured in a munitions factory and being disgraced by the white soldiers.

The play draws attention to the disappointments of black soldiers and the hopes of black immigrants at the same time. Susan Croft points out that

> [m]uch of the play is about confrontations with reality and the betrayal of dreams of love or of leaving for England, through the interwined relationships of the ambitious Minda, Ishbel and Sis, culminating in the revelation that Len's injury was caused by an accident in a Liverpool Munitions factory, where white racism was a more immediate war than the one they were ostensibly fighting. (89)

On the surface, the play reveals the conditions that force black immigrants to leave for Britain. The despair of the West Indians, along with lack of opportunities for them to lead satisfactory lives, is reflected throughout the play. On the other hand, the play also criticises prejudiced approaches of both black and white characters.

Following *A Hero's Welcome*, *Leave Taking* was staged at Liverpool Playhouse Theatre in 1987 with an all-black cast. Telling the relationships between three generations, Pinnock lays out the differences in perspective between the first generation immigrant Enid and her second generation daughters Del and Viv stressing out the themes of hybridity and displacement. Enid who emigrated from Jamaica to Britain and brought up her two daughters on her own sacrificing herself, criticises the behaviours of her elder daughter Del who suffers from not adopting to either culture and rebels to her mother. Viv, on the other hand, poses as an exemplary daughter who is a very successful student. Del, who got pregnant, leaves home and starts living with an obeah woman, Mai, in the second act of the play. Mai, on the other hand, is another first generation immigrant who practices old Jamaican beliefs serving the black community in Britain as a link to their culture. She also experiences a similar lack of communication with her son who, like Del, rejects his roots and aims at adjusting to British culture. During the second act, it is revealed that Viv walks out of exams refusing the education Britain can offer her and dreams about visiting Jamaica.

Although not shown on the stage, the story of Enid's mother who leaves home to work on sugar plantations makes the play a tragedy of three generations who suffer from displacement and its effects. Thus, the play brings out the theme of searching for home. As Peacock argues "[t]he play suggests that assimilation into the new culture is not the answer for either first- or second-generation immigrants" ("Black British" 53). The relationship among generations and among all women in the play focus on searching for an identity, which is specifically a black identity that is shaped by the first generation immigrants from the perspective of a diasporic society.

Staged at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in 1989, *A Rock in Water* takes inspiration from the real life story of Claudia Jones, the founder of the Notting Hill Carnival. The play, which was commissioned by the Royal Court Young People's Theatre, follows in an episodic form depicting the crucial moments of the life of Claudia Jones. From her childhood memories of her mother and how she was treated as a worker, to her prison experience and her deportation from the USA and to her experience in Britain founding *The West Indian Gazette*, the first black paper, and Notting Hill Carnival are represented in the play. *A Rock in Water* can be taken as a documentation of the struggle Claudia Jones experienced throughout her life. Nevertheless, rather than idealising Jones as a leader, Pinnock provides a much more objective representation of her. The play, in between the lines, draws attention to the female struggle and the treatment of the working class through Jones's mother and her relationship with Dina. Griffin also indicates that "[s]uch all-female scenes [...] show women constrained - by economic position, through imprisonment, through their identities as black and female" ("The Remains" 206). Moreover, the play also refers to how Jones treats other black characters once again drawing attention to class rather than race. In this regard, Pinnock presents a highly critical play delivering the most significant moments of the life of Claudia Jones contributing to the representation of the strifes experienced by blacks during the 1950s and 1960s.

These plays are classified in this dissertation as plays that belong to the first phase of Winsome Pinnock's career. These are the plays that mainly have all-black characters. In this respect, it can be further claimed that these plays aim to establish a certain black

identity questioning the place of the black characters within British society in addition to documenting their struggle to reach a black identity. For Pinnock, being inspired by the political and social atmosphere of the black experiences which have continued since the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* is also significant for such portrayal of characters and themes. Her first phase plays reflect the significant political and social developments that took place during those crucial times for the construction of black identity in Britain. Nevertheless, Pinnock's approach in the mentioned plays towards race and black characters changes to a great extent in the plays that are considered as her second phase in this study. Respectively, *Talking in Tongues*, *Mules*, *Can you Keep a Secret?* and *One Under* will be studied as plays that belong to the second phase in Pinnock's career when the racial representation begins to divert from the traditional approach. In these plays, it can be observed that rather than a diasporic perspective that focuses on the political and social problems of the black immigrants, it is the multicultural society that dominates the plays. Her one-act plays, on the other hand, will not be included in this study. *IDP* was produced by the Tricyle in 2006 and it was a part of a project which aimed to draw attention to the on-going situation in Darfur. First produced at the Soho Theatre in 2010, *Taken* is another one-act play. The play tells the story of a woman who had to abandon her children and reflects the erosion of the racial boundaries. This play also will not be included in this dissertation for the reason that it has been composed too recently to conduct a critical study on it.

In the first chapter, *Talking in Tongues* will be studied as the breaking point for Pinnock's attitude towards race. The change of the setting from the UK to Jamaica is quite significant for enabling the observation of different racial characters. Following Morning's study on how understanding race is situational, the characters and the understanding of race by them will be analysed according to the changing situations in the play. As opposed to the political depiction of blackness in Pinnock's former plays, biological, cultural and political blackness can be observed in this play. As expressed in the title as well, the play highlights multiplicities, of racial identities, in this case. Thus, this multiplicity will be evaluated in line with the political and social developments which occurred in Britain.

The second chapter of the dissertation will focus on *Mules*, discussing the racial ambiguity in the play. Lack of substantial references for the racial identities of some characters in the play suggests a much more universal reading of the play. This chapter will focus on Pinnock's aim to keep race as a background issue. The desperation experienced by the female characters that forces them to become a mule is reflected as a shared suffering of females rather than merely for black women. In this regard, it is significant to approach the play by taking race into consideration but not being driven by it. From the perspective of the couriers, drug-trafficking is depicted by Pinnock as a more universal and deep problem rather than a racial issue.

The third chapter will discuss an interracial murder in *Can You Keep a Secret?* The objective approach of Pinnock towards the murder will be the focus of this chapter. It will be highlighted that Pinnock's careful depiction of both white and black characters diminishes race as the core of the murder. While the victim as a black boy and the murderer as a white boy are significant details in the plays, not many references are given in the play on the racial identities of the remaining characters. Rather, Pinnock draws parallels between certain characters playing with their racial differences as well as similarities to indicate how alike these characters are. The perspective towards racial relations that aimed to be established in a multicultural society is mostly given in this play as the anger of both white and black boys towards each other which is explicitly reflected on the stage.

In the last chapter, *One Under* will be analysed as a representation of multicultural Britain in contemporary times. The play portrays relationships among white and black British characters. Rather than representation of a political issue regarding race relations, the play reflects everyday experiences of Londoners in a multicultural atmosphere. The representation of race in this play, once again, will be studied in order to reach the conclusion that race is an ambiguous entity because the society perceives it this way. The erosion of racial identities will be related to the contemporary changes in the society.

Consequently, this dissertation aims at studying Pinnock's second phase plays *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret?* and *One Under,* arguing that racially ambiguous characters in these plays represent the changing face of British society in terms of acceptance and definition of race and the embracing of Britishness.

CHAPTER I

FROM ENGLAND TO JAMAICA: BEING BLACK IN *TALKING IN TONGUES*

Winsome Pinnock's sixth play *Talking in Tongues* was staged at the Royal Court Upstairs in 1991 within the political atmosphere of the resignation of Margaret Thatcher and her replacement by another Conservative leader John Major. It was after the Berlin Wall came down, at the time the Soviet Union disintegrated and before the Maastricht Treaty was signed (Sierz 24), which led to political integration in Europe with regard to foreign policy, the military, and the criminal justice system creating a common European identity beyond nationalities and races. Moreover, it was right before the emergence of in-yer-face theatre, which with its unusual and unexpected tone, theme, and form swept the British stage and introduced a radical break. However, Pinnock's play cannot be considered politically significant in dealing with contemporary political developments that have changed the course of history in Europe nor a foreshadowing for the radical tone of in-yer-face theatre. Apart from the economic, cultural, and political developments that occur at the time of the play's production, *Talking in Tongues* can be considered as a breakthrough in Winsome Pinnock's career for reflecting racial issues from the perspective of Afro-Caribbean immigrants which Goddard defines as offering "a critical evaluation of second generational attitudes to blackness and whiteness in Britain and the Caribbean" ("West Indies vs England" 24). Theme wise, the play can be taken as a signal for the changing political discourse of the New Labour and the upcoming discussions on Britishness. Through this play, Pinnock's career evolves in terms of her treatment of black identity since she reflects the identity of West Indian immigrants who are not solely defined by the racial definitions of the first generation living in diaspora. In this perspective, it can be argued that Pinnock presents an idea of race, of blackness, which is to be formed within the rapidly changing political, economic, and social atmosphere of the United Kingdom and indirectly of Europe. Consequently, this chapter intends to analyse Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues* for projecting race as referring to the representation of blackness biologically and socially

rather than approaching race as having a political meaning, underlying the multiplicity of the understanding of race.

The production of *Talking in Tongues* by the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Upstairs, which is a black box auditorium defined as "[a] flexible studio space seating up to 90 people" ("Jerwood Theatre Upstairs"), is in fact a continuation of Pinnock's success as a new voice for the British stage. As briefly discussed in the Introduction, Pinnock was encouraged by the Royal Court's Young Writers Group which aimed to introduce young talents to the British stage. Sierz names the Royal Court's longest-serving artistic director Max Stafford-Clark as a key figure behind the staging of Pinnock's plays at the venue: "Yet, under [Stafford-Clark's] leadership, the venue bravely battled against grant cuts and in the early 1990s staged important plays such as [...] Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues* [...]" (59). According to Roberts Phillip, "Upstairs, black writers were inevidence. Fred D'Aguiar's *A Jamaican Airman Foresees his Death* and Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues* produced new commissions for both writers" (212). Regardless of being staged at the Royal Court Upstairs to a limited audience rather than reaching a larger audience Downstairs, Winsome Pinnock had already begun to be accepted as a significant name for Black British drama. Thus, *Talking in Tongues* can be taken as an approval of Pinnock's success as a Black dramatist.

In the play, three black childhood friends, Leela, Claudette and Curly are depicted in their adult years. Leela and her partner Bentley, who are both Black British, attend a party hosted by Bentley's college friend Jeff and his partner Fran. Leela drags Claudette and Curly along with them to the party organised at the house of the white couple. In the following acts, it is revealed that Fran is having a secret interracial affair with Bentley and getting ready to leave Jeff. This affair between Fran, a white character, and Bentley, a black character leads to racial questions in the play as mainly discussed by Claudette, Jeff, Bentley and Leela. In the second act, Claudette and Leela take some time off and travel to Jamaica for a holiday. They aim to stay away from racial questions raised by Leela's experience when Bentley cheated on her with a white woman. Their holiday in Jamaica enables the readers and/or the audience to observe

these two black women, Claudette and Leela, as they become acquainted with the white tourists, David and Kate, and the black inhabitants of the island, Sugar and Mikie who are employees of the hotel they are staying at.

The timeline of *Talking in Tongues* corresponds approximately to the timeline of its production. While a specific date is not provided in the play, the first act takes place during New Year's Eve most probably at the turn of a new decade, the 1990s. The play focuses on black characters in their 20s who were born and brought up in the UK. The main characters of the play introduced in the first act were brought up and educated under the strict policies of Margaret Thatcher who "made it quite clear that she was on the side of those who saw black immigrants as swamping British society" (Solomos 96), and faced immense discrimination in their childhood and adolescence. On the other hand, they still feel the effects of Thatcherism and its principles as will be discussed in detail, especially through the friendship of Jeff and Bentley. Although the first act takes place in an indoor setting, it takes place in the multicultural atmosphere of London as can be deduced from the conversation between Jeff and Bentley in the second scene of the first act. In this respect, it can be observed that Pinnock does not treat her black characters from the perspective of diaspora as can be observed in her first phase plays. Meanwhile, the stance of the black characters in her second phase plays shifts since these characters seem to adopt the multicultural atmosphere of London. Rather than strictly discussing a certain minority community, the black and white characters reflected in the play illustrate the changing face of London. In terms of its timeline, its setting, London as a cosmopolitan city, and its characters as second generation immigrants who succeeded in professional life contribute to the claim that *Talking in Tongues* is a cornerstone play for the representation of race from multiple perspectives as aimed to be thoroughly discussed in this chapter.

In the play, while the first act takes place in London, at a New Year's party at the house of Fran and Jeff, the second act takes place in Jamaica enabling the Black British characters to be observed in a black society as well. In the second act, accordingly, the understanding of race, according to characters, changes strikingly as the characters have new experiences in a new environment. Goddard juxtaposes these settings as follows:

"The two acts are clearly distinguished by a setting that moves from a monochrome coatroom at a party, a confined interior space where the black women spend most of their time hiding, to a beach in Jamaica set in vibrant colour" ("West Indies" 30). Thus, more than the change from indoor to outdoor, the events in the second act take place in a different country with a different culture and society. On the one hand, Claudette and Leela go to Jamaica, an exotic place where they can forget about their daily struggles and problems in London. On the other hand, Jamaica stands as the homeland of their ancestors evoking the shared history of Black people. Thus, the setting of this act becomes even more meaningful in terms of the discussion of race. These two acts have different characters representing the understanding of race on different levels such as biological, political and cultural. Differences in understanding of race are indicated by Modood as follows: "Again, whilst historically 'race' has been a biological or quasi-biological concept, in the late twentieth century many people, especially social scientists, have come to see it as a social construction, and group behaviour that previously used to be characterized as innate is now seen as socio-cultural" (38). Meanwhile, Stuart Hall also indicates that "[…] race is not a biological or genetic category with any scientific validity" ("The Question" 617). In the changing settings of the play first as Black British in the white society and later as black tourists in the black society of Jamaica, the black characters experience the changing concept of race beyond its biological category. In this regard, their understanding of blackness shifts based on the position they hold in these two different places. Hence, these two acts will be analysed with reference to the understanding of the multiplicities in the representation of race.

As pointed out previously, the first act of *Talking in Tongues* takes place at the home of Fran and Jeff, who are a white couple, as they give a New Year's party to their friends. Thus, both white and black characters who are depicted as friends of each other, either from school or childhood, get a chance to share a social moment. Griffin draws attention to this fact as a significant difference of this play: "Unlike many plays by Black and Asian contemporary women playwrights in Britain, which focus on inter-generational relationships as a way of exploring diasporic existence, Pinnock's play centres on peer relationships, and specifically on a group of young, heterosexually

active black and white women and men" (*Contemporary* 78). Moreover, attending a casual house party enables characters to be depicted as individuals rather than only being defined by their position within the public sphere. As opposed to Pinnock's earlier plays, in this play black characters are neither reflected as a separate class in the society, nor as a different community. Rather, black characters of the first act, Claudette, Leela, Curly and Bentley, belong to the same social sphere as the white characters. Thus, the setting of the first act, to a great extent, underlines the position of the black characters highlighting the social and economic improvements at the beginning of the 1990s.

The first act presents the three main black female characters of the play who struggle in British society as Black British: Claudette, Curly and Leela. Claudette and Leela function in representing the understanding of race from different perspectives through their experiences regarding their blackness which is revealed in the play first with the affair between Bentley and Fran and the correspondence with other white and black characters in the first act, and later in the second act through their experiences in Jamaica as an outsider Black British. Curly, on the other hand, is present in the first act only as a tool to feed Claudette's anger towards black men and to contribute to the plotline and the discussion of race through her affair with Jeff. Especially in the first scene of the first act, Curly contributes to Claudette's rage about race. This is introduced to the readers and/or the audience through Claudette's response to Curly's experience with her former white boyfriend that Curly shares with Claudette when they are in the closet after Claudette hurts her foot. When Curly went to have dinner with her boyfriend's family, meeting them for the first time, it was a shock for his family since he had not informed them about Curly's race and they were expecting an "English rose." Curly defines this moment by drawing attention to the significant gift she receives: "Just as well because it was the English rose collection, wasn't it? English rose they were expecting. […] I'm holding the English rose collection, not knowing whether to laugh or cry" (1.1.178). Hence, Curly is a character who is a victim of racial prejudices in British society. As the act ends, Curly gets ill and rests on Leela's lap. This can be interpreted as her weakness as a result of her treatment by the society as a Black person. She cannot be as strong as Claudette and demonstrate anger or protest

towards her treatment by whites. She cannot be as sensitive as Leela who learns from her experiences and starts a journey to find her self in the second act as will be touched upon. Although portrayed as belonging to the circle of girl friends, among Claudette, Curly and Leela, Curly is only a tool to exemplify the experience of a black girl who continues to suffer socially in a white society due to the perception of her blackness in line with the history of the blacks as immigrants in the UK.

Claudette, on the other hand, is quite a significant character for representing the stock perception of race, of blackness specifically, from the perspective of a black character. She appears on the stage beginning with the first scene. More significantly, she is the most outspoken character about her feelings, ideas, and comments. She is first depicted through her racial stand towards black men. It is apparent that she is jealous of white women for the attention they get from black men. Besides jealousy, Claudette feels anger because of the favourable behaviour of the society towards white women and their mean acts towards black women. Moreover, Claudette feels as if forced into a competition with white women for the attention of black men and expresses such competition to Curly as follows: “It’s always the same when a white woman comes in the room. […] Our men are straining at the leash like hunting dogs on the scent of the fox” (1.1.175). In her conversation with Curly, Claudette continues to complain about white women and draws attention to the inequalities she experiences in British society: “It’s not as if they want to be your friend. The only time one of them want your friendship is when she's trying to get her hands on one of our men, and once she's done that they're both off without a backward glance” (1.1.176). Claudette continues to expose her rage: “What I really hate is the way they have to get off the tube before you do, as though you were some maid following on behind. Or they’ll sit beside you brushing their hair out like Rapunzel, thinking they’re making you jealous. Many’s the time I’ve missed my stop because I’ve had my mouth full of some white woman’s hair” (1.1.176). Claudette’s outcry for the inequalities she faces in British society is critical for the discussion of race, especially in view of black history. Her anger is not towards a particular incident experienced by Curly or herself. She shows anger towards the injustice black immigrants have experienced in the past and continue to suffer indirectly in the contemporary society. It can be generalised that her anger reflects the blacks’

sufferings under slavery in the past, the discrimination they faced in the UK resulting from being treated as second class citizens. Claudette's anger towards white women who in fact represent white British society is partly explained by Dugger based on the image created for white and black women: "While nineteenth-century culture in the United States stereotyped White women as too frail and dainty to undertake physical labor, Black women were viewed as beasts of burden and subjected to the same demeaning labor and hardships as Black men" (427). Furthermore, Claudette's anger embodies the established concept of beauty. Similar to the idea of the alleged superiority of the white race, the concept of beauty is associated with European standards. Hence, whiteness, such as lighter skin, straight hair, and light coloured eyes, is accepted, more significantly promoted by the media and popular culture, as an indication of beauty for women. Although numerous studies have been carried out on this matter, the study Kenneth and Mamie Clark have conducted in 1947 is still considered as a cornerstone. In their experiment, known as the "Doll Test," black children ages of between three and seven were presented with two identical dolls, one black and one white. The participants were asked to identify the doll that is nice and that looks like themselves (Clark 169). The study revealed that the majority of the children preferred the white doll regardless of their skin colour (Clark 178). In this regard, the concept of beauty only accepts European standards of whiteness as internalised by children and promoted by the media and the popular culture. This leads to insecurity and self-hatred in black women towards their perception of black beauty. Such perceptions are revealed in Claudette in the form of hatred towards white women.

However, the inequality Claudette faces and fights against in British society when she compares herself with white women cannot be named as the core of her problem according to Parekh: "Equality is not an empirical fact, for empirically we are either similar or different not equal or unequal. Equality is a matter of moral judgment based on how we interpret and what weight we give to the similarities and differences" (*Rethinking* 132). Throughout the play, it is revealed that Claudette wants to be treated equally as a black person by the white society. However, she fails to recognise similarities and differences between different races and ethnicities that Parekh draws attention to as she seeks equality. Hence, this evokes even more anger in Claudette since

she is aware that she cannot equalise herself and her position in the white society if she cannot be white herself. Parekh later on states that "[e]quality requires, minimally, that we should acknowledge the equal dignity and worth of all human beings, accord them equal respect, and give equal consideration to their claims to the basic requirements of the good life" (*Rethinking* 133). Claudette cannot make a distinction by evaluating equality based on moral judgment as Parekh suggests, because neither whites nor blacks can show respect and consideration for each other's basic requirements; hence, they cannot be equal in the society.

By pointing out the social inequalities, Claudette draws attention to race as a bleeding wound in British society. Hence, beginning with the first scene, Claudette approaches race as a political issue. Tizard and Phoenix touch upon the understanding of race politically as they conduct research on mixed-race teenagers in the UK. Based on their findings, they state that "[d]efining one's identity as black was not related to social class, or the racial composition of the family or school. It *was* related to holding more politicised ideas about racism" (64). Similarly, as portrayed throughout the play, Claudette has a politicised idea about race and her blackness. Her black body as a political entity is such a fierce issue that she continues to express her anger boldly in every possible situation throughout the first act. Her anger can be observed in Curly's unfortunate experience with her former boyfriend's family and in what Leela went through with Bentley's affair with a white woman. Parekh argues that "[m]uch of human nature is thus not a product of nature but of human struggle. It is natural in the sense that it is acquired by virtue of belonging to the human species, but it is not natural in the sense that it is a result of the efforts of the species itself and forms part of its process of self-creation" (*Rethinking* 119). In this respect, what Claudette witnesses in terms of the racial sufferings of her black friends corresponds to her "process of self-creation" (*Rethinking* 119) of her racial identity.

The third black female character of the first act is Leela who is a much more submissive character. Although she suffers living in a white society, she cannot be as outspoken as Claudette about what really bothers her. To begin with, she cannot be sure about her identity as a black woman in contemporary British society. Living in a society and

surrounded by friends who perceive race as a political issue, Leela struggles to be herself, free from the social prejudices and historical burdens of her race. Leela's attitude can be explained with what Parekh emphasises: "Although human beings are shaped by their culture, they are not constituted or determined by it in the sense of being unable to take a critical view of it or rise above its constitutive beliefs and practices and reach out to other cultures" (*Rethinking* 157). Leela can be observed in the play trying to take a critical view of race and culture as a Black British in the white society. The first act, in this respect, is a realisation process for Leela deriving from the need to find her own voice. While Leela has quite a long stage time, she does not respond much to the events that go on in the party. She never expresses her ideas or feelings about discovering the affair between her partner Bentley and Fran. Compared to the anger demonstrated by Claudette, Leela remains silent and uses this chance to evaluate her experience. Her importance in terms of laying out the changing perspective of race, as emerges when compared with Claudette' acts and understanding, and redefining blackness as well as Britishness as an individual experience will be more significant in the journey she makes to Jamaica.

As opposed to the representation of Claudette, Curly and Leela who are stuck within their black identity due to the oppression from the society and due to the black history that was identified and commemorated with the *Empire Windrush*, Bentley is the only black male character in the first act who is depicted outside the stereotypical characterisation of blacks. Alibhai-Brown argues that "[…] there are a number of set categories and frames which operate to keep [Blacks] all in the dark" (139). Accordingly, Griffin underlines that "the play inverts the usual stereotype of the successful white male versus the unsuccessful black male through the figure of Bentley, a young black man, who is professionally successful, even if not as upwardly mobile as his former mate Jeff suggests" (*Contemporary* 78). Information about Bentley in the play comes through his conversation with his college friend Jeff in the second scene of the first act. Bentley, without being given an exact job title for his position in the play, is depicted as a successful professional. Bentley's professional position is underlined by Jeff through the details he paid attention to in Bentley's appearance. Jeff begins his conversation stating that "[t]hat is what you call a well-cut suit, Bentley" (1.2.179) and

continues with the following specifications: "Bet your shoes are Italian, handmade. […] I'll bet you've brought your portable phone with you. […] Very nice. BMW. When I saw it parked outside I knew straight off it was yours" (1.2.179). The friendship that can be observed between Claudette, Curly and Leela is replaced with envy in the relationship between Jeff and Bentley. The social expectations are turned inside out when a successful black person is presented next to an unsuccessful white. Thus, rather than managing to preserve the good relationship between friends, Jeff approaches Bentley with jealousy for the former's success as can be understood from his emphasis on his friend's appearance. Bentley can be taken as an example of what black people can achieve in the British society through proper education regardless of the discrimination practised by the whites in different aspects of life since the first arrival of black immigrants. Moreover, Bentley and his professional success, to a certain extent, can be examined as the result of the opportunities that Thatcherism has provided in the UK in the 1980s. Bentley's own words spoken to Fran in scene three also support this perspective: "I know how hard that is even though I do believe that it's up to the individual to rise above all the shit. That's all that matters. Work hard and you can achieve anything. You're judged by what you do these days, aren't you?" (1.3.189). Although Bentley suffers and continues to be judged on account of race, he clings to the idea of individual success, a significant issue of the Thatcher era which Griffin also recognises: "The play makes clear that, compared to Jeff for instance, Bentley has 'made it' and has done so, in a sense, in spite of his race" (*Contemporary* 80). From such a perspective, Bentley's views correspond to what McKissick argues:

> Whereas 1960's Black Anglo-Saxons had focused on simple mimickry of white characteristics – and Black Anglo-Saxons in the 1970's and early 1980's endeavoured to incorporate the very physiognomy of white people, or portions of white people – Black Anglo-Saxons in the late 1980's and the year 1990 conspicuously incorporated the worldview and socio-political thinking of white people. (ii)

In order to be accepted in the world of the white people, Bentley follows the rules of Thatcherism and expects to find success in life in spite of his blackness. Nevertheless, his hard work, besides providing a good job cannot bail him out from the burden of his blackness as will be discussed.

Just like Bentley challenges the stereotypical representation of blacks as under-achievers, Jeff, as a white character, challenges the representation of stereotypical white characterisation. As opposed to Bentley who is professionally successful and gets the white girl at the end, Jeff suffers from his position in the society. He is depicted as a character who performs according to the norms of the society. He has a job he dislikes. He has a relationship with Fran, a professional white female, which gives the illusion of happiness. Nevertheless, behind these, Jeff is a dissatisfied individual who cannot endure his job or his lifestyle in London. Jeff expresses his suffering in the play as follows: "[…] I can't breathe here. I don't feel at home. Of course it's home, I was born here, but it doesn't feel like a home, more like a place you rest at overnight on your way to somewhere else" (1.2.180). On Jeff's suffering, Griffin argues that "[h]is sense of belonging is determined by his emotional relation to place, and in his case that emotional relation is disturbed by his inability to achieve a sustainable socio-economic position through either employment or personal relationships" (*Contemporary* 79). While providing insight into Jeff's psychology and his suffering within his contemporary lifestyle, these lines are also a foreshadowing for the second act of the play in which Leela tries to find her own voice and home. Furthermore, Jeff's complaints about not feeling at home can be associated with Leela's complaints about not feeling at ease with her language: "It's because this isn't my first language, you see. Not that I do have any real first language, but sometimes I imagine that there must have been, at some time. […] If you don't feel you belong to a language then you're only half alive aren't you, because you haven't the words to bring yourself into existence" (1.5.195). This reproach is a problem Leela and Jeff share in terms of defining their true selves.

This theme repeats itself as Jeff mentions a perfume ad as it struck him deeply in his conversation with Curly:

> Jeff: Do you remember that perfume ad where the woman's running through the street at night?
> Curly: Which perfume ad?
> Jeff: It's very striking. There aren't any words. Just this image of a woman running. She just keeps running but doesn't arrive anywhere. (1.4.191)

His obsession with the ad indicates his entrapment in the society as a white male which resembles the entrapment of the black female friends Claudette, Curly and Leela in the white society. Moreover, his sense of entrapment contributes to the journey that Claudette and Leela will undertake in the second act by going to Jamaica with the hope of arriving at a place where they can find answers to their sufferings in British society. To a certain extent, it can be argued that it is Leela's search for her identity, her inner self that is represented by the woman in the advertisement. Leela's constant walk around the island, in Jamaica, in the second act reminds one of the image of a woman running in the ad in search for a meaning. Although Jeff does not reveal any other detail about the ad, the woman's active position of running can be associated with Leela's confusion in white society as a Black British person and her search for the meaning of her identity. Different from the ad, Leela in fact arrives at an understanding of herself and her blackness by finding a way to express herself in her first language through talking in tongues. This, however, lacks in the case of Jeff who cannot escape from the expectations of the society contrary to Leela. The same ad is referred to once again by Jeff in his conversation with Fran. Trying to mend his relationship with Fran, Jeff tries to be romantic with her offering a drink that would be shared by the two of them only. Fran, on the other hand, breaks the news to Jeff that she is breaking up with him to be with Bentley. Jeff suddenly brings up the same perfume ad stating that "[t]he first time I saw you I thought you looked like the girl in that perfume ad" (1.6.196). Fran, in response, laughs and replies that "[s]he's running through the street in her bare feet and her knickers, in the pouring rain. I don't look a bit like her" (1.6.196). Through her rejection, Fran indicates that she is quite sure of herself. It is, once again, Leela who can be resembled to the woman in the ad in her desperate wandering. Curly, on the other hand, can replace the woman in the ad for because of her vulnerability which is indicated through her unfortunate experience with her former boyfriend's family.

The radio which Jeff repaired for Fran can be taken as another significant symbol for relations in the play. Informing Fran that he finally fixed the radio for her, Jeff warns her: "It's still very fragile, so you've got to be careful with it, make sure you don't drop it or bang it or anything" (1.6.198). The fragility of the radio also stands for the fragility of the relationships between characters that are given in the first act. The relationships,

moreover, are closely linked with the racial stand points of the characters. From the relationship between Curly and her former boyfriend, to Leela and Fran, to Jeff and Fran, relationships get tangled when considered and evaluated in relation to race as represented by the fragility of the radio. British society, which was still trying to learn what it meant to be a multicultural society, is referred to by Stuart Hall as follows: "The rising visibility of ethnic communities together with the movement towards devolved government have posed questions about the 'homogeneity' of British culture and 'Englishness' as an ethnicity, precipitating the multi-cultural question at the centre of a crisis of national identity" ("Conclusion" 221-222). Within such a fragile situation in the society at the beginning of the 1990s, one can neither overlook nor consider racial differences in one's relationships. This, hence, enables the radio to be interpreted as a symbol of fragile interracial relationships.

Jeff's grievances which surface in his conversation with Bentley, however, indicate a change in British society. The changes in the society can be interpreted from different perspectives such as in relation to political or economic developments or in relation to the perception of racial identities in the multicultural society; however, this argument is irrelevant in this chapter. Nevertheless, Jeff's restlessness about his position in British society, in London during the play's timeline to be more specific, can also be discussed as indicating the fluidity of identities. Jeff is not content with the stereotypical lifestyle of a white middle class man living in London. As Modood discusses, "[i]n most cases 'difference' does not simply relate to free-floating attitudes and idiosyncratic stereotypes but to ways of thinking, acting and organizing across many if not all social and institutional contexts but not usually to territory (except in the sense of origins)" (38). Jeff, as a white man living in a white society experiences similar differences. Just as there is a multiplicity in discussing blackness as a kind of identity, Jeff's position indicates a multiplicity in discussing whiteness as well. This is indicated, along with Jeff's confused psychological state, as a result of his one night stand with Curly. Scene four opens with the indication that Jeff and Curly have had sex during the party after Curly learned about Fran's infidelity. Moreover, it is Curly who breaks the news about his lover's secret affair to Jeff. In the scene, Jeff expresses that it was just a one-night affair: "Listen . . . tonight . . . it was nothing . . . I mean, it was something, it was good, I

enjoyed it I mean, but it wasn't . . ." (1.4.192). In contrast to his words, inwardly he wants more from Curly and cancels her cab and asks her to stay with him. Contrary to the heated discussion between Claudette and Curly in the closet in the first scene, the play presents a white male interested in a black female. Although it is apparent that there are two races in that relation, black female and white male, the place they inhabit through this action is purged from social prejudices and expectations. Right before the end of the scene, as Jeff tries to convince Curly to stay and have wine with him, he says to Curly that "[w]hat happened was just between us. You and me. No one else comes into it" (1.4.192). This can be taken as an indication of Jeff's intention to establish a bond with her as unaffected by race relations. To a certain extent, Jeff comforts Curly about the incident she experienced with her former boyfriend. He ensures her that he will not let anyone, neither their friends nor family members or members of the society, to judge the relationship between two individuals. Thus, he does not pursue a biased approach regarding Curly's racial identity.

The other interracial relationship displayed in the first act is between Fran and Bentley. The secret affair between a white woman and a black man is revealed in act one scene three. When Claudette, Curly and Leela are in the coat room, these two characters enter without being aware of the presence of the three friends. While Claudette, Curly and Leela are hiding under the coats, they witness the affair between Fran and Bentley and, more strikingly, their act of making love. The scene where Fran and Bentley explicitly reveal both their relationship and the discussion of race through Leela is quite significant for an understanding of race from the perspective of different characters. For Leela, the victim of this racial dispute between Bentley and Fran, learning about her partner's infidelity by witnessing the sex scene is devastating. Yet, what is more striking is the conversation between Bentley and Fran where Bentley shares the miscommunication between him and Leela:

> Bentley: Every evening she comes home she needs to talk. I mean really talk. She never does, though. She just potters around, makes pleasant conversation: 'had a nice day at the office dear?' Underneath it all you can hear this, like a grating sound, you can hear what she really wants to say struggling to get out. But she won't let it out. (1.3.189)

This can be taken as a foreshadowing for the second act which is mainly about the spiritual search of Leela in Jamaica for herself. The journey also lays out the communication problems Leela suffers from. Leela experiences difficulty in establishing a healthy dialogue with Bentley because having the same skin colour cannot be enough for two people to share a common identity. From such a perspective both Leela and Bentley display a lack of the necessary conditions to share something common which Parekh specifies: "A sense of rootedness, effortless communication, a structured moral life and ease of mutual understanding, all of which are important parts of human well-being, are the spontaneous products of the membership of a stable cultural community" (*Rethinking* 156). Bentley and Leela's relationship exemplifies the lack of a stable cultural community from which both black characters suffer. Since Bentley's position in the society as a black male differs from Leela's, who looks for a deeper meaning in terms of her race and her unique identity in British society, they cannot communicate within their relationship. Hence, Leela and Bentley cannot be considered as members of the same cultural community. Moreover, apart from their skin colour, they cannot reach a mutual understanding that would form the basis of a stable cultural community.

For Claudette, what they witness in the closet is a justification of her outcry in the first scene. Throughout the first scene of the first act, Claudette is depicted as a rageful person on the subject of race. She blames black men for their interest in white women as pointed out previously. *Evening Standard*'s theatre critic criticises this aspect of the play in his review: "Miss Pinnock can write with sensitivity and humour about the frustrations and frivolity of her generation. But blaming the whites for the sexual tastes of black men is too glib a dramatisation of the issue" (Shulman). However, Claudette's anger about racial issues in the play is much more complicated than Shulman's comment. Unlike Curly and Leela, the play does not provide any incidents or personal details that might have led to such anger in Claudette. Witnessing the affair between Fran and Bentley justifies her anger towards men of colour. In the last scene of the first act, in scene seven, Claudette becomes a spokesperson for black women reacting against Fran and Bentley for the suffering the white society would cause. It is Claudette who cannot stand the injustice done to Leela and reveals that they know about Fran and

Bentley. More significantly, it is once again Claudette who deals with this affair from the perspective of race, blaming Bentley for betraying his own kind. Claudette expresses her anger for what Bentley did to Leela as follows: "Why am I shaking? I can't stop. I hate what that bastard's done to you. (*Almost laughing at herself.*) Look, I'm nearly in tears, I'm so angry" (1.7.203). More than the act of cheating, Bentley's preference of a white woman over Leela bothers Claudette. This is mainly apparent in her response to Bentley as he and Fran leave the house:

> Claudette: That's right, why don't you just fuck off with your white woman? I hope you'll be very happy together. Leela's too good for you, but you've been so brainwashed you can't see it. Go on, run away. You'll get a shock when you wake up in the morning and the face staring back at you in the mirror is still a black one. She can't make you white, black boy. (1.7.202)

In the study conducted by Tizard and Phoenix, it is stated that "[i]n the seventies, at the height of the black consciousness movement, many black people considered that sexual relationships with white people represented a denial of black identity, and the issue was much debated in the black press" (24). This idea, in fact, goes back to Fanon who in *Black Skin, White Masks* discusses black men's desire to be with white women as a way of proving his position as equal to white man. Through an example he discusses Fanon concludes that "[a]bove all, he wants to prove to the others that he is a man, their equal" (66). Decades later, Claudette points out the same prejudice by blaming Bentley's choice of a white woman over a black one as a racial betrayal beyond the personal betrayal of Leela. In her anger and accusations towards Bentley, it is observed that Claudette has a very set understanding of race. Although Modood asserts that some categories "do not have singular, fixed meanings" and race as one of such category "can mean different things in different places or different times" (38), for Claudette, race is a political concept. Hence, according to her perspective, using "Black" with a capital "B" is much more appropriate than "black" with a lower case "b." Her generalisation of men of colour and her anger towards them can be taken as an indication of this case. For Claudette, as depicted in her anger towards Bentley and in her treatment of Mikie, being Black means belonging to a certain part of the society and displaying certain habits and acts. In the case of the play's events, Bentley's preference of Fran, a white woman, over Leela is enough for Claudette to disapprove of his acts from the perspective of race.

Following a generalisation, identities are fixed for Claudette. Such fixed identities, moreover, are an indication of her political stand as marked by Mason: "This usage [of 'black'] frequently entails not merely a descriptive label but also a self-conscious political statement" (17). As she shouts at Bentley, he will remain Black no matter what he does to fit into the white society. Regardless of Bentley's white lover, his social and political position in British society will not change unlike the example Fanon provides in which a mulatto began considering herself white due to her white husband (*Black Skin* 58). Therefore, it can be argued that Claudette adopts the same approach towards blacks promoted by the whites in British society following the fixed racialised terms of the 1960s and 1970s such as their lower position in the society regardless of their level of education. From this perspective, it can be said that Claudette is a character who has already accepted her position in British society as a Black person in spite of her rage with regard to racial issues.

The representation of Claudette and her constantly voicing her rage can also be explained through what Nathan Hare has observed in American society in the 1960s and 1970s. Hare argues that "[a]s a matter of fact, Nouveau Blacks [as one category of blacks in American society] would rather talk about the idea of promoting blackness than act to make anything black. They would rather talk black than be black" (143). Throughout the first act, Claudette prefers to talk black during her constant complaints about white women and black men. In other words, she fails to act out her identity. On the contrary, rather than living as a black woman, Claudette only creates an illusion through her constant verbalisation of her black identity. Hence her talking, which is a promotion of her blackness, is a part of displaying a political identity. She constructs an arbitrary blackness through her complaints that have a political basis. Stuart Hall contributes to such a perspective arguing that "[t]he fact is 'black' has never been just there either. It has always been an unstable identity, psychically, culturally and politically. It, too, is a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found" ("Minimal Selves" 45). Thus, Claudette narrates a story about blackness through white women and black men. Beyond this, she blames them for the concept of blackness she is forced to perform socially and biologically.

Nevertheless, as opposed to Claudette's perception of Bentley and his black identity, Bentley is not depicted as a stereotypical black character who is unsuccessful and who socially belongs to the lower class. His representation is juxtaposed with Jess's, a white man, in order to contradict a pattern of blackness. Yet, Bentley is not a confident man in terms of his race and his position in the society. He hesitates to show off to Jeff and to play the race card against him. His conversation with Fran in the closet, on the other hand, reveals how Bentley is not so sure of where his blackness stands socially, politically or biologically. Suddenly, beyond being two lovers, they act as two individuals that belong to two different races. Upon revealing that Fran will leave Jeff the next day, Bentley hesitates about this decision, and the discussion suddenly turns into a racial issue with Fran's response: "Tell me, do all black men let their heads rule their hearts?" (1.3.189). It can be understood that Fran eventually began to judge Bentley as a Black person classifying his racial identity socially and politically. Understanding race from multiple perspectives according to a particular situation is laid out especially in Ann Morning's study which explains the situational understanding of race based on interviews conducted with college students from different backgrounds. Among the interviewees, one of the college students defines race as follows: "I think it kind of has a lot to do with like what culture you're coming from and like you're different, I mean everything from like how you eat, what you eat, to what you wear to like, I mean, the language, everything. So it's like this entire package of pretty much who you are…" (1173). However, in the case of Bentley and Fran, "the entire package" the student refers to includes the same environment, the same society, and the same circle of friends. Hence, Fran differentiates Bentley as Black when she prefers to use the race card. Similar to Claudette, Fran generalises black people in relation to the place of the black immigrants in the British society. Another student in Morning's study states that

> […] there's a lot of African Americans that have never lived in Africa, you know. So a lot of them grew up here and act a lot like most white people act, you know, but there are still different things like – I don't know, I'm not, like I've never lived in an African-American family or anything like that. But I'm sure there are some different things that they value that we don't. (1175)

The student confidently argues about the differences between races, particularly between white and black, "despite common nationality, residence, language, and political and economic values" (Morning 1175). Fran classifies Bentley's identity as different from her own identity based on the racial differences which have a separate history in spite of their shared qualities. She assumes Bentley to be different from any other white man because of the shared history black immigrants have experienced in the UK. As Bentley further tries to explain why he needs time to break the news to Leela, the following conversation which underlines racial difference takes place between them:

> Bentley: […] Underneath it all you can hear this, like a grating sound, you can hear what she really wants to say struggling to get out. But she won't let it out.
> Fran: Let what out?
> Bentley: You wouldn't understand.
> Fran: I see. It's a black thing. (1.3.189)

Although they enjoy the same social environment, are brought up by the same education system, have a professional career, and can be involved in a love affair, there appears a great difference between Fran and Bentley when race is the issue. His black skin colour is sufficient for Bentley to be different. Hence, rather than a biological distinction, Bentley's blackness is understood by Fran socially. According to Bentley and Fran, just because both Bentley and Leela are black, they can share something absolutely unknown to Fran due to her whiteness. This attitude, meanwhile, disregards British culture that Bentley, Fran and Leela were born into and lived in. However, this does not stop Bentley from having an affair with Fran because, according to Modood, "[i]t is not language, religion and customs which explain cultural difference and give rise to multiculturalist politics but economic structures, power relations or the results of self-interested calculations and decisions which more or less affect all agents in the same way and so are external to or independent of ethnicity or culture" (99). Bentley, in this case, has his own self-interest at heart that determines his actions rather than the so-called racial bond he is expected to share with his black partner Leela.

The problem of the understanding of race comes to the surface explicitly in scene seven when all of the characters are present during the discussion of *Othello*. Quite interestingly, following the affair between Fran and Bentley along with Leela's and

Jeff's confrontation with the betrayal, the main topic for a discussion among the characters becomes Shakespeare's tragedy. At the beginning of the scene, while Claudette and Jeff talk about blackness in *Othello*, everyone acts as if the affair did not happen, or simply they did not know anything about it. The play does not provide any detail on how a conversation about *Othello* began. Yet, the selection of *Othello* for discussion in this scene is quite substantial because it is the only scene where all of the characters of the first act are present, and it is the scene that finalises the relationship among the characters after the truth is revealed. *Othello*, as a play, is significant as a classical play for the portrayal of a black character. Moreover, Othello's blackness, making him almost an outcast in the society, is quite significant for the plotline of the play. Othello is a Moor who succeeds through his own personal skills, but continues to suffer similar to Bentley because of his race. In addition, he marries a white woman, Desdemona, experiencing an interracial relationship like Bentley. As Claudette drives Jeff to explain the reason why "white" Desdemona ran off with Othello if it were not for love, Jeff responds from the perspective of race as if disclosing the problem discussed by Claudette and Curly in the first scene and experienced by Jeff and Leela with the betrayal of their partners:

> Claudette: I thought they were supposed to be in love with each other.
> Jeff: He ran off with Desdemona in order to fit into the white world and she ran away with him in order to escape from it. I suppose you could call that a sort of love, if you define love as a mutual need to fulfil each other's fantasies: he wanted to be white and she wanted to be black, or to have conferred on her what she saw blackness, a certain mystique – all those references to voodoo. In other words, his difference turned her on. (1.7.198)

To a certain extent, Jeff provides an explanation for the interracial relationship they experience hundreds of years after Shakespeare wrote *Othello*. The similarities Jeff draws between Othello and Desdemona, and between Fran and Bentley underline that the perception of race has not been altered much despite political and social developments. Blackness, in *Othello*, means more than a biological fact for the characters. Othello's blackness defines his social stand and also constructs his political entity. His skin colour determines how the society and the other characters of the play perceive Othello and shape their actions towards him. Moreover, race is still a political stand rather than a means of conforming to one's biological identity and turns one into a

political entity as it is obvious in Othello and the black characters of *Talking in Tongues*. Stuart Hall puts forward a similar approach towards race: "'Race' is a political and social construct. It is the organizing discursive category around which has been constructed a system of socio-economic power, exploitation and exclusion - i.e. racism" ("Conclusion" 222). A similar statement is made by Catherine Hall: "For blackness is not a given, not a self born with skin colour; rather it was created, as in the context of political struggle in the 1960s and 1970s" ("Introduction" 20). Hence, both Othello's, and Claudette's and Leela's blackness is a discursive category, as Stuart Hall argues, that shapes their position in the white society they are living in.

As Claudette and Jeff begin their conversation at the beginning of the scene, Claudette's highly crucial question underlines one of the significant points in this play in accordance with the discussion of the understanding of race from multiple perspectives:

> Jeff: Everybody hated Othello because he was black.
> Claudette: In which sense do you mean black? In the biblical sense?
> Jeff: I'm not talking platitudes now, about darkness within, original sin and all that shit. It's about putting yourself in the other man's shoes, isn't it? I mean, look at the world through Othello's eyes: surrounded by racists, neurotic about his age and appearance, worried about losing his job, his hair. No wonder he ran off with Desdemona. (1.7.198)

When Claudette asks "in which sense," she wonders about the definition of Othello's blackness as opposed to her own generalisation of blackness as she did in the case of Bentley. Jeff, in response, tries to define a concept that can be given with the word "Black" with a capital "B" since he refers to a political identity that situates Othello as an outcast in society. This is an identity unintentionally favoured by Claudette who applies the same perception to define her blackness as well. Nevertheless, the conversation alerts the characters, the readers and/or the audiences towards the possible varieties of the definition of "black." The last scene of the first act, the resolution scene, opens up with a brief discussion of *Othello* as a significant play that deals with racial issues. This indicates that the issue in the play is not about an ordinary love affair. On the other hand, the play raises questions about race and it leads the characters to question their racial identities in the second act of *Talking in Tongues*.

Among the characters introduced in the first act, only Claudette and Leela are carried into the second act and they continue to develop the discussion on racial problems introduced in the first act. While the main plotline evolves around Leela's search for her identity and her place in the society, Claudette, through her actions that frequently contradict with her ideas stated in the first act, challenges the definition of race. In the first act Claudette can be observed making generalisations on whites as well as blacks. In the second act, on the other hand, she becomes a part of the same generalisations she has made. According to Griffin, "[f]or Claudette the trip to Jamaica is not about going back to her roots but about being in a predominantly black environment where she hopes not to have to deal with the racial and sexual debasement she suffers in Britain" (*Contemporary* 85). However, Claudette, depending on her hopes, reverses the role she plays in Jamaica compared to the role she played in Britain. In Jamaica, she becomes the tourist who holds no responsibilities besides enjoying herself. While performing this role, however, she forgets her sufferings as a Black person in the UK and wears another identity that would enable her to pass her time pleasantly in Jamaica. As soon as the second act begins, Claudette's intensions are revealed as she brags about the sexual attention she receives: "Yesterday I had three men dancing attendance on me. All the rich young American women on the beach and they're swarming around me" (2.1.204). As opposed to her complaints about how white women draw the attention of all men in the first act, Claudette brags about the attention she draws as a black woman as if taking her revenge from white women. This is also indicated by Griffin as follows: "Here [in Jamaica] Claudette can turn the tables on the black men who prefer white women because her money and tourist status temporarily endow her with a certain power" (*Contemporary* 84). Claudette's anger that is illustrated in the first act is replaced with her delight for the sexual attention she draws in the second act. The sexual attention, however, comes with her position that is assigned to her through her status as a tourist. Hence, Claudette's behaviour in the second act reveals that her identity is shaped by British culture influenced by the white perspective rather than her black skin. Tizard and Phoenix highlight the fact about group identities arguing that "[b]ut an ethnic group refers to people who share a common history, language, religion, and culture. They will usually also have the same skin colour, but people with the same skin colour do not always share a common culture" (5). As Claudette enjoys being a tourist and acts like

the white people, it is indicated that she enjoys the white culture she was subject to in the UK, even if it includes the painful truths about the problematic relationships between Black immigrants and white people. This is also supported by Gilroy who emphasises that "[…] individual identity […] is constantly negotiated, cultivated, and protected as a source of pleasure, power, wealth, and potential danger. That identity is increasingly shaped in the marketplace, modified by the cultural industries, and managed and orchestrated in localized institutions and settings like schools, neighbourhoods, and workplaces" (*Against Race* 106). In this respect, Claudette's behaviour both in the first and the second acts lay out the formation of her identity in British society.

Furthermore, how the perception of Claudette changes in terms of racial identities can be particularly observed through her relation with Mikie. As a black worker at the hotel Leela and Claudette are staying at, Mikie not only serves their needs at the hotel, but also satisfies Claudette's sexual urges. From this perspective, Mikie is a tool that satisfies the exotic urges of the tourists regardless of their race and nation. Claudette makes use of this service Mikie offers to her without questioning the relation since this is why she is in Jamaica, to enjoy herself through sex and alcohol as she admits to Leela: "Two weeks' time and you'll be back in that office and I'll be back on the road: rain by the bucketful and sexual austerity. I intend to rest, eat, drink, soak up as much sun as I can stand and fuck everything that moves" (2.1.204). In this regard, in spite of all of her accusations towards white people and their treatment of Black people, especially in relationships, as soon as Claudette claims herself to be a girl from London who came to enjoy her holiday fling, her understanding of blackness and her definition of a Black person change. She stands as a black person only through her skin colour, but socially and politically she acts no differently than any white tourist on the island. Nathan Hare's observation of Blacks in the American society affirms the behaviour of Claudette as well: "As a consequence of his lack of pride in self and color, the Black Anglo-Saxon tries to be whiter than white and even more superpatriotic than his white counterpart" (129). Claudette's treatment of Mikie also renders her whiter than people with white skin. Claudette explains to Leela what she perceives as absolutely legitimate as follows: "Everybody knows what the score is. You don't begrudge me a little holiday

fling, do you? We all use each other. Everyone goes home happy. No one gets hurt" (2.1.206). This perspective of Claudette supports the fact that blackness has a political content and she has potential to play with this discourse if that serves her wishes. Morning also justifies this perspective in her study by arguing that skin colour, along with the culture a person belongs to, can be both affective for understanding the situation of belonging to one race biologically and acting like another socially and politically (1176). Using Mikie is not important for Claudette since this is how relationships work on the island, in an atmosphere where everyone is seeking to satisfy their urges. This attitude, furthermore, makes Claudette no different than Bentley who prefers to have a relationship with a white woman. Similar to the white race she particularly criticises in the first act, Claudette prefers to put forward her own self-interest as opposed to racial solidarity among the black race.

Besides being a tool revealing Claudette's hypocrisy in terms of acting Black versus actually being Black as discussed previously, Mikie explicitly acts out blackness that would satisfy the expectation of the tourists who come to Jamaica in order to live the exoticism they look forward to. Hence, Mikie is presented as a character who is aware of his identity and the power of his blackness. Compared to Claudette and Leela, Mikie accepts his blackness as a biological fact and only acts a Black person for the sake of the expectation of the tourists on the island. In this respect, he has sex with Claudette along with hints that he had similar relationships with other guests only for the same reason, to satisfy the desires of the guests on their exotic holiday. Thus, Mikie's position in the play echoes the myths related to black sexuality that can be traced back to the times of slavery. St. Louis, in this respect, recalls the sexual power of black people as follows:

> Extending the scope of the mind/body split, black performativity does not just appropriate images of blackness as body within the public sphere, but incorporates the private. The sexual connotation of black performance recalls historical mythologies and pathologies of the black hyper-sexuality (read animalistic) attached to the practice and justification of the rape and lynching of black women and men. ("Readings" 58)

While sexuality between white male and black female was perceived as demonstrating white power, black sexuality was considered as a threat towards white males. Moreover,

Mikie's body illustrates desire for hyper-sexuality for white women. Such a perception is laid out by Weinberg and Williams in a study conducted to compare the sexualities of white and black males and females: "More detached from family controls and less subject to moralistic dictates, [black males'] sexuality has been less encumbered by restrictions, and thus is more liberal and direct than for whites" (213-214). This also highlights the comments made by Claudette indicating that Jamaica is a place for tourists to come and enjoy the sexual liberalism that black males can supposedly offer. Mikie is aware of his black body's power over white females and takes advantage of this awareness in his relations by selling the myth of the power of a black man's sexuality. Thus, Mikie politicises his identity, his blackness. Furthermore, Alexander comments on the perception of black and white females by black males exemplifying Mikie's acts:

> Black women were generally considered to be 'our' women and were exempt from the ideology of exploitation which dominated the public arena. […] White women by contrast, were perceived as legitimate targets for exploitation and were rarely considered for long-term relationships – at least in theory. They were thus closely associated with the public arena, and with wider society […]. ("Black Masculinity" 410)

This is apparent through Mikie's long-term relationship with Sugar, the local black worker at the hotel. However, Mikie's relationship with Sugar does not prevent him from being involved with female tourists. While his relationship with Sugar is about Mikie's real self, he plays a Black person with whom the tourists want to fantasise about.

In scene five, the conversation between Mikie and David, a white British tourist in Jamaica looking for his sister Katie in order to convince her to go back to England, reveals the confession of Mikie on his playing with race and the others' perception of race. In this scene, David first forces Mikie to stay with him, since he cannot sleep, and starts a conversation. Later, in order to pass the time, he forces Mikie to hand wrestle with him. At first, Mikie obeys David's wishes by letting him win the game since satisfying the guests and making them happy is one of Mikie's primary responsibilities. At that point David insults the role of blackness Mikie plays for the tourists pointing out what it takes to act a Black person:

> David: What's the matter? Isn't that enough incentive for you? That's a surprise. Everybody else here has been quick enough to take our Money from us. You've got to tip them for every blasted little thing they do for you. […] I mean do I look like a world bank? (*Puts some more money on the table*) That enough? That better? That should get your blood pulsing, shouldn't it. Come on. (2.5.221)

David not only attacks the Black identity of Mikie, but also humiliates him as a person degrading his own dignity at the same time. David generalises a Black identity that abides by the prejudices of the white outsiders. This is shaped by the power of money offered by the tourists and accepted by the locals. The exploitation of the blacks by the whites turns upside down with this conversation. David blames Mikie for the exploitation of white tourists by the black inhabitants of Jamaica. Upon such insult from a white person to another person who deliberately acts a Black identity to be subdued by whites, Mikie shouts the naked truth at David and indirectly to the readers and/or the audience: "You see, now, at this time a night, I not on duty. You see, now, I don't have to smile. You see, now, I don't have to pretend that you have something special about you. You see, what happen out there in the daytime, it's a game, just a game, understand?" (2.5.222). Mikie clearly points out that they are acting out a blackness to the tourists on the island. They act to satisfy the image the tourists have of their country and about Black sexuality. In other words, Mikie exemplifies the situational understanding of race which Morning reaches at the conclusion of her study (1185). Griffin also draws attention to the juxtaposition in Mikie's behaviour in line with the juxtaposition between day and night:

> In the juxtaposition between night and day, day – the 'white' time – is constructed as a time of pretence and deceit, of make-belief, during which the local population is forced to tolerate its own exploitation as part of the economic exchange which governs tourism. Night time, the 'dark' time, however, is the time owned by the black people when they can assert their independence and can stop pretending. (*Contemporary* 86-87)

Hence, throughout the play's second act, Mikie wears a mask over his black skin to pretend a blackness that is constructed politically. He acts a certain identity that changes based on the time of the day according to the expectations of the white tourists. Fanon suggests that "[i]t is the white man who creates the Negro. But it is the Negro who creates negritude" (*A Dying* 47). Hence, as the examples suggest, the play exemplifies

the creating of a sense of blackness through Mikie. Consequently, at this point Mikie's blackness differs from Claudette's blackness because Mikie is aware of the role he is playing as a Black person towards the white tourists.

Similar to how Mikie plays with race as a black person while acting a certain understanding of blackness, Kate, as the white character of the second act, also represents the fluidity of racial identities. She appears in act two, scene two as a white British woman who came to the island in order to escape from her life back at home. As opposed to being white, Kate's behaviour differs from Claudette's who shares the same status on the island as a tourist. Rather than looking for sex and drinks, Kate intends to settle down on the island to belong to that place. Kate indicates this to David: "It's a living. I fit in here" (2.2.208). Despite her skin colour, Kate is ready to accept the identity of the island's local inhabitants to be a part of their culture and way of life. Instead of being homesick in Jamaica among Jamaicans, as a reply to David's question, Kate answers that "[t]he great thing is feeling yourself disappearing. A little part of you dissolve everyday, but you hang on to those things that distinguish you: an accent, the way you walk. You don't give in to the lazy hip-swaying that the other women have. You walk very straight, very fast. People think I'm mad" (2.2.209). Deep down, Kate is aware of her difference, such as her accent. On the other hand, she is willing to join the inhabitants of the island. She intends to form an identity based on differences among the black inhabitants as defined by Modood: "Some people so comfortably meld into their society that they are not marked – by others or by themselves – by 'difference' and so often the question of identities, let alone prioritization, does not even arise" (109). This, to a certain extent, explains Kate's intention. From this perspective, it can be argued that race for Kate is a biological fact. Just like her accent, she cannot deny her whiteness. Nevertheless, her white skin cannot determine who she is and where she belongs. On the contrary, she prefers to belong to the island and its people. It is Kate's following remark that, in fact, expresses her understanding of race and identity: "But the best times are when I feel myself stateless, colourless as a jelly fish" (2.2.209). Rather than being defined by the society according to stock prejudicial perceptions, Kate prefers to enjoy herself, her identity, as stateless, not bound and defined by her race, and

colourless as a jelly fish. The journey she makes with Leela, is a journey to find her stateless and colourless self.

Although Kate wishes to reach a stateless and colourless identity, she cannot be successful in giving up being or acting a white tourist. This is especially indicated in scene three when Kate listens to Mikie's made up stories of the island in which the main point is to excite the tourists. Mikie tells his story about killing a pig in accordance with his role as a Black entertainer of the whites as he specifies this to Kate: "Who cares as long as we do it with a smile?" (2.3.213). Kate, on the other hand, reminds him that she should not be confused with other stereotypical white tourists saying that "I'm not a tourist, Mikie. I've heard that story before" (2.3.213). Eventually, Mikie convinces Kate to come on the boat with him just like he did with other tourist women, such as Claudette. Although Kate says that "I know what you are, Mikie, and I don't want any games" (2.3.215), she cannot stop Mikie from playing his role. Mikie, according to Griffin, "[…] finds it easy to treat her as just another sex tourist" (*Contemporary* 86); however, at least Kate voices the fact that she intends to search for her stateless and colourless identity by redefining her race and nation as opposed to the other tourists on the island.

As opposed to Kate's denial of her whiteness, her brother David is an embodiment of white British identity as perceived by the black inhabitants of the island. This is briefly discussed in the conversation between David and Mikie when Mikie admits how he acts a certain black identity as opposed to whiteness represented by tourists such as David. The main reason for David to be in Jamaica is to check on his sister Kate. He cannot understand Kate's insistence to stay there and aims to convince her to go back to England with him. While he is in Jamaica, he acts like Claudette who is a British person on holiday. He complains about Sugar who cannot bring a right order of drink. Following an unfortunate event experienced by Kate, which occurs in act two scene four when Leela and Claudette cut her hair, David responds by projecting his anger at the black workers of the hotel: "This amounts to assault. Either you do something about this or we get in touch with the British Embassy and it's trouble for you" (2.4.220). It is

apparent that David gets his power from his Britishness, claiming superiority of the UK over Jamaica and Jamaican people.

In the second act, Pinnock aims to lay out a notion of stock Britishness similar to the integration process encountered by the Black immigrants in the UK. This can be perceived as a result of stereotypical labels applied to the immigrants as well as the white society from the 1950s onwards which is referred to by Julios as follows: "The long ideological journey on the road to multiculturalism though was neither smooth nor consistent; often provoking strong reactions and polarising public opinion" (91), as discussed in detail in the Introduction. Britishness defined by the black inhabitants of the island in the play depends on behaviour rather than race. Besides whiteness, certain acts are referred to as contributing to the understanding of Britishness. In the play, characters from the UK tend to bring up the topic of the British way of life and weather as a common point among themselves. As the act opens up, Claudette and Leela share the downsides of living in the UK pointing out the fact that they should get as much sun as possible as it is scarce in their own rainy climate. The weather becomes another common point for Leela and David. In their only conversation in the play, they share their complaints about the heat in Jamaica following the fact that they will miss it back at home. Mikie comments on such cliché conversations pointing out that "English people always talk about the weather. You go anywhere in the island and find English people, that's what they talking about" (2.3.211). Hence, similar to the generalisations made by Claudette in the first act, Mikie comments on a social characteristic that defines Britishness from his outsider's perspective. His definition, moreover, indicates a common point among the characters regardless of their race. Similarly, Stuart Hall states that: "[…] national identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to *representation*" ("The Question" 612). Apart from their race or the geographical conditions they live in, Britishness is defined by common actions presented by British people in a foreign land. Kate, who is an outsider but likes to feel like one of the islanders, makes the most striking comment: "All you tourists care about is sex and cocktails" (2.2.208). Her brother David complains about Sugar who brings him the wrong cocktail order every time while Claudette is obsessed with enjoying the male attention she draws and the physical relationship she experiences on

the island. Thus, Britishness is defined based on the characters' shared actions as tourists in Jamaica, eliminating the racial differences between Claudette, Leela and David. According to Yancy, "[t]he presumption is that whiteness is lived as pure mind, while Blackness is lived as pure body" (45). Britishness, which was generally associated with whiteness until the 1990s when the Labour Party aimed to redefine the concept by "link[ing] aspects of multiculturalism to the subject of national identity" (Solomos 220), is about the characters' thoughts and acts as Yancy argues. This is indicated in the play in the second act through Claudette and David as discussed. The loose definition of Britishness, on the other hand, as indicated through what Claudette and David share in their behaviour and attitudes, can also be taken as a sign of the formation of a loose sense of "we." According to Parekh, "[w]hile cherishing their respective cultural identities, members of different communities also share a common identity not only as citizens but as full and relaxed members of wider society, and form part of a freely negotiated and constantly evolving collective 'we'" (*Rethinking* 238). Unintentionally, as the outsiders on the island, Claudette, David and even Leela form a collective sense of "we." This introduces another perspective on forming a community leaving out the race and racial indications and drawing attention to the multiplicities of identities.

In contrast to Claudette, David and Kate, Leela performs a racial identity not defined by the Britishness she grew up into. It can be pointed out that although they have the same skin colour and belong to the same race biologically, the perceptions of Claudette and Leela differ significantly in the second act as Claudette performs whiteness by expressing generalisations and claiming superiority over the black inhabitants of the island. What Claudette criticises and politicises in the first act is, to a certain extent, acted out by her in the second act. The changes in Claudette cannot be observed in Leela's representation of racial identity. Leela, through her search for her identity, comes to terms with her blackness as well as Britishness. More importantly, she learns to respect her past, along with the past of the black immigrants who suffered in the white society. From such a perspective, she gains the stateless and colourless condition of a jelly fish that Kate desires to have, thus she is not defined by her race. Leela accepts who she is including her blackness as a biological fact, the past of her race, and the

history of black people even before their arrival to the UK. Moreover, she embraces her blackness not as a political stand but as a way of defining herself. Her position and her own identity are evident when juxtaposed with Claudette's who performs a sense of whiteness in the second act. Opposed to Claudette who lies under the sun on the beach and who is after holiday fun, Leela has minimum contact with other tourists and spends her time in nature. She prefers long walks around the island. She swims with dolphins. She expresses her admiration for the nature of Jamaica to Claudette as follows:

> Leela: Don't you wonder what lies beyond the beach? It's more beautiful than I imagined. You can be alone yet not alone. There's a vastness about the place. It doesn't seem like an island at all. The people . . . they seem so at ease with themselves. They have that confidence that comes from belonging. Everyone's got a story to tell. I could listen to them all day. London seems like a figment of my imagination. (2.1.206)

Leela's close connection with the island and its inhabitants enables her to find herself. Moreover, the concept of truly belonging somewhere is experienced by Leela as something she lacks in the first act. Being free from social prejudices and expectations, her connection with nature and ancestral history comforts Leela's soul, and enables her to find her true self. Just like she thinks she cannot truly belong to London, Leela cannot belong to the group of tourists and stay with Claudette at the beach all day long either. At that point, Leela and Claudette share a different understanding of blackness that differs in their sense of belonging. As Claudette and Leela raise their glasses of wine, how they differ in their perceptions surfaces through their own words:

> Claudette: […] Sod the angst, the wretchedness –
> Leela: And the rain and the boredom –
> Claudette: Two girls from London –
> Leela: Two black girls –
> Claudette: To hot days and balmy, passionate nights –
> Leela: To dolphins –
> Claudette: and boys who flex their biceps on the beach just for us –
> Leela: To mosquito bites –
> Claudette: love bites –
> Leela: long walks, coconut milk and mango. To the magnificent silence of the sea –
> Claudette: and things that go bump in the night. (*Slight pause*) To freedom. (2.1.207)

In this conversation, Claudette's and Leela's expectations from this holiday are quite evident. As can be understood, Claudette is after having fun by enjoying the land as well as its people. According to her, they are "two girls from London" who have the right to maximise the time they spend there in terms of enjoying the sun, drinks and men the island offers them before they get back to their ordinary lives in London. According to Leela, on the other hand, they are "two black girls" as distinct from the white tourists who have come to the island to exploit it. She does not forget her blackness as her political identity in the UK, but biologically and historically her blackness also makes her a part of the island and its culture as well. Leela comes to the island as a black person who is in search of her roots, of a place she can truly call home. Thus, the concept of freedom that Claudette and Leela raise their glass to differs. Freedom for Leela is experienced through long walks whereas Claudette enjoys her freedom through sexual activities throughout the second act. Parekh refers to such differences among the members of the same community arguing that "[b]elonging to a cultural community, then, admits of much variation and is not homogeneous in nature. Some members might share all its beliefs and others only a few, and the former might differ in their interpretations of or degrees of allegiance to these" (*Rethinking* 148). In *Talking in Tongues*, Leela and Claudette, although they come from the same cultural community, differ in terms of exercising their racial identity.

From the perspective of race relations, scene four in act two presents a significant moment regarding the harassment of Kate by Claudette and Leela who present unique representations of blackness and whiteness. Almost drunk, Claudette becomes the same racial victim who is full of anger as presented in the first act when she sees Kate sleeping. She gets jealous of Kate because Mikie took her on his boat instead of Claudette; she begins to vent her anger towards white women, particularly on Kate. Claudette admits that,

> [i]t's like there's no escape. You can't run away, it follows you. You can't be yourself because you've always got to be ready to defend yourself. I hate, Leela. I can't stop hating. I hate her. I hate her because she's never been my friend, because she thinks there are two different kinds of woman and that I'm the inferior kind, because she takes comforting the fact that at least she's not bottom of the pile and delights in my oppression. Because she's constantly betrayed me. (2.4.217)

As pointed out, the scene suddenly brings back the Claudette introduced in the first act, a woman who is angry with the system, with history, and with the whole British society. Thus, here, apart from her personal grudge towards Kate, Claudette yells at everyone in the society who rejected her blackness and treated her as an unwanted person. Without realising how she treats the black characters around her in the second act, Claudette blames Kate for being white which is an arbitrary identity for Kate as pointed out. Hence, Leela and Claudette, first for fun, colour Kate's lips and draw a line across Kate's forehead. Later, Claudette furthers this game by turning it into an act of violence towards Kate. She gets a pair of scissors and begins to cut Kate's plaits which symbolise what Claudette lacks to be regarded as white. Based on his observation of middle-class blacks in the American society, Nathan Hare argues that "[t]o many mimics, it is not enough merely to act like whites; one must also look like them as much as possible. This applies especially to female mimics, though it is by no means unknown among men" (39). Claudette's emphasis on white women's hair, first in her anger in the first act and later in this particular scene, can be interpreted as her unfulfilled wish for looking like a white person in order to satisfy her need of equality in British society. Due to this reason, Claudette and Leela attack Kate, the only white woman in the second act, by cutting her hair and, thus, avenging their blackness through her whiteness represented by her hair.

This scene among Claudette, Leela and Kate primarily proves that people can become narrow-minded and biased as they talk about race. Kate has nothing to do with the accusations Claudette directs at her. More significantly, based on her treatment of Mikie and Sugar, Claudette has no right to accuse Kate. As someone who complains about her treatment by the society for being discriminated against because of her race, Claudette makes the same mistakes. In the case of Leela, on the other hand, as someone who avoids such angry acts and aims to discover peace and a sense of belonging and identity, she seems to be the last person to harass Kate because of her race. Yet, Leela's and Claudette's actions towards Kate is explained by Gilroy's claim that "[b]lack and white are bonded together by the mechanisms of 'race' that estrange them from each other and amputate their common humanity" (*Against Race* 15). Hence, the scene indicates how fragile the relationships among races can be. Moreover, it indicates how

people can be driven by politics and the impositions of the society in their actions towards each other. The shifting position of understanding of race is indicated by Lacy and Ono as follows: "Not only are race and racism difficult for contemporary critics to locate and isolate without focusing on power relationships, but because of changing cultural conditions and new technologies, discourses and logics of race and racism are always transforming themselves to fit new contexts and situations" (3). The history of the black immigrants in the UK, their treatment by the white society and their own experiences while growing up in the UK have affected both Claudette's and Leela's perceptions of Kate. As in that particular scene Kate's body and white skin represent a political stand at the moment of harassment. In fact, Claudette's and Leela's attitude in this scene shows that the perception of race as discussed in this study from multiple perspectives – socially, politically and biologically – is undermined because of the characters' politicised perception of racial identity. From a different perspective, this scene can be interpreted as the outpouring of the disappointment of Leela and Claudette who conducted a reverse migration to Jamaica expecting that it might be their home as opposed to Britain. Goddard, in this respect, argues that "Leela and Claudette discover that they are as much considered tourists as white people visiting Jamaica, and their discovery that Kate has settled there and feels more at home there than they do troubles their preconceptions of the Caribbean as home" (*Staging* 65). Hence, for Claudette and Leela, it can be the revenge for their disappointments on the island for not satisfying their black identities. Consequently, this scene strikes the readers and/or the audience about the reality of race relations and perceptions.

However, the play does not end with this dispute among Claudette and Leela, and Kate. In the last scene, scene seven, Pinnock proposes a different resolution, arousing new questions in terms of race relations and understanding of race. The play ends with the brief conversation between Kate and Leela. Kate begins talking to Leela with the aim of becoming a friend not knowing that Leela is one of the responsible people for the attack on Kate. Leela, on the other hand, continues their chat forgetting what they did to Kate. First, Kate creates a chance to speak to Leela by asking for some water from her table and continues by making small talk. When Leela wants to leave for her daily walk, Kate suggests accompanying her: "I know some good walks. Some are so scary you can't go

on your own. […] I could show you. Let me put my shoes on" (2.7.225). Although Leela rejects Kate's offer, she makes a promise to her:

> Leela: Not right now. Next time.
> Kate: It's a deal, next time you're here I'll show you.
> […]
> Kate: The next time you're here then.
> Leela: It's a deal. (2.7.225)

On the one hand, this conversation, the shared experience of enjoying walks around the island, indicates how similar these two women are. They are not presented as white and Black contrary to their positions as rivals in the attack scene. On the other hand, the promise they make to each other to share their passion later indicates that they will be able to enjoy a walk together in the future without being affected by the colour of their skin. What Aston states can also be taken as an example for the point Leela and Kate have reached: "To connect is to resist the boundaries that keep white upon black in place" (*Feminist Views* 133). They begin to cope with the restricted boundaries of fixed racial identities as they share a common moment on the beach. This can be interpreted as the possibility of the two races existing in the same society, sharing the same British lifestyle as intended by the Labour Party with Tony Blair to encompass a common identity. A common identity that can be shared by Leela and Kate beyond their race is also touched upon by Parekh:

> Growing up within a cultural community also means building up common bonds and developing a sense of solidarity with its other members. The bonds grow out of shared beliefs, common objects of love, shared historical memories and so on, though they can also sometimes transcend these and persist in their absence. One acquires a network of close relations and a system of support, and becomes bound to other members by the ties of mutual expectations and common interests. (*Rethinking* 156)

What Parekh suggests might be possible for these two women who share mutual expectations and common interests rather than the same skin colour. Hence, beyond the colour of their skin, it is actually the decisions of these two women that form their identities. It is revealed that besides being a white British person, Kate wishes to stay on the island and continue her life adopting the island's way of life. Leela, on the other

hand, plans to go back to London as a Black British person who plans to enjoy short periods of life in Jamaica in the future.

Based on the ending of the play with the brief conversation between Leela and Kate through their promise to each other, it can be argued that Winsome Pinnock is neither judgmental nor didactic with regard to race relations. To give an example, Claudette is not presented to be condemned by the readers and/or the audience. Neither the other characters nor the play itself through its themes and messages judge Claudette's actions displayed in the second act. It is clear that Claudette is a character who shows her anger towards white people as well as black males in British society as if punishing them for the shared history and the problems of the black immigrants. Yet, she makes the same mistakes and exploits the black characters in the second act as if acting out the cruel white stereotype herself. Nevertheless, she is not defined by the playwright as a bad person for her actions. She is neither judged nor punished for her attitude. On the other hand, she represents the multiplicity of biological and political identities through her actions. In this respect, it can be argued that, in *Talking in Tongues*, Pinnock presents a racially objective perspective highlighting the differences in defining oneself in terms of race. Pinnock favours neither blacks nor whites. She does not idealise one race over the other. There might be a dispute between two races as in the example of Leela and Kate, although it was an unintended act on Leela's part; however, this does not mean that they will stay enemies for long. Ponnuswami points out that "Pinnock ends the play with a gesture towards reconciliation, one that seems to repudiate Claudette's values and allows the play to end on a note of cautious optimism on the eve of the women's return to London" ("Alienation" 220). The play leaves the characters as they enjoy their blackness and/or their whiteness as they prefer to define. Pinnock states, in the published version of the play's script, that "[s]ome critics thought the play pessimistic; I don't" (226). Pinnock further argues that racism exists as a fact of life and it is important to recognise this. It is through Leela that such recognition is achieved and acted upon as she becomes friends with Kate. Thus, instead of being pessimistic, the play presents an optimistic ending enabling the readers and/or the audience to have faith in communication between people from different races who prefer to have multiple identities and who are not just shaped by the prejudices of the society.

The multiplicities of racial identities, in addition to being signified by the ending of the play, are also clearly indicated by the title itself. The title *Talking in Tongues*, according to Winsome Pinnock's own statement, goes back to the biblical story of the Tower of Babel which explains how different languages came into existence. According to the story, the role of the tower was to keep people together by uniting them for the same purpose of building it and reaching God. However, God interfered with the humans' plans by giving them different languages and separating them apart. Pinnock, in relation to the biblical story, indicates that "[l]ike the myth of the separation of men and women who were once one animal, this story suggests that we are potentially more alike than we know and that, while we will never again speak the same language, one of our quests is to find our way back to each other" (226). The idea that humans are more alike than they think is justified in the play regardless of the differences in race especially through the characters of Claudette, Leela and Kate. The relationship Leela and Kate establish at the end indicates that racial differences do not matter. The attack conducted by Claudette and Leela on Kate signifies that it is human nature, people's psychology, which conducts one's actions rather than reason. Also, in the case of Claudette solely, her race does not determine her actions and she can act just like a member of any other race or nation. From this perspective, the ending of the play also celebrates the quests of human beings in finding their way back to each other.

The other significance of the title for laying out the multiplicities of racial identities is given through the prologue of the play. The prologue presents a scene between Leela and Sugar as Sugar massages Leela and shares a story from her childhood. She talks about three women whom she knew when she was a child. These women went to wash clothes once a week and returned home joyfully. Quite curious about what makes these women so happy when they go to wash clothes, Sugar follows them and spies on them. First, she gets disappointed by their merely washing clothes without even talking to each other; Sugar later witnesses them as they start to sing together. Rather than singing a particular melody, these women begin to conduct a spiritual ceremony as Sugar conveys to Leela:

> Sugar: Them start to tremble and make little jump till they was jumping around like them didn't know where them was. Then all of a sudden the silent woman stand very still like her body sieze up and lift her head to the sky and start to call out. She was shouting – a woman I never hear say a word in my life – was shouting to the sky loud loud and saying words very fast in a language you never hear before. A woman who couldn't even talk, filling the sky with words in a language must be not spoken in a million years, a language that go back before race. (173-174)

This mysterious act of the women witnessed by Sugar is retold by her in order to indicate how their ancestors have found a way to release their pain and stress. What they experienced through their washing was a way to free themselves from the sanctions and prejudices of the society while finding their own voices. According to Goddard, "'Talking in tongues' in the second act is her way of embracing a West Indian identified woman's discourse in the gully where black women convene alone with each other" ("West Indies" 30). Moreover, the indigenous women's ability of talking in tongues is perceived by Sugar as a gift for these women not only to release their pain, but also to express themselves in a unique language, a language that unites all races and people. Unfortunately, human beings have lost such skills. The ability of gaining social freedom, not being restricted by the social rules, is achieved by Leela who somehow achieves to talk in tongues in the act two scene six. After Kate was harassed and Sugar was fired for being responsible, Leela and Sugar come across each other at the beach. While Leela expresses her regret for what happened and confesses that she is actually responsible, Sugar blames Leela for her irresponsibility and judges her according to what she has observed in the actions of the other tourists: "Unno tourist think you belong here. But you come out and you don't know where to put youself: one minute you talking sisterhood, the next minute you treating us like dirt. You just the same as all the other tourists them" (2.6.223). Eventually, Sugar also makes a political distinction of racial identities concluding that one's biological colour cannot determine his racial identity and his treatment of other races. Sugar's statement leads Leela to admit her failure to find herself which brings a sense of relief in Leela, like her ancestors' relief when they talked in tongues:

> Leela: *(as she speaks she becomes more emotional and starts to tremble through this speech)* Broken, yes. Invisible people. We look all right on the outside, but take our clothes off and you'll find nothing underneath, just thin air. That's what happens to people who have no language - they disappear. Only your feelings tell you that you exist, so you cling on to them even if they're not nice. And they're not

> nice. I'm angry, Sugar. I can't stop hating. I hate the world that tries to stifle me. I'm angry with myself for not being strong enough to hit out at it. I want revenge. I want to lash out ... (2.6.223)

At the end of her speech, Leela loses her control, as the stage directions reveal, and begins to tremble and murmur. She enters a stage of talking in tongues enabling her to release the rage bottled up in her. Leela eventually manages to find a voice to express herself uniting her with other people without taking race or nation into consideration. Through this process, Leela manages to establish a relation, a link so to speak, with Kate as the play ends. Ponnuswami draws attention to this link established by Leela through talking in tongues in a wider sense arguing that "[t]he act of 'talking in tongues' thus brings together several of Leela's needs: the need for an ancestral tongue, the need for a connection to a homeland or motherland; and the need above all for spiritual and psychological restoration" ("Alienation" 215). Hence, it is through this link that Leela comes to a resolution regarding her racial identity and social position. The point Leela reaches through her experience of talking in tongues can also be explained by what Gunning asserts that "British multiculturalism begins from this suggestion that an individual is formed in large part by the dialogical processes of recognition that take place within their ethnic community. Recognition must first take place among these people with whom cultural memories and understandings of social meaning are shared" (109-110). With the experience Leela goes through in Jamaica, she comes to a recognition of her self classifying her with an identity she is more comfortable to express in order to be a part of the multicultural British society.

When the prologue is evaluated in relation to the plotline, it can be argued that it is explanatory of the experience Leela goes through in act two scene six. The play prepares the readers and/or the audience for the recognition she will go through. However, the question should be why the story of the black women is given as a prologue but not within the play as a part of the dialogue between Leela and Sugar. In this regard, it can be argued that Pinnock intends to set the tone for the theme of the play in terms of racial representation. This indicates that Leela's search for her own voice, home and/or identity do not result solely from being cheated by Bentley. It is obvious that Leela has a problem with her body. Thus, not being reconciled with her

black body is a political indication. As Sugar narrates the story to Leela, she massages Leela to comfort her body. The indigenous woman forgetting her material existence and going through a spiritual process problematises Leela's stand since she cannot set herself free from her political body. As opposed to Fran, the self-confidant white woman, Leela cannot let go of her body; hence, she cannot freely dance. Leela admits her problem in accepting her black body stating that "I never forget my body. That's the trouble" (1.2.183). This reminds one of Yancy's remark in which blackness is associated with the kind of conduct exemplified by Claudette and Leela in the play. Leela's position in the society as not knowing where to belong is depicted through her restless relation with her body. Thus, she needs physical relief as well in order to attain spiritual healing. As Sugar relieves Leela physically, she also enables her to form a link between herself and her ancestral past. Sugar fulfils a tradition which Savory points out as follows:

> Story-telling was until recently a popular way for Caribbean families to gather, often around the grandmother as designated teller of tales, under the full moon. The purpose of such stories was often not just entertainment but moral teaching as well. The story-teller, then, is the guardian of the community's inheritance and protects that inheritance from being destroyed by imperialism or neo-imperialism. Also, story-tellers understand the power of the word, and the punning and verbal play which characterizes the African tradition. (248-249)

Hence, Sugar also uploads a symbolical meaning to the massage by establishing a link between Leela and the tradition Leela feels missing from her life as depicted in the first act. Through the narration of Sugar, Leela gets a sense of belonging. Moreover, it can be argued that with the prologue, Pinnock underlines the significance of an inheritance that needed to be preserved as Leela manages to learn to embrace her ancestral past at the end of the play.

Besides the title, in line with the prologue of the play, the character Irma who appears in act one scene five is highly significant in terms of delivering the idea of the multiplicity of identities. Leela encounters Irma at the party right after the humiliation she experienced by witnessing the sexual act between Fran and Bentley. The stage direction defines Irma in detail: "Lights up on Irma, who's sitting on the floor in a corner of the room, cross-legged. She's wearing a multicoloured jump suit and trainers, large gold

earrings and has a bald head" (193). Yet, the most significant physical characteristic of this newly-introduced character is her being a hermaphrodite. Irma, according to Ponnuswami who is "Leela's possibly imaginary new friend" ("Alienation" 213), is an embodiment of multiplicities in terms of gender. She frankly narrates her story to Leela, for Irma who is a stranger at a party, telling her special condition: "It doesn't happen very often, but sometimes a child is born with both receptacle and projectile nestling between its leg. I was such a child and the doctors told my mother that she had to make a choice, or I would be plagued by severe mental confusion and distress for the rest of my life" (2.5.193). Irma advises Leela to temporarily get away from her everyday routine which sets the scene for the second act of the play. Griffin defines the significance of Irma for the plotline as follows: "Irma thus functions as a kind of *deus-ex-machina*, appearing only in this scene in the play to suggest to Leela the affirmative position that may move her beyond her entrapped sense of self" (*Contemporary* 83). Besides what Griffin suggests, Irma is also significant in delivering the message of the play. Irma highlights that in spite of the biological, social and psychological complexity of her situation, her mother has accepted her as she was. In line with Irma's position, Stuart Hall indicates that "[i]f we feel we have a unified identity […] it is only because we construct a comforting story or 'narrative of the self' about ourselves. […] The fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy" ("The Question" 598). Thus, unlike the other characters, Irma is not pursuing a fantasy. Moreover, based on how she confidently shares her story with a person she just met, Irma also demonstrates that she is confident about who she is. She is not restricted by the arbitrary borders of gender defined by the society. She is reconciled with her multiple identities as her attitude illustrates, and which Marzette describes as follows: "With innovative skill, Pinnock also shows up what occurs and takes shape in between: in between belonging and unbelonging, in between pain and reconciliation, in between hurt and healing, even in between fe/male identity—as in the case with Irma" (42). In a much more restricted manner from the perspective of race, as a character, Irma is also a pioneer for Pinnock for her future representations of racially ambiguous characters. In the case of Irma, while the pronoun "she" is used, this character can be played by a male or a female transcending personal pronouns. The ambiguity of Irma's gender is an indication of a wider understanding of stock terms, the boundaries of which are drawn arbitrarily.

Besides, Irma also acts as a significant model for Leela to reconcile with her body, her blackness and her past as revealed in the conversation between these two characters. As opposed to the restless positions of Claudette and Leela in terms of their black bodies, Irma is depicted as an extremely confident character in terms of race and gender about who she is as a black hermaphrodite in British society. This is mostly significant through Irma's words on her baldness. Previously, the significance of hair was discussed as an indication of white power and superiority as could be deduced mainly from Claudette's actions. Irma asks Leela to assist her to scratch her head which leads to a candid conversation about her suffering:

> It happened while I was undergoing one of those torturous hair treatments – you know the kind where they put some foul-smelling cream on your head and tell you to shout when it starts to burn. Only when you shout out they can't hear you because they're off on their tea break. So by the time they come back they've got to call the firemen out to administer the final rinse. (2.5.194)

Irma's loss of hair due to an unfortunate event resulting from a mistake of others does not affect her sense of identity. She hesitates uploading a superficial meaning to materials, in this case to her hair. She is so confident that she can state the following prediction: "In the future all black women will sport bald heads" (2.5.194). Here, Irma shouts that she cannot be bound by the impositions of the society. Moreover, she is willing to be an example through her confidence about who she is. Eventually, she is self-assured about her unique identity that is represented by her physical features. Irma is an essential character as Marzette touches upon: "Through both occurrences—women talking in tongues and Irma's body politic—Pinnock represents the unspeakable space of interstitiality while underscoring the importance of a body of womanly support, a feminine collective of empowerment" (43). Similar to the experiences of Irma and the indigenous women, as narrated by Sugar, Leela finally finds a way to release her pain by learning to be herself instead of abiding to social and racial norms of the society.

Consequently, when *Talking in Tongues* was staged in 1991, Winsome Pinnock challenged the themes of the first generation Black British playwrights. Unlike her early plays, *Talking in Tongues* paved the way for the discussion of Black British people

perceiving them as a part of the multicultural society beyond the position held by the first generation immigrants. Sakellaridou, in this respect, clarifies that "[*Talking in Tongues*] is a conclusion and a farewell to the tormenting memories of the West Indian history of migration and an opening to a new, wider understanding of the problems of contemporary multicultural societies and global capitalism" (389-390). The play does not present a fixed/stable black identity to perceive and juxtapose with a white identity. Through its white and black characters, the play supports the idea of the multiplicity of identities. In this respect, the characters of the play put forward what Stuart Hall argues about understanding racial identities:

> Race is a discursive, not a biological category. That is to say, it is the organizing category of those ways of speaking, systems of representation, and social practices (discourses) which utilize a loose, often unspecified set of differences in physical characteristics – skin color, hair texture, physical and bodily features, etc. – as symbolic markers in order to differentiate one group socially from another. ("The Question" 617)

Rather than a fixed definition of black and white, the play exhibits the conceptualisation and fluidity of racial identities. As can be observed in the case of Claudette, besides having a black skin which constitutes her race, she performs a certain race according to the circumstances politicising her blackness. Leela, on the other hand, shows a milder approach towards her blackness. Along with these two main characters, Bentley, Jeff, Kate, and Mikie also challenge the traditional understanding of racial identities. Throughout the play, the characters play with their black and white identities constructed either politically, socially, or biologically. Consequently, with *Talking in Tongues*, Pinnock challenges the understanding of racial identities by exemplifying the fact that identities are plural and unfixed; thus, she introduces racially ambiguous characters.

CHAPTER II

AMBIGUOUS REPRESENTATION OF BLACK IDENTITY IN *MULES*

Commissioned by Clean Break Theatre, Pinnock's *Mules,* defined by Bayley as "pacy and fascinating" ("Theatre"), was first performed on 25 April 1996 at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. It was five years after the success of *Talking in Tongues,* and the Conservative John Major was still in power as the Prime Minister. While British society had not been introduced to the concept of "Britishness" in the sense that the New Labour adopted, *Mules* contributed to the career of Pinnock in her second phase as well as to her success as a representative Black British playwright. In the play, the main concern is the characters who do not suffer merely as black immigrants. On the contrary, they represent a more comprehensive understanding of blackness as discussed in *Talking in Tongues.* Besides their black identity, the characters in *Mules* are women smugglers, and they point to greater social problems in the changing British society. Hence, following the discussions in the first chapter, this play suggests a representation of black identity that can be redefined politically, socially and culturally. *Mules*, moreover, introduces ambiguity in the racial identities of some of the characters. This contributes to the discussion of Black identity by allowing multiple understandings of the racial identities of the characters in the play. Consequently, this chapter intends to analyse Pinnock's *Mules* for delivering more universal themes on the sufferings of women as drug smugglers while reducing the significance of the political understanding of Black identity. Hence, the racially ambiguous characters present blackness beyond a stereotypical representation.

Upon her success at the Royal Court Theatre beginning with *Picture Palace* in 1988, Pinnock was commissioned by Clean Break Theatre to write a play about the stories of imprisoned women. The company, as defined by its website, "was set up in 1979 by two women prisoners who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of imprisoned women to a wider audience" ("About Us"). The London-based company, since then, has staged plays that focus on issues concerning imprisoned women, as well as providing

educational programmes for them. Pinnock herself points out this specific aim of Clean Break Theatre as follows: "They put on a play every year which is related to the prison justice system in England. The plays are written specifically to tour prisons, and also to play a conventional theatre venue" (qtd. in Breslauer). The company's offer to Pinnock to write a play about women drug smugglers also enabled her to share a lifelong experience with female prisoners, regardless of their racial background, during her six-month residency with the company. Teaching creative writing to current and former prisoners inspired Pinnock for her play as well: "I wasn't formally researching while I was teaching, but people would tell me things – about prison life, about crime, what they got out of it" (qtd. in Breslauer). This project also took Pinnock to Jamaica in 1994 to conduct further research about women doing time for carrying drugs (Breslauer). Through her experience with prisoners, Pinnock presents imaginative characters based on real-life experiences. Eventually, *Mules* had its premiere in 1996 following the Royal Court's decision to co-produce the play with Clean Break Theatre. The play's success continued when it "received a workshop as part of the 1995/6 New Works Festival at the Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, California" (*Mules*, n.p.). *Mules'* American premiere was held on 17 June 1997 at the Mark Taper Forum, directed by Lisa Peterson ("Production History"). Moreover, the play also had a revival at the Young Vic in 2008, which indicates that the themes of this play are still valid. Pinnock's *Mules* is a noteworthy play as the number of performances by different directors in different venues indicates.

In this regard, *Mules* has an appointed theme of representing the lives of female mules, which is a slang word defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "person who carries dope for a drug trafficker and passes drug to buyer after a sale has been made" ("Mule"). Pinnock, however, used her creativity and literary ability to turn the story of women smugglers into a moving play which is praised by *The Independent* critic as follows: "Winsome Pinnock's pacy and fascinating play opens with all the punch and pizzazz of a Hollywood action movie, but hijacks those conventions to expose a sorry tale of exploitation" (Bayley). Among the main characters, the play presents Bridie as a professional drug courier who hunts young and desperate girls to turn them into smugglers; the sisters Lou and Lyla who are offered to be smugglers as the only option

to escape their poverty in Jamaica, and Allie who is a runaway teenager. On the other hand, Bridie's colleagues Rog and Sammie, Pepper and Piglet who steal Allie's money, Allie's landlady Rose, the illegal immigrant Olu, and two bad girls who harass Allie can be regarded as the play's minor characters. The main plot evolves around the drug smuggling controlled by Bridie along with three different sub-plots. One of the sub-plots involves Lou and Lyla. The second one is about Allie while there is a third story on Bridie and her drug business. The first scene opens up in an office with Rog and Sammie while Bridie is trying to solve two different crises: convincing a mule to take a trip to Amsterdam, and reimbursing her boss a large amount of stock that went missing. These three colleagues come together again in scene eleven to talk about Bridie's haunted house and their boss Cliveden, and to celebrate their success in tracking down the courier who ran away with the drugs. The last scene they share together, scene sixteen, presents Bridie beaten up very badly, possibly by her boss in a drug-related matter, as she is discovered by Rog and Sammie. This scene concludes the story line of the colleagues. Moreover, it highlights that Bridie is a mule and death is a possible end in this hazardous business. The other story line begins with the second scene with the introduction of the teenage girl Allie who runs away from her home because of her step-father and his sexual abuse and comes to London to start a new life. She rents a basement flat with her little money and hopes to find a job as a waitress in London. She first comes across Pepper and Piglet who drug her coke and steal her money. Later, she is harassed by two bad girls. Soon, Allie is kicked out by her landlady when she cannot afford the flat. Finding herself on the streets begging for change, Bridie discovers Allie and makes her one of her drug smugglers. Caught at the customs, Allie is sent to prison for drug smuggling in scene twelve tying her end of the storyline with Lou's. Lou and Lyla are introduced in scene three as they are trying to sell underwear at a market place. Hopeless about their future in their neighbourhood Kingsley, they decide to meet with Bridie whose business card they have. Bridie establishes a very close relation with the sisters and convinces them to become smuggler which is presented to them as the only way to get away from their miserable life in Jamaica. While Lou is sentenced together with Allie, Lyla manages to escape from the attention of the custom's police and returns to Jamaica. After Lyla gives up working as a smuggler, Bridie offers her a job on a ganja field in Jamaica – meaning marijuana which is considered as a meditative herb in

Rastafarianism (Edmonds 60). The play ends as the two sisters unite in Jamaica without further information on Allie.

The ambiguity, which constitutes the main discussion point in the play in terms of racial representation, can be observed in regard to the characters' racial background. On the list of the characters, it is stated that Lou and Lyla are Jamaican and Olu is a Nigerian immigrant (*Mules* n.p.). Bridie, on the other hand, is defined as American, but she can be considered as a black woman in relation to the detail provided within the play, as will be discussed later. The rest of the characters, however, are not defined racially, but are referred to in relation to the part they play. The play also provides a list for its casting when it premiered at the Royal Court. Based on the director's choices, the play was staged featuring three actresses who alternately play all the roles on the stage. Such staging creates a limitation on the understanding of the text from the perspective of race because of not reflecting the ambiguity in racial identities of the characters as preferred by the play's text. Since it is for sure that three characters are black, such casting entails the racial identities of the remaining characters by forcing all characters to be associated as black characters. The approach to all of the characters as black characters alters the understanding and interpreting of the racial positions of the characters. This is especially significant, even restrictive to a certain extent, when blackness is considered as not purely biological but political and cultural as well. Hence, while the characters whose racial identities are explicit in the text will be analysed first, the examination of the racially ambiguous characters will come later in this chapter.

As an issue-based play, the most significant part of the plotline is drug trafficking. However, this main issue of the play is especially significant from the perspective of race. This importance mainly derives from the black history and the race relations in the UK. Especially after the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948 carrying immigrants from the West Indies, crime rates began to be associated with the rising number of black immigrants in British society. George Yancy narrates a real-life experience depicting the prejudices of the white society towards its black citizens:

> Jane Lazarre, a white Jewish mother of 'interracial' sons, relates the story of how one of her son's Black friends was harassed right outside her home by police who

> thought the car he was driving was stolen. Lazarre shouted, 'But this is unbelievable!' Her son responded angrily, reminding her that being stopped by police and questioned because he is driving a nice-looking car is something that happens to him all the time. After all, he is a Black man and as such suspect a priori. (230)

As the black immigrants, who were actually legal citizens, turned into scapegoats in British society, racism became the number one political issue. As Fryer defines, "[s]tep by step, racism was institutionalized, legitimized, and nationalized. That which had been unthinkable in 1958 was by 1968 the law of the land" (381). Institutionalised racism asserted itself in the British justice system as well. In addition to the discrimination black people faced in their every day lives, such as in political representation, education and job opportunities, they were discriminated against by the police and the criminal justice system. The colour of their skin began to make black people the number one suspect in the eyes of the police as FitzGerald points out: "That is – whether or not they feature disproportionately in the crime reports to which the police respond – black people are more likely to be brought into the system as a result of initiatives taken by the police, such as targeted street robbery or drugs operations" (168). The racial attitude of the police is also underlined by Sanders who states that "[t]here is evidence which suggests that Afro-Caribbeans are less likely than whites to be given the benefit of a caution" (41). Unfortunately, the racial attitude of the police is also consistent with the criminal justice system. In this regard, Lester states that "[i]n the criminal justice system, ethnic minorities are over-represented in the prison population and under-represented in positions of responsibility. There are no High Court judges of ethnic minority origin, eleven Queen's Counsels out of 891 and only six MPS out of 651" (23). Furthermore, David Mason comments on the number of black prisoners in relation to racism practiced in the justice system:

> A particular area of concern has been the over-representation of people of African-Caribbean descent in prison. People from this group constitute more than 10 per cent of the male prison population (about eight to nine times greater than their representation in the population at large) and one-quarter of women prisoners. This situation has led some to claim that the criminal justice system is permeated by systematic, and institutionalized, racism. (110)

After explaining the racial discrimination in the justice system, Mason concludes as follows: "[…] available evidence suggests that […] people of African-Caribbean origin

are more likely to be arrested and charged than their white counterparts for similar offences. Moreover, if convicted they are likely to receive a harsher sentence and, where they re-offend, will tend to graduate more quickly to custodial punishment" (110). Hence, it can be argued that crime is a sensitive issue to be examined from the perspective of race and race relations. Furthermore, in the Parekh Report, the criminal justice system is considered as one of the crucial issues needed to be tackled by the Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain. This report points out that "Black and Irish people are differentially treated at all stages in the criminal justice system, from policing on the streets […] through to sentencing and imprisonment, where they may be subjected to racism by both prison officers and other prisoners" (Parekh 129). The report details this argument by summarising the key facts compiled from numerous official study and bulletins. In this respect, the approach to discrimination with reference to crime and the justice system classify *Mules* as a significant play for intersecting themes of crime, race and gender. The importance of the relation between justice, race and gender in society, which will be discussed in this play as a significant theme, is reiterated by Anderson:

> Though our icon of Justice is blindfolded, the actual practice of law has not been blind to race. The foundation of law, residing in liberalism carries into its use the racism that undergirds it. It carries the belief that people are judged as individuals, and that the system is blind to race, gender, or class. The ideology of liberalism (equality, individuality) reveals itself to be a myth; it is believed that differences among individuals have no bearing on their political or legal status. However, race and gender as categories retain a central place within culture, and those categories have bearing on the political and legal status of individuals. (79)

Along with the significance of the relation between justice and race, drug trafficking as the particular offence in the case of this play, is also crucial for the understanding of black identity.

Similar to the relation between crime rates and the probability of black people to be sentenced by the justice system, drug-related problems are also a significant social issue associated with blacks by the white society. In a study conducted by the Matrix Knowledge Group, among the prisoners who were sentenced for drug-related offences, 28% of the interviewees preferred to be defined as black ("The Illicit Drug" 58).

Stevens states that "[p]eople recorded as blacks are more likely than those recorded as white to be included at each of these stages of the criminal justice system for drug offences. Less than two in a thousand white people were arrested for drug offences in 2007/8, compared with over ten in a thousand black people" (96). Stevens further adds that "Black people were also 9.2 times more likely to be stopped and searched for drug offences" (96), indicating the crucial relation between race, being a Black person, and drug offences as assumed by the authorities. In addition, drug routes are crucial for relating drugs with racial issues. The Caribbean and West Africa are named as the main ports for drugs carried from South America into the UK according to the UK Drug Policy Commission (McSweeney 28). Furthermore, the Commission's policy report draws attention to Caribbean traffickers. The policy report also asserts that

> [t]he illicit drugs trade in the UK has far-reaching political, cultural and economic ramifications, and impacts negatively upon prison populations, levels of gun crime, social exclusion, and public health and community safety. These consequences and impacts are experienced disproportionately by the urban poor and minority ethnic groups. (McSweeney 8)

Hence, minority ethnic groups, such as African-Caribbeans, seem to be suffering most from drug-related problems. Statistics are further laid out by the Ministry of Justice in a report released in 2013 underlining the high number of black people involved in drug-related offences.

Moreover, what forces minority groups into involvement in the drug business is closely related to the immigration history of Black British people into the UK. Due to the social discrimination they faced in British society, inequalities they experienced in the British education system, and the institutionalised discrimination they struggled with, the drug business became an option for the disadvantaged Black youth to earn their living. Although their research is based on the United States, what Joseph and Pearson discuss as the reasons that drive black youth into the drug business can be applied to the UK as well: "Many of the Black youths who sell drugs from an inner-city economic structure with high unemployment, and joblessness and where there is the 'juvenilization of poverty'" (425). The working conditions in the UK are briefly indicated by Sierz: "There's a rapid rise in inequality and poverty: in the early 1990s, about one Briton in

six lives in poverty. […] The number of low-income workers peaks at 20 per cent of the workforce in 1992" (3). For the black youth who are already forced into poverty due to the disadvantages they face in education and the discrimination in the job sector, the drug business can be considered as one of the most profitable opportunities. Joseph and Pearson, in this regard, admit that "[i]n the inner cities, the drug business is one of the biggest employers and pays more in a day than working at a fast food restaurant in a month" (424-425) which is a possible position an under-educated person can obtain. The study conducted by the Matrix Knowledge Group once again draws attention to the financial means provided by the drug business: "Where motivation for entry was known, two-thirds of the interviewees (140 out of 212) entered the drug market for financial reasons" ("The Illicit Drug" 24). *Mules* also exemplifies the financial problems that force the female characters into the drug business. Women take part in the drug business especially at the level of international trafficking of drugs. It is the UK Drug Policy Commission's report that specifies the importance of women in trafficking drugs: "The study confirmed that women (in this case mostly non-UK nationals) were significantly more likely to occupy the higher risk, lower status role of courier and tended to carry more drugs, both in terms of weight and value, than their male (again predominantly non-UK national) counterparts" (McSweeney 27). Hence, women are perceived to be undertaking a crucial role in this business because it is risky to transport drugs as confirmed by the inmates: "Transportation could not always be described as an unskilled role. It was described by a number of interviewees as 'key' to the business and professional importers commanded high wages, particularly when paid by the kilo" ("The Illicit Drug" 51). Connecting drug trafficking, crime and the criminal justice system in general, race contributes to the significance of the theme of *Mules* along with Pinnock's personal attitude towards her black characters. Moreover, the racially ambiguous characters, along with black characters, challenge the perception of the racial identity of blacks in relation to race, crime and drug issues as discussed above.

With regard to the drug business and the main theme of the play, Bridie can be considered as the key character in the play. As the play opens up, she is introduced to the readers and/or the audience in an office with her colleagues as she shows her business discipline. The first act depicts Bridie's determined and strong character which

explains her success in the drug business. As a professional drug courier and a successful leader, Bridie tries to convince one of the girls to make a business trip to Amsterdam in order to pursue a deal that Rog could not handle. She also tracks a runaway girl who Sammie could not find. Hence, Bridie is introduced through her professional qualities before being identified as a black person. Griffin also points out Bridie's representation as a professional: "Bridie is a woman living in a global, late-capitalist culture, rootless and always *en route* […]" (*Contemporary* 217). By handling successfully the problems Rog and Sammie could not deal with, Bridie is depicted as an experienced, smart and practical professional in the field. This can be derived from the conversation between Rog and Sammie:

> Rog: Bridie'll know what to do.
> Sammie: Bridie's an expert in optical illusion is she? Even Cliveden, a man who can barely count to ten, is gonna be able to tell that a large chunk of his stock's gone missing.
> Rog: Bridie'll sort it out.
> Sammie: Superwoman to the rescue? She's not invincible, Rog.
> Rog: She's done it before. (1.1.4)

Thus, it can be argued that Bridie has a certain reputation among her colleagues regarding her professional ethic and success. Most significantly, she is good at drug trafficking because she has the ability to convince the girls to act as couriers. More specifically, she has the necessary communication skills. Her self-esteem is indicated in her evaluation of their so-called boss Cliveden: "He just thinks he's the boss. I'd like to see him transform a bunch of adolescent schoolgirls into professionals" (1.1.4). Bridie's success at recruiting the right girls to be employed as drug couriers is the backbone of the plotline. She unites the main characters of the play, Allie, Olu, Lou, and Lyla, once she brings them into the drug business.

Compared to Bridie's strict attitude in business related issues, she is depicted as extremely friendly and understanding in her relation with female mules, at least throughout the process of training them on the job. More significantly, she is a substitute mother and/or sister to the girls she recruits by fulfilling their psychological needs. Bridie is the only person who cares about the well-being of the girls. This is especially indicated through Lou and Lyla's experience with Bridie, who first feeds

them and listens to their life story in Kingston. Later, Bridie takes them dancing and becomes their friend. In scene seven, Bridie supervises Lou and Lyla while they are trying to put condoms full of drugs into their vaginas in a hotel room. It is apparent that, almost acting like a mother, Bridie instructs Lou and Lyla on how to hide drugs and how to act as a courier on the plane. Once they are caught in the customs, she never visits or legally assists Lou and Allie in prison for the sake of her reputation and safety in the business. However, Bridie makes a trip to Jamaica, to Lyla's house, in order to check up on her in scene fourteen. By bringing canned food to Lyla, Bridie assumes that she fulfils her role as the caretaker of the girls.

Beyond her depiction as a strong and determined professional in the drug business who can easily hunt girls to be employed as drug couriers, Bridie carries a black identity as well. Although the list of the characters classifies Bridie as American, the play's text does not bear any visible evidence indicating Bridie's racial identity until scene seven where she reveals her background to Lou: "Listen, Lou, I know what it's like to have no one, nothing. We come from the same place. I grew up in Trenchtown too" (1.7.31). Up until that moment, especially during the problem-solving scene with Rog and Sammie in scene one, Bridie presents a highly strong character unusual for stereotypical representations of black people especially in the media as discussed in detail and stated by Alibhai-Brown: "Ironically, even in popular culture – music, clothes, the club scenes where many of the leading purveyors are black – the writers universally (and uniformly, some would say) white" (146). Bridie has an expensive lifestyle. She lives at luxury hotels, eats out and wears designer clothes. In this regard, Lou draws attention to Bridie's Italian shoes as an indication of her taste and financial freedom to afford such luxuries (1.5.26). Thus, Bridie gives the impression that she belongs to the upper class regardless of her background, that is being from Jamaica, and her skin colour, which is black. According to Lou, the image Bridie promotes is enough to upload a different black identity on her which she can be proud of. In this regard, Bridie represents an example of the situational understanding of black identity from the perspective of Lou. This situation is discussed by Parekh as follows:

> Although skin colour, gender, height and other physical feature are universally shared, they are all differently conceptualized and acquire different meaning and

> significance in different societies. In some societies skin colour is given a deeper metaphysical meaning and made the basis of a differential distribution of power and status, in others it is not even noticed. (*Rethinking* 120-121)

When Bridie and the sisters interact, it is clear that blackness can be understood from different perspectives. In this regard, the way Bridie presents herself through her appearance constructs an image that wipes off the black identity that can be associated with the black history in the UK.

Furthermore, Bridie prefers to carry her blackness as a biological fact rather than a political one. She might have entered the drug business due to the financial problems which can be related to her black identity in general, based on the social history of the black immigrants in British society; however, her blackness does not bear any political meaning at that point. According to Parekh, "[b]oundaries structure our lives, give us a sense of rootedness and identity, and provide a point of reference" (*Rethinking* 150). He further details "boundaries" stating that "[s]ince they tend to become restrictive, we need to challenge and stretch them; but we cannot reject them altogether for we then have no fixed points of reference with which to define ourselves and decide what differences to cultivate and why" (*Rethinking* 150). The play represents Bridie as challenging the boundaries. Bridie does not take advantage of the problematic history of blacks in order to find her way into the business. She neither makes use of her blackness in order to convince girls to be couriers. To speak figuratively, Bridie does not take cover behind the race card. Instead, she approaches the girls by representing what they lack most in life: money and financial security for the lifestyle they want to live. In the case of Lou and Lyla, what matters is the impression Bridie leaves on them as an independent woman who has luxurious tastes in fashion and a luxurious lifestyle. Moreover, when the sisters agree to do the job, Bridie reveals that she is from Trenchtown as well. Rather than politicising her blackness, Bridie treats her skin colour as a biological fact which does not have any significance once she proves herself in the business. When Lou learns that Bridie and herself come from the same background, she feels close to her. Moreover, Lou believes that one day she can be as classy as Bridie transgressing the political meaning of her blackness. Thus, being black, having the same skin colour, cannot be the only factor for the sisters and Bridie to share a common

identity. What Parekh defends, "[c]ulture thus is not a passive inheritance but an active process of creating meaning, not given but constantly redefined and reconstituted" (*Rethinking* 153), can be applied to the relationship between the sisters and Bridie. Lou's and Lyla's aspirations for a better lifestyle unite them with Bridie long before the fact that their roots belong to the same place. Hence, Bridie constructs a meaning and a reason for Lou and Lyla which they desire to be a part of beyond the accepted connotations of their skin colour.

Moreover, rather than her racial background, Bridie's lifestyle defines her and who she is. Later in scene fourteen, when Bridie pays a visit to Lyla, she feels a need to recall her background to Lyla:

> Lyla: You better watch you car. Them youth them vicious round here.
> Bridie: I have a driver sitting in it. I was born here, remember. (2.14.58)

Hence, for Lyla the image Bridie reflects is much more indicative of her identity. According to Lyla, Bridie is not a black person from Trenchtown; she is a successful businesswoman who drives a luxurious car. Meanwhile, Bridie gives the impression that blackness that is defined by history, written by whites, is a stereotypical image and an identity that is referred to with a capital 'B' as Black, and can be considered as a feature that can be easily shed. As Modood perceives,

> [j]ust because we have a category that covers a selected population, e. g., the category 'black', it does not follow that black people form a single group. They may be divided into more than one group (e. g., Africans and Caribbeans, or young and old, or men and women) or they may consist of some group fragments and others who are very loosely, perhaps not at all, connected to one or more of these fragments. (111)

In other words, Blackness is not a significant part of one's identity and cannot be enough to place one into a selected category. Bridie cannot be solely defined as "black" just by considering her race. She does not feel that she belongs to a category defined by others. For Bridie, blackness is a habit that can be adopted or given up. Thus, her skin colour is not an indication of her identity as Black. Being black is not a preferable identity and Bridie can just drop it. She does not accept her past as the sole indicator of

her identity. Bridie indicates this in the play to Lou: "As for the ghetto . . . it isn't ingrained, you know. You can wash it off" (1.7.32). Disregarding her skin colour as determining her identity, Bridie believes that the ghetto she grew up in cannot define her identity. One has the power to change how people perceive her/him. Hence, Bridie rejects stereotypical classification because of her skin colour. The most significant indication of this is her American accent. This is revealed in scene seven when Bridie admits her background to Lou. Lou's response, "I thought you was American" (1.7.31) points out a significant detail about the identity of Bridie who explains the reason for her American identity as follows: "The accent started as an affectation when I was a child and later became part of my character" (1.7.32). Bridie treats her accent as an indicator of her identity which surpasses her blackness. To a certain extent, it can be argued that her accent functions to conceal her background. Thus, Bridie constructs her own identity which washes away her past in the ghetto. On the one hand, it can be claimed that Bridie's American accent suits the portrait she draws as a successful business woman connecting her to the long-established idea of the American dream. While the class system and the perspective of the white society towards Blacks in the UK still prevent, to a certain extent, African-Caribbean citizens from achieving in life as the white British, the system in the US enables each citizen, regardless of her/his ethnic and religious background, to better her/his social position in life. This could be pointed out as what aspires Bridie to be American rather than constructing British identity. This can be observed in Bridie's ambition to succeed in the drug business by even deceiving her boss. The drug business enables Bridie to travel, to stay in hotels, spend money on luxury, and most significantly to be independent because "[w]e all want to be able to stand on our own two feet, don't we? Who wants hand-outs and pity?" (2.10.46). Considering the fact that the play does not reveal openly the race of Bridie's colleagues, Rog and Sammie, one's success only depends on one's own ability rather than on one's ethnic background or social class. Bridie, who has "got the best job in the world" (2.11.50), achieves the American dream with her constructed American identity exemplifying that any person can do so if s/he works hard enough. Bridie's success that takes her from the ghetto to her position in the drug business can be taken as the realisation of the American dream, the dream of individual success. Nevertheless, this cannot be sufficient explanation for Bridie's choice of an American identity. It should

be still asked what makes Bridie pretend to be American rather than maintaining her British identity to a large extent.

On the one hand, Bridie's choice to adopt an American accent and pretend as if she is from the United States can be related to the recent surveys among minority groups who refrain from being referred to as British. While Labour began to promote Britishness as a common identity among all the citizens of the United Kingdom under the leadership of Tony Blair, it is denied by mainly the minority youth arguing that Britishness evokes the imperial history of the United Kingdom. According to Stuart Hall, "[t]his imperial experience profoundly shaped British national identity and British ideas of greatness and its place in the world. This more-or-less continuous intercourse with 'difference', which was at the heart of colonization, has framed the 'other' as a constitutive element of British identity" ("Conclusion" 218). Hence, referring to the colonial past of the UK, no matter what the intention behind the promotion of Britishness is, minorities, Black citizens of the country, still continue to feel themselves as the "other." While Mandler argues that "[s]pokespeople for ethnic minorities often prefer 'British' because it seems to keep open the possibilities for diversity and multi-culturalism better than 'English'; it is the case that people calling themselves 'English' tend to be more anti-European and anti-immigrant than people calling themselves 'British'" (241), recent surveys among youth indicate the opposite. Rather than letting Britishness as an umbrella term define them, minority groups begin to prefer hyphenated identities such as African-British or Asian-British which they believe can refer to their true roots and identities. The most striking information on the identities of the youth comes from the study conducted for the Camelot Foundation by Ipsos MORI: "[…] Britishness is relatively less important and does not feature on the list of personal traits which helps define personal identity" ("Young People" 19). Furthermore, this study adds that "[t]he British identity can be seen as more of a legal requirement or construct" ("Young People" 28). Since the study is conducted with young people in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Island without disregarding the ethnic background of the participants, it can be argued that Britishness has failed to unite different nations and ethnic backgrounds in the UK. Rather, young people perceive Britishness as something one can construct to get a benefit from. Accordingly, Britishness might be interpreted by others as an indication of

that person's birth place, a British education, and one's relation to the country. Hence, it is not adopted by the minorities who are classified as "Black" as the core definition of their identity. This case is further explained by Morrell:

> Historically, Britain existed only as a political arrangement and the events, symbols and institutions associated with it: the British Empire, the British economy, the monarcy, the flag or the BBC. Consequently, it is perhaps not surprising that the extent of British 'culture', even up until 1980s, was looked upon 'purely in terms of heritage, a monument which needed tending'. […] British citizenship, as a result of its territorial coverage, was primarily used as a tool of control and held up as an emblem of the reach of the British Empire. (32)

Britishness, as a result, began to be rejected by the subjects of the former colonies in order not to be reminded of their colonial past. The link between Britishness and whiteness is underlined by the Parekh Report as follows: "The unstated assumption remains that Britishness and whiteness go together, like roast beef and Yorkshire pudding" (Parekh 25). Hence, Bridie's construction of an American identity with her American accent to disclaim her ties with Britishness and the British Empire can partly be explained in line with the above-mentioned research and studies. Since Britishness is a constructed idea as well, Bridie, consequently, chooses to create a different identity for herself other than Britishness. Rather than adopting the Queen's English, which can be interpreted as representing a certain level of education and social status, Bridie prefers an American accent to construct an American identity that is unrelated to the imperial history of the UK and the social classes in British society.

From a different perspective, Bridie's adoption of an American accent can also be interpreted as politicisation of her blackness, although the opposite of this argument has been put forward. Bridie's not hiding behind the black history and not using the victim psychology in her relationship with the courier girls, as in the case of Lyla and Lou, leads to the perception that she treats her blackness as a biological fact rather than a political one. Making a choice between being perceived either as British or American, however, creates a politicised identity. Discussing the idea of multiculturalism, Modood draws attention to the notion that citizenship should mean more than just a legal status: "I have emphasized that this citizenship has to be seen in a plural, dispersed and dialogical way and not reduced to legal rights, passports and the franchise" (146).

Parekh, too, draws attention to this difference Modood discusses: "Citizenship is about status and rights, belonging is about being accepted and feeling welcome" (*Rethinking* 342). The national identity perceived as necessary by Modood (146) is adopted by Bridie in the play in the form of an American identity. Bridie cannot express a sense of belonging either towards the country she was born in or the country she legally belongs to, which renders her understanding of the concepts of citizenship, nationality and belonging highly complicated. Modood further argues that "[i]f too many white people do not feel the power of Britishness, it will only be a legal concept and other identities will prevail, including ones that will be damaging to multicultural citizenship" (151). Bridie, in this respect, approaches her British identity as a legal concept, just like perceiving her blackness as a biological fact. On the contrary, she prefers to politicise her identity by adopting an American identity beyond the legal and biological frame. Hence, by choosing an American identity, as opposed to a British identity, Bridie constructs an identity for herself that is beyond her blackness. In other words, it is possible to argue that she rejects her blackness in order to acquire a different identity than her ethnic background allows. Based on Parekh's argument, national identity "[…] should be so defined that it includes all its citizens and makes it possible for them to identify with it. National identity is about who belongs to the community and is entitled to make claims on it" (*Rethinking* 232). Through her American accent, Bridie redefines her national identity to be able to include her constructed identity.

Along with the possible interpretations of Bridie's American accent, a dialogue between Lou, Lyla, and Bridie in scene five hints at a completely different understanding of Bridie's racial identity. When the sisters meet Bridie at a hotel's bar, after a couple of drinks they begin to chat about themselves sincerely. Approaching Bridie as a true friend, they reveal their future plans:

> Lou: […] Me and Lyla was hoping that if we start up a little that we could get a little money together, save up enough to buy a little house outside the community.
> Lyla: Why you don't just go and tell her all you little daydream. (*to Bridie*) One day we going be so rich we going buy a house in Beverly Hills. (1.5.25)

Since both sisters are unaware of Bridie's background in Kingston because of the American accent Bridie performs, Bridie responds as expected: "In the US?" (1.5.25).

The sisters are amused by Bridie's response as she refers to Beverly Hills in California rather than Beverly Hills in Kingston, Jamaica. While Lou and Lyla think that it is a dream to have a house in Beverly Hills, Kingston, Bridie offers even higher aspirations for them. Thus, how Bridie understands Beverly Hills reinforces her image as a successful business woman who comes from the upper class further. She gives the signal that even the sisters can earn enough to afford a life in Beverly Hills, California if they follow her in the drugs business. Moreover, Bridie's response corresponds with her luxurious lifestyle as Lou and Lyla have already marked with envy. Nevertheless, Bridie's ignorance about the names of place can also be understood as challenging the hints she provides about her identity. Unavoidably, such ignorance leads one to reconsider Bridie's confession to Lou about being originally from Trenchtown. In fact, Bridie could just be lying to Lou in order to establish a link with her, so that she can transform Lou into a reliable courier who aspires to have Bridie's lifestyle and success characterised by a journey from Trenchtown to London. Beyond these discussions, it is obvious that Bridie has black skin. Whether she is American, British, or has a hyphenated identity, it can be argued that she constructs a certain identity to be understood situationally regardless of her black skin. In other words, Bridie ascribes political meaning to her blackness depending on the conditions and people. Her position is justified by Nayak as well: "[…] the newer set of representations do not entirely eclipse the older; they overlap and coexist in a field of shifting relations that allow the sign of blackness to convey multiple meanings, subject to context and situation" (145). Bridie conceptualises her race based on what other people want to think of her according to the established stereotypes and prejudices. Her approach can be explained by the study conducted by Morning (1185) which argues that rather than offering a fixed definition, people describe race based on a specific situation as discussed in the first chapter. Morrell refers to such perception as well: "The identity of an individual plays different roles in different social settings […]" (31). While the play does not present a deeper discussion of racial identity, especially in the case of Bridie, her blackness and her American accent around other characters, the moments between Lou and Lyla, and Bridie in scenes five and seven draw attention to how Bridie takes advantage of constructed identities, of blackness, for the sake of her interests.

Consequently, Bridie's image as a successful woman in the drug business comes before any of her possible identities, including her blackness.

In the play, Lou and Lyla are the other characters whose black identity is given along with other details about their background story. The sisters and their story are an example for girls who are involved in drug courier positions out of financial necessities. The sisters are introduced in scene three as they make a sale at a marketplace. This scene introduces their economic difficulties in addition to drawing attention to the close relationship between the two. The sisters try to survive alone in their poverty since they do not have anybody to rely on: "All we have is each other. We have a mother but she sleep naked a roadside. Sometime I see her I have to turn my head away like as if I don't know her" (1.7.31). Lou and Lyla's representation in the play is based on the hardships they experience in Jamaica. On the other hand, Jamaica is depicted by Lou and Lyla as a place for the pleasure of others who have money. "You in Jamaica for work or pleasure?" (1.5.25) asks Lyla to Bridie indicating that there are two reasons for people to come to Jamaica: either to enjoy the weather and scenery just like exemplified in *Talking in Tongues* or to conduct business such as drug trafficking. Hence, there are two sides of Jamaica mentioned in the play. While there is a Jamaican image promoted for the outsiders, like the "tourists clubs" (1.5.28) Lyla and Lou refer to, there is also a second, more realistic world in which locals try to survive as portrayed in scene fourteen. Life is extremely difficult in Trenchtown for its citizens. This is the world in which people cannot find a job with a decent wage, mothers disappear leaving their children behind, and people are faced with crime and violence every minute.

The story of Lou and Lyla, which is about their sufferings and poverty in Trenchtown, functions for exemplifying the background story which is full of hardships that force the girls to be involved in the drug business. Conditions are so harsh and it is so difficult to find a decent job that Lyla ends up working on a ganja field in order to support her family while Lou is in prison. The reason behind Bridie's motivation to support Lyla upon Lou's arrest is not clear. It can be argued that she empathises with the sisters because of their shared background. Hence, Bridie offers Lyla a less dangerous work in Jamaica: "This'll be the equivalent of a desk job. You'd like that wouldn't you? This

friend of mine owns a plantation and he's always looking for people to work on it. It's safe, easy work" (2.14.59). Bridie further explains the conditions for this possible job offer as follows: "You'll have a way to travel to work each day, although you could pick up the little minibus that Cooper lays on for his employees. The pay won't be as good as when you were working for me, but better than for most jobs you'd get round here. That is, if you could find anything round here" (2.14.61). Bridie is honest when offering a job to Lyla. There is no way out for Lyla from the poverty and misery she endures in Trenchtown but to accept Bridie's offer to work for her friend. The sisters' representation can be interpreted as an example for the white society's stereotypical and prejudiced approach towards black people associating them with crime. After her experience as a smuggler, Lyla continues being a part of the drug business. The objective representation of life in Trenchtown presents the reason for Lou's and Lyla's actions, affecting the readers and/or the audience not to be judgemental of the sisters.

Moreover, Lyla's employment on a ganja field can be interpreted in relation to the colonial past of Jamaica. The involvement of Jamaica in the drug business by supplying workers to be employed in different positions, serves a certain demand indicating that black people are also victimised by the drug cartel due to their difficult living conditions in their homeland. As Reitz points out, "[w]hile the commodification of the British-born couriers points to an intracultural conflict, with Olu, and subsequently the Jamaican sisters Lyla and Lou, a layer of intercultural confrontation is also added. The white, drug-consuming Western society does not care about how many thirdworld citizens are sacrificed in the upkeep of the supply-lines" (48). Hence, on a ganja field, Lyla cannot escape from working for the mother country even if it is in the illegal drug business. This is indicated by Gilroy as follows: "Racism involves a mode of exploitation and domination that is not merely compatible with the phenomena of racialized differences but has amplified and projected them in order to remain intelligible, habitable, and productive" (*After Empire* 32-33). The sisters are exposed to similar exploitation and domination even decades after the rule of the British Empire has come to an end. The ending of the play justifies Sakellaridou's argument as well: "Pinnock complicates her main story with three subplots, thus giving a dire collective picture of the fate of young black females in ex-colonies and the English metropolis, although her main focus

remains the neo-colonial state of Jamaica" (391). This idea is indicated by Tycer, too: "*Mules* combines Pinnock's ongoing concerns with postcolonial cultural exchange with her contemporary's depictions of the drug world" (231). Hence, Pinnock's *Mules* suggests that a new form of exploitation continues under a new neo-colonial attitude that aims to benefit from the poverty of black people in the former British colonies.

This exploitation can be related to the Rastafarian movement since ganja – marijuana – is significant for Rastafarianism. Rastafari is considered an African-origin religion. According to Savishinsky, "[…] for many young people in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora, Rastafari serves as a potent symbol and expression of defiance, independence, racial pride and solidarity" (19-20) since the African community is in exile and African people should be the superior community. Primarily the movement aims to provide hope and meaning for black people who have been exploited by the white society for centuries. Edmonds also states that "[w]hat is clear is that Rastafarianism is one of the most complex and insightful reactions to colonialism and the oppression of blacks that has emerged in the last hundred years" (ix). For this ideological and religious movement, marijuana is a symbolic herb: "Foremost among the herbs, that Rastas treasure is ganja, which they often refer to as the 'holy herb' or 'wisdom weed'" (60). On the one hand, ganja fields, where marijuana is grown, are important for the economy of the community. On the other hand, marijuana is considered to be sacred for its meaning in religious ceremonies and in healing processes based on biblical references (Edmonds 61). Hence, the emphasis on the ganja field in the play, highlights the black identity of Lou and Lyla. From the ideological perspective of the Rastafarian movement, Lyla's employment on a ganja field can be interpreted as an indication of the black pride she should feel. Nevertheless, as a worker, Lyla is still a victim of Western exploitation that Rastafarianism revolts against.

Along with Bridie, Lou and Lyla, Olu is the last character in *Mules* whose racial identity is specified. On the list of characters, she is defined as an illegal Nigerian immigrant. In scene two, she is introduced as a wretched and stinking girl from the perspective of Allie. At the first meeting, Olu frankly tells her story to Allie:

> Olu: I am a runaway myself. From Nigeria, the underground. They get you false papers, passports. They organize everything, but they certainly make you earn the favours they do you. That's why I'm in the state I am now. […] You wouldn't believe what they made me do. They made me smuggle drugs. Yes. Made me insert packets of coke into my vagina. I had to do about thirty runs before they considered that I had repaid my debt. […] In my vagina they made me smuggle those drugs and then when they had no use for me they left me to fend for myself. (1.2.9)

Similar to Lou and Lyla's lives, Olu, too, narrates heartbreaking story detailing her reason in being involved in the drug business. Olu's experience is also defined by poverty and despair. This despair is clearly linked to British colonialism and later with the immigration acts of the UK. Falola and Heaton summarise the colonisation of the region known as Nigeria today as follows: "The power and influence of the British became tangible from around the middle of the nineteenth century, and by the end of the century circumstances has led to a dovetailing of British interests that resulted in the colonial occupation of the territories that would become Nigeria" (85). The interest in the region is further discussed by Falola and Heaton who explain the colonisation of Nigeria by the British Empire as follows:

> The spread of Christian missionaries and British trading interests and, after the 1880s, the need to keep out French and German interests dovetailed, influencing the decisions of the consuls appointed to oversee British affairs in the coastal states of the Bights of Benin and Biafra to interfere more and more heavily in the local politics of the coastal states from the 1850s. Interference in local politics eventually led to direct British control of the coastal states between 1861 and 1885. (93)

Soon, the region began to be controlled by the Royal Niger Company with the Grant permitted by the Royal House. The colonial rule by the United Kingdom, as can be observed in other colonies, introduced westernisation to the region and its people, including English becoming the language of education. After a long struggle, "[o]n October 1, 1960, Nigeria became a fully sovereign state in the British Commonwealth" (Falola and Heaton 156). Although Nigeria gained her independence, the country suffered unrest due to economic problems and civil war. Moreover, British rule resulted in an identity problem regarding the country's national identity since the British were interested in the region for their own interests as Nicholas J. White points out:

> A key element in Labour's strategy of colonial political change was certainly long term: the creation of a multiracial Commonwealth to preserve British world economic and political influence. The Commonwealth was a free association of self-governing states linked together by common cultural, economic and strategic interests. Commonwealth membership in the past had served as an effective mechanism for preserving British economic and strategic interests in the 'white' Dominions whose full equality and independence within the Commonwealth had been confirmed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931. (25)

Such a vision created problems among Nigerians when they wanted to establish national unity. While the country strived to establish a national identity, some Nigerians immigrated primarily to the UK and other African and middle Eastern countries to escape from the unrest in their country only to discover similar problems in the Mother country. According to the BBC, based on the census, "[t]he Nigerian-born population rose in percentage terms over the 10 years up to 2001, reflecting growth in African communities in Britain" ("Born Abroad"). Entering the UK at a later date than African-Caribbeans, Nigerian people began to contribute to the black population of the UK at a time when British society had begun to question the position of black immigrants in British society. Nigerian immigrants faced severe problems upon entering the country at a time when British society had already become hostile toward non-white immigrants. Hence, it can be argued that Nigerians suffered mostly due to the colonial acts of the UK not only during the colonisation process but even after they gained their independence. The degraded situation of the Nigerians, due to British colonisation, as immigrants in the UK is touched upon by the Parekh Report: "The UK is the only country in the EU to have dealt with the problems of decolonisation by creating virtually worthless second-class citizenships for some of its ex-colonial nationals" (Parekh 206). Olu, in the play, can be pointed out as exemplifying the second-class situation of Nigerian born people in the UK due to their colonial background.

In addition to coming from former colonial Nigeria, Olu's background as an illegal immigrant is further significant when the problematic aspects of the British immigration policy after the 1950s are exposed. Olu exemplifies the despair experienced by the immigrants from the former colonies who arrived at the mother country to have better living conditions, but faced harsh British policies. Although the Nationalities Act of 1948 enabled the members of the former colonies to enter the country as legal citizens

of the UK, the hostile attitude towards black immigrants began with the 1950s. As discussed in detail in the Introduction, a series of acts were passed which aimed at regulating the relations between the immigrants and the white society and restricting incoming immigrants from the former colonies. This is explained by Solomos as follows: "Since it was the outcome of a sustained political campaign against black immigration it is not surprising that, despite claims to the contrary, the main clauses of the Act [the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Bill] sought to control the entry of black Commonwealth citizens into Britain" (58). Restrictions towards non-white immigrants continued to be applied with the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968 which limited "the entry of British citizens without close ties to the UK" (Julios 96). Further measures were taken against the entry of unwanted black immigrants in 1971 as Childs explains:

> At the election the Conservatives had promised that 'work permits will not carry the right of permanent settlement' and that 'immigration will be allowed only in strictly defined special cases'. The Immigration Act, 1971 was designed to redeem these pledges. Under it, permits replaced the former employment vouchers and enabled the holder to remain in Britain initially for one year only, with no automatic right to bring their dependants. The Act created a new category of immigrant – 'Patrials' – individuals having close ties with Britain, by birth for instance, who can come without restrictions. The Act strengthened the law to prevent illegal immigration and introduced a scheme of financial assistance for immigrants seeking voluntary repatriation. (171)

As pointed out, each act that was introduced to regulate and control incoming immigrants into the UK discriminated against the non-white immigrants further reducing the significance of the inhabitants of the former colonies. While race relations and immigration policies seem to be the hot topic of the 1960s and the 1970s, they can be even traced to contemporary times as an ongoing issue in the UK. In this respect, Julios draws attention to an act that was passed in 2002 introducing a so-called new phase in race relations:

> The *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, in particular, which provided a blueprint for the future shape of the country's citizenship and immigration policy, spelt out the government's vision of a British nation inhabited by British citizens committed to the British way of life. Newcomers, whose distinct ethnic makeup and traditions had until recently been celebrated as contributing to the UK's multicultural brand, are now required to integrate into mainstream society. (135)

Hence, it can be argued that through the 2002 Act, Britishness was once again intended to be introduced as an upper identity for all citizens regardless of their ethnic background. Nevertheless, at the time the 2002 Act passed, the UK was strictly eliminating immigration requests from the former colonies due to the racial reasons. Within this background, Olu stands affected by these strict restrictions in the immigration policies. Along with the problems in Nigeria observed after the country's independence, the restrictions in the immigration policies forced Olu to search for an alternative way to go to the UK. From this perspective, Olu can be taken as a victim of the system. The conditions forced Olu to find an alternative way, such as being involved in the drug business, in order to save herself. Thus, her blackness has a political meaning referring to the impact of the UK's immigration policies towards non-white subjects from the former colonies. In this case, Olu's being a Nigerian, a black person, carries a political significance reflecting the political understanding of blackness by British society. While representing one of the numerous reasons for women's involvement in the drug business, Pinnock also signifies that women of colour end up being drug mules due to the racial discriminations they face.

Olu as a black illegal immigrant from Nigeria becomes even more significant when her condition is compared to that of Allie's who is introduced to the readers and/or the audience in scene two along with Olu. Contrary to the miserable representation of Olu, Allie is introduced as a young woman who is confident and has self-esteem. Allie is a runaway, who left her home to find a chance to survive on her own in London. Allie rents a room despite her little money and begins to dream about getting a position as a waitress to sustain herself in the big city. Her expectations from life make herself confident as can be observed in her chat with the landlady:

> Rose: Got a job have you?
> Allie: Waitressing in a restaurant on Oxford Street. We get huge tips. (1.2.6)

Allie expresses her self-assurance once again towards the end of the scene: "We've all had it hard, in't we, but I'd never let myself get so low" (1.2.10). Regardless of her promise to herself, the rest of the play presents Allie as a character who begs on the streets and accepts being a mule. Nevertheless, behind Allie's self-esteem and

determination another tragic story is hidden. In scene ten, Allie reveals why she ran away from her home and family: "When my dad left [my mother] said it would be just me and her and then she took in the first man who showed an interest in her. […] He was a creep, crept all over the house at night and all over me, fucking bastard. […] He smelt of beer, fags and piss. I can still smell him" (2.10.47-48). Throughout Allie's confession, Bridie acts out, once again, the role of the caring sister and/or friend assuring Allie that she, too, has suffered: "My mother abandoned me when I was a child. I've been fending for myself since I was fourteen years old" (2.10.48). Hence, Bridie provides the necessary friendliness showing Allie that she cares about her. On the other hand, this background story finally reveals why Allie feels the need to be self-confident and to have a new life on her own. The abuse she experienced from her step father forced Allie to run away with a little amount of money with which she had to start a new life. Although not specified in the play, it is obvious that she comes from a small town and has no idea about the hardships a big city may bring. For Allie, unfortunate events begin in scene four when she is fooled by two muggers, Pepper and Piglet. Later in this scene, however, Allie is befriended by Pepper and Piglet. After briefly showing her the sights in London and reassuring her that they intend to help her and be friends, Piglet and Pepper drug Allie's coke and make her dose off. As a result, Allie loses the only money she has. She cannot find a job and, without money, she soon finds herself on the street. At the end of scene eight, Bridie comes to save Allie from her desperation and offers her a job.

The impact of Allie's story in *Mules* increases when it is compared to Olu's story in terms of the social conditions of these characters in contemporary British society. In this regard, when she is in Allie's room in scene two, Olu realises that Allie is a run-away just like herself. Yet, Allie neither accepts the fact that she and Olu shared the experience of running away from home, nor thinks about the possibility that she might end up suffering just like Olu. Hence, Allie rejects Olu and her attempt to be friends because she believes that she is much better than Olu: "Tomorrow I'm gonna get me a job waitressing in a restaurant, I'll get me a nice crisp uniform with a big pocket for costumer's tips – I ain't no stinking rat" (1.2.9). Allie compares herself to Olu and comes to the conclusion that she is luckier than her. Allie's attitude can be explained by

Parekh's following comment: "Human beings are also capable of dreaming dreams of better conditions, comparing themselves with other members of society, demanding justification for their differential treatment, and seeing through specious and self-serving arguments" (*Rethinking* 158). Allie's comparison is strictly based on their experiences as run-away youth in London rather than being based on race. Contrary to Allie's expectations, Olu stands in front of her foreshadowing Allie's fate, representing the future Allie has to face.

The next confrontation between these two similar characters occurs in scene six when Allie encounters Olu as the former is begging on the streets. This time, different from the experience in scene two, the two characters change their roles. Allie asks for money for a cup of tea and narrates her story to Olu in order to get her sympathy:

> Allie: I was mugged. My landlady chucked me out of her house because I couldn't afford the rent. I'm all alone in the city. I haven't eaten for two weeks. I'm not very good at begging.
> Olu: And is that my fault? By the look of you, you are strong and healthy. Why don't you look for a job? The rest of us have to work very hard for our money. Do you think that we're going to squander it away on people like you? You make me sick.
> Allie: Please. I used to be just like you, had a job, family. My skin was soft just like yours.
> Olu: Look, I'd like to help you, but I have nothing myself. All I have are a few coppers. […] (1.6.28-29)

The conversation between Allie and Olu at first indicates their changing roles. One example to this is the reference to soft skin. In the second scene Olu asks Allie: "Do you have any moisturizer? My skin is so dry" (1.2.9). In scene six, it is Allie who compares her skin with Olu's. Hence, the softness of their skin represents their well-being while indicating their changing roles. It may be said that Allie has reached a certain level of understanding of Olu's behaviour in her room earlier in scene two. However, the play, in fact, intends to underline the common problems of Allie and Olu. Both characters end up suffering similarly, and are saved by Bridie and drawn into the drug business.

It can be argued that racial issues are ruled out in the representation of these two characters. While Olu is a black character, as an immigrant from Nigeria, the racial identity of Allie is not revealed explicitly. As a racially ambiguous character, Allie's

position contributes to the understanding of blackness, especially in comparison to Olu. When the common problems experienced by Allie and Olu are taken into consideration, it can be claimed that race loses its significance with a racially ambiguous character. Contrary to the prejudices discussed above, the uncertainty about Allie's race suggests that involvement in the drug business cannot necessarily be linked to race and blackness in particular. Pinnock's *Mules* makes it clear that it is not one's race that forms a potential to be involved in crime. The similarities between a black girl and a racially ambiguous girl deliver the message that regardless of their racial identities, any one who has financial problems or problems with her/his family or society might end up being a mule. Hence, the play aims to demolish the prejudices against black people as criminals. In other words, Pinnock rejects the idea that the racial identity of a person is determinate of her/his behaviours and her/his perception by society. Anne Marie Smith points out that "'race' was defined by the New Right ["right-wing figures such as Powell and Thatcher"] as a cultural category, with respect to language, rituals, traditions and values rather than physical features alone" (54). As a response to such a definition, Pinnock rejects the fixed understanding of racial identities. To a certain extent, the representation of Olu and Allie exemplifies the situational understanding of blackness as political and biological. In view of the socially constructed prejudices, it is not necessary for Olu to be Black in order to suffer and end up being a smuggler when she is compared to a racially ambiguous character like Allie. Her blackness is limited to her skin colour, as being biologically black, since it is the living conditions that force both Olu and Allie into the drug business. Therefore, with the representation of these two characters, Pinnock aims to enable the readers and/or the audience to perceive racial identities from a different perspective as opposed to the established views. Thus, Pinnock contributes to the struggle of redefining multiculturalism as Modood asserts: "Namely, the primary interest of multiculturalism is not in culture per se but in the political uses of non-European origin ethnic and related identities, especially in turning their negative and stigmatic status into a positive feature of the societies that they are now part of" (43).

Besides their racial identity, Allie and Olu represent different legal conditions as one is a legal citizen of the UK and the other is an illegal citizen. This also questions the general perception that illegal immigrants are a threat to society from different aspects.

According to Modood, there are "different ways of being British" (126) that is beyond the legal framework. Allie's Britishness, in this sense, fits into this limited perception rather than carrying ideological meanings. Hence, it is neither their legal status in the UK nor their racial identities that determine Allie's and Olu's psychological and financial sufferings. Rather than representing a race or ethnicity, or a political meaning, Olu and Allie stand as individuals.

Apart from the four black characters, Bridie, Lyla, Lou, and Olu, the racial identities of the rest of the characters are not specified in the play. Allie, Rog, Sammie, Pepper, Piglet, Rose, and the bad girls are racially ambiguous characters. Among them, only Rog and Sammie, Bridie's colleagues, are referred to as English. Although it is not indicated in the play that both characters are white, the specification "English" gives the impression that they could be white based on the general association of whiteness with Englishness. While this perception has been previously discussed in the Introduction, Tizard and Phoenix's research conducted among young people of mixed parentage points at this idea once again:

> Part of the reason for the lack of warmth in their feeling about England was probably the view, expressed by half of them, that to be English is to be white. For this reason, even for those who thought of themselves as English, their Englishness was problematic. They tended to associate the concept 'English' with kings and queens and the life of the white upper class, in which they had no part. (87)

These assumptions leave the readers with the impression that Rog and Sammie are white characters. While Rog and Sammie's racial identity is not significant for the play's plotline, juxtaposing them with black Bridie contributes to the message that the drug business is not only a race-related problem. Hence, the play, once again, challenges the assumptions and the prejudices of the white society. Moreover, such interpretations conclude that Pinnock has a highly objective view towards the characters and the theme of the play. What *Mules* presents is beyond a racial issue. The characters are not categorised as "Black" or "white." Individual characters are depicted highlighting the motif behind their involvement in the drug business as couriers. In addition, these characters are dragged into this fate not due to their personal reasons or weaknesses. It is obvious that there are hidden reasons in the form of economic and

personal problems beyond personal traits. In this respect, race plays a very sensitive role in the situations depicted in Pinnock's *Mules.* The significance of race in each individual's life is signified by Lopez as follows:

> Race dominates our personal lives. It manifests itself in our speech, dance, neighbors, and friends […] Race determines our economic prospects. The race-conscious market screens and selects us for manual jobs and professional careers, red-lines financing for real estate, green-lines our access to insurance, and even raises the price of that car we need to buy. Race permeates our politics. It alters electoral boundaries, shapes the disbursement of local, state, and federal funds, fuels the creation and collapse of political alliances, and twists the conduct of law enforcement. In short, race mediates every aspect of our lives. (965)

However, in this play, by means of racial ambiguity, individuals are not forced to conform to the established racial roles. On the contrary, the readers and/or the audience perceive these characters as influenced by historical and social prejudices. As the play intends to demonstrate, it is significant to approach these characters as individuals who are not defined as racial stereotypes.

Although race has been strictly discussed based on the play's printed script up to this moment, the casting information at the play's premiere needs to be considered as well since the play's performance on stage challenges racial understandings, too. As stated previously, the play has been staged twice by two different companies with the choice of three actresses playing all of the characters although "*Mules* was initially written for a [racially] mixed cast" (Sakellaridou 391). This choice conflicts with the policy of Clean Break Theatre as Goddard specifies: "Clean Break Theatre Company's active multi-racial casting policy means that their plays often have mixed casts no matter what the race of the writer" (*Staging* 61). The revival of the play at the Young Vic Theatre presents four actresses as indicated in the review by Nick Curtis who finds the play "strong on character and mood." While these choices indicate the power of the director regarding the interpretation of the text, they also alter the meaning of the play from the perspective of racial issues. Catanese, according to the definition set by Clinton Turner Davis and Harry Newman, classifies non-traditional castings in four subcategories:

> Societal Casting: ethnic, female or disabled actors are cast in roles they perform in society as a whole.

> Cross-cultural casting: the entire world of a play is translated to a different cultural setting.
> Conceptual casting: an ethnic, female or disabled actor is cast in a role to give a play greater resonance.
> Blind casting: all actors are cast without regard to their race, ethnicity, gender or physical capability. (12)

Mules can be considered as an example for a play that requires a non-traditional casting. More importantly, beyond its non-traditional casting, the director's choice of a sub-category has a great impact on the understanding of *Mules*. In this regard, Catanese further states that

> [s]ocietal casting takes a pragmatic approach to the hypervisibility of whiteness by suggesting that if we only cast our stages as we live our lives, diversity will automatically increase. Conceptual and cross-cultural casting, however, both tend toward the pluralistic, investing in the specificity of racially discrete groups, while also believing that these differences do not preclude an understanding of the racially non-specific themes a text might address. (13)

Hence, based on what is intended to be conveyed to the audience, directors might opt for different casting options. This can be clearly observed in the casting choice of the directors for *Mules* which leads to a different understanding of blackness and the relation between crime and race. Thus, unlike what has been argued so far, staging the play with an all-black cast contributes to the misunderstanding that *Mules* is about Black people and their involvement in crime. Through such a staging, one can argue that drug trafficking is a racial issue. It is because of their blackness that the characters are in the drug business and create a threat to the white society. Furthermore, it can be argued that discussing a racial problem, the play intends to reach its audience in order to convey a racial message underlying the perception that the core of the problem is Black immigrants. From the perspective of the Black audience, staging the play with an all-black cast and presenting the play as about Black people and crime create a negative warning. This delivers the message that they should refrain themselves from these specific racial problems. For the white audience, on the other hand, it has a much more striking message. The play poses more-or-less as a warning against Black people who are perceived by the white society as the cause of the problems.

The importance of the casting is especially significant for the racially ambiguous characters. In this respect, Allie's representation as a black person challenges the parallelism between Allie and Olu altering the messages of the play which intend to reflect drug problems beyond a racial issue. In the case of Allie, a juxtaposed representation with Olu as discussed previously can be replaced by a stereotypical understanding of black people as socially unsuccessful people who tend to be involved in crime. Such representation contributes to the stereotypical understanding of Black immigrants. Hence, this affects the perception of race by the audience as well, especially by the white audience who might have a much more prejudiced approach towards Black immigrants. Although the remaining characters have a limited role within the course of the events, assuming that all characters are black characters creates a problem for other minor characters as well. In this case, Allie's landlady Rose has a crucial role. As opposed to the problems black characters experience and the threats they pose to society, the black Rose represents a good example. In the background, she works hard for an honest life, and thanks to the opportunities the UK has offered, she is a property owner. Anna Marie Smith refers to the changes in the representation of black identity in the face of an image constructed with prejudice:

> As the policing of the black community became more highly organized, however, extensive efforts were made to represent the policing frontier not simply as the line between whites and blacks, but as the line between different blacknesses: the law-abiding blacks who conducted themselves in a sufficiently British manner versus the dangerous blacks who, through their criminality, proved themselves to be recalcitrantly anti-British. (98)

According to Smith's comment, Rose is juxtaposed with the other black characters who can be classified as criminals. She admits that she is not welcomed in the neighbourhood: "Truth is, they're dying to see me leave this street. That's the way of the world we live in today, isn't it?" (1.2.6). Yet, she resists the black crime and violence around her and tries to be a law-abiding citizen. The chosen "all black" casting classifies Piglet and Pepper, and the two bad girls as "dangerous blacks," contrasting with Rose, and representing a different notion of blackness. Hence, when Rose is presented as a constructive and positive example, Piglet and Pepper stand as negative examples for the Black audience while justifying the negative image of black citizens for the white audience.

Eventually, the staging of the play creates difficulties that directly affect the aim and message of the play. Although it is not the purpose of this study to compare performance through the written text, racial perception in the choice of casting needs to be touched upon briefly. According to Sauter, "[t]heater belongs predominantly to the playing culture and only to a limited degree to written culture. What is played is for the here and now, what is written is for the future. While written culture seeks preservation, playing culture immediate enactment" (5). Based on Sauter's comment, it can be argued that what is staged and how it is staged is crucial to deliver the right message and target both white and Black audiences. In this respect, racial ambiguity is necessary to highlight the message that rather than their racial identity, it is the economic, social, and even political conditions that force desperate women to be involved in the drug business. Moreover, staging the play with a mixed cast eliminates the stereotypical representation of Black people addressing both white and Black audience in the same tone. On this subject, Wandor claims that "[t]he text is not merely a 'blueprint' for performance. It is the starting point, and it remains after the live performance is done. It exists as a literary text in its own right, available for analysis and argument and debate as to its meanings. This text demands special ways of reading; it has its own special internal conditions" (6). Therefore, it can also be argued that the play's text abides by the objective point of view in academic studies as regards racial representations. Pinnock offers an objective analysis of the relation between crime and race since she herself promotes such a perspective as well: "[…] the play isn't about race and I don't see why reviewers would assume that it was. […] I don't see why one can't just see them as characters and that there are other areas being explored apart from race" (qtd. in Stephenson and Langridge 52). Beyond the reading of the play as about race, two bad girls make a conclusive comment on the general assumptions of society:

> Bad Girl 1: Main species homo-caucasian with heteroerotic tendencies. Everything else is baloney.
> Bad Girl 2: Everything else?
> Bad Girl 1: Women, criminals, blacks and children. (1.8.37)

Thus, with the comment of these unnamed characters, Pinnock delivers the message that there is not one perception of blackness available in the play. These women's conditions

from the perspective of race, gender, and social position are not different or one is not prioritised over the other. Hence, race cannot be taken as the only determiner of one's position and identity.

In relation to race and the diverse staging possibilities, *Mules* also presents another challenge. Although the play is divided into two acts, according to its published text, there is not a separate scene division in these two acts. Where the text marks the second act, the following scene is numbered without a break continuing with the number scene nine which is structurally the centre of the play. This scene does not follow the flow of the plotline. In this scene Bridie first "pretends to 'die' on stage" (2.9.43); later she describes how a courier dies from burst condoms as Olu experienced. This scene does not seem to contribute to the storyline as it is not necessary for the readers and/or the audience to know that Olu's death. Nevertheless, this descriptive scene delivers the vital message of the play by drawing attention to the inevitable fate of the smugglers. The scene gains significance for vividly describing the risk not only Olu took but all women agree to take by carrying large amount of drugs in their bodies which is pointed out by Tycer also: "The audience expects Olu's death to be revealed to be pretend: for her to sit up as Bridie did. Instead, the character of Olu is never heard from again, her onstage death symbolizing the death of countless drug couriers" (234). Bridie describes the experience as follows:

> Bridie: First you start to gasp for breath because the drug enters the blood stream and deprives you of oxygen. Then the body goes into spasms, as though you were having an epileptic fit. You'll cry out, but there will be no words because you'll have lost the facility for words. Nothing but an agonized screaming. The whole thing lasts several minutes. It's the quickest death ever. (2.9.43)

Eventually, the play makes it clear that the sufferings of these women are more significant than their racial identities. Rather than discussing drug trafficking as a significant international issue, the play focuses on the women's lives who do not have strong family relations and are forced into the drug business mainly because of financial reasons. According to Anderson, "[t]hough it is important to offer 'positive' images of black women, it is also important to recognize the humanity of black women and offer characters who are not perfect, who may have what some might call serious 'character

flows'." We might still sympathize with them, but they must also take responsibility for their own actions." (31). By drawing attention to the struggles some women face and the risks they take, Pinnock presents female characters as Anderson expects to see on the stage. The women in *Mules* may not be perfect, but they struggle to make their lives better. Whether they will succeed or not is open to discussion since the fate of all women smugglers is already marked by Bridie: "Live like a mule, die like a mule" (2.9.43). The play, however, presents the female characters just as victims who struggle to achieve a better life despite difficulties. More importantly, the victimisation of women is not directly linked to their racial identity. Hence, to a certain extent, their racial identity as white or Black cannot alter their victimisation. Pinnock, in her interview with Stephenson and Langridge, refers to this as follows: "It's the victim thing again. […] From the time I spent in Holloway prison, it seemed to me that a lot of the women, so-called criminals, were actually taking action to provide for their families, in the way they knew how" (52). Based on Pinnock's opinion, it can be perceived that the beginning of the second act delivers the message that Pinnock builds her play upon. Reitz, not considering racial ambiguity in the play, argues that "[…] since all the protagonists in *Mules* are black, the gender-based issue of commodification becomes an issue of race as well" (47). Reitz further relates this to the victimisation of the characters: "The play does not foreground the racial implications explicitly, but it leaves the impression that the women are victimised more easily because they are black" (47). However, Reitz ignores Pinnock's intentions represented in scene nine reducing the reading of the play to a racial problem. Reitz's perception exemplifies how casting may lead to a misinterpretation of the play. Griffin, contrary to Reitz, states that "[t]he play is thus concerned not with the vicissitudes of crime but with the vicissitudes of being a female in a certain globalized economy […]" (*Contemporary* 219). Nevertheless, it is significant that at the point where a second act division is proposed, the play signifies the suffering of drug smugglers as victims more than the political identities they carry as Black or as illegal immigrants. In addition, the racial ambiguity of the characters contributes to the understanding of the women's victimisation which is more significant than their racial stand.

The title of the play *Mules* is also coherent with the themes of the play. In addition to meaning "a smuggler," other meanings of the word "mule" evoke the aim of the play through representation of racially ambiguous characters. The primary meaning of the word "the offspring of a he-ass and a mare" ("Mule") tends to be used in slang referring to inter-racial people. The *OED* also refers to the meaning of the word as "hybrid" ("Mule"), referring to plants. Hence, the usage of the word eliminates certainty. Similarly, the play eliminates the certainty of the characters' racial identities as well. As discussed regarding the position and the role of the characters, besides their employment as mules, as drug smugglers, they also embody a hybrid identity regarding their race. The hybridity of the characters is only proposed in the sense that they are not forced into an arbitrary racial identity that can be defined with an upper case 'B' as Black in a restricting manner. On the contrary, racial ambiguity enables these characters to be discussed from multiple perspectives.

Consequently, Winsome Pinnock's play *Mules* reflects the hopeless struggles of female drug smugglers. As an issue-based play, however, it evokes the discussion of race and racial relations as well. More importantly, Pinnock manages to remain quite objective about the racial standings of the characters although the staging choices of the directors regarding the racial identities of the characters can alter the understating of the play. With racially ambiguous characters, she successfully delivers the problems of her female characters as well as touching upon the racial issues that are discussed in a much more constructive manner in comparison with the recent discussions on multiculturalism. Hence, *Mules* deserves to be discussed and praised beyond the stereotypical representation of racial and gender issues as Aston also agrees: "This is a play that is not about being black and female, but about the way in which 'mules' as stateless citizens figuratively come to stand for the way in which women, across nations, face a variety of exclusions on account of their material, gender, racialised and sexualised states" (*Feminist Views* 136). Pinnock, especially from the perspective of race, uploads a positive sense to ambiguity enabling her characters to be understood situationally rather than to be judged by prejudices and as stereotypes.

CHAPTER III

A BLACK AND WHITE REVENGE IN *CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET?*

The year 1997 marked the end of Conservative rule in the UK with the election of Tony Blair as prime minister. The rise of the Labour Party brought hopes for the country's immigrant community. The Black citizens expected to have less troubled living conditions in view of the discriminations and hardships they faced in British society. Yet, the Labour ideology Blair promoted during his campaign failed to meet the demands of immigrant communities, and it did not seem to improve policies on immigration and race relations previously established by the Conservatives. Hence, Black citizens were highly disappointed since their hopes for their future and well-being in British society under the Blair government were rendered futile.

Within such a political atmosphere, Pinnock's seventh play *Can You Keep a Secret?* was first staged on 7 July 1999 at the Cottesloe Theatre in London. Evoking the significance of her previous play *Mules*, *Can You Keep a Secret?* is also an issue-based play which draws attention to institutional racism that was prevalent in the UK. The play carries onto the stage the murder of a black boy by a white boy and its aftermath as the police investigate the murder. The play thematically deals with a significant issue that was being experienced by Blacks in British society since the arrival of the first immigrants in 1948, that is racial murders in British society. More importantly, with her objective approach, Pinnock abstains from blaming either individuals or institutions for such murders. The play reflects human nature regardless of the characters' races. Consequently, this chapter aims to evaluate Pinnock's *Can You Keep a Secret?* focusing on the representation of a racial murder in order to highlight the fact that it is human psychology rather than race that brings about the actions of the characters. In this play, Pinnock once again portrays different understandings of blackness that can be carried beyond its political meaning.

Through the relationships between white and black characters, *Can You Keep a Secret?* discusses a political issue, a racial murder, the roots of which go back to the arrival of

Black immigrants even before 1948. Accordingly, although the timeline of the play corresponds to the timeline when the Labour Party gained power, racial incidents that occurred prior to 1997, while the Conservative Party was in power, need to be discussed, referring to the roots of the racial problems. As briefly surveyed in the Introduction, the mass arrival of the immigrants from the West Indies in 1948 marked the beginning of racial issues in the contemporary Britain, including racial murders. The political acts affecting the approach of the white society towards Black people in Britain contributed to the hatred killings in history. Institutional discrimination towards Black immigrants by the police and the criminal justice system as mentioned in detail in the second chapter can also be pointed out as the reasons that underline racial murders. As the number of immigrants increased, British society became hostile towards black people who entered the country holding British passports. Moreover, as job opportunities began to decrease both for white and Black citizens, racial relations in the UK became even more problematic, and this led to racial harassments and killings especial of the Black British citizens. In this respect, especially in the 1980s, Black citizens witnessed the fiercest time in relation to racial problems. Phillips points out what has changed in the attitude of British society towards Black people: "During the 1970s, the emergence of the 'skinhead' youth culture, its link with the rise in popularity of extreme right political activism was accompanied by an apparent increase in racist incidents. These developments led to an increase in official concern, and, eventually in the 1980s the police and Home Office began to keep records of 'racial incidents'" (156).

Along with the political and economic developments in the UK in Thatcher Britain during the 1980s, the rise in racial problems forced authorities to recognise these problems and take action. In this respect, the New Cross Fire in 1981, which can be considered as an example of institutional discrimination and a hatred crime against Black citizens, has a historical significance for race relations in the country. In this incident, while a group of young people were having a birthday party in a house in New Cross, southeast London, a fire broke out killing thirteen young Black people. The aftermath of the fire has classified this devastating event as one of the cornerstones for Black people living in the UK. As Dee Lahiri wrote in *The Guardian* years later, the police initially considered the fire as a racial attack. Indeed, there had been a former

complaint because of the noise, following the recent racial tension in the area. However, this option was ruled out and it was believed that the fire broke out after a fight inside the house. Nevertheless, one of the party attendees disclaimed this view of a fight, which was still disregarded by the police. Hence, even though the investigation was reopened decades later, there was still no conclusive verdict on the cause of the fire. Nevertheless, the event is significant because of the anger among the Black community in the UK. As stated, "[s]ix weeks after the fire, more than 10,000 people angered by alleged police brutality and incompetence took part in a protest march" (Lahiri). Thus, this unfortunate event united Black citizens against the discrimination of the police force. As further underlined, "[m]ost of the families bereaved by the tragedy now accept that the fire was started by someone inside the house. But given the history of the investigation, doubts will inevitably remain about the police's version of events" (Lahiri).

In addition to the New Cross Fire in 1981, the Brixton Riots in 1981 and in 1985 can be considered as two other significant events exemplifying racial discrimination by the police. As a sign of the rage of the Black society against the officials in the UK, Brixton turned into a war zone as both the police and the Black community attacked each other. When a Black woman was shot by mistake, another wave of hatred towards the police led to the Brixton Riots in 1985. Since then, the Brixton Riots are considered to be important landmarks in the history of race relations in Britain (Parekh, "Integrating Minorities" 19) exemplifying the destruction of institutionalised racism and the importance of communal union by Black people. Because of these events, the race problem in the UK was perceived in a new perspective by the Thatcher government indicating the necessity for new race regulations. However, despite the new measures that aimed to decrease the number of immigrants in the UK for the purpose of reducing violence as seen in the example of Brixton, racial violence increased. According to Phillips,

> [t]he attempt to explain the extent of violent racism as a reaction to "the numbers" is consistent with the assumption that policies to reduce the number of immigrants would reduce the extent of violence targeted against them. […] [However,] [a]mong the periods of most ferocious racist violence in the UK was 1981 in the

> immediate aftermath of the 1981 Nationality Act which ended 'primary immigration' from former colonies in the Caribbean and Africa […]. (160)

Hence, in line with the political developments regarding race relations, racist violence has continued to be an issue in the UK. In this regard, it must be asserted that there have been other victims of this racist attitude in the following years. For example, Rolan Adams and Joy Gardner can be named as two people among many others who suffered because of the racial murders and were affected by the discrimination of the police. Joy Gardner died in 1993 while he was in police custody for deportation (Cohen). Rolan Adams, on the other hand, was stabbed to death by a group of young white people in the same year (Palmer and Barrett). Both Gardner's and Adams's deaths exemplify the continuation of racial incidents and the institutionalised racism that existed in the UK despite the political developments. This is underlined by Ponnuswami as well: "The 1990s were also, of course, a period of continuing tensions between black communities and the mainly white Metropolitan Police Service, most significantly in relation to the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the 1995 riots following the death of Wayne Douglas in police custody" ("The Social" 87). These unfortunate events also indicate the failure of the Conservative Party in regulating race relations in the first half of the 1990s. Moreover, the racial tension in society that existed throughout the 1980s and 1990s became campaign material for Tony Blair as late as his campaign in 1997 to get the support of the immigrant communities. Nevertheless, this racial tension could not be settled until the Macpherson Report of 1999.

In spite of the social and legal changes, such as the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the *Windrush* in 1998 and the revisions made in the Race Relations Act since the 1980s until the contemporary era, the Institute of Race Relations reports that "since the death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 that at least ninety-six people have died in such attacks" ("96 Murders") with the average of five killings per year. What makes these racial murders even more depressing is that most of these killings did not make the news according to the *Institute of Race Relations*. Moreover, these killings were ignored by the politicians because "[f]or politicians the issue has been dealt with in the Macpherson Report of 1999" ("96 Murders"). The recent statistics on racial violation is available through the UK Ministry of Justice and Home Office, along with

numerous studies conducted by the university research centres and independent institutions, and the death of Stephen Lawrence still marks the high point of the debates ending “Britain’s denial about racism” (Cathcart).

Stephen Lawrence, born to Jamaican parents who were a carpenter and a teacher in 1974, was an ordinary boy who was described by his family as academically promising. The website of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust depicts Stephen as follows: “Stephen was just like most young people, juggling an active social life, school work, family commitments and part time employment. He had ambitions to use his talent for maths, art and design to become an architect and he wanted to have a positive impact on his community” (“Stephen’s Story”). However, Stephen was murdered on 22 April 1993 while he was waiting for a bus with a friend. The murder was described in the official report as follows:

> Stephen Lawrence had been with his friend Duwayne Brooks during the afternoon of 22 April. They were on their way home when they came at around 22:30 to the bus stop in Well Hall Road with which we are all now so familiar. Stephen went to see if a bus was coming, and reached a position almost in the centre of the mouth of Dickson Road. Mr Brooks was part of the way between Dickson Road and the roundabout when he saw the group of five or six white youths who were responsible for Stephen's death on the opposite side of the road. Mr Brooks called out to ask if Stephen saw the bus coming. One of the youths must have heard something said, since he called out *"what, what nigger?"* With that the group came quickly across the road and literally engulfed Stephen. During this time one or more of the group stabbed Stephen twice. One witness thought that Mr Brooks was also attacked in the actual physical assault, but it appears from his own evidence that he was a little distance away from the group when the killing actually took place. (Macpherson 1.2-1.3)

Although there was an eyewitness, the suspects could not be identified. It is stated that “[t]hree of the prime suspects were taken to trial in 1996 in a private prosecution which failed because of the absence of any firm and sustainable evidence” (Macpherson 2.3). Thus, none of the five suspects were convicted of this racial attack. Throughout the years, the family, Mr and Mrs Lawrence, struggled to make their voice heard and to prove to the public and the officials that Stephen was killed due to racial hatred. As a result of the boundless struggle of Stephen’s parents and the public interest, the Home Secretary became personally interested in this case. Hence, the case was reopened and re-examined resulting in The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Report of an Inquiry by Sir

William Macpherson of Cluny, known as the Macpherson Inquiry as well. Ultimately, the verdict, "Stephen Lawrence was unlawfully killed in a completely unprovoked racist attack by five white youths" (2.5) was made public by the inquest jury. Despite an apparently objective system of investigations in the UK, it is clear that "[w]ithout the commitment and character of Mr and Mrs Lawrence it is difficult to doubt that the Inquiry would not have taken place; without the Inquiry there would have been no 'Lawrence agenda'" (Savage 38).

Moreover, the inquiry acknowledged a significant fact about the murder investigation six years after the murder: "The investigation was marred by a combination of professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership by senior officers" (46.1). Thus, reconsidering the evidence, statements of the witnesses and the family, and going over the investigation handled by the Metropolitan Police officers, the report officially declared that institutional racism was practised. This is indicated in *The Independent* as well: "Some of the most memorable moments of the Macpherson Inquiry of 1998-99 involved the exploration of denial among police officers involved in the first, failed investigation of the murder" (Cathcart). Further, on the significance of the Stephen Lawrence case it is stated that "[i]t was the first time that black people with a grievance had been vindicated in such a way" (Cathcart). Furthermore, the report was concluded with 70 recommendations by Macpherson for the betterment of racial relations. Macpherson groups the recommendations under the subtitles of "Openness, Accountability and the Restoration of Confidence," "Definition of Racist Incident," "Reporting and Recording of Racist Incidents and Crimes," "Police Practice and the Investigation of Racist Crime," "Family Liaison," "Victims and Witnesses," "Prosecution of Racist Crimes," "Training," "Stop and Search," and "Prevention and the Role of Education." These titles indicate the aim to arouse awareness for the necessity of equal treatment of Black citizens by the police force. Although these recommendations primarily refer to the police force for the improvement of their credibility, the suggestions could be applied in other institutions such as the judicial system, the local government and the school system as well. Bourne comments on the Inquiry and its impact in the UK as follows:

> It has led to new ethnic recruitment and retention policies in the police force and the institution of equality performance targets. It has created a new definition of a racial incident which changes the way that the police are obliged to investigate racial violence. And it ushered in an amendment to the Race Relations Act which, for the first time, brought, not only the police but all public bodies under the full force of the law and bound them to actively promote racial equality. ("The Life and Times" 13)

Clearly, many public institutions were asked to approach racial issues in a new perspective that ensured racial equality. Similarly, the significance of the inquiry is underlined by Gilroy, too: "MacPherson's epoch-making report anchored the most recent phase of reforms and helped to bring anti-racist goals closer to the governmental process" (*After Empire* 112). Hence, it is apparent that the Macpherson report challenged the understanding of racism and race relations in the UK, at least in theory. This is underlined by Hesse as well:

> Since that time, up until the publication in February 1999 of the MacPherson public inquiry into the racist murder of Black teenager Stephen Lawrence, the question of racism had virtually been eliminated from the vernacular of British public culture. Despite the best efforts of local community organizations in highlighting the rise in racist attacks, continuing deaths of Black people in police custody and punitively unjust asylum and refugee laws, racism had become a non-issue in the public sphere. (9)

Combined with the discrimination the Metropolitan Police performed against black citizens throughout the investigation, the death of Stephen has been a public issue since 1993. It was finally in 2012 that Gary Dobson and David Norris were found guilty. Dobson was sentenced to fifteen years, while Norris was sentenced to fourteen years for murdering Stephen Lawrence. Nevertheless, more than the conclusion of the trial, the aftermath of the murder from 1993 onwards is significant for the racial relations in the UK. The murder and its aftermath is still a newsworthy topic for the media in the UK. In this respect, especially *The Guardian* pays great attention to the developments related to this murder even in contemporary times by publishing on the murder and its aftermath frequently.

With the Macpherson report, institutional racism in the UK was officially unveiled. In spite of the family's persistence in drawing attention to the racial attack Stephen suffered and the racial discrimination against black citizens throughout the

investigation, racial violence did not end neither with the death of Stephen Lawrence nor with the Macpherson Inquiry. As indicated above, British society still suffers from racial violence if not from institutional racism as severely as in the 1980s and the 1990s. Nevertheless, the Stephen Lawrence case has become a main concern for the media and a turning point for British society. The murder and its aftermath also affected the drama of the time as Goddard expresses:

> The Stephen Lawrence case had a directly measurable impact on arts policy and it also arguably seems to have affected the topics of black playwriting in the new playwriting, in particular heralding the prevalence of urban plays about vulnerable and disenfranchised black teenage boys and young men. The Lawrence case prompted open discussion about race relations, thus creating a moment whereby the theatre industry was ready to accept plays that dealt with delicate and painful subjects of race, racism and nation. (*Contemporary Black* 10)

The Stephen Lawrence case was carried onto the stage in Richard Norton-Taylor's and Nicholas Kent's production in 1999 after the Macpherson Inquiry was completed. *The Colour of Justice* made its premiere at the Tricycle Theatre and moved to West End's Victoria Palace Theatre as a result of public attention. The public's response to the play is depicted by Billington as follows: "It is fascinating to note that in 1999 when The Tricycle Theatre staged its edited version of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry, the event commanded a large amount of space: precisely because the theatre was engaging directly with a topical, public event" (55). The play was written by an investigative journalist Norton-Taylor based on transcripts of the inquiry and some other official documents on the case. Thus, the play can be considered as a verbatim play. Rather than focusing on the murder itself, the play reflects the aftermath of the murder as examined in the Macpherson Inquiry. It addresses the mistakes and discrimination of the police force in this investigation. In this regard, "[t]his dramatisation of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry can't help but serve as a rallying cry, but it is more than a clarion call" (Clapp). With the dramatisation of the inquiry, therefore, in *The Colour of Justice* racial issues that surfaced in British society and institutions in the aftermath of the murder of the Stephen Lawrence are presented on the stage.

In the same year a TV version of *The Colour of Justice* was broadcasted on BBC2, again directed by Nicholas Kent. Another TV drama focusing on the murder of Stephen

Lawrence was aired in 1999 as a drama documentary. Titled as *The Murder of Stephen Lawrence*, this TV drama was written and directed by Paul Greengrass. As Harris indicates, this documentary "is a sober and serious exploration of some of the actual events surrounding the murder of a black British teenager and the subsequent police investigation" (182). Similar to the success of *The Colour of Justice* at the box office, "*The Murder of Stephen Lawrence* received the Best Television Drama awards from the CRE and BAFTA" (Bourne, *Black in the British Frame* 216). By presenting the case of Stephen Lawrence, both TV films started a process of questioning race relations in the UK.

Black British playwrights still carry racial violence onto the stage in order to draw the attention of their mixed race audience to the unsolved problems of race relations in the UK. In this regard, Roy Williams's contribution can be examined. *Fallout*, which premiered in 2003 at the Royal Court, touches upon the issue of racial murders. As Pearce indicates, Williams is inspired by two real-life events: "First, the murder of Kwame and subsequent botched investigation is based on the 2000 Damilola Taylor case; second, Williams examines the police as an institution in the wake of the 1999 Macpherson Report, published after the Stephen Lawrence murder, which concluded that the police were 'institutionally racist'" (155). Focusing on the Black gang culture mostly, *Fallout* shows that the case of Stephen Lawrence is still influential in terms of racism, and racial violence is still an important issue for Black British playwrights. As Goddard expresses, "[s]everal high-profile new millennial black British plays explored urban teenage crime and violence, often related to gang warfare and drug dealing, and many featured the fatal stabbing or shooting of young black male characters" (*Contemporary Black* 12).

Staged in the same year after the success of *The Colour of Justice* which deals with the murder of Stephen Lawrence, Pinnock's *Can You Keep a Secret?* has a very similar story and theme. Nevertheless, in an interview with Jim Mulligan, Pinnock states that in spite of being topical, the play was not inspired by the case of Stephen Lawrence:

> *Can You Keep a Secret?* is based on the killing of an Asian man a few years ago. The girlfriend of one of the killers found out about it and her dilemma was whether

> or not to tell the police. If she did, she knew she would be ostracised. She was an ordinary young Londoner and I thought it was incredibly brave of her to give evidence knowing that, in her community, that was something you simply did not do. I was very struck by her heroism and it's been on my mind for a long time. (138)

Based on a real event she had knowledge of, Pinnock created a fictional world unlike *The Colour of Justice* which depicted the real life story of Stephen Lawrence murder. However, similarities with the case of Stephen Lawrence in Pinnock's *Can You Keep a Secret?*, on the other hand, cannot be denied as will be discussed further. *The Colour of Justice*, in this respect, intends to be more informative by drawing attention to the discrimination against black citizens observed in the police force following the Macpherson Inquiry rather than focusing on the murder. On the other hand, *Can You Keep a Secret?* introduces a much more comprehensive approach towards race relations in British society by fictionalising a racial murder based on a true story. Instead of representing a well-known public incident within the context of racial discussions, as it is the case in *The Colour of Justice*, Pinnock poses questions related to racial issues. In this regard, Pinnock's play will be examined by focusing on the situational understanding of racial identities as represented through a racial murder.

Can You Keep a Secret? was put on stage by Half Moon Young People's Theatre Company at the Cottesloe Theatre – a name that was changed to Dorfman Theatre in 2014. This theatre is defined in the National Theatre's website as "the smallest and most flexible of the National's three theatres" ("Cottesloe Theatre"). Having a play staged at the National Theatre can be considered as an indication of the success Pinnock reached as a Black British playwright in 1999. Moreover, Pinnock got the chance to be staged at the National with a play focusing on the murder of a black teenager by a white teenager. Although the play cannot be classified as a political play, it is for sure that with the theme of a racial murder it touches upon the political issues of the early 1990s. Hence, the theme of the play makes it even more significant together with the venue which indicates that Black British playwrights have now achieved to get more attention from the authorities with reference to being staged and are now able to reach a wide-range audience. In the year 1999 when the play was put on stage, it was also published by Faber and Faber as a collection of plays under the title *New Connections 99: New Plays*

for Young People, along with the plays of such writers as Sarah Daniels, Alan Ayckbourn, Sharmon Macdonald and Peter Gill. Thus, the editor Suzy Graham-Adriani's selection once again indicates the success Pinnock started to enjoy as a Black British playwright.

Pinnock's play consists of seventeen scenes and opens by introducing Kate and Aleysha, white and black respectively, who are the girlfriends of the murderer, Sean and the victim, Derek. As Kate and Aleysha wait for their boyfriends in front of a cinema, they begin to chat with each other. They are interrupted by Candy who informs them about the fight their boyfriends were involved in. The second scene reflects the most crucial scene of the play. In this scene, the black character Derek and the white character Sean fight, at the end of which Sean murders Derek. Surrounded by his friends whose racial identities are not specified but given in the following scenes as white, Sean forces them to swear to remain silent, shaping the rest of the events in the play. The following scene reflects the reaction of Derek's family to his death along with chief Inspector Johnson's interrogation of the family. Shocked by the death of Derek, his black friends blame themselves for not being with him and helping him to defend himself against Sean and his white friends. Hence, to ease their anger and regret, Derek's friends look for someone to blame for the murder. Sean's friends, who have witnessed the murder, also struggle to find a way to overcome what they have witnessed and what they swore to do. Kate, on the other hand, feels the heaviest burden as an accomplice in the murder. Sean hands over to Kate the jacket he wore on the night of the murder covered with Derek's blood in order for her to get rid of it without drawing attention. In addition to this emotional pressure on Kate, Sean threatens his girlfriend to remain silent. Due to these traumatic incidents, in a state of shock Kate loses her ability to talk. Kate's silence comes to an end in scene fifteen when she confesses the murder to Inspector Johnson and hands over Sean's blood stained jacket. The play ends in Kate's bedroom when the readers and/or the audience learn about the aftermath of the police investigation and the lawsuit. Accordingly, there is no verdict and Kate has to withstand what she has witnessed.

Can You Keep a Secret? does not intend to tell a crime or a detective story. Therefore, the readers and/or the audience are not expected to follow the proofs, eyewitnesses, and the findings of the detectives to solve the crime on the stage. With the second scene, the readers and/or the audience are faced with the murder. As the murder is committed on the stage, the murderer is clearly observed along with the victim. Hence, the readers and/or the audience have a much heavier burden on them as they are led to question the social attitude that allows such murders and their aftermath. In this scene, the fight and the murder are realistically acted on the stage as it represents two teenage boys who are angry and out of control. As Mulligan highlights, in the fighting scene "[t]he language here is shocking, the violence explicit, the emotions raw" (138). Pinnock defends the language used in the scene: "The language is not provocative or inflammatory. It is the language of young people, the language I hear as I am walking in the street. The language is at times racist, foul and violently homophobic but it is the language of the characters I've created" (qtd. in Mulligan 139). The scene, which draws attention to the everyday realities of race relations, represents what can be encountered in any street or alleyway in a multicultural city shared by Black and white British citizens.

As the stage directions inform the reader, the second scene opens up in an alleyway behind the shopping centre. As Derek and Sean are fighting, Sean's friends provoke Sean towards Derek. Without being informed about how and why these two teenagers began fighting, the readers and/or the audience are involved in the fighting in the course of the event. What seems to be presented is no more than name-calling that fired up the fight. Oral defamation towards each other apparently began with Derek since Sean opens up the scene with the words "[t]ake it back" (2.97). Captured from his throat, Derek agrees to apologise to Sean if he lets him go. In order to appear to be apologising, Derek replies as follows: "I'm sorry I called you a div" (2.98). However, looking for more trouble, he continues: "Anybody looking at you can see that you're nowhere near a div. Anybody looking at you can see that you are in fact, a fine, upstanding, genuine homo" (2.98). Derek's reply immediately shifts the course of the fight. The derogatory words read and/or heard by the readers and/or the audience indicate an ideological fight that comprises political definitions of race and gender. As a white boy, Sean has supposedly racial superiority over Derek. Because Derek cannot attack Sean from a

racial or social aspect, he aims at the most vulnerable part of Sean, his sexuality, and calls him a homosexual. From the times of slavery since "[s]lavery was merely one form of gender and race hierarchy where the initial domination practices were developed" (Lemelle 84), sexuality was an important factor in comparing the superiority of white people over black people as discussed in detail in the first chapter. Although white people have been claiming dominance over black people based on their so-called advanced culture, the sexual power of black men has remained a threat for white men. For black men, on the other hand, being with a white woman is an indication of their improved social status in their relations against white men as discussed by Fanon as well (*Black Skin* 159). Thus, closely related to the social and political interpretation of inter-racial relations, race has been a significant factor in sexual relations since the times of slavery up to the contemporary times. Such a perception indicates that inter-racial relations were considered to be the ultimate proof that white men had lost their superiority, along with their power, to own black men and women. In this respect, since Derek cannot attack Sean from a racial point, he aims at Sean's sexuality in order to degrade him. Lemelle suggests that "[w]e perform masculinity depending on the social situation and the social circumstances we encounter. Passed on from slavery was the imaginary organizational matrix of black male subjugation" (74). Derek takes advantage of this "imaginary organizational matrix" (Lemelle 74), the idea that their whiteness can classify white men as more powerful and thus superior, and he constructs an idea of masculinity to hide the political meaning of his blackness. By diminishing Sean's sexual power, Derek challenges the former's racial superiority. Thus, being named a homosexual is more degrading than any other insult in the case of Sean as his sexual power as a white man is targeted. Hearn discusses the significance of heterosexuality indicating that "[t[he dominant and dominating form of sexuality was and is heterosexuality, and particularly men's heterosexuality, even though the detailed structuring of that heterosexuality in the public domains has changed" (124). Thus, Derek attacks a concept that is most valuable to Sean. As Lemelle states, "[g]ender is a form of power" (15). To degrade Sean's power, Derek targets his gender, indeed his power as a real man.

Derek's attack on Sean's masculinity is also connected to the perception of manhood in line with the colonial perspective. Within this perspective, heterosexuality was coined as another binary opposition in order to define the West as opposed to the East. Although Krishnaswamy particularly focuses on the colonial discourse of India as an English colony, what he discusses can be applied to all colonial subjects:

> The metropolitan production of heterosexuality/homosexuality in nineteenth-century psychological/psychoanalytic, medical, and anthropological discourses interestingly intersects with the colonial elaboration of Indian effeminacy. The first British writer to express explicitly the East as a homosexual terrain was Sir Richard Burton. (300)

Although the study of masculinities has emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, the colonial discourse of the nineteenth century had already placed "the other" as the effeminised as opposed to the manliness represented by the so-called civilised West. Thus, Black men, after post-colonialism, had to struggle to overcome the binary oppositions including heterosexuality as underlined by Alexander: "The challenge facing black masculinity, then, is to move beyond convenient binary categorizations – white/black, male/female, inside/outside, dominant/subaltern, plural/single, straight/gay – to confront a more complex and conflicted reality" ("(Dis)Entangling" 137). However, in order to move beyond binary oppositions, Black men also had to challenge the constructed identities as presented by whites. According to Jackson II and Hopson, "[…] masculinities are publicly interpreted on a daily basis from a variety of cultural, social, political, and economic standpoints" (3). As they suggest, these standpoints are affected by the perception of Black identity: "As a result, regardless of one's academic credentials, professional achievement, class position, or societal status, none of this will save him from being marginalized, closely scrutinized, and unfairly treated" (Jackson II and Hopson 2). Hence, since Black men cannot truly achieve the same social, economic, political, and cultural positions white men enjoy, their masculinity always lacks essence and needs to be redefined. Ghaill asserts this as follows: "They were aware of the historical contradictions of black masculinity as a subordinated masculinity, with the denial of the patriarchal privileges of power, control, and authority that are ascribed to the white male role" (188). Black man's lack of confidence in asserting his masculinity,

which is a result of the authority of the white men in a patriarchal social order dominated by the white race, is further pointed out by Chaney and Gyimah:

> Since White men, in general, have greater education, higher incomes, and more stable family units than Black men, one could reasonably argue that it is impossible for Black men to totally experience ―hegemonic masculinity due to their marginalized place in society, juxtaposed to White men. Furthermore, the historical oppression of Black men makes it harder for them to demonstrate masculinity in ways that are comparable to those exhibited by White men […]. (28)

In this respect, Derek's name-calling with slang words constituting homosexuality can be interpreted as an attempt to degrade Sean into Derek's position as a black male. As Carbado indicates "[…] race—and, more specifically, here, Blackness—does not exist outside gender or sexuality; it is constituted by both. The assertion of Blackness, without more, linguistically submerges sexuality and gender as aspects of Black being" (11), Derek acknowledges the gendered aspect of his black identity to attack Sean through homosexuality.

As a counter attack, Sean targets Derek's blackness. Thus, since Sean does not want to lose his superiority and power over Derek with the latter's accusations towards his masculinity, he uses the race card in return. Phoenix asserts that superiority can be established and an identity can be forced upon a person through name-calling:

> In other words, people make particular positions their own through repeatedly taking up particular positions in conversations. Once they have done this, they see the world from that perspective and are more likely to act in accord with it, be emotionally invested in it, and take on the moral responsibilities, rights, and duties with which it is associated. The taking up of particular positions is part of their 'identity projects'— that is, part of the process of trying to become who/what they envisage themselves as being. ("Remembered Racialization" 105-106)

Hence, by pointing out Derek's blackness, Sean aims to claim a superior position as Phoenix argues. Therefore, as a way to deal with Derek's attacks on his heterosexuality, Sean, in return, degrades Derek racially. Sean insults Derek as "[y]ou black cunt" (2.98), "[w]og" (2.98), "[j]ungle Bunny" (2.98), "[n]igger" (2.98), and "[y]ou black nigger cunt" (2.98) in this order. Sean constantly targets Derek's blackness in order to remind Derek that his blackness cannot overcome his own masculinity and superiority.

Sean's fierce rage unconsciously forces him to hit Derek with an iron bar until his anger cools down. Between Sean's insults, Derek, on the other hand, cleverly explains to Sean why his racial attacks are not hurtful to him. As an indication of his self-esteem, Derek replies: "See, you can call me what you like, but it's like I'm wearing a bullet-proof vest. It won't touch me 'cos I'm straight with myself, see?" (2.98). Unlike Derek who is on good terms with his identity, even if this solely means being black, he continues to challenge Sean: "You, on the other hand, you're all confused, aren't you? You haven't come to terms with who you are so every name I call you cuts like a knife because you don't want to see the truth of it" (2.98). Derek's stand can be explained with the hardships he has endured in British society and in the British education system. Born into Thatcher's Conservative era, it is highly possible that he suffered from the discriminations against Blacks as discussed previously. The main strike, however, comes later as a response to Sean's racial attack when he calls Derek "nigger" repeatedly. Rather than taking offence by that word, Derek considers the word meaningless partially due to the immunity he gained living in British society. Derek argues: "And if you say it enough times it loses its power, becomes just a sound" (2.98). Unlike Sean, Derek does not let words hurt him anymore. As suggested by Phoenix, "[p]eople position themselves and others as they explain, defend, abandon, or entrench their own positions and resist or take up the positions others produce for them to occupy" ("Remembered Racialization" 105). Derek empowers himself by resisting the idea of being the nigger Sean perceives him to be. Derek's strategy can be explained with the perception that there are different understandings of blackness. It is possible that he rejects a political understanding of his black identity. Moreover, by rejecting a political understanding, Derek simultaneously refuses the relation between blackness and its connotations as explained above. When Derek considers his blackness as a biological fact, he is not affected by any derogatory words. Thus, Derek continues to attack Sean. In order to prove his power, Derek once again degrades Sean's superiority by attacking his masculinity:

> Derek: That's right. Change the words round, recombine them. They still ain't got any power. And you know why? Because there's a new world order. Look at you, Nancy Boy, hair cut to the scalp. Who you trying to look like? Like a black felon on death row, that's what. New world order: The Niggers Rule OK and you, my

> dear Nancy Boy, are the new victim. That's why my name calling carries more weight. (2.98-99)

According to Krishnaswamy,

> [m]odern masculinity was elaborated not only through an increasingly stricter demarcation between the sexes but also through a systematic 'unmanning' of minorities within and foreigners without Europe. According to this model, the ideal appearance of the English male (the tall, strong, clean-cut English man) specifically excluded those who were stunted, narrow-chested, excitable, easily wearied, or inefficient – qualities associated with women, the lower classes, Jews, Papists, Spaniards, the French, and colored people. (292)

In his verbal attack, Derek reverses this process by calling Sean "Nancy Boy" which means gay in colloquial language. This way Derek draws attention to Sean's lack of masculinity. In order to prove that he is more masculine and powerful than Sean, Derek underlines Sean's lower sexual status by referring to him with a colloquial expression ascribing homosexuality to Sean. This reply eventually makes the readers and/or the audience think about where Derek got his courage to attack a white boy among his friends. Ghaill argues that, "Black youth systematically encounter among white sectors of the population situations of degradation and violence that serve to deny their black identity" (186). Derek's attitude, however, challenges this assumption. In this respect, it is the changing image of blackness in British society that Derek depends on in his insults. This change was initiated by Black people as Fanon examines through the example of a black medical officer who was enrolled in the army: "Finally, he enlisted one day in the army as a medical officer; and he added, not for anything in the world would he agree to go to the colonies or to serve in a colonial unit. He wanted to have white men under his command. He was a boss; as such he was to be feared or respected" (*Black Skin* 61). Similar to this soldier, Derek enjoys acting like the boss towards Sean. In order to understand the changes in the contemporary society represented by Derek's challenging attitude, it is also important to discuss both the Labour Party's majority in parliament, which corresponds to the timeline of the play as well, and the influence of the third generation Black immigrants on society, which contributes to the new world order Derek mentions in his argument with Sean.

When the Conservative rule came to an end in the UK in 1997, Tony Blair promoted the party and its ideologies under the label of New Labour. With the new image promoted by New Labour, as Morgan remarks, "[Blair] appealed less to the older working classes of Labour's heartland than to the mortgaged home-owning middle classes of middle England" (670-671). What the adjective "new" constitutes has been a matter of discussion since then. As briefly discussed in the Introduction, Labour readjusted its policies and ideologies challenging its Leftist tradition and associating itself more with rightist ideas. Still, "[…] Tony Blair skilfully tapped into the angst and the expectations, and although one now tires of his use of 'New' it captured the imagination of the public" (Alibhai-Brown 36). Hence, after fighting for the betterment of race relations and the expectations aroused in Blacks during Blair's campaign, the immigrant communities were disappointed by Blair and his government for not regulating race relations in the UK sufficiently. In this respect, Solomos argues that "[h]owever the agenda had little influence on the policies pursued by the Labour Party. As minority representation became more established in local and national politics during the 1990s, pressure for minority incorporation into political institutions continued and had at least some effect on the thinking of the Labour Party" (200). Hence, under the leadership of Blair, the Labour government failed to regulate race relations, which will had a negative effect regarding the failure of Blair in his third term as prime minister, contrary to the general expectations. This is underlined by Julios as follows:

> Blair went on to list six main areas of public policy in which intervention is needed in order to transform this vision into reality including: firstly, the provision of grants to communities promoting integration and cultural diversity; secondly, a firm public standing on equality, respect and equal treatment for all citizens at all times; thirdly, universal allegiance to the rule of law; fourthly, nurturing of home-grown community preachers and monitoring of their overseas visiting fellows; fifthly, establishing a set of rights and responsibilities inherent to British citizenship and inculcating them to the younger generation through the school curriculum; and sixthly, setting the use of English language as a condition of citizenship. (154)

In line with this comment, New Labour's aim to regulate certain public policies is referred to as a necessity rather than as an option by Modood: "The recognition that a society had become multiethnic or multicultural was not simply about demographics or economics. It was an understanding that a new set of challenges were being posed for which a new political agenda was necessary […]" (5). As underlined in the Introduction

and discussed in this chapter, New Labour adjusted the understanding of Britishness into their new political agenda in line with the re-examined policies and ideologies of the party. Concordantly, Solomos indicates that,

> [u]nder Tony Blair's leadership New Labour was particularly concerned to portray itself as a party that did not shy away from expressions of love for its country, albeit accompanied by acceptance that Britain was a multi-cultural society. It therefore came as no surprise when, after its victory in the 1997 general election, it attempted to define a new sense of patriotism and pride in national symbols such as the flag. [...] In the period leading up to the 2001 general election there was a series of attempts by New Labour to link aspects of multiculturalism to the subject of national identity. (219-220)

With this approach of New Labour, it is possible to comprehend how Blair modified the policies of the Labour Party to win the election after the Conservative rule. Moreover, it is possible to point out the criticisms by the minority groups after Blair came to power. Although Blair promised to start a new era in race relations, ultimately the Macpherson Inquiry revealed the truth about this issue in the UK and the need to act upon racial problems. This is underlined by Hesse who states that "[i]t took the campaigning struggles of the Lawrence family and their supporters in relation to the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence to challenge and change the stranglehold of this racialized moratorium" (26). As Blair was in office for only two years, the Macpherson Inquiry indicated to the immigrant communities that New Labour, while in power, could make difference in terms of race relations in society and the policies in line with Macpherson's suggestions.

As Derek suggests in his reply to Sean about the new world order, the play does not depict the first generation Black immigrants who live in the diaspora. The black characters of the play are not Black characters who work hard in manual, semi-skilled jobs white people refused to do. As indicated in the play, just like Stephen Lawrence, Derek is the son of Black parents who settled in the UK. Since the play takes place at the end of the 1990s – a time line between 1997 and 1999 based on the release date of *Titanic* as mentioned in the play and the premiere date of the play – the second and even third generation immigrants who have already adopted a multicultural British identity are represented on the stage. Regardless of the discrimination they faced, Black citizens

aimed to achieve more in life than the jobs offered to their grandfathers and grandmothers, and even their fathers and mothers. As Sarah Spencer draws attention,

> [t]he public should be aware that without immigrants neither our health service nor transport system would be viable. They should know, because the Government has ensured that they do, that the refugees who came to Britain have a *higher* education and qualification level than those already settled here and that children from Indian, Chinese and Black African families are *more* successful at school than those from white families. ("The Impact" 88-89)

Thus, Derek shouts the naked truth at Sean when talking about the new world order in which Black people are not just unwanted immigrants anymore. As Spencer underlines, they are educated and play an essential role in public services. Rather than subjects of diaspora, they are a part of multicultural British society now. Moreover, they have their own communities that celebrate the richness of their local culture combined with the notion of Britishness that constitute their hyphenated identities as touched upon in the Introduction. This changing order is signified in the Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain – known as the Parekh Report as well – as follows: "[…] young African-Caribbean people in Britain occupy a prominent position in popular culture, giving rise to many wannabe white imitators for whom black is a badge of street credibility" (Parekh 30). Elaboration on black culture is once again underlined by Jo Croft: "In the late 1970s and 1980s, the Afro-Caribbean Rastafarian style influenced both black and white youth subcultural fashion, with red, green and gold Ethiopian colours commonly featuring on T-shirts, hats, badges and jackets. Today, more than ever, black subcultural styles tend to lead the way in British street fashion […]" (157). Besides Derek's announcement of the changing world order as explained above, accepting Black immigrants as a part of British society was officially declared as Alibhai-Brown emphasises: "It is important to note that between 1997 and 1998, three British Prime Ministers, three leaders of opposition parties, the Queen and Prince Charles, all made speeches which rejoiced in multicultural Britain. They made these speeches to white and Black Britons, something which had not happened previously to any significant extent" (116). More significantly, Derek's family, based on the limited information provided in the play, enjoys better social conditions. This amelioration in the blacks' situation is underlined by Sakellaridou: "Besides, the two black families involved (the victim's and his girlfriend's) enjoy a higher middle-class status. On the

contrary, the white families (those of the offender and his girlfriend) are given a lower social and cultural profile" (392-393). For that matter, Derek becomes a spokesperson for Pinnock in pointing out the social changes experienced in British society by white and Black citizens. This inevitable shift in society is pointed out by Gilroy, too:

> Race thinking has proliferated, but in order to maintain its grip on the world, it has had to change. The simpler hatreds forged in more innocent days now coexist with complex, proteophobic, and ambivalent patterns. This change means that blackness can sometimes connote prestige rather than the unadorned inferiority of 'bare life' on the lowest rungs of humanity's ontological ladder. (*After Empire* 40)

The new world order Derek mentions clearly indicates these social changes. Moreover, within this new order, Derek does not suffer from a political identity as a Black person. On the contrary, he redefines his blackness based on his changing social position in contemporary British society.

The information provided by Derek's parents depicts an image that challenges the general assumption about Black people. Jackson II and Hopson remark the negative stereotyping of black people based on the black image promoted by popular culture: "Black males are routinely scripted as dangerous, anti-intellectual, reckless, incompetent, uneducated criminal delinquents, deadbeat dads, incarcerated felons, and/or entertainers and athletes" (2). Derek, in the play, is not portrayed as another negative stereotype suggested by Jackson II and Hopson. On the contrary, contributing to the changing status of Black immigrants, Derek is depicted as an academically and socially successful young man who has a bright future ahead of him. Although the fight happens in an alleyway and Sean is accompanied by his friends, it cannot be described as a gang-related issue, especially when Derek's image depicted by his parents is considered. Both Derek and Sean are random boys who are carried away with their intensive feelings. Derek's mother implicitly states in her conversation with the inspector that Derek was not involved in a gang or any criminal activities: "Other women's children get into trouble. I thought that I was one of the lucky ones" (3.101). The issue is discussed in scene five when the Chief Inspector comes to talk with Derek's parents. Yet, his mother Mrs Lewis repeatedly informs the inspector that "[h]e was not involved with drug dealers, pimps or criminals" (5.105). Later in scene eight

Derek mentions his ‘A’ level results when he visits Kate in her room as a ghost. As he himself admits, he is not the brightest student. The results that arrive at his home after his death are enough for him to pass and to get the chance to enter a university: “‘B’ and two ‘C’s. Not brilliant, I know, but it would have been enough, Kate. It would have been enough” (8.117). Hence, Derek’s remarks remind the readers and/or the audience of Stephen Lawrence. Both Derek and Stephen are random boys who were not involved in criminal activities and did their best to achieve some academic success. Such a depiction of Derek underlines his victimisation because of a meaningless fight over nothing, pointing at the futile victimisation of some Black citizens in contemporary British society.

Sean, on the other hand, is not much different from Derek. As a teenager, he is rebellious enough to invite his friends to his home to have a party, promising them that he knows where his parents hide the key to the drinks bar (6.110). The fear of becoming a murderer for beating Derek to death even makes Sean threaten his girlfriend Kate. In scene ten, Sean holds Kate by her neck and ensures her silence by force: “I’ll make you another promise, Kate, and this one I’m gonna keep. You tell anybody and, I swear, I’ll cut your fucking tongue out” (10.121). Regardless of his reckless acts, he was also a promising child. In scene sixteen, Inspector Johnson explains that Sean used to play football, and he even joined the youth team for his training. Yet, it is also revealed that Sean gave up football, wandered aimlessly and ultimately killed a black boy out of rage. Although not enough evidence is provided about Sean’s family and the environment he grew up in, what Johnson informs the readers and/or the audience about Sean’s past can explain his victimisation. Based on Sean’s chat with the inspector, it can be understood that Sean’s father used to be Johnson’s friend. It is further hinted that Sean’s father did not choose a respectable path as Johnson: “We were good friends once. Our lives took us on different paths, that’s all. He went one way, I went another. Once we’d both made those choices there was no going back” (16.134). Johnson reiterates how he sustained his relation with Sean’s father: “I’ve looked out for your father, made sure he didn’t get into too much trouble” (16.135). Thus, the scene between Sean and Johnson gives the impression that Sean’s father was not able to provide a healthy environment for his son to grow up to be a citizen who is tolerant of others, even if they belong to a different

ethnicity, and aware of his responsibilities within society. Hence, this leads to the conclusion that Sean was not sufficiently guided, at least by his father, to become a constructive and fructuous member of society.

Eventually, although the incident can be labelled as a racial murder, neither character fits into the image of an extreme racist. On the contrary, they are made racist as St Louis explains: "If race is non-existent in any real biological sense then, for many commentators, it follows that racist ideas and practices must be prefaced by a productive process in which the imaginary racial category is made real" ("Racialization" 36). Clearly, both Sean and Derek are teenagers who ended up defending themselves in a social environment that victimised them. Rather than British society, it is Sean's group of friends who represent the social environment in the fighting scene. Hinted as white, Sean's friends put pressure on both Sean and Derek and trigger their hatred towards each other. To consider the murder from the perspective of race relations in the UK, it can be argued that the relations are as fragile as the situation between these two teenagers involved in.

The fragile situation between Sean and Derek is fractured by name-calling which starts as a joke which turns into conceptual fighting over race and power as previously discussed. Tizard and Phoenix analyse the practice of name-calling among children and teenagers in their report based on the interviews conducted among mixed-race youth: "When asked if they had ever been racist themselves, half of the young people (53 per cent) said that they had. […]The great majority of the incidents involved name-calling. Boys in particular tended to stress that there was a large element of joking involved, and their name-calling was not intended to hurt" (101). Phoenix, in a different study, further argues against name-calling as follows:

> Racialized name-calling can be viewed as a liminal event in relation to awareness of colour and awareness of racism. On the one hand, it can be used (and taken) as a joke or as an interactional strategy devoid of racist intent. On the other hand, it can signal racist intent. As such, it positions young people with regard to racism, not simply race or colour. ("Remembered Racialization" 118)

As seen in the play, social conditions in contemporary Britain render race such a problematic issue that racial name-calling can lead to racism. A fight over name-calling between two teenagers leads to a murder. The intolerance for "the other" forces both Sean and Derek to exercise physical violence. Since Sean grew up in a social environment where racial prejudices and violence were present, he showed his hatred against Derek in a murderous attack. It is possible to classify both boys as victims based on the perception of race and racial differences by society. From Pinnock's point of view, these boys are presented as characters that follow the dominant attitudes in society based on the racial roles assigned by society. Therefore, Pinnock adopts an objective attitude towards white and black characters in an attempt to represent racial issues on the stage unlike the plays that depict racial murders on the stage as previously cited. Clearly, the play does not try to blame either side on racial grounds. On the contrary, Pinnock emphasises the significance of the situational understanding of racial identity while a racial murder is presented on the stage.

Since the main issue in the play is not solely the murder itself, race is also dealt with through the reactions of other characters. Thus, the second scene triggers the question of race among Black and white characters in the play. As the victim at the end of the fight, it is appropriate to begin with discussing the meaning of Derek's blackness for his friends, family and the white characters. In this respect, it can be argued that Derek's parents, Mr and Mrs Lewis, approach the murder as a racial murder. Scene three expresses the shock Derek's parents experience with the devastating news. Since both of them highlight the good qualities of their son as a decent teenager, they ask themselves why this happened to Derek. According to their judgment, there could be no reason for Derek to be killed in the streets. When they are questioned by Inspector Johnson, it is revealed that they suspect a racial killing. In their conversation in scene five, both parents try to convince Inspector Johnson of their son's good behaviour and eliminate the possibility that Derek was at a fault in the fight and his eventual murder. They believe that Derek is only a victim here and intend to show this to the inspector as well. In order to protect his son's innocence Mr Lewis says: "My son didn't know any troublemakers" (5.105), and later adds: "My son had no secrets" (5.105). In fact, Mr and Mrs Lewis's defence of their son is followed by the accusations of Johnson who tries to

examine all possibilities in the case: "I have to make sure that no stone is left unturned. I have to investigate every possibility before I can eliminate it" (5.105). Upon Johnson's reply, the family needs to force him to investigate the murder in line with their suspicions. Mr Lewis asks the inspector: "Have you found my son's killers?" (5.106), and Mrs Lewis draws his attention to the details: "Have you pursued any of the clues?" (5.106). As a reaction to Johnson's reluctance to investigate the murder immediately, Mrs Lewis reminds him of the rumours about this being a racial murder committed out of hate. In the light of the mistakes of the police department during the investigation of Stephen Lawrence's murder, Derek's parents continue to accuse Johnson of discriminating against this Black family. Derek's father states: "Maybe you're not listening" (5.106). His mother adds: "Maybe you're not looking hard enough" (5.106). Mr Lewis draws attention to their suspicion of discrimination once again: "With every minute that you're standing here vital evidence is being lost. Since my son died it has rained three times. All the evidence washed away" (5.107). The play does not provide any other stage time for Derek's parents. Thus, their reaction towards the murderer is not known. Nevertheless, based on the image drawn in scene five, it can be argued that Mr and Mrs Lewis are similar to the Lawrence family because they are also determined to fight for justice after their son's murder. Mr and Mrs Lewis in *Can You Keep a Secret?* are aware of racial discrimination in contemporary British society and they remind the inspector of their awareness as regards the prejudices of the white society against the black people. Their reactions to Johnson also reflect these truths about society they live in. However, as Modood asserts,

> [s]trictly speaking, race is of interest to liberal citizenship only because no one can choose their race; it is either a biological fact about them or, more accurately, is a way of being categorized by the society around them by reference to some real or perceived biological features, and so one should not be discriminated against on something over which one has no control. (69)

Similar to Derek's categorisation by Sean as "Black" and other examples that will be discussed within the play, Derek's family has no control over their black skins. They implicitly react to this fact when they question Johnson's attitude in this murder investigation. According to the family, being black is a biological fact. What matters is Johnson's working harder to investigate the murder of a teenager rather than a Black boy.

Aleysha, who is Derek's long time girlfriend, responds to Derek's death emotionally. As Aleysha tells Kate in the first scene, Derek and she have been going out for four years and got engaged a month ago before the murder (1.95). Losing her fiancé devastates Aleysha who now feels "all [her] love being sucked down a black hole" (3.102). This sudden loss drags her into a depressed state in which she continues to wait for Derek in front of the cinema as if he will appear out of nowhere. Aleysha's hatred of white people only surfaces in scene twelve when she visits Derek's grave. There she meets Sally and Gary who have also lost their loved ones at a young age and formed friendship with people like them to share their sorrow with. Aleysha, however, rejects their support and friendship, and letting go of her anger she says: "Listen, I come here to be alone. Yes, I feel raw. I feel like shit. I hate every fucking white bastard in the world because they all killed Derek. And I tell you something, I don't want to stop feeling like that. I don't want to get over it. I don't want to be part of no cosy death club" (12.124). It is apparent that Aleysha, too, considers the murder as a racial murder. Moreover, this leads her to adopt a racist attitude towards white people. According to Banton, "[p]eople who thought of themselves and others as belonging in races were said to be racially conscious" (56). In line with this comment, as she evaluates the murder, Aleysha consciously develops a racist approach blaming the white race. In her comment, she racially classifies people based on skin colour as indicated in the Parekh Report: "Groups are characterised exclusively in terms of what makes them different, and differences are reduced to a few simple either/or distinctions – a fixed set of oppositions between 'us' and 'them', those who belong and those who do not" (Parekh 63). In her opinion, not only the murderer but also the whole white race is responsible for this tragic incident. In a state of extreme sorrow and anger, Aleysha's blaming all whites also draws attention to the immigration history of the UK and the race relations since 1948. Hence, the murder strengthens her hatred towards white people as Phoenix suggests: "By contrast, no black or mixed-parentage young people described coming to consciousness of colour *because* they suddenly recognized that they did not like white people. Instead, they gave a variety of examples of incidents that they considered had led them to this consciousness" ("Remembered Racialization" 115). For Aleysha, and

for Derek's friends as well, the murder creates a consciousness about what led them towards hatred for the white race.

A similar approach can be observed in Derek's close friends. Especially Ben feels extreme guilt for not having been with his friend to support him: "I hate to think of him dying like he did on his own in some back alley. He would never have let me die like that. He was always there for me" (3.101). Derek's friends gather in scene seven discussing the murder and more significantly revealing their anger towards the police and British society. On the stage, along with Aleysha and Ben, there are two other friends, Michael and Trish, whose racial identity is not revealed but hinted as black based on Ben's complaint. Drawing attention to their blackness and their position in society as "the other" in the eyes of white citizens, Ben complains: "Our parents are always talking about how hard our grandparents had it and how they went through all that crap just to make things easier for their kids" (7.114). Hence, it is apparent that all four friends of Derek who appear in scene seven have Black identities that need to be emphasised with a capital "B." Ben persuades Derek's friends to investigate the murder and to avenge their friend's death rather than to leave it to the police force to solve the murder. Nonetheless, the responses of the friends complicate the issue turning it into more of a racial problem. Ben convinces his friends first by blaming the police: "The police don't care, do they? Why should they? It isn't their friend, their son? If the police don't care who will? We can't rely on the police, can we? We bring them evidence and they don't believe us" (7.113). Without knowing who committed the murder and why, Ben directly adopts a racial discourse. He adopts the marginalised status of being Black in a white dominated British society. In relation to what he experiences, he develops a certain identity for himself as Modood asserts: "Identities are relational and so, just like difference, are constituted partly from the outside. But the concept of identity (like ethnicity and culture as opposed to race) allows the 'inside' more space, more agency. This is not just in relation to individual self-definition but in relation to the outsider perceptions, treatment and social expectations […]" (41). His understanding of blackness shapes Ben's further actions. As a result, Ben internalises racial issues to such a degree that he directly concludes that the police is prejudiced towards the murder.

Moreover, with the story Michael narrates, in which his cousin dies in police custody, he contributes to the assumption of institutionalised racism in the police force:

> He was asthmatic, yeah, and he was calling out for his medication, because they'd locked him up and everything, but they thought that he was making trouble. Being aggressive because of the shouting and everything so they didn't take any notice of him. Next thing he collapsed and they still didn't take any notice. Next day they found him dead. (7.113)

While Ben, Aleysha, and Trish are all ready to avenge their friend Derek, Michael directs the most crucial question: "But when we find them, what will we do with them? If we're not going to the police" (7.113). He later adds that he does not want to be involved in violence (7.113). Michael's attitude should motivate the readers and/or the audience to question this situation. It is apparent that Ben's attack is not solely about avenging Derek's death. If it is about race and race relations, violence cannot be the solution. Derek's murder can be just another piece in the big picture of the race problem in the UK. Thus, neither finding Derek's murderer nor using violence can solve the racial problems these characters experience in society. This murder will remain just another violent incident experienced between different racial groups. Between the lines, Pinnock delivers the message that violence, committed by either white people or Black people towards each other, cannot be the answer to racial problems experienced in British society.

In this regard, Pinnock reveals the big picture about racial issues in *Can You Keep a Secret?* through the discussion between Derek's friends. The main problem in contemporary British society is reflected on the stage by Ben at the end of scene seven when he talks about the hardships encountered by previous generations of immigrants as follows:

> Ben: And, now, our parents, they go through crap to make things better for us. And us – just when we were beginning to take things for granted, now we can see that things are going to be just as tough for us and that we're going to have to fight just as hard as they did. And that's when we have to ask ourselves whether or not we're up to it. And you got to think long and hard when you answer that question because you have to understand that we can't rely on anybody but ourselves. (7.114)

Hence, Ben reveals his real anger about the condition of immigrants which seems to have not improved in the least for a half-century. It is now the third generation of immigrants who reside in the UK. Unlike the first generation of immigrants, they are not proud British passport holders who arrived at their motherland with great hope and ended up living in diaspora. On the contrary, Ben, Derek and their friends are living in the UK as British who were born in this country, grew up in British society and were educated within the British education system. The officials have begun to recognise their existence in the country and include them in legislations. Nonetheless, Ben still feels that Black people are classified in society as "the other" and discriminated against, and exposed to treatment not any different than the treatment of their grandparents. Hence, Ben shapes his Black identity based on the complicated history of his ancestors as Yancy suggests: "Blacks ground their identities in a complex history that is constantly unfolding and rearticulated because Blackness is a *lived* existential project, the affirmative content of which is fundamentally shaped by (but need not be reduced to) that complex history" (117). In addition, Ben describes this as a fight for which they have to gear up. It can be argued that Ben pays no attention to what has been achieved by the government and the civil society in terms of regulating race relations in the 1990s. Eventually, the anger Ben expresses comes not from the death of his dear friend. He is angry because Derek was killed due to his race although three generations have struggled to be a part of British society.

From this perspective, scene fourteen where Ben accuses a boy named Weirdboy of being the murderer is crucial for depicting his anger towards the problematic relations between white and Black British. Ben, followed by Michael, Trish and Aleysha, has Weirdboy cornered and begins to blame him for Derek's murder. Most significantly, his accusations have racial content. More than anything, Ben targets Weirdboy's whiteness. Banton maintains that "[i]t was better to describe a person by reference to his or her colour because colour is observable where race is not" (59). In this respect, Ben attacks Weirdboy because he assumes that Weirdboy is just another white boy who shares the common feeling of racial hatred in the white community against Black people. Moreover, Ben is not aware of the fact that he too has developed a racist attitude towards white people. Therefore, Weirdboy, without realising the reason why he is

captured, is attacked by Ben who uses racist discourse: “That’s right. You don’t know me. To you I’m just another black guy, ain’t I? We’re all the same as far as you’re concerned, aren’t we? That suits you, doesn’t it, lump us all together. What is it? Coons are taking all the jobs? Coons are spoiling the country with their weird spicy food and their music” (14.127-128). Through his accusations, Ben alters the power relations. As the Black counterpart, he presents a racist attitude. Gilroy draws attention to this situation as follows: “For example, it has sometimes been argued that only white people can be judged racist because racist is a defining attribute of whiteness or an intrinsic property of the power it holds. Racism can only be a consequence of power and so, the argument runs, since blacks have no power – as a ‘race’– they cannot, by definition, be racist” (*Between Camps* 219-220). Unlike the general assumption that only whites can be racist, which turns Black citizens into the victims of racism, Ben attacks Weirdboy, a white boy, with a racist attitude.

While Derek’s other friends remain silent, Ben continues to attack Weirdboy without listening to him. Determined to make Weirdboy a scapegoat, Ben pressures him to release his guilt and anger. Weirdboy, on the other hand, tries to make Ben realise that hurting him will not ease his pain and anger: “You’d like to kill me, wouldn’t you? You’ll tell your friends that you did it for revenge, to pay back for having lost your friend. But it wouldn’t be true, would it? If you killed me you’d be doing it for yourself, wouldn’t you? You’d be doing it to make yourself feel better. To take away the guilt that keeps you awake at night. Isn’t that right?” (14.129). Thus, Weirdboy comes to the same conclusion that violence cannot solve the racial problems that exist in the UK. In spite of all her anger, Aleysha’s response to Weirdboy actually delivers the message of the play: “But you’re just a boy. Just another boy” (14.130). Like Derek and Sean, Weirdboy is just a boy who should not be imprisoned in constructed racial identities. It is the political identities imposed on the youth that complicate racial relations. Besides, the interaction between Weirdboy and Ben is quite constructive for race relations because Weirdboy, by means of his challenging responses, enables Ben to question his point of view as regards racial issues in Britain. As the Parekh Report also proposes, “[c]ontinuity with the past provides an essential resource for survival, but it exists alongside interaction across a wide spectrum of daily activities” (Parekh 29). When

accusing Weirdboy, Ben acts taking into consideration the sufferings of the first and second generation Black immigrants. However, both Ben and Weirdboy, like Sean and Derek, are two members of the same society which should not be burdened because of what happened between white and Black citizens in the UK. They should not treat each other based on constructed political identities imposed on them either. If Ben and Weirdboy can manage to establish a better relationship, this will enable them to understand each other through dialogue. Aware of such a need, Pinnock's representation of white and black characters depicts a highly constructive image for the future of race relations in the UK.

While Derek's murder is observed as a significant racial issue for his family and friends, witnessing the fight and the murder turns into a trauma for Sean's friends. Rather than separating the two fighting teenagers and stopping this meaningless fight, they assist Sean in killing Derek as the stage direction suggests: "One of the others throws [Sean] an iron bar. The others egg him on, making noises every time he hits with the iron bar" (2.99). It seems like Sean and his friends create a closer knit by sharing this secret. Sean makes all of his friends keep their mouths shut; therefore, they fabricate a story on what they did on the night of the murder. Although it seems like everyone has forgotten what happened in the alleyway, they feel its psychological effects in scene six. In an alleyway or near the cinema where they can gather and sit, Sean and his gang have fun and chat about the film *Titanic,* which they have just seen while Candy finally reveals how the murder psychologically affected her as can be observed in her comment about the film. Feeling sad about the death of the character played by Leonardio Di Caprio, Candy complains as follows:

> Candy: It's just a film. But why did they let him die? They aim those films at young people like us because they know what we're afraid of, what we have on our minds. They knew that it would upset us and that we'd never get it out of our heads about a young boy dying. […] that's a terrible thing to hear a young man dying. A young boy who could have been any one of us. That's a thing that could haunt you for the rest of your life. (6.109-110)

The awkward silence, as indicated in the stage direction, actually means that Candy refers to Derek's murder while she seems to be talking about the film. Just like Aleysha's comment provided above, Candy's using "young people," "a young boy," "a

young man" and "a young boy" take race away from the incident. Suddenly, Derek's blackness does not matter much compared to his status as a young boy just like any other person among Sean's friends. Although none of Sean's friends have courage to stand up for justice and reveal the secrets of the murder, at least Candy comes to the realisation that an innocent young boy was killed.

Furthermore, Pinnock's interesting choice of film needs to be touched upon as well. The film that the whole group of friends has seen, and Candy uses to express how witnessing a murder affected her, is James Cameron's film *Titanic*. The film became an international blockbuster when released in 1997 (Lubin 7). Yet, this cannot be taken as the only reason for Pinnock's choosing this film for the teenagers to go and watch. Although the film was promoted by the ship's tragic end, Dassanowsky disagrees with such promotion: "That Cameron's *Titanic* tends toward a fantasia on the theme of Titanic [*sic*] and its world, rather than a fictionalization, was not forthcoming from the director until well into the film's release, and only after historians pointed to a long roster of errors and families of Titanic [*sic*] victims protested the completely inaccurate portrayals" (21). The film mostly focuses on the secret affair between an upper-class woman and a lower-class man. This relationship reminds one of the racial classifications in Pinnock's *Can You Keep a Secret?* The white and Black differentiation in the play is replaced by class differences in the film. The characters are limited by arbitrary identities based on class distinction in the film. Hence, love cannot overcome their class difference. Similar to what happens in the film, in the play both Derek and Sean become victims of arbitrary racial identities which they cannot overcome. The race distinction that can be observed in the play is replaced with the class distinction in the film *Titanic*. In this regard, beyond the tragedy of the unsinkable *Titanic*, the tragedy of otherness is reflected through a love story. In a similar story depicted in the play, beyond the racial issues brought by "the empire on which the sun never sets," constructed racial problems in contemporary British society are exemplified.

Besides Candy's uneasiness expressed by her comment on the film, Sean's girlfriend Kate is affected by the murder emotionally and psychologically more than the other

characters. Indeed, Kate's responsibility increases when Sean hands over his blood stained jacket to her in order to get rid of it. She shares Candy's pain more sincerely than the others, which is indicated in their chat in scene six. It is apparent that both of them struggle hard to get rid of the thought of the murder. Upon Sean's threat, Kate remains silent as she is affected psychologically. She only breaks her silence when she decides to hand Sean's jacket over to the police and confesses the murder. Unlike the rest of the characters, however, she does not approach the murder or Derek from the perspective of race which is a major difference when compared to the attitudes of Sean's other friends. Her attitude, in this respect, gains significance when she encounters Derek's girlfriend Aleysha as will be discussed in detail.

Regarding the characters' reaction to the murder, Chief Inspector Johnson's perspective is probably the most crucial in line with the institutionalised racism practised by the police force in general and in the case of Stephen Lawrence in particular. Johnson is first introduced in scene five when he questions Mr and Mrs Lewis about their son. As opposed to Derek's parents' effort to prove their child's innocence, Johnson compels them to reveal some information about Derek that can pin down why he was involved in a fight. He defends his attitude: "I have to follow my nose, Mr Lewis. My aim isn't to alienate you, but, as I say, I have been involved in so many 'incidents' of this nature that I've built up a knowledge, shall we say, about these things. You're not the first parents I've met who have been shocked to learn about their child's involvement in the darker side of life" (5.106). He later appears in scene fifteen when Kate decides to confess the murder. Based on their social chat at the beginning, it is apparent that Johnson personally knows both Kate and her parents. As Kate hands over Sean's jacket, Johnson continues to treat her as gently as possible. He calms her and offers tea before taking her testimony. In the following scene, it is also revealed that Johnson is a friend of Sean and his family as well. It is hinted that Johnson and Sean's father used to be good friends when they were young. It is obvious that his treatment of black and white characters differs based on his personal history with the characters. Based on the close relationship Johnson used to have with Sean's father, upon Kate's confession, he indirectly talks with Sean and warns him to stay out of trouble. Johnson first states: "I've always kept an eye out for you," followed by his warning: "All I'm saying is that

you've got your whole life ahead of you. Use it wisely, Sean" (16.135). Johnson's positive discrimination towards a white character can also be explained through Mohanram's argument: "Thus, one could say that whiteness was not just about racial differences, but also about the covering over of class differences in the threat of black violence" (44-45). Johnson seems to protect both Kate and Sean as these three characters are white. Since the murder was partly labelled as a racial incident, Johnson stands for an institutional prejudice against the blacks.

Nonetheless, Johnson cannot be merely referred to as a negative stereotype of a discriminatory policeman. Pinnock depicts him neither as a bad policeman, someone who the readers and/or the audience cannot like for his discriminatory acts, nor as an idealist stereotype who merely focuses on solving the murder regardless of the pressure from the society. Pinnock does not aim to prove that all policemen have a racist attitude similar to the Macpherson Report which concluded about the institutional racism practiced in the police force. Johnson might be favouring white characters because of their shared personal history, but he is also aware that investigating a racial murder has drawn the attention of society. In scene fifteen, he complains to Kate that he is ignored socially by people he knows since he began to investigate Derek's murder: "You know, Kate, I'm beginning to feel as though people are deliberately avoiding me. Especially the 'youth'. […] I know that I'm a social pariah. Ever since I've been on the Lewis case nobody wants to know" (15.131). Meanwhile, Johnson's reproach indicates the tension in society from the perspective of racial relations. This investigation turns into a heavy burden for Johnson. On the one hand, the Black family of the victim expects justice that will come as a result of Johnson's careful hard work in investigating the event. On the other hand, his approach is under scrutiny by the white members of society as if they are testing his loyalty to his fellow white citizens. Thus, Johnson's approach complicates the racial problems in the play. Although Johnson arouses some suspicions with his attitude towards the murder, he cannot be categorised as a stereotype in any manner. Thus his depiction points out Pinnock's unbiased perception of race even on such a sensitive topic. Moreover, Johnson himself has the burden of representing the state. The responsibility of the police force, in terms of preserving an unbiased approach towards the murder, is indicated in the Parekh Report too: "Public services are embodiments of

the state […] It is therefore essential that they are staffed by individuals of merit and integrity, that their exercise of authority is regulated by clearly defined procedures, that their actions are above suspicion, and that any acts of partiality are subjected to the severest punishment" (Parekh 49). Thus, Johnson undertakes the responsibility of a racial murder while feeling the pressure of the victim's family, society and the state.

Weirdboy is probably the most crucial character in portraying a balanced view of racial problems. Although his real name is Danny, as revealed in scene four, throughout the play he is referred to by the nickname "Weirdboy" by other characters. The meaning of this nickname comes from the function Weirdboy has in the play. Weirdboy frequently appears in various scenes, but he is not a part of either group of friends. He is more of an outsider who is defined by Sakellaridou as "a surrealist intervention of a witness, external to the plot and scapegoat to the action" (393). Not belonging to either group of friends, Weirdboy is marginalised by the teenagers in the play as signified by his nickname. By calling him "Weirdboy," the teenagers apply a constructed identity. They take away his individuality and force him to act out an identity they have created for him. As opposed to the racial identities the other characters adopt in the play, in the case of Weirdboy, a social identity is cast upon him. Eventually, Weirdboy is also cast as "the other." However, Weirdboy stands as the only character among the other teenagers who can reflect and sustain his individuality as can be deducted from his position in the play.

Although being more or less the same age as the other teenage characters of the play, Weirdboy acts more maturely than the others. Reminding us of Shakespeare's fools, he appears on the stage to utter the truth that the other characters cannot admit. He first appears in scene four, almost out of nowhere, having a conversation with Kate. Weirdboy scrutinises Kate's action, who returns from shopping: "That's all that's left to us these days, isn't it? Buy buy buy. Spend spend spend. […] Makes us feel good about ourselves, doesn't it?" (4.102). In this scene, he is aware that there is something bothering Kate and that she's trying to hide this by going shopping. According to Weirdboy, Kate assumes that buying nice things will make her feel good about herself

and help her forget the matter that is bothering her, which is in fact the murder. What is naively sensed by Weirdboy is explicitly laid out by Gilroy:

> The car you drive and the brand of clothing or sport shoes that you wear may no longer be thought of as accidental or contingent expressions of the arts of everyday life and the material constraints that stem from widening inequalities of status and wealth. Blinded commodities acquire an additional burden when they are imagined to represent the private inner truths of individual existence or to fix the boundary of communal sensibilities that have faded from other areas of public or civic interaction. (*Between Camps* 107)

In his interest in and comment about Kate's condition, Weirdboy expresses that he can observe a problem behind her shopping spree as follows: "A big dark secret. You've put up a wall. There's something you don't want me to know, isn't there?" (4.103). In order to forget about the murder that she strives to keep a secret, Kate engages in carefree shopping. Yet, Weirdboy sees the reality behind this façade.

Weirdboy and Kate later share the stage again in scene thirteen. This time Kate remains silent due to the shock she experiences after Sean's physical threat, and Weirdboy talks to her in order to comfort the young girl. He tries to get closer to Kate and chats with her as if he is a good friend of hers. Yet, towards the end of the conversation, in order to prove to Kate that he knows her much better than any of her friends, he reveals the truth:

> Weirdboy: I know everything that you are, everything you've done. You forget that I can read your mind. No, you can't put a wall up against me now. I can see everything and you know what I see, Katie? I see blood. I see death, Katie, a young man dying, and you killed him. You think you can hide in your silence, Katie, but you can't hide from me. I know what you are. You're a murderer, Katie. A murderer. (13.127)

Weirdboy is a careful observer of the behaviours of the teenagers in the play. Just like he has closely observed Kate and arrived at the truth, Weirdboy appears in scene six observing Sean and his friends as they expose their nervous psychology through discussing the film *Titanic*. Later in scene seven, this time Weirdboy watches Aleysha and her friends as they discuss taking Derek's revenge themselves. Except for Kate, he does not have a close contact with any of the teenagers in the play, but he watches them

carefully and interprets their actions. It is Weirdboy's wisdom that conduces Kate to confess the murder. Weirdboy touches upon her conscience making her finally break her silence and reveal the truth. In this respect, Weirdboy shapes the events in the play as he makes Kate confess the murder to Inspector Johnson.

While Weirdboy is the most defenceless and innocent character, Ben and his friends accuse him of killing Derek. Although he tries quite hard, Weirdboy cannot persuade Ben to believe in his innocence. He mainly focuses on convincing Ben that he is not a racist: "I've never been racist in my life. Never even had a racist thought. Never heard anybody in my family say anything" (14.128). Weirdboy reverses this struggle by projecting Ben's anger on to himself. Observing Ben's psychology, Weirdboy argues that he regrets not supporting his friend that leads Ben to attack the first person he notices as the potential murderer. Thus, Weirdboy exhibits his ability to act maturely compared to other teenagers once again in this scene. Although he is portrayed as a teenager, Weirdboy is quite a mature man. While other teenage characters suffer from their bitter experiences, Weirdboy approaches racial issues quite steadily since he knows that the constructed identities that are forced upon individuals can lead to certain racial problems as can be observed in the relation between Derek and Sean.

Additionally, all the characters in general, except Weirdboy, suffer from labels in this play. Weirdboy seems to be an outsider because he does not belong to any of the gangs. Unlike the other characters, he lacks a common label that places him into a group of friends. Instead, he is given the label "Weirdboy" in order to keep him away from the groups formed by the other characters. Nevertheless, while his outcast position enables him to stand as an individual, the constructed identities specified by the labels problematise the stand of other characters. In this regard, it is the fear of losing her label as Sean's girlfriend and as a member of a gang that forces Kate to remain silent about the murder. Most significantly, it is Derek's arbitrary label as Black that makes him a victim of murder because of another label forced upon the killer, Sean. All the name-calling that takes place in scene two, in the fighting scene creates an arbitrary labelling of Derek and Sean, leading them to the murder. Moreover, society has such a problem with labelling in the play that this even complicates Johnson's job. Since this crime is

labelled as a racial murder, the expectations from Johnson differ as he admits to Kate. As indicated by his nickname, Weirdboy is weird since he does not abide by the norms of society by not feeling an obligation to belong to a group. Instead, he is portrayed as an individual. Pinnock uses this character, more precisely needs such a character, in order to point out that society misjudges individuals based on socially constructed labels. While people think that they need labels to define themselves and to be a part of society, these labels are constructed based on the perception of others. As can be observed in the play, blackness can be considered as one of the constructed labels that functions to hurt individuals rather than indicating an identity.

As can be concluded from the discussion above, Pinnock takes advantage of depicting a fool-like character, Weirdboy, to contribute to the deeper meaning of the story along with enabling the events to move forward. In this respect, she also makes Derek appear after the murder as a ghost. In scene eight, as the stage direction informs us, Derek's ghost appears in front of the window of Kate's bedroom and steps in to wake up Kate to ask for her help to solve his murder. Naturally, Kate first thinks that she is dreaming. However, Derek convinces her that she is not dreaming by proving that he has been following her since his death, and knows everything that happened since then, and how she feels. Derek's appearance as a ghost and the conversation between Kate and the ghost in scene eight can be explained through the state Kate is in. It can be argued that Derek's ghost represents Kate's conscience. Her grief and sense of guilt might be relieved in the play through the ghost based on the conversation between the ghost and Kate in scene eight. Derek's ghost talks to Kate as an all-knowing character. Moreover, he can utter what Kate is afraid to hear and to admit to herself. Derek's ghost knows that Kate hides the jacket Sean gave her and questions the reasons behind her acts: "Why didn't you throw it away? Are you thinking that you might have to show it to somebody one day?" (8.115). Derek's ghost even continues to force Kate to consciously think about her actions: "You've kept the jacket under your bed. Whether you know it yet or not, you're thinking that you should show it to somebody" (8.115). Derek's ghost admits that Kate is the only person he can talk to. Derek's family and friends are in sorrow because of their loss and cannot cope with seeing his ghost. Furthermore, Kate is the key name, as a witness and as the person who possesses evidence to solve the

murder. From such a perspective, Kate is the only character he can talk to. Yet, it is clear that Derek's ghost is no more than Kate's conscience, and that Kate is in fact having a conversation with her inner self.

Pinnock, however, disagrees with such an interpretation as she reveals in her interview with Mulligan: "Some people will see Derek as the personification of Kate's guilt and grief but for me he is real. In the world of the play you can believe that he comes back and pleads for someone to speak on his behalf" (140). Eventually this conversation, along with Kate's conversation with Weirdboy, contributes to her determination to break her vow to Sean. Derek's ghost first arouses pity by discussing the sorrow his father feels for not sharing the happiness of his success with his 'A' level results. Further, he projects Kate's future as an old woman, a grandmother who is still full of regret and has Derek's image in her mind. To a certain extent, Derek's ghost emotionally abuses Kate in order to speak up about the murder. Most significantly, Derek's ghost does not use any racial discourse. He speaks to Kate as someone who understands the state she is in after the murder and argues that both he and Kate deserve comfort and serenity. Thus, they establish a connection as two friends who understand each other. This is especially indicated in scene seventeen. After Kate appears at court as a witness, Derek's ghost reappears at her window as the only friend Kate can share her experience with. For Kate, after she decides to confess the murder, keeping a secret for the sake of being a part of the gang loses its importance. On the contrary, she devotes herself to do the right thing and defends a victim who is in need of justice. Eventually, this draws Kate and Derek's ghost closer. The solidarity Kate and Derek's ghost present in this scene disregards racial labelling. As her last words in the play Kate states bravely: "I won't let you down, Derek. I'm going to speak and keep on speaking and I'm not going to shut up until we win. Yes, Derek, from now on I'm going to speak. Just you let anybody try and stop me" (17.137). From the Kate who swears to keep the murder a secret to be able remain in the gang and agrees to hide evidence to be able to remain Sean's girlfriend, she evolves into a new Kate who now collaborates with Derek's ghost to fight for justice. On top of this, they are not fighting to get justice for a black boy, but they are fighting for a promising young man to get justice. Thus, Derek's ghost, on the one hand, functions in a similar manner to Weirdboy. He utters what Kate

cannot confess to herself and acts as a support for her to do the right thing. On the other hand, the relation between Derek's ghost and Kate presents an example for an inter-racial friendship.

So far it has been argued that Pinnock complicates this racial killing underlying that there is more than the characters' skin colour that matters in the problem. The events in the play are triggered by the murder. However, the murder of a black boy by a white boy gains more significance with the reaction of other characters and their perception of race. Beyond what has been discussed in this respect until now, Pinnock's choice to open and end the play with Kate and Aleysha delivers an important message as well. These two young women, both of whom are seventeen, are presented in the first scene in front of a cinema waiting for their boyfriends to arrive to see a film. The only detail in this scene that distinguishes them is their race: Kate is white and Aleysha is black. As they wait, they chat about their boyfriends as ordinary teenage girls. It turns out that although not having met officially, they know each other:

> Kate: […] You're at sixth form college aren't you? I seen you with your mates. I work in the market. On the handbag stall?
> Aleysha: Is that you?
> Kate: Yeah.
> Aleysha: Cool. Me mum bought a bag off you the other week. (1.95-96)

While they are having this conversation, their racial identity does not matter. They promote the idea that as white and black they can live together. They go to the same market to shop, go to the same cinema to watch a film and have similar experiences with their boyfriends. Their racial identity does not determine their involvement in and contribution to society. As Phoenix indicates "[…] many theorists now see identities and subjectivities as locally situated, accomplished in social interaction, and performative" ("Remembered Racialization" 106). The depiction of the relation between Kate and Aleysha can be considered as an explicit example of Phoenix's suggestion. These two young women involve in a social interaction to gain local understanding and meaning. As Kate gets the news from Candy about the trouble Sean has gotten into, she leaves in a friendly manner:

> Kate:[…] Got to run. See you around.
> Aleysha: Yeah. See you around. (1.97)

Thus, the first scene and the daily conversation between Kate and Aleysha deliver the message that their racial identity in fact has no impact on their communication. In the Parekh Report, it is suggested that "[p]ost-migration communities are distinct cultural formations, but they are not cut off from the rest of British society" (Parekh 27). The report continues highlighting that " [t]hey are not permanently locked into unchanging traditions, but interact at every level with mainstream social life, constantly adapting and diversifying their inherited beliefs and values in the light of the migration experience" (Parekh 27). The interaction intended to be portrayed among characters who belong to different races is especially exemplified through the friendship of Kate and Aleysha. This scene, before the murder scene, warns the readers and/or the audience about racial problems. Pinnock leads the readers and/or the audience about the murder by first ensuring that regardless of their racial identities, which mainly complicate relations in a socio-political context, human beings are more alike than they think in order to indicate the victimisation of Derek and Sean. Hence, the first scene establishes friendship on a common ground before the second scene presents arbitrary identities and labelling as complicating the relations between races.

Just as Pinnock chooses to open the play by showing Kate and Aleysha's companionship of, the play ends with these two young women as well. In scene seventeen, when Kate returns from the courthouse, her failure in bringing justice to Derek is revealed. This is already hinted by Johnson. When Kate hands over the jacket to Johnson, he already affirms that it might not be enough evidence to prove Sean's guilt. Moreover, it is revealed in the last scene that none of her friends have supported Kate. She stood on the witness stand on her own and confessed what she witnessed on the night of the murder. As a result, the case is closed because of lack of enough solid evidence. Just like it affects Kate, this subverts the perception of the readers and/or the audience towards the justice system. This situation leads to a sense of pessimism that it will take more than Kate's courage to convict the murderer. Nevertheless, Pinnock does not end the play with this pessimistic outlook. A small detail that is indicated in the stage direction changes the tone of the play: "There is a knock on the door. Derek stands

aside. Kate goes to the door. It's Aleysha. She enters. They stand looking at each other for a short while until Aleysha reaches out to Kate. They embrace. As Derek watches them, the lights go down" (137). As the play reaches its end, this time there is no dialogue between Kate and Aleysha. Yet, their act of embracing means more than words as it exemplifies Stuart Hall's definition of identification, which suppresses racial identifications: "In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation" ("Introduction" 2). At the end, the readers and/or the audience are promised a companionship between a white young woman and a black young woman whose racial identities do not have a political meaning at all. What is important in this scene is that these two women have found a way to overcome their racial differences and to feel strong despite their pain. Eventually, they establish the required interaction, the basis of a multicultural society, as Parekh maintains:

> When we understand human beings in this way, we do not automatically assume that others are either basically like us as the concept of human nature encourages us to do, or totally different as the concept of cultural determinism or culturalism implies. We approach them on the assumption that they are similar enough to be intelligible and make a dialogue possible, and different enough to be puzzling and make a dialogue necessary. (*Rethinking* 124)

Both women manage to establish a dialogue to live in harmony in the same society. Even if they have to fight harder against institutional discrimination to bring justice for Derek, it is obvious that there is still hope to restore race relations in British society. Thus, with the way she ends the play, Pinnock aims to deliver the message that it takes more than finding out the murderer to solve the problem of racial crimes and to regulate relations between different races.

In this regard, Pinnock places the heaviest burden onto the readers and/or the audience as can be understood from the title of the play. Formulated as a question, the title refers to the readers and/or the audience more than characters. When directed as "Can you keep a secret?," the readers and/or the audience are called upon to think on the racial discrimination that exists in society. Kate develops certain awareness in accepting one's responsibilities and duties along with learning to be racially objective in her relations.

After the change in Kate's behaviour, the title directs a question to the readers and/or the audience to consider a similar change in their acts towards racial problems in society. According to the message suggested by the title, it is the readers and/or the audience who should act responsibly by not keeping this secret and by taking action to bring justice to all and to restore race relations in British society. According to Sakellaridou, "[t]he whole conception of the play sounds conventional, promoting the role of theatre as a vehicle of change, as having a strong corrective or utilitarian function" (394). Pinnock calls everyone to action to serve for the betterment of relations between white British and immigrant communities.

In conclusion, Pinnock's *Can You Keep a Secret?* carries onto the stage a significant topic from the perspective of race relations. Pinnock manages to create a play that achieves more than reflecting a murder and its aftermath compared to *The Colour of Justice* and the other plays which deal with the topic of racial murders. The play urges the readers and/or the audience to develop a certain understanding about the actions of the characters that transcend artificial racial labels. Hence, *Can You Keep a Secret?* indicates the success of Winsome Pinnock as a Black British playwright who reflects a sensitive topic with literary skill and leads her mixed race readers and/or audience to question a racial murder beyond racial prejudices. Moreover, she abstains from creating white or black stereotypical characters that reflect prejudices about racial characteristics. In fact, Pinnock deals with the highly complicated nature of racial issues in British society quite delicately, and she successfully designs characters that enable the readers and/or the audience to question their established racial perceptions. Representation of white and black characters in *Can You Keep a Secret?* shows that social prejudices about racial identities and issues are actually groundless. This can lead to the readers' and/or the audience's recognition that personal and social approaches towards racial issues need to be reconsidered according to the changing understanding of multiculturalism as Pinnock suggests through her plays written in the second phase of her career.

CHAPTER IV

COLOUR OF PAIN AND SORROW IN *ONE UNDER*

Winsome Pinnock's *One Under* premiered in 2005 and the play was defined as "[her] first full-length play in several years" (Shuttleworth). Nevertheless, from 1999, when *Mules* was staged, to 2005, the political and social scene in the UK had changed in line with international and domestic events. The UK enjoyed a certain level of stability under Tony Blair who was the prime minister for three consecutive terms. While the country was being ruled under Labour ideology from 1997 to 2007, when the immigration acts and race relations were regulated accordingly, 9/11 attacks in New York, USA in 2001 and 7/7 London bombings in 2005 challenged the perception of immigrants in most Western countries. The discussion of the conditions of Black immigrants shifted with prejudice towards Islam in the UK. It was observed that the Western countries, beginning with the USA and the UK, started to discriminate against immigrants based on their religious beliefs rather than their skin colour, introducing a new definition of 'Black' with capital 'B.' Pinnock's *One Under*, on the other hand, standing at a distance to Islamophobia, focuses on the situations of the third generation black citizens in British society. From this perspective, the play celebrates the understanding of multiculturalism gradually established in the UK. In line with the theoretical discussion conducted in this study, Pinnock's career, with this play, reaches a point in which she is not only interested in reflecting the problems of Black identity, but also stresses out the changing definition of racial identities from a political perspective. Thus, the play aims to reflect the harmony in society rather than reflecting racial problems. Through such an optimistic perspective, Sakellaridou comments on Pinnock's attitude towards the sense of Britishness established both for white and black citizens in the society as follows: "[…] [B]y embarking her black male protagonist on an existential journey of guilt, torment and self-knowledge, Pinnock transcends her race and gender barriers and addresses the enigmatic and tragic ordeal of human life in a much more complex way than in her previous, more predictable works" (396). Therefore, this chapter intends to analyse Pinnock's *One Under* which reflects blackness as a biological identity that has lost its significance in British society. With

this play, Pinnock contributes to the reconstruction of Britishness that embraces all citizens who share a common life style and culture regardless of their skin colour.

In *One Under*, Pinnock once again provides ambiguous racial identities in order to highlight the universal importance of pain and sorrow for human beings. Ambiguity appears as a result of multicultural society which reflects racial issues on a new level in the twenty-first century. This sense of ambiguity results from the political developments under the Labour government, which constitute the socio-political background of this chapter. As highlighted in the previous chapters, Tony Blair reshaped the party with the intention of redefining Britishness. As the youngest prime minister since 1812, Blair aimed to renew the country's image as a young country with revisions in different fields. In some ways, it can be argued that Blair intended to rebuild the image of the UK as a country not only bound by her history. According to Shi, "[t]he 'young country' image boosted by the New Labour was an attempt to come to terms with modernity and to focus on contemporary culture and the industries of the post-industrial information society" (104). Such an approach created a possibility for the immigrant communities to be able to adopt Britishness as their identity. Since, unlike the previous government, New Labour preferred an understanding of Britishness that was not strictly bound by the empirical past of the country, Black youth was expected to reconsider how to define their identity. The existence of different ethnic communities as a result of immigration from former colonies was acknowledged by New Labour as reflected in the need to redefine Britishness. This is once again expressed by Shi: "Blair accepted Britain's multiethnic and multicultural character as an essential component of its identity" (107). However, Parekh approaches Blair cautiously: "Blair's view of British identity was an improvement on Thatcher's, but it too was inadequate" ("Being British" 35). The changes in the Labour ideology under the leadership of Blair can be pointed out as the reason for Parekh's comment. McCormick touches upon the shift in Labour ideologies under the leadership of Blair as well:

> Under Tony Blair, 'New' Labour in opposition had abandoned many of its more socialist ideas, and had adopted key elements of the Thatcher programme. Blair came into office underlining the importance of the free market, and emphasizing the need to improve education, rebuild the National Health Service, invest more heavily in Britain's human capital, build a society less dependent on government,

> take a tough stance on crime, work in a more constructive fashion with Britain's EU partners. (28)

Hence, as briefly touched upon in the Introduction, Tony Blair could not fulfil the expectations of immigrant communities. Parekh further judges Blair as a Labour prime minister as follows:

> He was more sympathetic than her to pressure for devolution and the demands of cultural diversity, but had no coherent framework to accommodate them. He talked of social responsibility and social justice, but did little to check unrestrained individualism. He remained ambiguous about the empire, and never assessed and came to terms with its legacy. […]Thanks to his failure to offer a coherent view of British identity, there is a widespread sense of disorientation and a lack of direction and purpose in national life. ("Being British" 35-36)

Nevertheless, beyond Blair's campaign to promote the new image of the Labour Party – later the image of the country was defined by the term "Cool Britannia" – and to get the votes of the middle class, embracing the multicultural reality of the country became a necessity for the Labour government. Just as Parekh indicates, "[a] national self-definition cannot be imposed from above or prescribed by politicians" ("Being British" 36), the society required a definition of Britishness to be abided by politicians as well. Thus, along with the image of New Labour, Blair was forced to act upon regulating some of his policies according to the multicultural formation of the society. The stress on tolerance, shared values and diversity was mainly introduced as a result of significant social and political developments.

As discussed in detail in the third chapter, the Macpherson Inquiry was one of the most significant developments that influenced Labour policies when Blair was in office. Prepared with the effort of the Lawrence family to bring justice to the murder of their son, the Macpherson Inquiry was concluded in 1999 after the investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Discrimination against Black people in the form of institutional racism, which actually existed in the UK since the arrival of *Empire Windrush*, was officially declared for the first time with the Inquiry in 1999. In a research prepared by the Home Office in 2005, "Assessing the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry," the impact of the Inquiry over police officers is laid out in great detail. As a summary, the report concludes that "[t]his research suggests that a number

of quite considerable changes have occurred in policing since the publication of the Report. […] The research identified a number of areas in which the Lawrence Inquiry appears to have been an important lever for change in the police service" (Foster 94). More concretely, as *The Macpherson Report – Ten Years on*, which was ordered by House of Commons, indicates "67 of Macpherson's 70 recommendations have been implemented fully or in part in the ten years since his report was published" (7).

Along with the Macpherson Report and the public awareness it introduced, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, known as the Parekh Report, is another significant development which had a shocking impact on society as well as politicians. The report is a product of a three-year research and the work of a committee established by the Runnymede Trust which is defined by the organisation's website as "the UK's leading independent race equality think tank" ("About Us"). The commission included leading academicians, scholars, journalists, and professionals in the UK. As a result of the research conducted by the commission, "[t]he three-year project has reviewed the public philosophy regarding ethnic minority communities and has made policy recommendations targeted at government, local government and other levels of leadership" ("Commission"). Different from the Macpherson Inquiry, the Parekh Report approaches racism from different angles. Thus, it is a much more comprehensive study. The difference the report made is marked by Gunning as follows: "However, a full, reasoned, and consistent account of the aims and ideals of multiculturalism as a political policy of respect for cultural diversity did not appear in Britain until 2000 with the publication of the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (CFMB), chaired by Bhikhu Parekh" (108). The report was welcomed by the government in line with the aim of the commission: "[…] The publication of the Runnymede Trust report on the future of multiethnic Britain brought cultural differences and the role of the state centre stage" (Bhavnani 118). The report, after laying out the issues in line with racism, provides strategies of change. According to the report's preface, "[t]he Commission's remit was to analyse the current state of multi-ethnic Britain and to propose ways of countering racial discrimination and disadvantage and making Britain a confident and vibrant multicultural society at ease with its rich diversity" (viii). In accordance with the consciousness that "race is too important and sensitive an issue to be turned into a

political football or approached in terms of narrow electoral calculations" (*The Future* viii), the commission proposed suggestions and recommendations for the well-being of the society. In this respect, the report first discusses six main themes listed as follows: "Rethinking the national story and national identity; understanding that all identities are in a process of transition; developing a balance between cohesion, equality and difference; addressing and eliminating all forms of racism; reducing material inequalities; building a pluralistic human rights culture" (xiii). With the second part, the report focuses on specific problems in the areas of police and policing, the wider criminal justice system, education, arts, media and sport, health and welfare, employment, immigration and asylum, politics and representation, and religion and belief followed by recommendations for the government and local authorities to improve race relations. Solomos underlines that "The Parekh Report, in particular, provided a basis for rethinking the underlying rationale of policies on race and immigration" (240). Therefore, it can be argued that just as the Macpherson Inquiry is significant for admitting a reality of the society, which is institutional racism, the Parekh Report strikingly challenges the question of multiculturalism.

In the light of these current developments, the Race Relations Act 1976 was amended by the Parliament in 2000. According to Solomos, "[t]he 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act was the product of this shift in thinking and was the main initiative that New Labour put on the statute books to address racial discrimination and exclusion" (92). The significance of the act is also underlined by Bhavnani: "The passing of the 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act, which requires public sector bodies to actively promote 'race' equality, has been hailed as a key change in the ways in which British social policy on 'race' equality has been transformed" (71). Due to the positive attitude encouraged by the Parekh Report and the actions of the government afterwards, multiculturalism began to be cherished as can be observed in the following example:

> In April 2001, the foreign secretary, Robin Cook, made a speech that symbolised the spirit of these new times. In what widely became know as the 'Chicken Tikka Massala speech', he outlined an inclusive version of Britishness, incorporating a variety of pluralism. Devolution and European integration were accommodated, but the main thrust of his speech celebrated ethnic and cultural pluralism. 'This

> pluralism', he argued, 'is not a burden we must reluctantly accept. It is an immense asset that contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of the nation.' He continued that 'Chicken Tikka Massala is now a true British national dish, not only because it is the most popular, but because it is a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences. Chicken Tikka is an Indian dish. The Massala sauce was added to satisfy the desire of British people to have their meat served with gravy.'(Ward 139)

Nevertheless, the shift in Labour ideology in an attempt to respond to conservative ideologies eventually affected race relations as well. Solomos underlines this fact once again indicating that "[t]he 2000 Act was generally welcomed as a step in the right direction by those concerned with racial discrimination and exclusion. There was, however, some disappointment that the Act did not take up all of the recommendations by the Commission for Racial Equality for strengthening the 1976 Race Relations Act" (92). In this regard, by passing the Act Blair indicated his intention to improve race relations in the UK. Meanwhile, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 introduced a test evaluating the knowledge of British life to become citizens touching upon the doubts Solomos pointed out. Schnapper comments upon the content of the test as follows:

> In practice, a minimal command of English, or evidence of progress in English, would be required, and the citizenship tests would cover five main areas: British political institutions; Britain as a multicultural society and as four nations; the British legal system; an understanding of employment; everyday information. In other words, it covered practical aspects of life in the UK but also history and values, key elements in the definition of Britishness. (91-92)

The function of such testing is interpreted by Shi as follows: "Contrasting with former policies which encouraged immigrants to maintain their cultures and way of life as they like, the revised UK nationality laws require immigrants seeking UK citizenship to have knowledge of English language, British history, culture, and customs" (108). Hence, the Asylum Act 2002 reflects the harsh attitude of the Labour government towards immigrants.

Moreover, the London bombings on 7 July 2005 further intensified the questions of race relations and immigration. The bombings were carried out by British-born Muslims, and this evoked the fiercest discussion about multiculturalism. Yet, it also shifted the

discussion from ethnicity to religion since Muslims, regardless of their ethnicity and country of birth, became the new target for the discussion of multiculturalism and integration of different cultures. Sarah Spencer draws attention to this shift in the society and in the government: "Blair's interest in the integration agenda grew after the 2005 London bombings, focusing on Muslims and ethnic minorities rather than on migrants per se" ("Immigration" 357). Such an approach revised the understanding of Britishness as Colley suggests: "Official statements and initiatives to do with 'Britishness' have magnified since 9/11 and 7/7, especially under the current Prime Minister, Gordon Brown" (23). By the time Blair's third term as prime minister ended in 2007, immigration and multiculturalism were bigger issues compared to Blair's first term. This is indicated by Page as follows:

> Finally, one of the biggest shifts in public opinion during the Blair years was rising concern, initially about asylum-seekers, legal and illegal, and then race, multi-culturalism and immigration of all sorts. By the end of Blair's premiership this was frequently seen as the biggest issue facing Britain, although how much was driven by media coverage as opposed to actual experience was unclear – while only 18% per cent saw it as a big problem in their own area, some 76% saw it as a national problem. (455)

Schnapper draws attention to the condition of the UK at the end of Blair's term in 2007 in terms of race relations as well:

> By the end of the Blair premiership, the public perception of the cohesion of the British society was quite bleak. Divided communities leading separate lives, Muslim communities affected by extremism, no common Britishness in spite of the political leaders' repeated attempts to define and celebrate it – this was the kind of picture depicted in the media and public discourse. Fears of a melting down of social cohesion, including a white backlash against ethnic minorities, were rife by then in official and media circles. (107)

Another Labour politician Gordon Brown, who acted as prime minister from 2007 until 2010, intended to restore problematic race relations in the UK after the political and social events under the leadership of Blair. The conservative David Cameron, who has been serving as prime minister since 2010, has sustained a similar discourse underlying the importance of togetherness for the well-being of the UK after succeeding Brown. However, since Pinnock's play *One Under* was put on stage in 2005, neither prime ministers' time in office will be discussed in detail.

Contrary to the social and political developments mentioned above, *One Under* does not draw a negative picture of multiculturalism. Staged before the London attacks – premiered in February, four months before the bombings – the play presents the positive attitude of British society as it became hopeful of the possibility of a multicultural society that can live in harmony with the publication of the Parekh Report. Thus, this chapter analyses the play in terms of reflecting the multicultural society that British people hoped to establish under the leadership of Blair before being affected by the attacks of British-born Muslim citizens in London which turned into a political subject more than a social concern. Pitcher underlines the significance of the bombings for the discussion of multiculturalism as follows:

> Despite recognition by expert and public opinion alike that the London bombings were a direct response to the British state's involvement in the prosecution of the War on Terror, I will argue that state discourses attempted to deflect critical attention away from such understandings, and transform terrorist violence motivated by political intent into an arbitrary attack on an innocent, cohesive multicultural society. (136)

Pitcher clearly argues that the British state formed an official discourse about the bombings, in which these events were presented as an attack on the idea of multiculturalism in contemporary British society. Based on Pitcher's argument, it can be claimed that multiculturalism is still a matter of political discussion even in the twenty-first century. This point of view also marks the importance of *One Under* because the play reflects Pinnock's intention to stay away from the political agenda. In this regard, Pinnock reflects on the stage a society that accepts its Black members.

In the middle of this social and political scene, the premiere of the play was made at the Tricycle Theatre, London. The Tricycle Theatre website defines this theatre as "ambitious and entertaining." The website continues highlighting that "[t]he Tricycle views the world through a variety of lenses, bringing unheard voices into the mainstream. It presents high quality and innovative work, which provokes debate and emotionally engages" ("About Us), as if specifically referring to Pinnock's *One Under* and its significance in Pinnock's career and, in general, for Black British drama. Compared to her previous plays, it can be observed that Pinnock wrote this play with a

different technique and aim. Structurally, the play narrates Sonny's story with flashbacks. The time lapses among the scenes complicate the order of events quite frequently. In fact, the play is mainly criticised by various theatre critics due to these gaps in the plotline. This is indicated in a review published in *The Guardian*,

> [w]ith its complex time structure and symmetrical plotting, the play's twin tracks merge and separate like the Circle Line at rush hour. On one hand, this chopped-up chronology helps disguise the story's inconsequential ending. It also means that, for too long before their motives are revealed, we've no idea why Sonny and Cyrus are behaving cryptically. (Logan)

Hence, these gaps in the plotline are treated as the weakness of this play by most critics.

In addition, thematically, Pinnock does not target a particular "black issue," such as drug dealing or racial killing, compared to her previous plays. *One Under* illustrates Pinnock's achievement in reflecting contemporary multicultural British society. This point is highlighted by Griffin: "But where Pinnock's previous plays were powerfully focused on black women's predicaments, […] *One Under* give[s] equal space to men and women, and present[s] predicaments that might apply to non-black characters as much as black ones" ("The Remains" 207). In *Theatre in a Cool Climate*, Pinnock herself comments on her play as follows:

> When I first started to write plays I was very conscious of some kind of political agenda. I wanted to write plays where black women were the heroines and I also wanted to chart the various developments of a multicultural society. […] I am currently writing a play in which there is a narrative that does not centre on issues of race or identity, but it will not be surprised if, because of my choice to cast the play mainly with black actors, it is viewed as a 'black' play. (36)

In this regard, referring to and judging the play as a "black play" would be a superficial approach, since the significance of the play does not merely come from its black characters and its being written by a black British playwright as Pinnock also points out. On the contrary, the play deserves a close study for its success in reflecting the multicultural characteristics of British society in contemporary times. In fact, the play can be approached from the perspective of race relations in the UK. In this respect, more than the casting of black actors and/or actresses, the ambiguity in the racial identities of the characters enables a racial reading of the play focusing on the

developments in race relations in the twenty-first century Britain. Similar to the use of ambiguity in *Mules*, ambiguity in *One Under* has a function of highlighting the improved racial relations in society, which will be discussed in detail.

Pinnock's *One Under* has a fairly complex plotline in terms of storytelling. The play jumps back and forth between the prelude and aftermath of the death of Sonny, complicating the story. It combines Cyrus's story with the flashbacks that sheds light upon Sonny's story. In act one scene one, the play opens up in an office at an underground station as Mags and Cyrus wait for the police officers to question Cyrus about the incident. It is revealed that a young man, Sonny, jumped under the Tube train driven by Cyrus, who has developed the belief that the young man who died under the train is his son whom he had to give up for foster care. Moreover, Cyrus assumes that Sonny has chosen him intentionally to look for the reasons behind his death. Cyrus thinks that Sonny's death was not just a suicide. Motivated to reveal the truth behind Sonny's death, Cyrus begins tracing the clues which he assumes that Sonny has left for him. Then, the play introduces Sonny's adoptive mother, Nella and his foster sister, Zoe. Without admitting his real identity, Cyrus helps Nella around her house. While they form a close relationship, Zoe, recognising Cyrus from the inquest, reacts against his presence in the house. Due to the friendship they have formed, Nella also offers Sonny's council flat to Cyrus for him to stay when she learns that he is staying at a hostel. Happy that he can investigate into Sonny's life more closely, Cyrus begins staying at Sonny's flat. When Zoe arrives to clean the flat, she disapproves of both Nella's and Cyrus's actions. After Cyrus admits that he has suspicions that Sonny might be his blood son, Zoe gives him two weeks' time before she hands the key of the flat back to the council. In Sonny's flat, Cyrus finds a dry-cleaning ticket leading him to Christine. First, Cyrus hopes that he can find the answers he is looking for regarding Sonny's death when he picks up Sonny's jacket. Nevertheless, he realises that his next clue is actually Christine who works at the dry-cleaner. When they meet at Sonny's flat, Cyrus makes Christine tell him about the day she spent with Sonny. In return, he shares the clues he has to solve the mystery of Sonny's death with Christine. After two-weeks' time, Zoe empties out Sonny's flat and ends Cyrus's 'investigation.' Moreover, she forces Cyrus to leave Nella alone in order to protect her mother. With the following

scene, as Zoe visits her mother, she realises that Cyrus is still helping her. In fact, Cyrus is still searching for what Sonny might have buried in the garden before his death. Upon seeing this, Zoe confesses to Nella that Cyrus is the driver of the Tube train in front of which Sonny jumped to commit suicide. Nella's confession on Sonny's blood father along with Zoe's confession about Cyrus leave both Nella and Cyrus devastated.

As Cyrus's relation with Nella and Zoe is told, albeit some time lapses, as one of the threads, the readers and/or the audience also witness the last days of Sonny told in flashbacks. Only in act two scene five, the details about Sonny's working in Nella's garden are given. It is also in this scene that the reality about Sonny's suicide is revealed. Accordingly, one night when Sonny goes to face his blood father, he gets disappointed with his father and leaves in his car in a frustrated manner. In a rainy weather, he hits something with his car. Although Nella thinks that he could have hit an animal, Sonny thinks that he actually killed someone. After reading the papers about Christine, whose child died in a hit-and-run accident, he develops the idea that he killed Christine's son. Thus, he befriends Christine to appease his conscience. Sonny appears at the dry-cleaner to persuade her to go out with him. He convinces her to spend the day with him by making up stories without admitting the truth about who he is. During this time, Sonny only aspires to make Christine smile and forget her pain. His guilty conscience, nevertheless, finally leads him to the Tube station to commit suicide. The play ends with the scene that shows the random encounter of Sonny and Cyrus at the Tube station before the tragic event.

The play aims to reflect the tragedy of individuals interconnected with sorrow. While characters' racial identities are hinted as black or white, the play does not emphasise a strong racial identity that contributes to the meaning of the play. This highlights characters as individuals rather than assigning them a particular political identity related to their races. Eventually, Christine's tragedy and subsequent sorrow, whose racial identity is ambiguous, are linked with Sonny's tragedy and subsequent sorrow. who is a black character. Sonny's sudden decision, on the other hand, creates another tragedy for all of the characters in the play. Hence, pain and sorrow that all characters suffer from connect them to each other regardless of their racial identities and the constructed

meanings of these identities. By means of the web of relations linked with pain, racial relations and understanding of blackness are revealed at the beginning of a new century. In this regard, mainly the meaning and significance of racial identities surface in the play through the theme of adoption. Based on the information provided in the play, it is possible to state that Sonny is adopted and he is black, indicated by Nella's reference to Sonny's Nigerian blood father. In this regard, the fact that Nella is Sonny's adoptive mother is first revealed in act one scene seven through Cyrus. As Cyrus discusses with Zoe to get permission to stay at Sonny's flat, he reveals his suspicions:

> Cyrus: When Nella told me Sonny was adopted it blew my mind. […]
> Zoe: You're not implying that Sonny . . .
> Cyrus: Yes, he's mine. Sonny's my boy. (1.7.42)

Adoption becomes the topic of the conversation once again in act two scene four among Nella, Zoe and Cyrus when Nella reveals the fact about Sonny's blood father. Regardless of the truth behind Sonny's blood father, adoption itself is a sensitive topic in terms of race relations.

Like most of the characters in the play, Nella's race is not stated explicitly. Touching upon Pinnock's use of racial ambiguity, Griffin remarks that "[t]he cast for the play was mixed, featuring three black men, three white women, and two black women. I sat through it, trying to decide what the racial politics of the play were, and whether or not the casting choices mattered" ("The Remains" 200). As discussed in detail in the second chapter, ambiguity contributes to the reading of race relations from different perspectives affecting the representation of blackness in *One Under*, too. When premiered in 2005, Nella was played by Lynn Farleigh ("One Under") who is a white actress. Seeing a white woman adopting and raising a black boy on the stage gives the message that race relations in fact have improved. In line with casting choices, Goddard reveals her observation: "The casting adds another dimension to the issue of family ties and separation as the story becomes one where a white middle class woman has adopted a black man's son. The racial dynamics are mostly inconsequential to the narrative and only three of the ten reviews mentioned race" (*Staging* 193). Tizard and Phoenix, based on their research conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, state that "[a]n example

of more far-reaching impact is the policy of many social service departments to interpret their 'same-race placement' policy to mean that mixed-parentage children in care must be placed with black or mixed couples only, on the grounds that they cannot acquire a positive black identity in a white family" (4). Hence, Tizard and Phoenix draw attention to a practice maintained in the UK based on the dominant racial assumptions. The assumption that "[…] different races – and in particular, blacks and whites – inhabit very different cultural worlds, despite common nationality, residence, language and political and economic values […]" (1175) is underlined by Morning in another study on racial issues. On the assumption that the difference in skin colour should result in extreme cultural differences, it was argued that a white couple could not raise a black or mixed-race child. As indicated by Gilroy, fostering and adoption are regarded as a sensitive issue by Blacks, too: "[…] A special concern with black fostering and adoption policy has emerged as the primary vehicle for black cultural nationalism. This issue has precipitated a debate over the capacity of white families to provide an environment in which black culture and identity can be nurtured" (*Small Acts* 31). This perspective is indicated by Fanon as well:

> The white family is the agent of a certain system. The society is indeed the sum of all the families in it. The family is an institution that prefigures a broader institution: the social or the national group. Both turn on the same axes. The white family is the workshop in which one is shaped and trained for life in society. […] As long as he remains among his own people, the little black follows very nearly the same course as the little white. (*Black Skin* 149)

However, regardless of the belief in cultural differences between different races, the increasing interracial relations in British society have contributed to the change that can be observed in the play in terms of racial adoptions. How interracial relations are perceived by society is indicated by Ward as follows:

> The difference in the 1990s and in the early years of the new century seems to be that being a 'different kind of British' has become increasingly appropriate and welcomed. In 1993, for example, an opinion poll suggested that three quarters of white people (and 88 per cent of young people) would not mind if one of their close relatives married an Afro-Caribbean. (138)

Nevertheless, Julios provides a much more detailed analysis on the changing face of interracial relations in contemporary British society:

> Those of mixed parentage, in particular, have consistently increased their share of the UK population. By 1997, already half of black men and a fifth of Asian men in relationships in Britain had a white partner, conversely a third of black women and ten per cent of Asian women had also opted for a white partner. Over the past decade, the number of inter-ethnic couples and children of mixed parentage has ostensibly risen by 20 per cent, there now being four times more children than adults of mixed ethnicity. There is also evidence that British society is becoming more mixed, with the numbers of mixed neighbourhoods increasing from 864 to 1,070 in the decade to 2001. (144)

In Pinnock's *One Under,* the embracing attitude in British society for welcoming interracial relations and mixed-race children is reflected through the relationship between Nella and Sonny in the light of this gradually changing social environment. Hence, it can be argued that Pinnock represents the current social condition of British society as she carries a black boy with a white adoptive mother onto the stage. Even if Nella is not Sonny's blood mother, this interracial family exemplifies the familiarisation of British society with such relationships. Parekh touches upon the necessity of interaction between different cultural communities as follows:

> Different cultural communities in Britain are not ghettoised but expected and encouraged to interact with each other as well as with the shared public culture in a spirit of open-minded dialogue. The common public culture would not have come into existence without such an interaction, and bears witness to the spirit of dialogue that lies at the heart of the kind of multiculturalism to which Britain has historically been committed. ("Being British" 38)

To a certain extent, Nella's attempt to take care of children from different ethnic backgrounds, such as black Sonny among many other foster children, can be pointed out as an example of Parekh's explanation. Nella intends to create an interactive social environment for her foster children. Nella's open-minded attitude towards Black children shows that Britishness can be defined in a much more constructive and inclusive manner.

Furthermore, the relationship between Nella and Sonny needs to be emphasised on two grounds in terms of racial relations. First of all, since the play's text does not reveal Nella's race explicitly, it is necessary to consider how Nella as a black character would change the importance of race as pointed out above. Considering Nella as a black

person cannot contribute to the plotline of the play since her black identity will not have a major impact on the understanding of race. Nevertheless perceiving Nella as a black person still indicates the contemporary understanding of blackness which is a part of British society and Britishness through her image as a British citizen. Nella illustrates the picture of an old lady who is retired and enjoys her days at home. In act two scene four, Nella reveals that she has fostered other children before adopting Zoe and Sonny: "All the children I fostered were very polite" (2.4.75). Through this information, it can be stated that financially and socially Nella has a respectable position in society. At least the government found all of her conditions, mainly economic and social, convenient for taking care of foster children. Thus, it can be concluded that she is not a discriminated member of the society unlike the first generation Black immigrants. She has successfully established herself as a citizen of the UK beyond any constructed label that can be referred to regarding her race or ethnicity. While the play does not provide enough detail on Nella in order to pursue a detailed discussion on the significance of her race, it is still important that Pinnock does not reflect stereotypical characters such as successful white person versus a lower class black person. Instead, ambiguity in terms of her racial identity contributes to Nella's representation as a part of contemporary multicultural British society.

The second point to be considered is Nella's position as Sonny's adoptive mother. Not being the blood mother but being Sonny's adoptive mother is crucial for the plotline. This fact in the story both creates the surprise element and also triggers Cyrus's acts in the play. Hence, it is a crucial part of the play that cannot be changed. Even if Nella is considered as Sonny's blood mother, her whiteness still indicates that British society has developed a better understanding in terms of perception of race and race relations in the new millennium. As pointed out previously, this indicates the acceptance of interracial relations in British society.

As regards Nella's role in the play, it can be observed that she is a caring person. Despite being Sonny's adoptive mother, it is revealed in act two scene four that Sonny is a special child for Nella: "All those children I fostered and you were the only two I ever adopted" (2.4.78). Their relationship is represented in act two scene five which

takes place before Sonny's suicide, after the day he spent with Christine in Nella's garden. After Sonny ignored Nella for some time, he comes back to her house to take care of the garden as he promised to do. During their conversation, it is hinted that Sonny is financially and mentally going through a hard time. Nevertheless, Nella continues to act as his mother by caring for his well-being and supporting him financially. It is joyful for Nella to have him at the house and see him helping her out. According to Nella, Sonny is as happy as he used to be: "Oh, it's wonderful to see you in such good spirits. You have to admit the last time I saw you you didn't. You seem full of life. It makes me very happy" (2.5.85). She continuously points out how much she cares about Sonny and how she wishes him to be successful and happy. Although Sonny cannot get rid of the feeling of guilt that preys on his mind for killing a person, he strives to do something for Nella which leads him to work in the garden at night time. At some point, as a reaction to Nella's wish for Sonny to make up with Zoe, Sonny responds to Nella as "[s]he's not my real sister" (2.5.84). Since Nella treats them as her own children, Sonny's reaction hurts Nella and makes her utter these words: "You mean, in the same way that I'm not your real mother? And you're not my real son?" (2.5.85). Even these brief lines from their conversation indicate the level of their relationship as mother and son regardless of Sonny's being adopted. Indicating this relationship Sonny says "[b]ye, Mum" (2.5.90) when he leaves the house. Nevertheless, Pinnock does not represent a relationship between Sonny and Nella defined by their race. The relationship people establish, and how they treat each other within their relationship, is not restricted by their racial identities. According to Parekh, "[b]eing British is a political project, not the actualisation of some primordial and unchanging essence" ("Being British" 32). In the reflection of this mother and son relation, nothing political is reflected. On the contrary, it is the primordial and unchanging essence of human beings that is projected through Nella's caring attitude towards Sonny. Their race and their skin colour are biological facts that can neither restrict their identity according to a political agenda nor shape their relationship. On the contrary, their roles as mother and son surpass any other constructed label. In this regard, Bhavnani asserts that

> [e]xperiments found that people made immediate, almost reflexive, associations with social groupings. They associated black and white people with different social

> traits at a subliminal level. Since these connections are made often enough, they become part of the unconscious. Our culture is suffused with these images. We are surrounded by notions of equality and tolerance, but the reality of these concepts is lacking in our society. Thus our conscious minds check or limit our response. (54)

The mother-son relationship Nella and Sonny illustrate erases the social traits Bhavnani refers to. Since these characters do not act according to the political aspects of their races, they do not belong to two distinct groups as white and black. Thus, in the play, relationships among characters do not depend on social groupings. Blackness, in this respect, stands as a biological fact for the sake of the plotline due to the adoption issues. Relationships among characters that are not bound by race can be observed in the relationship between Nella and Sonny and will be exemplified further through other characters. Once again, racial ambiguity appears as a constructive element in order to challenge previously mentioned racial understandings.

A similar relationship, in terms of being detached from racial constructions, can be observed between Zoe and Sonny. It is hinted in the play that there was a problem between the two before Sonny's suicide and they were not in touch:

> Nella: […] I wish you two would make up. I'll bet you've forgotten why you fell out in the first place.
> Sonny: (stops cutting) I haven't forgotten.
> […]
> Nella: You have no idea how much pain it gives me to see you both hating each other.
> Sonny: We don't hate each other.
> Nella: You used to be so close. You were inseparable.
> Sonny: Life moves on. Me and Zoe followed different paths, that's all. (2.5.84-85)

Along with this, the readers and/or the audience are not informed about what has passed between Zoe and Sonny. The text does not reveal any racial problems either. In this regard, it must be underlined that Zoe's racial identity is also not certain. The conversation between Nella and Sonny in act two scene five reveals the truth that Zoe is not Sonny's blood sister as quoted above. Hence, it can be argued that Zoe is not necessarily a black character since the text also does not provide any concrete evidence on her racial identity. In the original production, however, she was played by a black actress Doreene Blackstock ("One Under"). Depicting both the sister and brother as

black might be interpreted as strengthening the relationship between these two characters. Nevertheless, race cannot be accepted as a shared identity as discussed in depth in the previous chapters. The limitation of this perspective is indicated by Mason:

> Since skin colour is a key marker of status in modern Britain, it is argued, the term 'black' is the appropriate one to use to refer to all those who are victims of the exclusionary practices of white racism. This usage, it should be noted, frequently entails not merely a descriptive label but also a self-conscious political statement. The claim is not merely that those designated by the label 'black' share certain experiences but that they *ought* to embrace a common identity as a basis for effective mobilization and resistance. (17)

While such labelling can only be applicable to the first generation of immigrants who suffered from political statements, neither Zoe nor Sonny can be expected to share a sense of blackness described by Mason. Morrell once again underlines the problematic case of a shared black identity: "Identity, […] is not possessed but expressed" (34). However, one can neither possess nor express blackness through skin colour, as studied in Pinnock's earlier plays as well. In this regard, having the same skin colour, as in the case of Zoe and Sonny, cannot guarantee a shared black identity by these two characters. Gilroy draws attention to the constructed definition of race: "Races are not, then, simple expressions of either biological or cultural sameness. […] Thus ideas about race may articulate political and economic relations in a particular society which go beyond the distinct experiences or interests of racial groups to symbolize wider identities and conflicts" (*Small Acts* 20-21). Hence, in line with racial theories, both Zoe and Sonny stand as individuals who are not restricted by their skin colour as intended to be portrayed in the play.

Besides the fact that their skin colour cannot be taken as the basis of their shared identity, the play depicts Zoe and Sonny as characters that have different personalities. The image depicted for Zoe is that of a mother who is juggling with the responsibility of motherhood, her work and the need to take care of her mother. She is aware that from time to time she neglects her mother. Nevertheless, she expresses that she has grown up to be a busy woman who is aware of all of her domestic, familial and professional responsibilities which are reflected in her conversation with Nella:

> Zoe: There's enough there for you to put in the fridge for the rest of the week.
> Nella: How do you do that? I didn't even see you go in the kitchen.
> Zoe: You have to juggle when you've got kids, don't you?
> Nella: You didn't learn it from me.
> Zoe: I learnt it in spite of you. (1.5.24-25)

In an attempt to question the mother-daughter relationship, the play presents Zoe and Sonny sharing the same unfortunate past of being abandoned by their blood parents. After they grow up in their adoptive home, they end up living different lifestyles as Zoe is married with kids and Sonny is not quite sure about his future. Since Zoe and Sonny's current conditions are not determined by their race, Pinnock eliminates the significance of skin colour in the case of these two characters and underlines social and economic difficulties for members of contemporary British society. In this regard, the ambiguity of Zoe's skin colour is also not as significant as the racial ambiguity of Nella. Even if Zoe is perceived as white, Nella's relation with Sonny already confutes the importance of race in the play. Zoe says that Sonny was a special child for Nella: "[…] Sonny was your favourite. Losing Sonny has left a hole in you and you'll look for anything to fill it with. A complete stranger, anything. As long as it's not me" (2.4.78). Hence, the racial ambiguity in the play contributes to the developments achieved in understanding and accepting interracial relations. As can be deducted from the relationship among Nella, Zoe, and Sonny, race is just a biological fact that cannot determine identities and the level of social relations. Modood asserts that

> [i]ndeed, we really only begin to talk about multiculturalism when the groups in question cannot be characterized in 'racial' terms only, when they do not, for example, portray themselves as 'black' or 'brown' but where issues of (perceived) bonds based on community structure, family norms, cultural heritage, religious tradition seem to be equally important as phenotype or descent. (40-41)

Within the family, not only Sonny and Zoe, but also Nella is freed from racial characterisations; this exemplifies the understanding of multiculturalism as signified by Modood.

Furthermore, the relationship between Sonny and his blood father, which actually triggers the action in Sonny's subplot, needs to be analysed within the context of racial relations. While Sonny has a settled relation with his adoptive family, the play depicts a

problematic relationship with his blood father. The text does not reveal any information regarding Sonny's mother. However, there are two scenes in which Sonny's blood father is mentioned. The first one takes place in act two scene four when Zoe reveals the fact that Cyrus is in fact the train driver who killed Sonny and that he remains with Zoe and Nella because he believes that Sonny is his blood son. As a reply, Nella confesses the truth about Sonny's blood father:

> Nella: […] I know who his father was. *Pause.* He came here once. Years ago. You remember, Zoe. His father came round on his birthday with a bicycle. […] He was a Nigerian, I think. He wore a mohair suit and carried a briefcase. […] He kept patting Sonny on the head and smiling nervously. You could tell he was uncomfortable, couldn't wait to get away. And when he'd gone Sonny took the bike and rode it up and down the garden furiously. He crashed into that tree, remember? He cut his lip. (2.4.81-82)

Nella's account provides a clear image of Sonny's blood father. Her narration primarily ensures that Sonny has black heritage leading the readers and/or the audience to the conclusion that Sonny is a black character. The brief memory of Nella includes other important details as well. Nella prefers to define Sonny's blood father by his nationality. Instead of identifying him as Black, she particularly labels him as "Nigerian." Rather than referring to him as "Nigerian-British," using another hyphenated identity, or addressing him based on his skin colour, Nella considers him a foreigner based on his nationality. Thus, she refers to his political identity. Nella's description focusing on nationality can be explained in Gilroy's comment: "Consciousness of 'race' was seen instead as closely linked to the idea of nationality" (*Between Camps* 32). While Sonny is a part of the family regardless of his racial identity, it is understood that Nella casts Sonny's blood father out due to the national label she used. Since Sonny is not discriminated against because of his skin colour, it can be assumed that he carries a British identity rather than Black identity that has political connotations. His father, on the other hand, is a "Nigerian" who has a specific national and political stand. In this regard, Byrne indicates that "[t]here are different levels at which the question of national identity and its changing nature and formation can be addressed. National identity is the product of state intervention in terms of politico-legal definitions of borders, citizenship, and belonging" (141). Thus, Nella prefers a politico-legal definition for Sonny's blood father based on his skin colour. Gilroy remarks that

"[n]ationalism and racism become so closely identified that to speak of the nation is to speak automatically in racially exclusive terms" (*Small Acts* 27). Thus, Nella applies "racially exclusive terms" by referring to Sonny's blood father with a national classification.

The other detail provided in the play about Sonny's blood father is also related to his appearance. Although Nella narrates an incident that took place years ago, she is quite certain about the details of the appearance of Sonny's blood father. She can immediately point out that he was wearing "a mohair suit." Hunter identifies this specific material as follows: "Mohair, the lustrous fleece of the Angora goat, is one of the most important speciality animal fibres, detailed on the frontispiece" (68). Hunter further underlines mohair's significance: "For centuries, mohair has been regarded as one of the most luxurious and best quality fibres available to man" (68). Thus, it can be concluded that mohair is a luxurious material because of its high quality. Mohair also indicates a social position as in the case of Sonny's blood father. Along with his suitcase, the mohair suit can be interpreted as an indication of his social position, that is upper-middle class. Thus, he challenges the negative stereotypical representation of black people which is promoted by the media and popular culture. Instead he creates a different image. The image-creating process of Sonny's blood father brings to mind the idea that race is a constructed identity as Bhavnani stresses out once again: "Racism is not about objective measurable physical and social characteristics. It is about the ideological legitimation of relationships of domination and subordination in different social and historical contexts" (151). In other words, it can be argued that he covers his blackness and the socially constructed image of his black skin with the mohair suit he wears by constructing another image with the help of the attributes of mohair in the eyes of society.

Sonny's blood father is mentioned for the second time in the play in act two scene five. According to the chronological order of the events, this scene most probably takes place on the night before Sonny's suicide. Sonny stops by at Nella's to help her in the garden. As Sonny and Nella chat, Sonny talks about his experience during his visit to his blood father, which leads to the accident he was involved in. The conversation reveals that

Nella wanted Sonny to find his blood father in order to ease his mind. Nevertheless, the encounter between Sonny and his blood father did not turn out as Nella expected. The disappointment with and hatred for his blood father is expressed by Sonny as follows:

> Sonny: I had so much to say him. I was going to tell him what for, tell him how much I loathed him for ruining my life. […] I went to where he works. They showed me where I'd find him. In the canteen, they said. That's him, they said. The one with the loud laugh, and there he was laughing and joking. He had this laugh, Nell, this really loud laugh. And when he laughed he shook his shoulders (*He demonstrates*.) He looked like the kind of bloke everybody liked. And you know something, it wasn't hate I felt. It was more like a longing. Me, a grown man, and all I wanted was for him to hold me. I wanted to say here I am, I'm your son, but I had this feeling that if I did that, he'd just look through me like I was a piece of shit on his shoe. I ran, Nella. I ran away. (2.5.88-89)

This time the play projects a psychological description, more than a social one, of Sonny's blood father based on Sonny's feelings about his father. Although Sonny is a grown man, he is in need of his father's attention and love as he himself admits. Sonny's blood father is depicted as stripped from his racial identity. Apparently, he is loved and respected among his colleagues free from his political and racial identities. In this respect, Pinnock manages to tell a sentimental story of a man who grows up in an adoptive family missing the love of his blood father. She reduces the significance of racial identities in a story which focuses on loss and sorrow.

Sonny's relationship with Christine, moreover, emphasises the importance of personal relations in society that depend on sharing mutual feelings regardless of race distinctions. Upon reading Christine's story in the newspaper that she lost her child in a hit-and-run accident, as briefly mentioned previously, Sonny assumes that the news refers to his accident and he is the killer. Hence, without revealing the truth, Sonny decides to meet Christine as he tells Nella: "I was with this girl, Nell, and I tried to give her a piece of myself, to make her happy, but I couldn't because there was nothing there. There's something missing" (2.5.90). Thus, part of the play's narration focuses on the day Sonny spent with Christine. Accordingly, Sonny shows up at the dry-cleaner bringing Christine lovely flowers and convinces her to go out with him during her lunch break. They sit at a park and chat after eating their lunch. Christine frankly talks about her unfortunate experiences with her former boyfriends. Intentionally, Sonny lets Christine talk while keeping his silence and not revealing much detail about himself.

Sonny further persuades Christine to spend the afternoon with him rather than going back to the dry-cleaner. He makes up the story that he is a gangster on the run who is about to begin a new life under the protection of the government. This way Sonny creates a fictional world for Christine, as well as creating a fictional identity for himself, which explains the secrecy of Sonny's acts. Eventually, the couple ends up in a hotel room where they spend the evening. In line with Sonny's and Christine's understanding of romance, the day Sonny spent with Christine to make her happy turns into a romantic date later that night especially after Christine reveals that it is her birthday. The relationship later evolves into an affair in which they share their intimate feelings after having sex in act one scene eight. The romance between the two is later carried forward by Sonny's act of fulfilling Christine's wish for "a bag of green jelly babies" (2.8.50).

In this unusual, but in a way romantic, relationship, race is not mentioned. When the play was put on stage, Christine was played by a white actress, Adie Allen ("One Under"). The ambiguous characters in the play aims to emphasise that race has no impact on the relationship between Christine and Sonny. In this regard, the only reference to blackness appears in act two scene two. As Sonny comes back to the hotel room after leaving Christine to get some fresh air, he refers to the Caribbean in his comment about the weather: "It's very warm out there. Balmy. […] Close your eyes you'd think you was in the Caribbean" (2.2.62). This reference to the Caribbean climate cannot be taken as an adequate reference to discuss Sonny's black identity. As an adoptive son, probably he has never been to the Caribbean. Politically and culturally, neither the geography nor the culture of the Caribbean has any significance for Sonny who was brought up in Britain by a British adoptive family. Sonny's attitude is underlined by Thomas who draws attention to the common experience of the second and the third generation black immigrants: "By the 1980s, over 40% of all blacks in Britain had been born within its borders. Many of them had never visited their 'ancestral homes' and many […] having been educated and raised in Britain, were closer to the idiosyncrasies of British culture than their parents were" (27). Regardless of the detail that Sonny was brought up by a white adoptive family, like all other Black British citizens who had the same experience, Sonny is exposed to British culture more than the black culture. Thus, comparing the weather in England with the hot weather in the

Caribbean cannot mean more than a daily expression indicating the unexpected warm weather in London. Such a reference to the weather can be likened to a similar conversation about the weather in *Talking in Tongues*. As discussed in detail in the first chapter, British characters in that play, both white and black, find themselves discussing the weather as a common interest when they are in Jamaica. While complaining of heat, the characters in *Talking in Tongues* are also aware that they will miss the sun in the rainy weather of England. This approach of the characters in the play, regardless of their racial identities, forms a common identity. Likewise, Sonny and Christine can chat about the weather like two British citizens beyond the political connotations of their skin colour. This indicates that as a Black playwright Pinnock, in this play, does not focus on political representation of blackness and black culture. A reference to the Caribbean is merely a daily expression for Sonny and Christine regardless of their skin colour and racial backgrounds. Hence, the scene attempts to exemplify an ordinary situation in which two British people talk about the weather without being restricted by racial connotations.

Quite interestingly, Pinnock makes a couple of references to her previous plays throughout *One Under* similar to the conversation about the weather as mentioned above. This occurs in the form of name-dropping, but it is not possible to disregard such an interesting detail. Following the chronological order of Pinnock's second phase plays, another reference to *Talking in Tongues* appears in act one scene three of the play when Cyrus talks to Ernest, the cleaner, in a train carriage. In fact, Ernest wakes up Cyrus when the train reaches the end of its line and tells Cyrus that he was talking in his sleep. After Cyrus asks Ernest what he was saying in his dream, Ernest replies as follows: "You was using another language, talking in tongues" (1.3.12). In order to clarify what he means, Ernest adds that "[l]ike French or something" (1.3.12). Cyrus and Ernest lose their interest in this topic when a wallet on the floor draws Ernest's attention. However, as discussed in the first chapter, talking in tongues has a thematic importance in the play *Talking in Tongues*. On the one hand, through the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, the idea that humans are more alike than they think is indicated in the play. On the other hand, Leela experiences the ability of talking in tongues, which enables her to come to an awareness of her racial identity and social position. Whether a

link can be established between Leela's and Cyrus's experiences is not clear because the text does not provide as much detail on Cyrus and his identity as *Talking in Tongues* does for Leela. Nevertheless, it can be still argued that probably as a second generation immigrant in the UK, Cyrus has developed an awareness about his blackness and about living in British society as a black person, as will be discussed in detail, which enabled him to talk in tongues as Leela achieved to do even without being aware of it.

The same scene also makes a reference to Pinnock's next play, *Mules*. Following the conversation between Cyrus and Ernest, Cyrus, surprised by the time lapse since he fell asleep, indicates his shock as follows: "That sign says we're still at King's Cross" (1.3.12). Nevertheless, Ernest's reply is even more surprising according to the given reference: "What you think it should say? Trenchtown?" (1.3.12). Based on the date Ernest provided in act two scene seven – that he got married in 1968 – it can be concluded that he is a first generation immigrant. Thus, in order to show his surprise and how unusual Cyrus's question is, he uses the name Trenchtown. Although this place does not signify a specific meaning for the readers and/or the audience of this play, it is significant within this study since it is mentioned in another play. As a place, Trenchtown is the name of a neighbourhood in Kingston, the capital city of Jamaica which at the same time is the birthplace of Bob Marley, the representative of Rastafarianism which has importance for the emergence of Black identity as examined in relation to the play *Mules*. As discussed in the second chapter, Trenchtown has significance in terms of symbolising the lifestyle of the sisters along with the hardships they have to endure in the play, *Mules*. Moreover, the place represents some characteristics of blackness as examined in detail. In this respect, Trenchtown is more than a name that is mentioned randomly. Instead of casually using the name of an English town or place, Ernest unconsciously prefers to use Trenchtown; hence, he indicates his blackness. His blackness will be further discussed in line with Ernest's immigrant identity as opposed to Britishness represented by Cyrus.

A reference to the third play examined in this study, *Can You Keep a Secret?,* appears in act one scene six. After Sonny takes Christine to the Hotel Russell, which is quite a luxurious place located at the heart of Bloomsbury, Christine is impressed by Sonny's

choice of the room. Surprised by the size and comfort of the bedroom, Christine expresses her opinion as follows: "There's a four-poster bed in there. It's as big as the *Titanic*" (1.6.32). Similar to mentioning Trenchtown, a comparison through *Titanic* might not seem significant for the readers and/or the audience of *One Under* at first. In this study, on the other hand, this detail can be taken as an interesting choice in line with Pinnock's preference to include *Titanic* the film in *Can You Keep a Secret?*. In the third chapter of this study on *Can You Keep a Secret?*, a parallelism was drawn between the film and the situation of the characters in the play. However, a similar relevance cannot be detected in this play. Based on these references to her previous plays, it cannot be argued that Pinnock establishes intertextual links between her plays since there is not enough evidence for such a claim. Moreover, a particular pattern for these references cannot be observed. Hence, Pinnock does not seem to have a particular aim or a message indicated through these references. Still, it is quite interesting to trace back references to all three plays previously studied in this dissertation. It is also worth mentioning that in this play these references do not have an important function or a meaning related to blackness or black identity. However, these references to her previous plays have significance in relation to Pinnock's political agenda in terms of portraying black characters. Therefore, these references and the change in their significance can be interpreted as a shift in her career when compared with the message intended to be delivered in her first phase plays.

Among the characters in *One Under*, Cyrus can be considered as a black character because, based on the information provided in the play, Cyrus assumes that Sonny, another black character, is his blood son. The shock Cyrus experiences after his first accident as a train driver changes him. He is caught up in the idea that the person who jumped in front of the train has chosen Cyrus to complete a mission. He states this for the first time in act one scene one: "Picked me out or something" (1.1.5). Cyrus becomes wholly absorbed in this idea, so that he keeps telling it to other characters as well. In act one scene seven, he explains his suspicion to Zoe when she catches Cyrus in Sonny's flat: "All along I'd had this strange feeling that he'd chosen me for some reason" (1.7.42). Later, he desperately reveals his struggle to Nella in act two scene four: "I wanted . . . Sonny wanted me to . . . I wanted to find out about Sonny . . . there

were messages, he left messages for me, a trail to find and a father has a duty to a son" (2.4.81). With the assumption that he was chosen by Sonny, Cyrus devotes himself to investigate the truth behind Sonny's death. To achieve this, Cyrus gets close to the family and begins tracing the clues that he thinks Sonny has left for him. He explains his acts to Christine in act two scene one as follows: "It's like the trail of breadcrumbs them smart kids left behind in that fairy tale. Every piece of bread leading me back to him. First there was that ticket, then I found you and you led me to Mr Walker. It all makes complete sense" (2.1.60). Nevertheless, rather than the reality of his findings, the scheme in his mind, makes sense for Cyrus. Indeed, Cyrus creates a story in which he deeply wishes to believe and later frames the details he learns about Sonny according to his version of the story. Cyrus's belief that Sonny is his blood son is also one of those details of his scenario. A significant part of the plotline constitutes Cyrus's struggle to search for clues to complete the stories he has created in relation to Sonny. Throughout this journey, the play presents his relationship with Nella, Zoe and Christine. In all of these relationships, however, race does not have any significance as discussed previously. Besides the fact that the readers and/or the audience know Cyrus's race indirectly, conversations among the characters mentioned above do not reveal anything particular on the issue of his blackness. Hence, it can be argued that Pinnock carries onto the stage a black character whose blackness signifies more than a political identity. In this regard, Cyrus carries a black identity that transcends the meaning it signified in the case of the first generation immigrants. Accordingly, Stuart Hall states that "[…] identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation" ("Introduction" 4). As it will be further discussed, the black identity Cyrus represents can be regarded as an example of this fragmented and fractured identity constructed in contemporary British society. In *One Under*, Cyrus's black identity is constructed in accordance with the multiplicity of his experiences not as a Black person, but as a citizen of multicultural British society.

Contrary to depicting Cyrus as a black man whose identity, and meaning of blackness, situationally shifts, as discussed in detail based on certain characters in the previous chapters, he is in fact portrayed as holding a black British identity. More than any other white or black character in the play, it can be argued that Cyrus represents British identity through his image illustrated in the play. This is mainly apparent in the last scene of the play. The scene takes place early in the morning before Cyrus experienced the tragic accident. Hence, this enables the readers and/or the audience to observe Cyrus as he is not affected by the extreme stress and worry that dominate his acts throughout the play. In this scene, Cyrus comes across Sonny outside the Tube station. Coming to his job, Cyrus assumes that Sonny is the same guy who sits at the same spot asking to spare some change and chats with him every morning. This misunderstanding leads to a conversation between Cyrus and Sonny without being aware of what will happen later. The conversation reveals quite interesting facts about Cyrus's life. While the play never underlines a political meaning of his blackness as can be observed in Pinnock's previous plays, Cyrus is depicted as a black character that combines his blackness with Britishness. On the one hand, he mentions the barbecue he and his wife are planning to host for friends and neighbours that evening when they will serve Jamaican style cooking with "rice and peas, curry goat, rum punch" (2.8.109). According to Houston, "[i]n the Caribbean, women do most of the domestic cooking, while men tend to be more involved with outdoor cooking, such as barbecuing, or with procuring food items, such as fishing or hunting" (81). Carrying out this cooking tradition in the UK, Cyrus and his wife are hosting a barbecue where they will serve traditional Jamaican cooking paying respect to their ancestral roots. Although he settled in the UK long ago, Cyrus adopts the traditions and habits of his ancestors as a part of his Black British identity. In this respect, Houston states that "[g]oat meat is very popular in Jamaica, due to the influx of East Indian immigrants who, when they arrived in the Caribbean, began using goat as a substitute for the lamb they had been accustomed to in their curry dishes" (75). Drawing attention to Cyrus's particular choice of curry goat to treat his guests, Houston also adds that "[w]hile goat meat is popular in the rest of the Caribbean, it is served most often as a special-occasion meat, not as part of the everyday diet" (75). Similarly, the other food on the menu, rice and peas, are considered traditional Jamaican food: "Another Caribbean classic dish is beans and rice. Each region has its variation, but

whether living or travelling in the Caribbean, beans and rice are eaten in one from or another very often. […] In the English Caribbean this dish is called rice and peas, and it is made from red kidney beans or small red beans" (Houston 99). Along with the food, the rum punch Cyrus refers to, which "[…] was often kept for guests" as Goucher indicates (114), also reminds one of Jamaica and her colonial past. Made from sugarcane, the Caribbean can be named as one of the major producers of rum in line with her history of sugar plantations. Along with sugar, rum has gradually become the island's number one produce: "In the days of the slave trade, rum was an essential part of the rituals of gift-giving and exchange on both sides of the Atlantic and a most necessary cargo on the slave ship. […] Across the Atlantic, rum was given to the recently arrived Africans as part of their 'seasoning,' and it also found its way into the hands of sailors and soldiers" (Goucher 113). Maingot refers to the introduction of rum into the English tradition as follows: "By the mid-eighteenth century, rum was no longer just on the West Indian plantation or British ships but had joined the other established spirits as an essential —though perhaps not the most select — item in a gentleman's 'wine cellar'" (238). Thus, the details Cyrus provides regarding their barbecue party also carry hints of his black heritage. While the Caribbean food and drink traditions as touched upon briefly indicate the multicultural atmosphere of the Caribbean, the menu Cyrus chooses to serve his guests also points out the traditions of Cyrus's ancestors formed by the island's colonial history. Hence, the Caribbean food and drink mentioned in the play exhibit certain cultural and historical characteristics.

Although Cyrus's emphasis on his Caribbean diet supports the idea that he has a close relation with his roots, his morning habits for breakfast actually show that Cyrus's actions can differ situationally. As the play indicates, "[Cyrus] never start[s] work without a full English breakfast inside [him]" in the mornings (2.8.112). Although English breakfast is not preferred by every English person everyday, it has marked itself as one of the quintessences of Englishness. According to the website of the English Breakfast Society, "[t]he full English breakfast is a centuries old British tradition which dates back to the early 1800's, when the Victorians first perfected the art of eating breakfast and elevated the most important meal of the day into an art form" (Bule). The English breakfast traditionally consists of "black bacon eggs, British sausage, beans,

tomato, mushrooms, black pudding and toast" (Bule) with some variety in different regions. However, English breakfast has turned into such an iconic item that Scotland and Wales also serve English breakfast with regional products. Hence, it is further stated that "[t]he traditional full English breakfast was so popular, that the Scottish and the Irish developed their own versions and in doing so, changed what was a predominantly English tradition into a much loved British tradition and it is for this reason that the full English breakfast must be considered to be a British cultural institution" (Bule). In this regard, Ashley points out how English breakfast is considered to be a part of British culture in contemporary times:

> If one were to ask a sample of British people what they understand by the term 'British food', their responses would not be identical but would tend to overlap in ways which might encourage the notion of a 'core national diet'. A day's 'menu' might be: the full English breakfast (fried egg, bacon, sausage, tomato, etc.); roast meat (especially beef) with all the trimmings; afternoon tea with scones and/or home made cake; and fish and chips for supper. (76)

At a moment when nationality is not sufficient for the definition of an identity, a shared culture unites people of different ethnicities and origins under a common identity. Kumar states that "[t]he British state is the classic example of the 'state-nation', the state identified not by ethnicity but by state institutions such as Parliament and the monarchy" (43). Similar to state institutions, common cultural elements, such as English breakfast or Indian take-aways, can define Britishness and the core of the British state's identity as Robin Cook referred to Chicken Tikka Massala in his speech, literally and metaphorically. This perception is explained by Wilk as well: "Many studies have demonstrated that food is a particularly potent symbol of personal and group identity, forming one of the foundations of both individuality and a sense of common membership in a larger, bounded group" (376). As the food culture of the immigrant communities contributed to British traditions, a shared identity is defined through the revised British cuisine. Thus, Britishness begins to be reshaped with the contribution of the minority communities to British society and culture. In this regard, Cyrus can be considered as an example of this situation. Freed from an arbitrary political definition of his blackness, Cyrus is a Black British citizen who has a black skin and who enjoys a traditional English breakfast in the morning and curry goat in the evening. According to Pines "Black Britishness, therefore, represents a complex set of

relations, that is to say, relations which are not necessarily structured as binary oppositions – e.g. black and/or British – but rather relations which are much more subtle and complex in their construction" (63). In this regard, Cyrus, as a Black British character, is an example who transcends binary oppositions and manages to connect his ancestral roots with his daily habits. Furthermore, Phoenix suggests that "[i]ndeed, the economic as well as gastronomic importance of the 'Indian take-away', the 'mainstreaming' of Carnival and of 'black music', are evidence that British identities and cultures are now plural and syncretic" ("Multicultures" 88). Besides not giving up his habit of having an English breakfast in the mornings, Cyrus enjoys his Caribbean style barbecue through which he, at the same time, contributes to the plurality of British culture as Parekh also suggests: "While shaping the wider British culture, [the immigrants] are also shaped by it, reinterpret and revise their cultures accordingly, and develop areas of growing convergence between the two" ("Being British" 37). This idea is also underlined by Robins: "To be a part of a nation is to participate (with one's compatriots) in a common culture and in a community of trust and obligation – belonging to that community is the fundamental social relation and social value" (486). Once again, Cyrus's participation in a common culture indicates his sense of belonging to the British community. Concordantly, Cyrus presents blackness as a part of a multicultural society as Parekh defends: "Like any other society, a multicultural society needs a broadly shared culture to sustain it. Since it involves several cultures, the shared culture can only grow out of their interaction and should both respect and nurture their diversity and unite them around a common way of life" (*Rethinking* 219).

In this regard, Cyrus's occupation has a significant role in the development of his identity as well. As previously stated, Cyrus is a train driver in the London Underground transportation system which "dates back to 1863 when the world's first underground railway, the Metropolitan Railway, opened between Paddington and Farringdon serving six intermediate stations" ("London Underground"). With a history that goes back to Victorian times, the London underground, "[…] the world's first subterranean railway network […]" (Long 12), has been given the nickname "The Tube" which has turned into one of the trademarks of London. According to its history, "[t]he 'Tube' became a proper name for the first time in the early 1900s, after the

Central London Railway (now the Central Line) was nicknamed the 'Twopenny Tube'" (Coldwell). Along with this historical significance, the Tube has become a worldwide symbol of London. Morley and Robins suggest that "[…] initially, it was at least founded on the recognition that, rather than Britain having any naturally dominant position in the world economy, 'Britishness' is but one of a large number of 'brands' on sale in the global marketplace and thus stands as much in need of marketing as the average soap powder" (4). The Tube, in this regard, has been treated as a brand, for London in particular and for the UK in general, selling an image of British life to the foreigners. Moreover, its bar and circle logo, the roundel, is also considered as "[…] one of the first, best, most familiar and most enduring corporate logos" (Long 46). Furthermore, Long draws attention to the logo "[…] as emblematic of London as Tower Bridge, a Routemaster bus or black cab, a Beefeater […]" (46). Hence, the Tube for Londoners, and for British people in general, has a symbolic meaning since it is one of the defining characteristics of the UK's capital. Quite significantly, the London Underground also created an opportunity for employment for the first generation Black immigrants: "By 1969 over 4,000 staff from the West Indies had been recruited by London Transport" ("London Underground"). Cyrus, as a black citizen, maintains this tradition as an employee of London Transport. However, different from the first generation immigrants, he is a part of the city and society both legally and culturally. Parekh touches upon the forms of citizenship as follows:

> Mere residence does not make one British. Even the formal status of being its citizen is not enough. An individual might enjoy all the rights of citizenship and discharge his obligations conscientiously, but take a wholly instrumental or detached view of his relationship with the country. It means nothing to him, he has no personal bond with it, he feels no wrench or sense of loss when he leaves the country, and might as well live elsewhere. British citizenship makes it easier to be British but the two are not the same. ("Being British" 33)

Contrary to legal citizenship, Cyrus has a personal bond with the country, the culture and the city. Cyrus not only resides in London, but he experiences it. Hence, his frequent usage of the names of some stations implies that he is actually a Londoner.

The stress on London also differentiates *One Under* from other plays examined in this study. Although the first act of *Talking in Tongues* takes place in London, the main

setting is inside a house where a New Year's party is held. Since the interior environment is in the foreground, the city itself loses its significance. In other words, it is implied that *Talking in Tongues* could take place anywhere in the UK. In *Mules*, on the other hand, London is mostly depicted as the representative of any metropolitan city promoting the capitalist system. The name of the city is uttered along with such cities as Los Angeles and Amsterdam to reinforce a metropolitan image that can be associated with luxury, taste and money, in short consumerism, without having a characteristic of its own as discussed in the second chapter. *Can You Keep a Secret?*, similarly, does not reveal any detail about the city in which the events occur. In this play, however, London is underlined as the setting through the stress on the Tube. On the one hand, the events of the play can be encountered in any other city that has an underground system in the UK to fulfil the plotline. From this perspective, London does not seem to have much significance as the setting. On the other hand, in the scenes that take place in the underground, London acts almost as one of the characters of the play through the names of the stations. For example, Mags says: "I walked from Seven Sisters to King's Cross" (1.1.6). Likewise, in act one scene three, Cyrus gets a ticket to go to Leeds, but is surprised when he sees the sign that says "King's Cross." Moreover, the last scene, according to the stage directions, particularly takes place outside Seven Sisters Tube station. The stage directions provide exact locations for other scenes as well. In act one scene five, for example, it is specified that Nella's house is in Tottenham which is an area in North London. Stage direction in act one scene six indicates that Sonny takes Christine to the Hotel Russell which is situated on Russell Square. Through such name-droppings, the play reminds the readers and/or the audience that they are in London and that the characters are highly connected to the city. Within the question of Britishness, Robins highlights London's position as follows:

> London provides a vast space – bigger in some senses than the nation – in which cultures can be differently imagined and conceived – and differently imagined and conceived by all who are engaged with its reality. And it is a space, consequently, in which the relation between the diversity of cultures might be reimagined and reconceived on a more complex basis. (491)

The possibilities London offers in terms of reflecting multiculturalism are underlined by Gilroy as well:

> We may find that London's cosmopolitan post-cultures are more fragmented, fragile and unevenly developed formations than the stronger versions of the automatic multiculture thesis would lead us to believe. It is hard to even name but if, in following that agenda, we can set aside the desire to celebrate prematurely the great victories of British tolerance and the irresistible rise of what might be called London's hybrid commonwealth, there are new and important processes to be explored. ("A London" 59-60)

Hence, when the definition of Britishness is considered from the perspective of representation of contemporary London through white and black characters, Robins's suggestions can be taken into consideration: "[…] London might allow us to think differently and more productively about issues and problems of multiculturalism" (491). Robins further argues that "[o]ne can become a Londoner very quickly, and one can easily cease being a Londoner, too, if one wishes: one 'belongs' to the city in a very different sense from that in which one belongs to the nation" (491). The play, regardless of the characters' racial identities, depicts individuals with a British identity who are Londoners and who actually belong to this city. In this regard, Lester analyses London and its immigrant communities as follows:

> Within the next twenty years 40 per cent of London's population will be from ethnic minorities. Within the United Kingdom there is an enormous variety of different communities. There are black, brown and white communities; Scots, Northern Irish and regional communities. There are African, Jamaican, Indian and Pakistani communities and Chinese and Malaysian communities. There are cultural minority communities, Muslims and Sikhs. Every citizen of the United Kingdom is also a citizen of the European Union. Each of these communities is just one aspect of what it means to be 'British'. (28)

Lester's prediction is partially stated by Colley based on the contemporary society: "The 2001 census revealed that about 10% of the population was made up of ethnic minorities; it also showed that almost 45% of Asian and black Britons lived in London" (23). In this regard, Gilroy's point can be observed in London: "Time and again it is London that supplies the answer to the puzzle of what English culture is going to be" ("A London" 68). Moreover, the answer is given to some extent by Pinnock in *One Under* as definitions of Britishness are presented in accordance with the changing situations of the characters.

Eventually, this play successfully brings different communities together in London depicting different aspects of being British. Phoenix asserts the fact that "[j]ust as British identity was (re)constructed by the Victorians on the basis of its strengths at the time, so, at the end of the twentieth century, Britain needs once more to self-consciously rework British identity" ("Multicultures" 88). Hence, Pinnock reworks on the British image by depicting a black character who controls a train whose history goes back to industrialisation in the Victorian era, and who enjoys English breakfast as much as rice and peas and curry goat. Pines, on the other hand, expresses some concerns on the reworked British identity:

> But this new and apparently more confident image of black Britishness or black Englishness remains an awkward construction nevertheless, partly because of the way that it attempts to play down or elide the unresolved discourses of British race relations and multiculturalism, and partly (perhaps more importantly) because there is little evidence to suggest that this re-invented sense of black Englishness has been able to establish itself as a permanent feature in the contemporary British social, political, and cultural landscape. (59)

Pines's usage of the terms "black Britishness" and "black Englishness," which he uses interchangeably, can be challenged based on the working definitions established in the Introduction. Nonetheless, Pines's caution for the position and meaning of black Britishness in contemporary British society is highly crucial. Plays written during the second phase of Pinnock's career depict the change in the social and political positioning of black British citizens as Pines mentions. In addition, Goddard interprets Pinnock's contribution to Black British drama as a promising development in terms of the representation of British identity in a multicultural society: "The primary focus is on bereavement and race is certainly not an important issue in the play, but the use of a multi-racial cast unquestionably creates a production that represents London's inner city demographic and suggests a model for future black women's theatre that examines the interracial connections that speak to our times now" (*Staging* 194). Hence, Pinnock succeeds in portraying the contemporary society through multi-racial characters.

Accordingly, Goddard draws attention to the significance of multi-casting in the play as follows: "*One Under* is a clear emotional thriller typical of its genre, but the use of a multi-racial cast further complicates how the relationships between the characters are

understood" (*Staging* 193). As far as the discussion in this study is concerned, the multi-racial casting also makes it possible to ask questions about situationally changing definitions of identities. While this is briefly discussed through Sonny's blood father and Cyrus, Ernest can be pointed out as an example for this situation as well. Ernest, who accompanies Cyrus in two scenes, is depicted as a stereotypical immigrant. Based on the date he got married, which is revealed in act two scene seven, he is a first generation immigrant who speaks broken English, or Creole English, in comparison to other white and black characters in the play. This can be understood when he speaks for the first time: "Come nuh, man. Some of us wants to get home to we sweet sweet bed and we not so sweet wife" (1.3.11). His stereotypical representation is mainly based on the position he holds as a cleaner in the London Underground Transportation. His job is the indication of his social position as an immigrant in contemporary British society: "The British population itself is shaped by imperial history: the African-Caribbean and South Asian presence, the result of the post-war migrations when Britain's labour shortages were met by Jamaican and Trinidadian bus drivers, building labourers, hospital workers, and nurses, Indian and Pakistani factory workers and cleaners […]" (Catherine Hall, "British Cultural" 27). None of Pinnock's second phase plays studied in this dissertation portray such a stereotypical immigrant character. According to Griffin, Ernest is a representative of the work force that came from former British colonies as immigrants:

> This replays one particular employment history of the British Empire repeatedly presented in Pinnock's plays, such as *A Hero's Welcome* (1986), *Leave Taking* (1987), *A Rock in Water* (1989) and *Mules* (1996), namely the extraction of black labour from colonized countries to support the expansion of the post-World War II British economy in certain predominantly underpaid and menial employment sectors, such as public transport and the service sector, including cleaning and nursing. ("The Remains" 200)

In this regard, Ernest is depicted as a cleaner, whose only concern is to do his job as he expresses: "I only clean the trains" (2.7.102). He never fancies a train ride, which he finds boring, since he is not interested in experiencing England. Instead, he prefers a to fly on an airplane which would take him away: "Give me a long flight and I can stretch out my foot, a glass a champagne and England disappearing under the clouds" (2.7.102). Hence, Ernest's function in this play is quite important for juxtaposing the

blackness represented by Cyrus and Sonny. The play does not provide any detail to associate Ernest with Britishness. Unlike Cyrus and Sonny who are active parts of British society, Ernest works at nights without having any interaction with the daily lives of Londoners. Instead, through his unskilled job as a cleaner, he represents how white British society has taken advantage of the immigrant communities from the 1950s onwards.

While Ernest's chat with Cyrus contributes to the plotline as it encourages Cyrus to commit his acts, Ernest at the same time plays a role that underlines the difference among immigrant generations represented by Ernest, Cyrus and Sonny in the play. By presenting three generations of black men, Pinnock, to a certain extent, lays out the differences among generations. Drawing attention to the differences in terms of blackness they represent, the play indicates that second and third generation black people in the contemporary times are integrated into British society while contributing to the concept of Britishness. According to Parekh, "Britain, to put the point differently, is constantly in the making, and is not a fixed entity. It is an ongoing political project, and to be British is to participate in this project in a spirit of commitment and critical sympathy" ("Being British" 39). Thus, the three generations of black men presented in the play illustrate this political project. Nevertheless, as touched upon briefly, this project involves a cultural contribution more than merely taking part in a political unification. In this regard, the social meaning of Britishness is defined by Seaton as follows: "It is the real needs and desires of the public, not mythologised or convenient ones that is the place to start a proper dusting down of Britishness. Being British is more voluntary than it has ever seemed before, but it has to start from realities" (77). Hence, the three black male characters of the play lay out the realities of being an immigrant and exemplify a sense of Britishness that does not depend on official requirements such as citizenship gained through a test. Moreover, Modood also comments on the appearance of three generations in the play: "In the case of a living culture that we are part of, that we have been inducted into, have extended through use and seen change in our own lifetimes, it is easier to better appreciate the processes of change and adaptation, of borrowings from other cultures and new influences, and yet at the same time appreciate what is the subject of change" (93). Accordingly, it can be argued that

Pinnock aims to explain this process of change through the representation of different forms of blackness exemplified by the differences between three generations of black men: Ernest, Cyrus and Sonny.

Consequently, written in the early years of a new millennium, *One Under* portrays interracial relations in the UK that are characterised by sorrow and pain and exemplifies the change in the contemporary multicultural society in terms of perceiving racial identities. Through her choice of characters and theme, the play also signifies the contribution Pinnock made with this play to the literary tradition of Black British drama reflecting multiculturalism in the 21st century onto the stage. The importance of the play for Pinnock's career is referred to by Sakellaridou as follows: "*One Under* is the play that achieves most fully Pinnock's long-term ambition to transcend the limitations of race and integrate into English tradition" (394-395). Nevertheless, the most striking and significant comment comes from *The Telegraph*'s theatre critic:

> Although Pinnock is a black dramatist, and many, though not all, of her characters are black, this is a drama that never mentions race issues once. Her characters are Londoners, and their skin colour simply isn't an issue. It is, I think, the first "black" play I have seen that accepts the multi-cultural nature of Britain today without finding any need to examine its stress fractures. It is a highly encouraging sign of a country at last beginning to feel at ease with itself, at least when it comes to matters of race. (Charles Spencer)

In this context, Spencer briefly underlines the significance of Pinnock as a contemporary Black British playwright and the necessity to study Pinnock for her contribution to the notion of multiculturalism. From the perspective of Pinnock's contribution to the British stage, it can be argued that it is with this play, *One Under*, that she carries the discussions of race, multiculturalism and Britishness to a new level. As a second generation Black immigrant herself, Pinnock successfully carries black and white characters onto the stage outside a political agenda. In this regard, the play manages to reflect the multicultural society in which individuals are defined not by their race, but by their shared feelings as members of the same community. Black and white characters of the play have common struggles and experiences. Although British society found itself in the middle of the discussion of multiculturalism and immigration after the London bombings, *One Under* eliminates political discussions and established

understandings of racial perceptions. In this regard, while the play does not provide substantial examples and details for discussion of black identity and its perception, this lack, along with the ambiguity of racial identities, indicates Pinnock's emphasis on the changing face of multiculturalism and definition of Britishness in the contemporary British society.

CONCLUSION

"Great drama is colour-blind and goes far deeper than the colour of a person's skin, white or black."
(Steven Berkoff, qtd. in Bosanquet)

When Meera Syal "called on theatres to cater for Asian audiences and recognise the potential of the 'brown pound'" (Alberge), South African born actress Janet Suzman created a controversy with her reply: "Theatre is a white invention, a European invention, and white people go to it. It's in their DNA. It starts with Shakespeare" (Alberge and Brown). Suzman's comment led to a discussion of this topic in which names such as Ben Okri, Dawn Walton, David Lan and Bonnie Greer were involved and criticised Suzman's biased approach to the issue. Before this public discussion, Pinnock had stated her opinion about the little number of black theatre-goers along with little opportunities for Black British playwrights in her interview with Stephenson and Langridge. Pinnock complains that it is only when a play by a Black playwright is staged that venues promote it as a "black play" in order to welcome a black audience. Hence, in her criticism, Pinnock objects to the classification of a play as a "black play" and the assumption that "theatre is white": "I want it to be seen by everybody. I want my work to be seen by a mix of people. […] It would also be quite exciting if we could just see what's happening in society reflected on the stage" (qtd. in Stephenson and Langridge 53). In fact, Pinnock had already criticised such elitist attitudes as Suzman's even before this recent debate on race:

> For an artist whose aim is to reach as many people as possible, theatre elitism is extremely problematical, but my own experience demonstrates that the theatre remains elitist only because it is allowed to be so. When a so-called 'black' play is produced at a theatre, the marketing department will call on its list of black institutions and invite them. The message is that they are only invited to see plays by black artists and are not otherwise welcomed. (32)

It can be pointed out that more than a decade after Pinnock's statement, along with the political and social developments observed in the UK following the racial disputes in the 1980s and 1990s, race was still an issue for the British stage. Pinnock's second

phase plays, on the other hand, approach racial issues from the perspective of multicultural discussions as studied in this dissertation.

In this regard, Pinnock's emphasis on the representation of black identity begins with *Talking in Tongues*. This play brings together white and black characters that socially and economically have similar backgrounds. Rather than depicting lower class black characters that struggle financially and deal with discrimination of the white society, Pinnock portrays middle class or upper-middle class characters that have professional lives. Through personal issues, the play shows that the young generation aims to define their blackness as well as their Britishness in plural and unrestrained terms. Hence, through the interaction among white and black characters Pinnock presents that traditional understanding of racial identities, which is reflected as stereotypical representations generally, is changing in society with the second and third generation Black immigrants. In order to point this out, Pinnock reflects a successful black male, Bentley, who is compared with a white male, Jeff, who has difficulties in representing a stereotypical successful white British image. Moreover, the use of two settings in the play, the UK and Jamaica, helps to indicate the fluidity in identities. This is especially specified through Claudette who plays with her blackness based on the place and situation she is in. In this regard, the play presents an understanding of blackness that shifts situationally rather than signifying a fixed definition. Representation of the fluidity in identities differentiates this play thematically from Pinnock's plays that are classified as her first phase plays.

Pinnock's changing attitude towards race continues with her next play *Mules*. Commissioned by Clean Break Theatre, *Mules* focuses on the life of women prisoners. The play discusses the risks that female drug couriers take as the only way to support themselves and their families financially. Race is quite a sensitive issue in the case of drug related crimes. In view of the prejudices in British society towards Black immigrants, it is highly crucial to present issues related to drugs on the stage through black characters beyond society's prejudiced approach. Thus, Pinnock's use of ambiguity regarding the racial identities of her characters eliminates the emphasis on race in the play. The female characters in *Mules* are involved in the drug business not

particularly because of their racial identities. The play lays out much more complicated reasons, either social, political or domestic, that force female characters to be smugglers. While doing this, Pinnock once again makes a distinction among situational understanding of blackness as biological, political and social constructs. Eventually, beyond the discussion of a black identity from a certain perspective as perceived by the black diaspora, through its representation of desperate women, the play addresses a wider audience and/or reader. Hence, Pinnock aims to draw attention to greater and more complicated problems women face beyond the arbitrary meaning and significance their racial identities carry.

On the other hand, the third play studied in this dissertation, *Can You Keep a Secret?*, deals with a much more sensitive issue than *Mules*. *Can You Keep a Secret?* brings onto the stage the murder of a black teenager by a white teenager. The importance of this subject is that it is a topical one. Known as the Stephen Lawrence case, the murder of a black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, and its aftermath unearthed the fact that institutional racism was practised in the UK since the arrival of *Windrush*. Albeit presenting a highly discussed racial issue on the stage, Pinnock manages to sustain her objectivity. More importantly, she aims to explain why the murder committed on the stage should not be merely perceived as a racial problem. Similar to *Talking in Tongues*, Pinnock prefers to focus on personal relations. Thus, the victim and the murderer stand on the stage not as black and white characters. On the contrary, they are teenagers who have similar experiences and personalities. Beyond directing accusations to either side based on a prejudiced perspective, Pinnock intends to make the readers and/or the audience, regardless of their racial identities, observe each character as an individual. Without delivering a didactic message or a message for a particular racial group, this play makes the readers and/or the audience question the racial relationships and problems related to race as observed in contemporary British society.

One Under, the last play analysed in this study, also focuses on the personal relationships of the characters. Pinnock does not apply any limitations of race by presenting her characters as black or white. Moreover, she does not particularly focus on a specific racial issue. Without pursuing a political agenda in terms of race relations

in society, Pinnock presents black characters who are members of British society just like white characters. Thus, Pinnock underlines the biological meaning of blackness and reflects the multicultural nature of the society. On the one hand, this play lacks substantial examples and detail to follow up a discussion on black identity when compared to her previous plays. On the other hand, this indicates the level Pinnock reaches in her career in order to address a mixed audience and reflect multicultural British society. Hence, the choice of racially ambiguous characters and the changing understanding of blackness in *One Under* differentiate this play from Pinnock's first phase plays. More significantly, this play almost signals a new phase in her career in which blackness gives way to Britishness with emphasis on the multicultural nature of the society.

Within the journey Pinnock undertook through her plays, it can be pointed out that she reached a point where she proved herself as a substantial playwright who was not restricted by labels as woman or Black British. Unlike the first generation Black British playwrights, who were discussed in the Introduction, she does not produce her plays in line with particular themes reflecting the Black immigrants who live in diaspora. Instead, Pinnock accommodates her themes and characters to the changing social and political atmosphere of the UK. Winsome Pinnock moves ahead from being classified as a leading Black British dramatist for depicting the black identity and problems from the perspective of black diaspora to being a proven young talent who successfully reflects contemporary British society in her plays while drawing attention to more universal problems.

At this point, this dissertation divides Pinnock's plays into two phases based on her approach to the representation of blackness. In this regard, her second phase plays project the developments in the representation of black people and racial issues in British society. Furthermore, it is observed that the socio-political background of each play is related to the action on the stage, which is discussed in detail in each chapter. Since the plays are studied in chronological order, it is possible to observe that Pinnock's second phase plays reflect multiculturalism in the context of the changing understanding of both blackness and Britishness in contemporary British society.

As a contemporary playwright, Winsome Pinnock successfully depicts British society which has embraced the changing definitions of identities. The multicultural society that is being discussed by theorists and scholars, some of whom with similar hyphenated identities, is represented on the stage through Pinnock's plays as she has developed a sense of Britishness through their ambiguous racial representations. Pinnock prefers plurality while racially depicting both black and white characters in an ambiguous way. In this regard, her characters also contribute to the idea of multiculturalism. Even before Tony Blair explained his revised definition of Britishness, Pinnock had already begun to challenge established understandings of blackness from a political perspective and the sense of Britishness accepted in the 1980s when Thatcher was acting as prime minister. Thus, she began to look for different opportunities in order to attract audiences from different racial backgrounds by presenting on the stage who are in search of their identity. As this study aims to underline, both her black characters and white characters search for a possibility to enjoy their identities without being restricted by stereotyping and prejudices. More importantly, the representations of these identities show that they can be lived in a plural sense rather than through fixed and arbitrary labels and definitions. This plurality creates a sense of Britishness outside political context.

Furthermore, Pinnock's representation of blackness in her second phase plays focuses on racial ambiguity in order to display different understandings of blackness that evolved in line with the political and social developments in the UK. Pinnock's use of ambiguity allows the readers and/or the audience to approach these characters by acknowledging the difference between the definition of Black with an upper case "B" and black with a lower case "b." Moreover, she also questions the impact of the colonial discourse which claims the superiority of the white race. She opens up the possibility that there may be a distinction between "White" with a capital "W" and "white" with a lower case "w." Pinnock's such aim is indicated in the plays written for mixed cast which focus on themes that are not particular to "black plays." Hence, throughout her second phase, she produced plays aiming to address the audience and/or the readers from different racial backgrounds. Since she does not aim to reflect so-called "black problems" on the stage, Pinnock's plays can be enjoyed by all racial or ethnic groups. It

is in her interview with Heidi Stephenson and Natasha Langridge that Pinnock draws attention to her racially ambiguous but life-like characters: “I think the more I write, the less I want to write about race in the way that I have done and the more I want to write human stories, because I think that our society is becoming so much more hybrid” (48). Human nature, instead of race that is underlined, in Pinnock’s characters enables her second phase plays to reach wider groups. While doing this, Pinnock, at the same time, inspires other British playwrights who have hyphenated identities to produce plays representing the multicultural condition of the UK, and Britishness for all members of society.

Being a second generation Black immigrant seems to affect Pinnock’s drama. However, it cannot be argued that Pinnock reflects autobiographical elements in her plays. Instead, she touches upon the common experiences of Black immigrants who have difficulty determining their position in British society. Such a theme can be traced back to her first phase plays. Nevertheless, Pinnock’s second phase plays, as indicated, tend to differ beginning with *Talking in Tongues*. While it is not possible to track down any personal experience that contributed to this change in her themes or in her style in her second phase plays, it was most possibly the political and social changes in British society that contributed to such a change. Thus, it can be argued that the social and political developments in the UK from the late 1980s to the beginning of the new millennium have shaped Pinnock’s drama and her point of view towards black identity. Hence, she can be considered as a keen observer of British society in the sense that she illustrates the changes in society in her plays. While succeeding in reflecting political developments regarding multiculturalism, in her plays, Pinnock even tends to foreshadow the developments in race relations. This is especially indicated in *One Under*. Although politicians preferred to use the London bombings turning it into a social problem as discussed in the fourth chapter, Pinnock preserves her optimistic perspective regarding formation of multicultural society by projecting her understanding of Britishness in the play. In this contemporary multicultural atmosphere, Pinnock acknowledges the situational understanding of race. In her second phase plays, it is possible to observe different understandings of blackness as can be interpreted

biologically, socially, and politically following the discussion in this study. These various understandings, moreover, constitute her sense of Britishness in her plays.

In addition, Winsome Pinnock, based on her second phase plays, cannot be considered as a playwright who writes political drama. Nevertheless, it can be stated that there are political elements in her work. As the changes she reflects regarding society are closely related to political developments, she reflects a political issue without writing political drama by defining the problem and offering her solution outside a political context. Thus, her second phase plays do not reflect a particular criticism of the system or a political opinion in terms of race relations. On the contrary, Pinnock approaches her themes and characters objectively. Yet, by leading her readers and/or audience into a process of questioning, Pinnock hopes that her plays can be useful to broaden the views of the readers and/or the audience regarding racial issues.

While Pinnock is considered to be a significant name for Black British drama, she has not produced any stage play since 2010. As an award-winning playwright, she holds a teaching position at Kingston University, London. Moreover, she has been an active member of the theatre community in the UK through the positions she holds, such as chairing the selection committee for the Alfred Fagon Award for Best New Play of the Year from 2010 to 2012 and leading a year-long workshop for the Royal Court to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Nelson Mandela's inauguration. Nevertheless, Pinnock's latest work, a radio play titled *Clean Trade*, once again signifies her approach towards reflecting the multicultural society rather than merely focusing on Black characters. The play focuses on a group of cleaners and their adventure of trading on the stock market. Since the text of this radio play has not been published, it is not possible to comment on the play extensively. However, it can be still argued that this play once again indicates that Pinnock does not specifically target race as the main theme based on a review of the play which comments on the play as "[c]haracters develop as they interact; revelations come from credible histories" (Petty). Eventually the play is summed up as a "[d]elightful comedy of female togetherness" (Petty). Hence, it can be put forward that Winsome Pinnock has developed her career from being a second generation immigrant playwright to a Black British playwright who can draw the

attention of the readers and/or the audience from different racial backgrounds by portraying contemporary multicultural British society. Thus, her plays can be considered an indirect reply to Suzman's above accusations for theatre being for whites.

In conclusion, it can be argued that Pinnock has experienced a change in her dramatic approach in line with British people's changing attitude towards people of colour and the idea of a multicultural society, and reflects these changes in her plays. Considering multiculturalism as a concept in which each distinct culture preserves its own qualities and respects other cultures is an outdated approach in the new millennium. The concept of multiculturalism that is in a state of flux in line with constant changes in society has been discussed in this study through the views of various scholars as pointed out throughout this study. Drawing on what has been discussed by Parekh, Hall, Gilroy and many others, as cited, Kymlicka rephrases multiculturalism under a new label:

> According to post-multiculturalists, it is […] the search for new post-multicultural models of citizenship that emphasise the priority of political participation and economic opportunities over the symbolic politics of cultural recognition, the priority of human rights and individual freedom over respect for cultural traditions, the priority of building inclusive common national identities over the recognition of ancestral cultural identities, and the priority of cultural change and cultural mixing over the reification of static cultural differences. (99)

According to this perspective, Pinnock accomplishes to create a multicultural atmosphere in which both white and black characters form an identity, Britishness at the same time, that is not limited by the political interpretations. Hence, Pinnock equally contributes to the formation of the definition of Britishness in the new millennium. As Pinnock herself states, "[a]s theatre is a microcosm of its society, and truthfully reflects what is happening therein, when this starts to happen then Britain's multicultural society will begin to come of age" (38). Consequently, Winsome Pinnock introduces racially ambiguous characters in contemporary multicultural British society to question established racial understandings and contributes to contemporary British drama through her plays which can be enjoyed by the readers and/or the audience who come from different racial backgrounds.

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APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 17/06/2016

Thesis Title / Topic: Constructions of New Britishness in Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret*, and *One Under*

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 29/05/2016 for the total of 211 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 2 %.

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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

17.06.2016

Name Surname:	Banu Öğünç
Student No:	N10249539
Department:	English Language and Literature
Program:	English Language and Literature
Status:	☐ Masters ☒ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY

Date: 17/06/2016

Thesis Title / Topic: Constructions of New Britishness in Winsome Pinnock's *Talking in Tongues, Mules, Can You Keep a Secret*, and *One Under*

My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

17.06.2016

Name Surname:	Banu Öğünç
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ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER