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**RE-VISION AND RE-REPRESENTATION: AN EXPLORATION OF AWARENESS AND  
VOICE IN MARXISM, POSTCOLONIALISM, POSTMODERNISM AND  
PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY**

A thesis submitted to  
the Graduate College of  
Marshall University  
In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
In  
English  
by

Stacy Sexton

Approved by

Dr. Kristen Lillvis, Committee Chairperson

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## APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Stacy Sexton, affirm that the thesis, *Re-vision and Re-representation: An Exploration of Awareness and Voice in Marxism, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism, and Psychoanalytic Theory*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the Master of Arts in English Program and the Graduate College. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

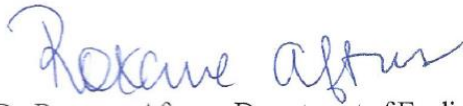


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## ABSTRACT

Awareness and voice are explored through case studies of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. Karl Marx's unaware and voiceless *lumpenproletariat*, Gayatri Spivak's possibly aware but voiceless subaltern, and Saul Williams' losers are compared. Williams' loser may or may not have access to and engage in re-vision and re-representation, since the loser may exist at any point along the continuum of awareness and voice. Capitalism and the superstructure make everyone a loser. Thus, there is an inherent solidarity among losers, and it is this solidarity that may bring re-vision and re-representation to those who are unaware and voiceless. Unlike the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern who fall under modernist metanarratives, the loser has a postmodern subjectivity whereby the individual's inherent access to discourse gives her/him access to power. Carl Jung's and Julia Kristeva's theories of individuation and self-realization are used to further expound upon the individual's relationship to discourse, and, by extension, to re-vision and re-representation. To conclude, the solidarity of the loser and the loser's inherent access to discourse and power may facilitate awareness and voice, revision and re-representation, for self and others.

## INTRODUCTION

i SPEAK A NEW LANGUAGE / as is ALWAYS THE FIRST SIGN of a NEW AGE.

(Williams, *Said the Shotgun to the Head* 5-6)

*Re-vision and Re-representation: An Exploration of Awareness and Voice in Marxism, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism, and Psychoanalytic Theory* was begun as an exploration of subjectivity and power. This text is about the hope that lies in discourse, re-vision, and re-representation. Chapter 1 focuses on subjectivity as formed through capitalism and the superstructure. I begin by delineating the “*lumpenproletariat*,” the “subaltern,” and the “loser” and their relationship to awareness and voice, according to Karl Marx’s, Gayatri Spivak’s, and Saul Williams’ theories respectively. Chapter 2 narrows in on the individual to look at the individual’s relationships to self and others. I utilize Rebecca Raby’s discussion of modern meta-narratives vs. postmodern narratives in “What is Resistance?”; Carl Jung’s and Julia Kristeva’s theories of psychoanalysis, self-realization, and individuation; and Saul Williams’ theories. These theorists lay the groundwork for my discussion of subjectivity, discourse, re-vision and re-representation. Throughout both chapters, I use Zadie Smith’s characters in *White Teeth* as case studies.

The first chapter, “The *Lumpenproletariat*, the Subaltern, and the Loser: An Examination of Awareness and Voice,” discusses subjectivity and capitalism. According to Marx, the *lumpenproletariat* lacks both awareness and a voice (Marx, “Eighteenth” 45). Spivak argues that the subaltern may be aware but is voiceless (Spivak 104). Williams claims that the loser may exist with any degree of awareness and voice or lack thereof (“Saul Williams Returns” par. 7). Williams’ loser at first seems like an ambiguous term. Yet, the loser is ambiguous because (s)he is ubiquitous, i.e., we are all losers in conjunction to capitalism and its superstructure (par. 12). It



is this ambiguity and ubiquity that allows the loser to exist in solidarity with other losers, as well as with the subaltern and the *lumpenproletariat*. Using these theories as premises, this paper argues that solidarity is realized through re-revision and re-representation, which is founded upon awareness and voice and which brings about discourse and power. Re-vision/re-visioning<sup>1</sup> denotes the process of self-discovery and re-creation of self whereby the individual takes back their authority through discourse and re-imagines the present, past, and future. Through reclamation of one's own identity, the individual has the power to remake their culture as well. Re-visioning is a tricky process, one of picking and choosing, of trial and error, a place of uncertainty and possibility. Anyone who re-visions has to make their home, albeit a troubled home, in the in-betweens. Re-representation<sup>2</sup> is speaking for self and others through discourse that re-visions reality. As an example, one means of doing this is through rebelling with “thought, words, music, a collage of evolutionary shifts that might explain how one generation goes from being colored to black, and another that infuses ‘nigger’ with love” (Williams, *US(a)* 19). Solidarity compels the aware and vocal loser to speak to and for the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and other losers with the hope of making re-vision and re-representation viral.

The second chapter, “Awareness and Voice Beyond Capitalism: A Psychoanalytic and Dialectic Perspective,” explores metanarratives, narratives, subjectivity, discourse, re-vision, and re-representation. I theorize that the metanarratives of identity and power-relations presented by Marx and Spivak for the *lumpenproletariat* and subaltern are not accurate representations of subjectivity and power. Rather, I propose that a postmodern view of subjectivity should be used. Discourse, according to postmodernist thought, is the means by which the subject is formed, comes to understand his/her self, and exerts power (Raby 162). Every individual has access to discourse and, as such, has access to power (162). While Williams’ loser does exhibit a

postmodern subjectivity, Williams' theories are not explicated sufficiently to provide a foundation for an exploration of the relationship between the self and re-vision and re-representation. In other words, Williams talks about changing one's perspective and discourse, but does not explain the process of changing one's reality, i.e., how the self is formed through discourse, myths, symbols, etc. That being the case, Carl Jung's and Julia Kristeva's psychoanalysis, self-realization, and individuation serve as a framework to discuss how dialect and power intersect with the individual and society. Jung describes the process as follows: "To do this he must first return to the fundamental facts of his own being, irrespective of all authority and tradition, and allow himself to become conscious of his distinctiveness" (Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche* 59). The individual must move past the mass symbols propagated by society and form her/his own symbols and myths. I use the words from the characters from *White Teeth* to show how discourse also exists in the in-betweens of a discourse that nurtures re-vision and re-representation and a discourse that pathologizes. It is worthy of note that the path to individuation and re-vision is not linear; some of the characters progress and then regress. That undulation is to be expected given that individuation is an ongoing remaking of the "I." Some wholly accept the mass symbols, others reject the mass symbols but never create their own symbols, and others create their own symbols and stories. Discourse and symbol/myth/story making is where hope lies. It is the means to re-vision and re-representation.

## Notes

1. The term re-vision can be found in other texts but not with the same meaning. For instance, Rudnytsky defines re-vision as “taking a fresh look at something, whether prompted by [an event],...or as the result of the discovery of new primary sources or major additions to the scholarly literature...or simply as a consequence of the way that one’s understanding of a phenomenon changes with one’s own intellectual and emotional development” (xxii). Another example is Bloom’s use of revisioning as in the act of reconceptualizing one’s precursor’s poems in order to make “a mental space...to fill [with their] own vision” (66). My form of re-vision was inspired by psychoanalysis (discovering oneself through individuation which brings multiple subjectivities of the self into harmony), feminism (under the umbrella term of Feminism, there being different forms of subjectivity, intersectionality, feminism and feminist rhetoric, all which are constantly challenging the status quo both within the movements and outside of the movements to recreate and rename the self and the relationship between the self and society) and posthumanism (recreating the self and society through reconceptualizing the past, present, and future). In this text, re-vision specifically denotes self-actualization through challenging and re-writing the symbols and concepts that constitute the self and society. In this text, re-vision is a process inextricably linked to awareness and voice, to discourse and power.
2. Re-representation is “representation as ‘speaking for’” and creating “art or philosophy” (Spivak 70, 72). The way in which I use re-representation in this paper aligns with the second definition, which Spivak further explains as “a representative consciousness (one re-representing reality adequately)” (70-71).

## CHAPTER 1

### THE LUMPENPROLETARIAT, THE SUBALTERN, AND THE LOSER: AN EXAMINATION OF AWARENESS AND VOICE

We cannot forget / Our past because / You will remember it / For us.

(Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* 151)

Capitalism and its superstructure make fools of us all. Through this realization (i.e., awareness of the oppression of capitalism and awareness of the solidarity created through the ubiquity of oppression), the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the fool may become aware and find their voices. This paper will begin with exploring the multiple meanings of *lumpenproletariat*, subaltern, and loser. Awareness, re-vision, voice, and re-representation will then be defined and explored through the theoretical lenses of Karl Marx's, Gayatri Spivak's, and Saul Williams' works. In order to gain a better understanding of these abstruse theories, I will use Zadie Smith's characters in *White Teeth* as case studies. The "good for nothing[s]" (8); "losers" (76); "fools" (77); "Hippies, Flakes, Freaks, and Funky Folk" (32); the crazy (148); thugs self tagged with corporate logos (193); pious, Muslim "juvenile delinquent[s]" (369); "half-caste," self-deprecating African Americans (228); "stranger[s] in a strange land" (351); the angry who have neither "face [nor] voice in the country" (194); as well as the half-witted philosopher cooks (433); the pseudo-heroes who now wait tables one-handed (92); the paper folders who make none of their own decisions (441); and even the "middle class mafia" (358) of *White Teeth* are representative of Karl Marx's oblivious *lumpenproletariat*, Gayatri Spivak's voiceless subaltern, and Saul Williams' dynamic loser, all of whom are oppressed by capitalism and its superstructure. Finally, I will use the analysis of Smith's characters to demonstrate that it is possible for the loser, through the processes of re-visioning and representation, to bring awareness to the *lumpenproletariat* and give voice to the subaltern.

## **Ambiguity of Class, *Lumpenproletariat*, Subaltern, and Loser**

As the section title suggests, class, *lumpenproletariat*, subaltern, and loser will be defined. This lengthy review of the terms is necessary for an understanding of the complexities of the theories and for the later use of case studies from *White Teeth*. *Lumpenproletariat*, subaltern, and loser are distinct but overlapping terms in terms of class, awareness, and voice. Because of their dual or multiple meanings, they appear to be identical in ways. The *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and losers can but do not necessarily share unawareness and voicelessness. What distinguishes the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern from the unaware and voiceless loser is the possibility of awareness and voice. Whereas the loser may develop awareness and a voice, the *lumpenproletariat*, as conceived by Marx, will never be aware and the subaltern, as conceived by Spivak, will never have a voice. An additional distinction is that loser is a term connoting solidarity, since all losers, regardless of their state of awareness and voice, are oppressed by capitalism and the superstructure.

The meaning of class, the standard means of labeling individuals as *lumpenproletariats* or subalterns or losers within a capitalistic society, is two-fold and contradictory. Class, according to Spivak's interpretation of Marx, has the common association of a distinct economic position and lifestyle, but it also has the denotation of community, without which a group of people in an economic group is not truly a class (Spivak 72). This definition of class leaves one wondering if the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser – really more of a motley group of individuals than a community – constitute a class. Economically and socially, the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser belong to a class, a minority and severely marginalized class. At the same time, the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern have been traditionally denied a class, because the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern can be found in

multiple economic classes and because class necessitates awareness and a voice to express community. By extension, the unaware and voiceless loser would also be denied a class. Yet, the solidarity expressed by the aware and vocal loser gives the unaware and voiceless loser and, by extension, the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern a class. The *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser exist in an in-between state of having a class and being without class.

Likewise, the meaning of *lumpenproletariat* is two-fold and contradictory, indicating the unemployed as well as those without class consciousness. The *lumpenproletariat* are not a particular class but are the “passively rotting mass,” the “refuse, offal, and wreck of all classes” (Marx, “Eighteenth” 45). Included in the *lumpenproletariat* are not only those who do not labor (“beggars,” “vagabonds,” “pickpockets,” “discharged convicts,” “runaway galley slaves,” and “dismissed soldiers”) but also the petty bourgeois (“keepers of disorderly houses” and “literati”) and capitalists (“adventures-seeking dregs of the bourgeoisie”) (Marx, “Eighteenth” 45). In contrast to the *lumpenproletariat* are the proletariat<sup>1</sup>, the term used by Marx to indicate those who labor and/or those who have attained class consciousness. Undoubtedly because of the dual meanings of *lumpenproletariat* and proletariat, Marx does not mention the proletariat in relation to the *lumpenproletariat*. However, there are many who would be labeled *lumpenproletariat*, in the sense of the unemployed, who develop class consciousness and are proletariat in consciousness; inversely, there are those who would be labeled proletariat, in the sense of the employed, who have not and perhaps never will develop class consciousness and, as such, mentally belong to the *lumpenproletariat*<sup>2</sup>. Marx also labels the *lumpenproletariat* “the dangerous class” (Marx, “Manifesto” 215). Perhaps this is because the *lumpenproletariat* are generally associated with criminals, but the association may also be because it is the *lumpenproletariat* of each class, even among the proletariat, who uphold the ideologies of the

power structure, thus working against their own and their peers' enlightenment and liberation. It is in this latter sense that *lumpenproletariat* is used in this essay and will be demonstrated through the case studies from *White Teeth*. Again, the term *lumpenproletariat* is ambiguous. An individual can exist in an in-between state of simultaneously being and not being a *lumpenproletariat*.

As with the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern is a perplexity, existing in a state of class and classlessness and voice and voicelessness. Spivak describes the subaltern as "the margins (one can just as well say the silent, silenced center) of the circuit marked out by the epistemic violence, men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat" (Spivak 78). The subaltern is most commonly associated with the subproletariat, the poorest of the proletariat, such as those found among Marx's description of the unemployed *lumpenproletariat* but also any severely marginalized group. Like *lumpenproletariat* with its dual meaning, subaltern also refers to those who have no access to representation, no matter the class. Spivak writes:

Reporting on, or better still, participating in, antisexist work among women of color or women in class oppression in the First World or the Third World is undeniably on the agenda. We should also welcome all the information retrieval in these silenced areas that is taking place in anthropology, political science, history and sociology. Yet the assumption and construction of a consciousness or subject sustains such work and will, in the long run, cohere with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the advancement of learning and civilization. And the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever. (Spivak 90)

As such, though the subaltern may be aware and literally have a voice, the subaltern is rendered effectively voiceless (Spivak 104). The subaltern is voiceless with a voice, certainly a paradoxical and in-between state.

The loser has multiple meanings and subjectivities. The dictionary definition of loser varies from Williams' definition of loser. Williams' loser can also be broken down into multiple

subjectivities that exist on continuums of awareness and voice. There is the aware and vocal loser, the unaware and voiceless loser, and the aware but voiceless loser. Furthermore, these subjectivities are nested within the overarching oppression of capitalism which gives a shared meaning to the different losers.

The loser has a dual sense as well when comparing the common use of loser to Williams' meaning(s) of loser. Loser can refer simply to someone who has lost or who suffers loss, but, when an individual is called a loser, it most often refers to someone who is a failure as a result of their own incompetence (Loser). It is a word used to dismiss, silence, and reject.

Alternatively, Williams reclaims loser, like "nigga" has been reclaimed: "The lowest rungs, the disenfranchised, the people who don't matter, who are brutalized or displaced, and the way you take that back and say, 'Yeah, I'm a nigga, I'm the baddest motherfucker you will ever meet'" ("Saul Williams Returns" par. 7). Instead of depicting the loser as a failure without any reference to the effect of society, Williams sees the loser as the individual who still aspires despite and against the oppression of society. Williams elaborates that he thinks of losers as "those who identify with the disenfranchised and don't want to consider themselves free until everyone is free" (par. 7). Williams' loser, unlike the *lumpenproletariat*, is aware of the oppression of society and, unlike the subaltern, speaks against society's oppression, and, unlike the proletariat, feels a sense of solidarity with the oppressed, no matter their class, no matter if they are beggars or literati or bourgeoisie. Contrary to the way that loser is used in common parlance, Williams' loser is lauded as an astute, capable individual who belongs in and actively works to build a sense of community. Considering its dual meaning, loser is a re-claimed word, an ambiguous shapeshifting word, having both negative and positive connotations.



In addition to the loser as a reclaimed subjectivity as just discussed, the loser may also be unaware and voiceless, thus giving Williams' own definition another meaning. Williams thinks of the Christian concept of the sinner when thinking about the loser ("Saul Williams Returns" par. 7). Everyone, according to Christian ideology, is a sinner and a loser from birth. Another of Williams' assertions helps explain this: "We're all prisoners to gender roles, to all the ideologies, [including religious ideologies], that we're born into and perpetuate before we even start thinking for ourselves and questioning societal authority that we've given power" (par. 12). As the quote entails, many losers are unconscious of the power structure and their role in aiding it. The quote also indicates that everyone starts out a loser, an unaware and voiceless loser. The ubiquity of the oppression means that the aware and articulate loser feels a sense of solidarity with the unaware and voiceless loser. Thus, there are multiple subjectivities nested within the concept of the loser.

Another example of Williams' unaware and voiceless loser is the consumerist loser, who is similar to the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern. The most common type of loser discussed and depicted by Williams is the loser whose only goal is consumerism, anything to ward off vulnerability and to increase bravado, having forgotten about their past and present subjugation (*The Dead Emcee Scrolls* 142). Williams talks of Caucasians trying to be black, presumably to increase bravado, and African Americans "tryin to shop to feel free," perhaps also to increase bravado or maybe to feel the temporary high gained from the addiction of consumerism (168). Critiquing the consumerist loser and their mentality that places the maximization of wealth i.e., capitalism, as central, Williams asks, "How much will it cost to buy you out of the mentality that originally bought you?" (143). This quote indicates that those in capitalist cultures are unconsciously investing in the power structure which has and continues to oppress them, to

silence them. In this way, they are like the *lumpenproletariat*, being unaware of their own buying into the oppressive structure, and the subaltern, being voiceless as a result of being oblivious.

Yet another type of loser is the aware but voiceless loser. Williams writes of the indie rock concept angst driven loser who falls short of expectation, who doesn't belong (par. 7). This type of individual is conscious of society's concept of and effect on their self, but it is questionable whether the individual is just whining about the oppression or if they are using their voice for revolution. If the loser is just whining, the loser is essentially voiceless, a voiceless similar to that of the subaltern.

Altogether, losers may exist at any point along the continuum of awareness, from a consumerist loser who buys into the myth of sin, to the aware but voiceless angst driven loser, to the enlightened and vocal loser. Once a degree of awareness develops, voice is cultivated. The cultivation of voice is a tricky endeavor, since the loser may be voiceless even with a voice. What distinguishes whining from revolutionary articulation? The answer seems to be awareness of solidarity, not just awareness of the oppression of the power structure. Solidarity is what may bring the *lumpenproletariat* to awareness and what may give voice to the subaltern and the loser.

Loser is a term connoting solidarity. Williams asserts: "We're all fucking losers" ("Saul Williams Returns" par. 7). By resisting the standard of categorizing individuals into different groups, Williams' cosmology creates a solidarity which creates a single class and, in doing so, does away with class. His cosmology of solidarity allows for the transformation of the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern into the loser who is aware and uses their voice as a means of personal and societal transformation. It should be noted, though, that the loser can be found at many stages of development and may plateau at any stage of development; the loser may be unaware and voiceless and lacking solidarity, partially aware but voiceless and lacking solidarity,

partially aware and vocal but lacking solidarity, or, ideally, aware and vocal and having realized and expressed solidarity. Also worthy of note, solidarity exists even when the loser is said to lack solidarity. Solidarity is like quantum entanglement<sup>3</sup>; just because the loser is not aware of it, it does not mean that it does not exist. The aware and articulate loser knows of the solidarity and acts accordingly, whereas the other forms of losers are ignorant of the solidarity but not exempt from it. Just as the oppression is ubiquitous, so is the solidarity.

The solidarity of the loser may reach across theories i.e., the loser may help bring awareness and voice to the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern. Some losers may never develop awareness, like the *lumpenproletariat*, or their own voice, like the subaltern, while others will. Those who do recognize the oppressive nature of these ideologies and develop their own voice in defiance of the power structure and in solidarity with the unaware and voiceless loser create a path to awareness and the development of a voice for the loser, even if the loser does not avail their self of it. By extension, the loser may also aid the *lumpenproletariat* in developing awareness and the subaltern in asserting their voice.

### **Awareness and Voice and Re-vision and Re-representation**

Awareness (re-vision) and voice (re-representation) are key to the transformation of the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern into losers. I use case studies from *White Teeth* to explain the transformation. In chapter 1, I focus more on what renders one unaware and voiceless, while, in chapter 2, I give more specifics about how one engages in re-vision and re-representation.

Re-presentation, Spivak explains, refers to “‘re-representation’ as in art or philosophy” and “representation as ‘speaking for’” (70). Re-presentation, “as in art or philosophy,” entails “a representative consciousness (one re-presenting reality adequately)” (70-71). On the other hand, Representation “as speaking for” is viewed ominously by Spivak (70). Spivak asserts that the

subaltern's "representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes" (71). Under these conditions, the subaltern receives their identity through their relationship with their representative master.

Spivak asserts that these two types of representation are "related but irreducibly discontinuous" (70). This irreducible discontinuity occurs as a result of "a model of social indirect" wherein there are "gaps between the source of 'influence,' ...the 'representative,' ...and the historical-political phenomenon" (72). In other word, somehow, re-representation is subjugated to representation as a tool of the power structure which works to reinforce oppression. Spivak does not adequately explain how these gaps come about or why they necessarily form. Also, Spivak asserts that conflating the two forms of representation "in order to say that beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act and know for themselves, leads to an essentialist, utopian politics" (71). This statement is extreme and dogmatist in tone; for instance, Spivak uses a trigger word, utopian, which evokes an automatic response of skepticism and perhaps even scorn. Beyond the dogmatic tone, Spivak's assertion denies the gestalt, in this instance the result of the sum of parts existing on a continuum between ideal and monstrous. Perhaps some subalterns cannot speak, their speech being lost in re-representation; perhaps other subalterns can speak, being their own representative and receiving their identity through their relationship with their own self.

In contrast to Spivak's understanding of representation, Williams believes that re-representation as speaking for is possible. He states, "I know that I have well over a million kids that agree with me and I'm not really speaking my opinion. I'm really speaking theirs" ("An Interview" 735). Further, Williams rhetorically questions, "if the poetry is not for the people, and

of course for ourselves and our own healing and growth processes, then what the fuck is it for?” (“An Interview” 735). The million kids could arguably be those who are already aware who came upon Williams’ words and identified with them, but they could also be those who discovered Williams’ words and developed awareness through his words and, hopefully, eventually develop their own voice. The people are all losers, whether aware or oblivious or silent or expressive. Williams’ own engagement in re-representation as art or philosophy indicates that the loser is able to not only refashion the self but is able to speak for those who identify with the speaker/writer and nurture awareness and encourage articulation in fellow losers, thus creating a sense of solidarity and the potential for one loser’s re-representation and representation to act as a catalyst for another loser’s re-representation and representation.

Re-vision and re-visioning are terms used in this essay to convey the action of re-appropriation and reclamation of one’s own identity and culture. Re-vision necessarily occurs at the microcosmic level of self (analogous to Spivak’s re-representation of reality) but also occurs at the macrocosmic or cultural level (similar to Spivak’s representation). Self and other are understood to be inextricably joined. As such, introspection of the self affects others. The individual who re-visions speaks for their self but, having a grasp of solidarity, also speaks for others i.e., all of the other losers.

The *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser’s relationships to re-vision and re-representation are related to their belief systems, particularly to beliefs about solidarity. The reason why the *lumpenproletariat* does not engage in re-visioning and re-representation is clearly a result of a lack of awareness. The subaltern is said to not engage in re-representation, even though the subaltern may be aware. Perhaps the reason for the subaltern’s lack of re-representation is a lack of re-visioning, which is foundational to re-representation. The question

remains as to why the loser engages in re-visioning and representation, but the subaltern does not. The difference is not a matter of awareness of the power structure or ability to exert their voices. What is different is the re-conceiving of self which results in a sense of solidarity and the belief of being able to re-conceive and affect reality. The individual who is told that they are subaltern and believes their self to be voiceless will remain voiceless, perhaps complaining without effect. Inversely, the individual loser, starting with the self, will exert their voice knowing that they will eventually impact others and society. The subaltern buys into a myth of personal powerlessness and the ineffectiveness of solidarity and thereby engages in self-defeating thoughts and action. The loser is brought to awareness and develops their own voice, acts which require a change in belief systems, through their own and others' acts of re-visioning.

The boundaries between the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser are not finite. The *lumpenproletariat* e.g., the loser as materialistic individual who never really uses their own voice due to lack of awareness, and the subaltern e.g., the loser as one who is conscious of injustice but feels powerless to enact change and so really become voiceless, exist alongside the individual engaged in re-visioning. The loser acts in truth to their self and from a sense of solidarity. By doing so, perhaps the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern may realize that they are losers.

### **Case Studies of the *Lumpenproletariat*, the Subaltern, and the Loser**

In order to examine the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser, I will use the characters in *White Teeth* as mock case studies. Smith's characters, situated in an urban area in a core country affected by global capitalism, have a realistic diversity that makes them ideal for explication. Specifically, I will examine three different classes – upper proletariat/middle class

(Joyce Chalfen), proletariat/working class (Samad Iqbal), and subproletariat/unemployed (Millat Iqbal) – in this paper.

The superstructure – its division and consequential alienation from the act of labor, product of labor, and species-being – rather than labor is primarily engaged in *White Teeth*. The unnamed narrator, asserting that tradition is an equally deleterious but far more insidious means of oppression than religion, sketches the ways in which the traditions propagated by the superstructure harm individuals (Smith 161). It is also worthy of note that since the means of production are continuously revolutionized, all else undergoes change along with it, causing upheavals in the social structure which leads to emotional, mental, and spiritual agitation (Marx, “Manifesto” 207). This dis-ease in the social structure may lead individuals to cling more strongly to tradition.

#### **Joyce Chalfen: A Case Study of a Normative, Middle Class Literati Representative**

Despite being vocal, Joyce Chalfen is a *lumpenproletariat* (dually, in that she is a non-productive literati and in that she obviously supports the social structure), a subaltern (in that she does not have her own voice even if she is a published author), and a loser (in that she is the type of loser who is unaware and voiceless). Morals, smugly asserts Joyce, originate from those like herself, the middle class who she views as the “inheritors of the enlightenment” and the “source of all culture” (Smith 359). Joyce never seems to realize that enlightenment – the base of revolution – and culture are often at odds. She never steps outside the social norms of the superstructure to which she was indoctrinated and consequently never engages in re-visioning or re-representation.

Throughout *White Teeth*, Joyce reinforces common stereotypes. Religious and ethnic minorities she pities for their uncivil social mores. Joyce states that Millat (originally her son’s

acquaintance who she becomes enthralled by, as a mother figure but possibly as more) is better off being a boy, unbelievable atrocities being forced on girls in Muslim households. This stereotype was gathered from a *Times* article, the examples in which she hastily generalizes to all people of Muslim descent and all practitioners of Islam (Smith 266). She xenophobically views those from different ethnicities and religions as being defunct, the inferior other. Just as atrociously, Joyce reinforces patriarchal social norms while claiming to be a feminist. She seeks a man smarter than herself to marry who will liberate her from thinking. Naturalizing patriarchy, Joyce restricts women to the limiting role of nurturer. Joyce is perplexed when confronted with a lesbian couple, not being able to figure out who nurtures and who teaches. Even her literary works are used to reinforce the idea of women as nurtures. The things that truly bind her liberty (e.g., gender roles, monogamy, and so on) she calls liberating (269). Additionally, Joyce, justifying class and reinforcing stereotypes, believes that the middle class are superior because of good genes and hard work (293). The unstated parallel to Joyce's dogma is that those who are working class or who live in poverty are deprived because that is what they deserve; anyone who is not middle class becomes the undeserving poor, self-made losers.

As an "interpreter,"<sup>4</sup> Joyce uses her voice to re-represent in a way that reinforces the superstructure (Spivak 77). Joyce is a regional leader of culture, verging on being a national influencer of culture, since her published books sold well. Being an interpreter, Joyce may seem like the average person, but she holds and reinforces beliefs that benefit the capitalists i.e., those who oppress the people, while simultaneously oppressing both herself and the rest of the masses. Pushing her middle class (perfidiously ethnocentric, patriarchal, capitalist) morality, Joyce engages in a type of corrupt re-representation.



Joyce produces a “history as narrative...of truth,” in reality a lie that functions as a form of epistemic violence, in the process of re-representation as an interpreter (Spivak 76, 78). Mainstream media – Joyce’s book but also other forms of “brain washed [media] cleared of purpose [such as] radio programing” – serve to make its many “i’s” the individual’s “I” (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* 147). Joyce re-represents the identity of the *lumpenproletariat*, the subaltern, and the loser in the process of forming her own identity. She holds the *lumpenproletariat* and the subaltern, which she would probably consider incompetent losers, up to herself as a mirror in order to delude herself that the middle class are not losers. Joyce’s superstructure driven re-representation is in keeping with Spivak’s assertion that the subaltern cannot speak through the scholar, that the literati only represent themselves when speaking for the subaltern (70). In speaking for herself, Joyce unconsciously speaks for the capitalist, thus upholding a superstructure that is contrary to her own good. Joyce is not conscious of the corruption of the power structure and does not have her own voice. As such, Joyce is a *lumpenproletariat* and a subaltern, the type of loser who is unaware and voiceless and lacks solidarity.

Despite being considered successful in the general public’s view, particularly pertaining to her book publications, Joyce is an oblivious and voiceless loser who has not heeded the voice of the loser who speaks against the corruption of the social and economic structure. She is unaware of her role in the perpetuation of the power structure and merely reiterates the mores of society. She has not engaged in re-visioning and so is unable to re-represent herself or other losers despite her access to media which would easily allow her to do so.

### **Samad Iqbal: A Case Study of a Tradition Bound, Relapsed *Lumpenproletariat***

If Joyce is a subaltern without her own history and effectively voiceless, Samad Iqbal is doubly so. Samad is rendered voiceless because of his economic status and also because of his ethnic and religious identity. His identity being Bangladeshi and Islam, he is considered other.

While at first Samad is rightfully repulsed by the economic power structure, he makes the mistake of not realizing that the social structure, even Islam, is determined by the economic structure. Tradition, muses the obviously laboring *lumpenproletariat* Samad, is in *White Teeth* synonymous with culture and roots which Samad views as inherently good. Tradition/culture/roots are what saves, the spiritual line thrown to the man overwhelmed in a sea of moral flux. Yet, the ascetic tenets of the traditions that Samad seeks to follow are unattainable, impossible to follow due to the inhuman nature of the tenets, at least in a capitalistic society. Still, despite the mental, emotional, and spiritual turmoil that results from him being unable to follow tradition, Samad believes that tradition is good. The narrator notes that even if someone were to point out to Samad that even weeds have roots or that rot often starts at the roots that he would take no heed to it (161).

Samad lacks awareness of the substructures within the superstructure. What he fails to understand is that there are “layers of meaning” to tradition that must be deciphered and critiqued (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* xxviii). Tradition is subject to re-representation. Islam – any patriarchal mainstream religion such as Christianity, “[c]hurch of...back of / bus...hold your tongue...fear...sick[ness]...hell...born / in sin...short on rent” (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* 9) – is utilized to enact conformity. Before Islam, however, there was gnosis, particularly Jewish Gnosticism, which is not based on tradition but direct experience with the divine. “Before before,” there was no division between God and man (Williams, *The Dead*

*Emcee Scrolls* 29); there is a tradition that bespeaks of a time before division between male and female gender roles, light and dark skin, East and West, Islamic and pagan, before patriarchy, racism, religious and intellectual superiority complexes, even before anthropocentrism. Samad does not go far enough back through tradition to recall that before Islam was the dominant religion of his home country of Bangladesh, there was Hinduism, before that speculatively an earth religion. Nowhere in *White Teeth* does it indicate that Samad rejects the culture of Bangladesh before Islam. The only culture that he actively rejects is Western culture, which is predominately Christian in religion. Rather, any earlier cultures seem to be lost to him. Samad has already been forced into assimilation, his Hindu heritage and even earlier roots already having been stripped from him.

Partially aware at the beginning of his story, Samad is critical of the power structure but feels helpless. Circuitously but predictably, Samad's experience shows how the superstructure supports the oppression of capitalism. It is Samad's desire to follow tradition that results in him supporting the economic structure, ministering to "the endless needs and the needless ends" of the masses of the West where abides "neither patience nor pity," where "people expect...their lovers...children... friends...and even...gods" to be delivered quickly and cheaply (Smith 172). Since "[a] man is a man is a man" (Smith 216), Samad must support a superstructure which oppresses him like his father and his father's fathers (76); he must fight a war that cripples him and work a job that makes him feel degraded. While fighting in the war, Samad repeats as if a chant "I'm a Muslim and a Man and a Son and a Believer" (101). He takes on the roles which Bangladeshi culture most values. As a civilian worker, after gaining the economic responsibility of supporting a wife and buying a better house, Samad muses that he wants to wear the following sign while working:

I AM NOT A WAITER. I HAVE BEEN A STUDENT, A SCIENTIST, A SOLDIER, MY WIFE IS CALLED ALSANA, WE LIVE IN EAST LONDON BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO MOVE NORTH. I AM A MUSLIM BUT ALLAH HAS FORSAKEN ME OR I HAVE FORSAKEN ALLAH, I'M NOT SURE. I HAVE A FRIEND – ARCHIE – AND OTHERS. I AM FORTY-NINE BUT WOMEN STILL TURN IN THE STREET. SOMETIMES. (49)

While still valuing the identities esteemed in Bangladeshi culture, Samad is struggling with the identity placed upon him in Western culture. Quickly thereafter, Samad dejectedly discovers that he only has value at the restaurant as an employee, not a student nor scholar nor fighter nor husband nor Muslim nor friend nor lover (49).

The fact that Samad is disturbed by the identity assigned to him means that he is somewhat aware that there is something wrong. However, he does not seem to be aware that what is causing him pain is the power structure and the culture, both Western and Islamic, that it is the root of his distress. As such, Samad is an at least partially oblivious *lumpenproletariat*, a *lumpenproletariat* whose anger could lead to awareness. Since Samad only thinks about his different identities and never actually voices them, he is subaltern. He is a loser whose dissatisfaction with self and culture could result in the development of awareness and a voice.

Finding his labor and its rewards lacking, Samad turns to the mores of the superstructure, to fundamentalist Islam, which distracts and sedates him, thus nullifying his potential. The Islam that Samad follows is not an Islam that he re-visioned but merely a subculture of the superstructure. Allah, more accurately Samad's conception of Allah as produced by the superstructure, essentially becomes Samad's representative master who has almost unrestricted power over his identity and who is expected to shelter and bless (Spivak 71).

However, the spiritual and physical mores of Islam being untenable, Samad feels guilt, and his identity is further distorted. Outside of work, he is "a masturbator, a bad husband, an indifferent father, with all the morals of an Anglican" (Smith 118). Consequently, he eagerly

takes up his position at work as the crippled yet gifted lead waiter (118). The customers who he complained against as those who gave up faith for sex and then sex for power (a twisted path that Samad himself ends up following) are now the people who he takes pleasure in serving as the lead waiter (172). Morally, Samad has been assimilated into the masses by way of religion. Instead of moving forward through re-visioning, he becomes a *lumpenproletariat* who reinforces the power structure, mindlessly fulfilling his job as a means to escape the spiritual pain caused by the superstructure in the form of tradition.

Samad's experience with tradition, traditions that are little more than a policing mechanism that gives stability to the economic powers that be, is in keeping with Spivak's explanation of Marx's view of value (identity) in a capitalist society. Spivak states that value is determined "as the representation sign of objectified labor," that labor acts as a sign which determines the signifier as labor (73-74). In other words, the sum of Samad is reduced to his labor, labor which supports the power structure and its accompanying superstructure. Samad becomes a loser in the mainstream sense of the term particularly in that he places blame on himself instead of realizing the role of the social and economic structure. Samad regresses from a partially aware but voiceless loser to the type of loser who is oblivious and voiceless like the *lumpenproletariat* and subaltern.

Samad fails at re-representation in his attempt to be a regional leader for Islam. His efforts fall on deaf ears and are even scorned. Samad's failed attempt at re-representation is due to the fact that those who are dominant in one location may not be dominant elsewhere (Spivak 79). Not only can the variation in dominance apply to location, but it can also be true within groups of people within the same area. Samad may have some authority with Muslims of his own age in his area, but he has no say among the more youthful and assertive fundamentalist

Muslims in the area nor with those who follow normative middle-class morality. Samad fails because he works within the traditional systems with traditional means.

Being unable to represent himself, Samad attempts to represent the past and the future but is unable to successfully exert his voice. Concerning the past, Samad lauds his ancestor, Mangal Pande, as a revolutionary and war hero. However, his endeavors to rewrite, to re-vision and re-represent, his ancestor's place in history as a hero are constantly checked. Marcus Chalfen, Joyce's husband and a respected scientist, tells others not to take Samad's words seriously (280). Even Samad's best friend, Archie, attempts to disprove Samad by referring to scholarly books to make his point (209). Samad's voice is ignored or combated, silencing him no matter how much he speaks. Regarding the future, Samad attempts to control the future by shaping the characters of his sons, Millat and Magid. As Europeans viewed themselves as "men saving brown women from brown men" in colonizing India and subjugating India to its laws and norms (Spivak 93), Samad views himself as an Eastern, Muslim man saving the already westernized youth from the West. Having only enough money to save one son, he sends Magid to Bangladesh to learn Islamic tradition and counts Millat as lost to his Islamic heritage. However, Magid turns to secular Western morals, and Millat turns to a form of Western fundamentalist Islam even too radical for Samad; in the end, both sons are Englishified (286). Having no voice to shape the cultures that his children grew up in, Samad is unable to influence their characters in a desired manner and so is unable to implement the future that he envisions. Whether it is through the past or the future, Samad attempts re-representation through others. He never re-visions himself, and, as a consequence, he is unsuccessful at both types of re-representation.

While realizing the corruption of a capitalist power structure, Samad fails to see that the religion and traditions that he defines himself by are merely extensions of the power structure.

As such, Samad is not fully aware of the oppression enacted upon him by the power structure and remains at least partially a *lumpenproletariat*. Being unable to re-represent his present, past, and future, Samad is subaltern. Samad is at best a partially aware but voiceless loser. If Samad were to become aware of the fact that Islam – not Islam itself but the way in which Samad dogmatically follows his version of Islam – is part of the power structure which represses him, he would ideally seek out a new identity and reality and, in doing so, would bring him to re-vision himself. Only then would he have hope of re-representing his children and the rest of his reality and, in doing so, exert his voice, the voice of the loser.

### **Millat Iqbal: A Case Study of the Perversely Liminal Oppressed Oppressor**

Perhaps the most complex example of a loser in *White Teeth*, Millat Iqbal (Samad's son) is other in a group of others. Millat is caught between his father's beliefs and middle-class morality and so loses his individuality. Like the subaltern woman of India, Millat is "caught between tradition and modernization" (Spivak 102). Millat seeks to construct his identity as a counter culture against a counter culture that has become a regionally dominant culture, at least in Millat's home, which itself was originally a counter culture, when compared to normative middle-class culture, against a dominant culture. Millat is swept away by the Western need to be scientific and an Eastern based "nostalgia for lost origins" (Spivak 93).

As a youth, Millat is on the verge of revisioning himself. Millat knows himself to be neither a fool nor a follower (Smith 181). Constantly shapeshifting, Millat hedonistically does as he pleases, purposefully going against the morals of his father and of society (182). Certainly, Millat has not quite developed his own voice, but he exhibits a degree of awareness and freedom. He strives against being a loser, in this sense a loser as a fool and a follower, which the unaware

and voiceless arguably are. At this point, Millat is not quite fully *lumpenproletariat* nor subaltern; he is on the path to becoming the type of loser who is both aware and vocal.

Soon thereafter, Millat discovers that he exists in an in-between state, not being Christian and English nor Muslim and Bengali (Smith 291). Pressured to please multiple subcultures incessantly – being not only the daredevil, trickster, respected womanizer, drug user, hero, and voice of his generation, constantly changing his identity to suit his peers – Millat feels the pervading pain and anger of “belonging nowhere that comes to people who belong everywhere” (225). At the same time, to mainstream culture, Millat realizes that he is a bum or a job stealing, turban wearing, elephant worshipping Paki who is not welcome in America and that he is limited by other’s expectations to being a waiter like his father or a dentist at best. Millat realizes that he has no voice and that his image is not reflected in American culture. He is one of the many angry, having neither “face [nor] voice in this country” (194).

Despite trying out many roles and being a leader among some of the subcultures, Millat’s individuation is stunted, since he merely shapeshifts between the roles listed above which are projected upon him. He does not truly engage in re-visioning and never has a voice of his own. He is a *lumpenproletariat*, albeit an angry one, and a subaltern who speaks in order to fit into the many subcultures of the superstructure rather than for re-visioning the subcultures and mainstream culture which denigrate and limit him. Although Millat is a leader, he does not re-vision his self and so does not re-represent his self or the others for whom he speaks.

Morally rebellious yet counterculture typical, Millat finds solidarity among others who are angry and voiceless like himself in the Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation (KEVIN). Though Millat joins KEVIN as a means of exerting himself, he loses his voice. Millat dogmatically enforces the inhibiting tenets of KEVIN, rejecting the irrational faith of his father



for the rational Qur'an and the depraved, freedom crazed West for fundamentalist Islam (Smith 368). Not only inhibiting himself by giving up sex and other actions labeled carnal, Millat also polices others. Regurgitating leaflet words, Millat accuses Karina Cane – the girl who he initially describes as having a “sense of humor that felt like a miracle” – of being a whore, despite her adamant answer that she respects herself and that her clothes are chosen to please herself (311). Because of the propaganda, Millat can no longer envision a good woman as being anything other than the restrained women of KEVIN. Yet worse, Millat essentially tells Karina that he will have sex with her whenever he wants (i.e., that he will rape her), that she is not to enjoy sex, and that she should be ladylike by not being vocal during sex (309). Millat is ruled by and enforces moral tenets, the epistemically violent tenets of KEVIN, external and contrary to his own being. Sadly, Millat does not realize that KEVIN is just another subculture, claiming to be both a counterculture and the rightful dominant culture, of the superstructure. He has taken on the role of a leader of a subculture of the superstructure and voices words which are not his own. Through his lack of awareness, he has lost his voice and has become a subaltern. Like his father, Millat regresses to a one-dimensional *lumpenproletariat*, a subaltern who engages in representation for an oppressive power structure, and the unaware and voiceless loser that he dreaded to become. Without realizing it, Millat becomes the fool and follower that he adamantly rejected.

After joining KEVIN, Millat still struggles to grasp his identity, his coveted image of the gangster clashing with the image of the Islamic holy man expected of him (368). Being Bangladeshi and Islamic in Western society (his marginalized familial associations within the dominant social structure) or being Western within a Bangladeshi and Islamic subculture (his assimilated Western affinities within his family structure), Millat is rendered psychologically

marginal and consequently feels the need to demonstrate to himself and others his devotion to his chosen culture, much like the Indian women who commit the ceremonial self-emulation of sati (Spivak 94). Just as it is generally the vulnerable, the women in a patriarchal society, who commit sati, so it is usually the vulnerable, the poor in a capitalist society, who sacrifice themselves for the mores of a given belief; it is the psychologically, ethnically, and religiously marginalized Millat who literally and figuratively pulls the trigger of the gun as a means of establishing his dominance in KEVIN by killing the God usurping, Oncomouse creating scientist Marcus Chalfen. “Millat is reaching like Pande,” reliving his ancestor’s life rather than re-visioning his own (442). In this way – even if Millat is playing the role of a revolutionary, gun and all – he is still voiceless; he is subaltern.

Yet, Millat’s character and actions can also be reinterpreted, as with hip-hop, as a “cry for respect,” “a cry for power and / to be recognized” (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* xxvii-xxviii). Sometimes, the oppressed, when they begin to recognize their own power, abuse their newfound power in a manner similar to the way violence was enacted against them (xxviii). In this way, Millat’s history parallels the history of hip-hop. Hip-hop, according to Williams who grew up nurtured on hip-hop, once was a means of expression and challenging the powers that be and the norms they perpetuate. This early phase in hip-hop resembles Millat’s pre-moral-indoctrination years. Now, hip-hop reflects capitalist ideology, the same ideas that sold the ancestors of the producers and listeners of hip-hop into slavery. Instead of questioning a system of greed, hip-hop perpetuates capitalism and its tenets of misogyny and violence among its listeners through the “romanticism of gangsterism” (xxvii) that involves putting others down in order to prove one’s own superiority (109). This later phase in hip-hop resembles Millat’s KEVIN years. Williams calls out hip-hop for being negligent, for allowing itself to be “defined

by something less than yourself,” as Millat himself has been defined by something so very less than himself i.e., tradition, religion, expectations and so on (114).

There is hope; perhaps the subaltern can speak. Millat is angry, a currently misdirected anger but an anger that can be used for voicing malcontent and demanding revolution. Though he is not fully conscious of what is causing him pain (not just the judgement and expectations of society but also his beloved Islam), he is aware that something needs to be balked against. Millat is like “NGHs kill[ing] NGHs in Jesus’s name” (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* 45); he’s killing off one part of himself, the Western, with another part of himself, the Eastern. Despite his misguided actions, Millat is willing to take control over his own life, to violently fight a system that he views as a threat to his wellbeing. Millat has a voice, but it is a voice that upholds one of the many forms of tradition of the power structure, thus rendering him virtually voiceless. Millat regurgitates pamphlet words as hip-hop artists now spew out capitalistic propaganda. What is lacking is not a voice but introspection, questioning and meditation on his own beloved tenets that would allow his voice to be meaningful. If Millat were to engage in introspection and questioning of culture, perhaps he would see the false idols that he has made out of science and a religion founded upon beliefs averse to his self. He would see that the path that he has chosen is a circuitous path merging with pure science (the 5%), the coercive wrath of a gangster (the 10%), and the many other paths that lead to nowhere but dead ends (the 85%) (166); he would realize that he needs to abandon the “future slave narrative,” to forge his own path of “I, self, lord and master” whereby he could become the aware and assertive loser engaged in representation (20).

This self-forged path of revision may not take a traditional form. Millat is a child of tradition, not the perverse tradition of the superstructure, like the children of hip-hop listed by

Williams – Portishead (trip-hop), Led Zeppelin (hard rock), and Bjork (multi-genre: classical, techno, pop, jazz, folk and other) – who still engage in status quo questioning (Williams, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* 114). Yes, Millat is enacting the part of a fundamentalist, gun raised, but, in that moment, he is also witness to a man facing the gun for love of another and the freeing of another being.

At the end of *White Teeth*, the reader is challenged to divide the present into those “whose eyes fell upon a bleeding man, slumped across a table, and those who watched the getaway of a small brown rebel mouse” (Smith 448). The bleeding man, Archie, whom Millat shoots in an attempt to shoot Marcus Chalfen, kept his eyes on the mouse, thinking “*Go on my son*” (448). Inadvertently, the combined actions of Millat (the embodiment of anger and passion) and Archie (the long-suffering enactment of love) have set a fellow being free. Perhaps Millat will come to see that his actions should not have been directed against Marcus Chalfen, who represents the West in Millat’s mind, but at freeing the Oncomouse, a fellow being who has lost their freedom to the traditional ideology of anthropocentrism. Perhaps Millat will see the possibility for freedom for himself as well. If such were to be Millat’s future, the future that Smith challenges her readers to imagine for themselves, then Millat may, in the end, cast off the *lumpenproletariat* lack of awareness and voicelessness of the subaltern for the awareness and the voice of the loser who re-visions and re-represents self and society. Perhaps, like the best of hip-hop which joins the strength of vulnerability with the care for the craft of words such as is found in poetry, Millat will rename himself and ply the best in himself to a self-determined channel of art or philosophy or to whatever else his form of re-visioning and re-representation may be.

## The Hope for Re-visioning and Re-representation

Could Millat's voice be effective? What does a newly aware individual have to do to avoid the mistakes of those who came before? What does one have to do to avoid being carried back into slavery? (Williams, *Dead Emcee Scrolls* 108). What does one have to do to guard against the insidious, seemingly ubiquitous indoctrination of the superstructure propagated by capitalism?

Williams ambiguously asserts that "sometimes we need to stand on the shoulders of our ancestors, sometimes we have to stand on their necks" (Williams, "An Interview" 735). Sometimes, one has to break with the past and the current culture that results from the past. Other times, the past and culture is a means of enlightenment. Re-visioning is a tricky process, one of picking and choosing, of trial and error, of death and rebirth; it is a place of in-betweens, a place of dis-comfort. Anyone who re-visions has to make their home, albeit a troubled home, in the in-betweens.

However, being open minded is not enough. Williams states that "If we don't break the rules, we perpetuate the pattern." (Williams, *US(a)* 17). One means of dismantling capitalism and its superstructure is through rebelling with "thought, words, music, a collage of evolutionary shifts that might explain how one generation goes from being colored to black, and another that infuses 'nigger' with love" (19). Anything that works to shift consciousness can be used as a means of rebellion. In order to make one's voice effective, capitalistic means often have to be used. Williams explains, "You can't buy freedom, but let's buy some airtime and shelf-space and elevate this freedom of speech" (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* vii). Another form of enacting change is enacting legislation (Williams, *US(a)* 17). Still, legislation often falls short, and Williams even writes in some of his early poetry that he is unsure whether or not his words

ever reach and affect their intended audience (Williams, *She* 76). Yet, in a more recent interview he states that he is the voice for a million or more people (Williams, “An Interview” 35).

Considering Williams’ success, it seems that the loser can have a voice.

## Notes

1. The proletariat, “a class of labourers...who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce” (Marx, “Manifesto” 211). The proletarian movement, Marx defines as “the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority...[that]cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being blown to pieces” (216). There are multiple differences between the proletariat and the loser. (1) Unlike the proletariat, the loser can come from any social class, even the *bourgeois* or capitalists. (2) In contrast to the proletariat, the loser feels a sense of solidarity with people from all strata of society, including the *lumpenproletariat*. (3) The loser is not dependent on the majority to affect change. (4) The loser may use capitalistic means. The reason the *lumpenproletariat* instead of the proletariat was chosen as a comparison to the subaltern and loser is because the proletariat is generally not disparaged, considered Other, unlike the *lumpenproletariat*, subaltern, and loser. Also, examining the proletariat would be redundant since the proletariat is the same as the subaltern until the majority sways towards revolution.

2. An example of an employed (proletariat) but unaware (*lumpenproletariat*) individual is Samad Iqbal from *White Teeth*; he works full time but fails to understand that the superstructure (culture) is part of the oppressive structure of capitalism (Smith 161) An example of the unemployed (*lumpenproletariat*) but aware (proletariat) is Neena Begum also from *White Teeth*. Her mere existence as a lesbian challenges the heteronormative mores of her family, but she also purposefully challenges the other characters to engage in re-vision. For instance, one of her lines is as follows: “you’ve been taught all kinds of shit. You’ve got to reeducate yourself. Realize your value, stop the slavish devotion, and get a life” (237).

3. Quantum entanglement “is the property of the quantum mechanical state of a system containing two or more objects, where the objects that make up the system are linked in a way that one cannot adequately describe the quantum state of a constituent of the system without full mention of its counterparts, even if the individual objects are spatially separated” (Moran vii).

4. There is in colonized peoples a group of “interpreters” between those who hold power and the masses (Spivak 77). The categories are “1. Dominant foreign groups. 2. Dominant indigenous groups on the all-Indian level. 3. Dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels. 4. [the masses]” (79). If this model is applied to a core country such as England or America, it might be categorized as follows: 1. The capitalists i.e., those in power. 2. Those who symbolize morality and identity at the national level e.g., politicians, celebrities etc., 3. Leaders of community or regional subcultures i.e., often but not necessarily those who emulate the previous group. 4. The masses.

## CHAPTER 2

### AWARENESS AND VOICE BEYOND CAPITALISM: A PSYCHOANALYTIC AND DIALECTIC PERSPECTIVE

Laugh through saturated-striated meaning, through affirmed-rhythmic identity.  
Laugh into a void composed of logical, syntactic, and narrative surplus.  
(Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 181)

This chapter moves beyond an examination of capitalism. I begin by reviewing modernist metanarratives and postmodern narratives. Modernist metanarratives, such as those that are found in Karl Marx's and Gayatri Spivak's works, are rejected as being unrepresentative of reality. Postmodern narratives, such as those found in Saul Williams' works, are retained for their accurate portrayal of the complex relationship between the parts of the self and the self to the other. Postmodern narratives align with explanations posited by psychoanalytic theorists such as Carl Jung and Julia Kristeva and also make way for a discussion of discourse. Hope for self and society lies in psychoanalysis, self-realization, and individuation, all of which may be brought about by discourse and myth making. Yet, discourse may also be used to pathologize, as is evident in *White Teeth*. Again, I use the characters in *White Teeth* to present examples of postmodern narratives; stagnation, progression, and regression along the path to self-realization/individuation; discourse that pathologizes and discourse that leads to re-visioning and re-representation.

#### **Insufficiencies of Marxism and of Spivak's Postcolonialism**

Theoretically, this chapter moves from a discussion of Marxism and post-colonialism to psychoanalytic texts and their emphasis on individuation and discourse is the focus of attention. Karl Marx's *lumpenproletariat* and Gayatri Spivak's subaltern can be classified as a modernist metanarratives of identity and power. (See Raby's "What is Resistance?" or the discussion below for information on modernist metanarratives and postmodern narratives.) The *lumpenproletariat*



subject and the subaltern subject are static. As such, they do not have a way to re-visioning and re-representation in and of their self. In comparison, Saul Williams' loser(s) is a postmodern subject that has an inherent path to power through discourse. In order to give insight and further expound on Williams' work, the self, and discourse, I will explore Carl Jung's and Julia Kristeva's theories. Jung's and Kristeva's psychoanalysis, self-realization, and individuation serve as a framework to discuss how dialect and power intersect within the individual and culture.

Discomfort may be a catalyst to awareness; however, capitalism alone is not the source of the distress, and awareness of and rebellion against capitalism is not sufficient for re-vision and re-representation. Additionally, the individual must have awareness of their self and their relationship to discourse, thus the inclusion of Jung's and Kristeva's theories. The characters in *White Teeth* are undoubtedly ill at ease, the discomfort of which brings them to the brink of awareness. Marx prophesied a time when the proletariat would become aware of their alienation and rebel. Spivak speaks of the distress and helpless awareness of being marginalized between vying hegemonic powers. When Williams talks of the loser as "the lowest rungs, the disenfranchised, the people who don't matter, who are brutalized or displaced" ("Saul Williams Returns" par. 7), he speaks against the unbounded materialism of capitalism and the "romanticism of gangsterism," which is the capitalism of illicit substances and violence (*The Dead Emcee Scrolls* xxvii), and gives voice to what he perceives is a growing awareness, for the loser is also "those who identify with the disenfranchised and don't want to consider themselves free until everyone is free" ("Saul William Returns" par. 7). Despite the emphasis placed on capitalism, capitalism is not the origin of the problem, even if it is a component of it. Mere rebellion against capitalism is not the solution. Marxism and, in certain aspects, Spivak's

postcolonialism, fall short. Williams' theories seem more inclusive; he acknowledges spirituality as well as economy, and he acknowledges the individual's subjective experience along with the objective. However, Williams' theories are not thoroughly articulated. As such, I incorporate psychoanalytic theory – primarily the theories of Carl Jung and the theories of Julia Kristeva to a lesser extent – for further explication, seeing that Jung's and Kristeva's theories seem to overlap with Williams' theories.

Like Marx, Jung speaks of the harm which the modern means of production have wrought, but Jung argues that a lack of self-exploration and self-expression are the real cause of affliction. Jung recognizes and speaks, though using different words, against the alienation from the product of labor, alienation from the act of labor, and alienation from the species being i.e., alienation from the individual's self and the individual's peers (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 155). Unlike Marx, Jung treats alienation as an individual psychological phenomenon rather than a rally cry against capitalism. Jung critiques Marx's failure to recognize the subjectivity of alienation and subjugation. Jung gives the following example: "When many people possess cars, the man with only one car is a proletarian deprived of the goods of this world and therefore entitled to overthrow the social order" (144). Furthermore, Marx's theories have been distorted and associated with National Socialism, which Jung calls "a vast intoxication that has plunged Europe into indescribable catastrophe" (133). Marxism has become the new intoxication, the new "opium of the people" (Marx qtd. in Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 133). Socialism, "social welfare," does "nothing to overcome...spiritual stagnation" (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 145). Society, the collective, "lacks soul" primarily because the individual is not given sufficient access to "personal expression" (156). The modern industrial employee has become "a pathetic,

rootless being,” according to Jung (155). The individual must gain insight into and express their self as well as address capitalism and the superstructure.

Spivak’s theories are more realistic than Marx’s in that she recognizes the subjectivity employed as a means of implementing and maintaining power; however, unlike Jung, she does not sufficiently address the individual’s subjectivity. In “The Rani of Sirmur,” Spivak discusses how history becomes imperialistic (251). She examines how archives filled with the writings of British politicians, merchants, and soldiers are used for the “construction of a fiction whose task was to produce a whole collective of ‘effects of the real,’ and that ‘misreading’ of this ‘fiction’ produced the proper name ‘Indian’” (249). Spivak warns that even seemingly objective documents, particularly historical documents, have their own social, political, and economic contextualities which should be considered (250). She states that “meaning/knowledge intersects power” (255). The example that she gives is that of the British government taking steps to ensure that the indigenous population does not learn more military tactics than what the government desires (255). Controlling access to meaning/ knowledge enables those in power to continue their oppression. Spivak’s emphasis on the construction of meaning/knowledge is undoubtedly rooted in her understanding of psychoanalytic texts. Still, despite the fact that Spivak addresses subjectivity, she fails to address the subjectivity of the individual and, since the subaltern cannot speak, fails to see the subjectivity of the individual’s relationship to power. For this reason, I will integrate Jung’s theories and the work of other psychoanalysts, which take into account objectivity and subjectivity and society and the individual.

### **A Modernist Metanarrative vs. Postmodern Theories of Identity**

Rebecca Raby’s “What is Resistance?,” which describes the metanarrative of modernist theories of identity and the narratives of postmodernist theories of identity, provides a means of

contextualizing Marx's, Spivak's, and Jung's theories. Also, I include an article by Judith Howard to bolster support for a postmodern perspective. Finally, I introduce the relationship between postmodern narratives and discourse.

A modernist metanarrative of identity and power relations – which Marxism and even Spivak's post-colonialism, to a lesser extent, fall into – fails to address the subjectivity of reality, depicting the subject as coherent and rational and the power dynamic as binary with distinct boundaries between those in power and the oppressed wherein power is wielded by the dominant against the oppressed. Such metanarratives grant the individual an easily intelligible sense of morality, agency, and path of resistance (155). As was shown in the previous chapter and will be further evidenced in the present chapter, such a simplistic notion of the individual and power relations does not hold true.

Postmodern theories, which Jung's theories and other psychoanalytic theories fall into, see the individual as fragmented and take into account latent states. In postmodern narratives, the boundaries between oppressor and oppressed are blurred and identifying and assessing morality, agency, and resistance becomes difficult (Raby 161). Particularly, the individual may be fragmented at the psychological level as relates to conscious and unconscious states as well as when it comes to identity e.g., identifying with both the dominant culture and a subculture.

Judith Howard's concisely titled article "Social Psychology of Identity" gives an overview of social psychological theories and empirical findings relating to identity and supports the postmodern theories of identity and power relations. Individuals "construct and cross borders of various categories in defining themselves" based on which culture or subculture the individual is engaged with (372). Not only does the individual cross borders of identity, the individual can hold multilayered identities:

some actively identify with both (or more) groups, experiencing multiple perspectives simultaneously; others border—cross actively by shifting among different identities as they move among different social contexts; and yet others locate themselves on a border, experiencing “mestiza” consciousness,...a destabilization of unified identity expressed in the language of fluidity, migration, post colonialism, and displacement. (376, 287)

As such, empirical studies of identity support the postmodern concepts of identity rather than a modernist metanarrative.

Discourse, according to postmodernist thought, is the means by which the subject is formed, comes to understand his/herself, and exerts power (Raby 161). Discourse is closely related to power in that discourse is primary to all individuals, all individuals having access to power, all be it different relationships to power. Of course, discourse can take the form of verbal communication through language but is also found in other symbols, visual symbols being potent means of conveying and exerting power as well.

### **Discourse in Psychoanalytic Theories of Identity**

The “talking cure”<sup>1</sup> is another term for psychoanalysis (Schultz & Schultz 296). Psychoanalysis is rooted in discourse. Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Jacques Lacan, and Julia Kristeva are the most commonly referred to discursive psychoanalytic theorists<sup>2</sup>. Freud will not be addressed because Jung protested any dependence on Freud, exerting that he had already formulated his “scientific attitude and the theory of complexes before [he] met Freud” (Jung qtd. in Shamdasani, “Introduction” 11). Freud and Jung both worked towards the same goal of grounding psychology in science through clinical work, but their theories and methods were often at odds. Jung’s theories will be the primary focus. Despite the fact that Jung’s and Lacan’s theories are conflicting, Lacan’s theories on discourse are worthy of note, even if the theories are only to be dismissed. Jung’s and Kristeva’s theories, despite Kristeva’s attempts to distance herself from Jung, are complimentary to one another.

Lacan is postmodernist but also modernist; as such, his theories are rejected as not being wholly reflective of reality. Lacan asserts in *Ecrits* that words, language, and symbols create reality (229). It is a reality wherein the “truth in speech” is utilized so that the individual realizes that reality is “neither true nor false” but, like the individual him/herself, is subjective (212). Symbols act on the individual – “the symbol has made him speak” – to the extent that Lacan tries to prove that freedom is an illusion (229). The example which Lacan gives is the individual’s participation in marriage, a symbol which the individual undertakes without understanding why, which is really culture, culture being synonymous with language, achieving mastery over nature (229). Symbols – particularly the first symbol that the child ever sees, his/her mirror image – cause an alienation which becomes an essential feature of the individual which cannot be transcended; the ego itself becomes other (76, 79). As a result, Lacan depicts the individual as forever fragmented and subject to culture. Lacan’s concept of identity is postmodern but his conceptualization of the individual’s relationship to power follows a modernist metanarrative of identity. Lacan’s and Jung’s theories are at odds. While Jung would undoubtedly agree that some people, perhaps Lacan included, do remain fragmented throughout the course of their lifetime, his process of individuation allows the individual to become aware of and to integrate, even only if tenuously, the fragmented parts of the psyche. Jung also recognizes that the individual’s psyche and culture are reflexive, thus recognizing the power of the individual to also construct society<sup>3</sup>.

Kristeva, in *Desire in Language*, views language as a margin, a boundary of “upheaval, dissolution, and transformation” (23). Rhythm (equivalent to the instinctual part of the individual, the unconscious, desire) must be recognized as a component of the signified structure (the conscious, culture, the sign, formal components of language such as grammar) (24). The

individual is shaped by language but must also recreate his/her own language, thereby balancing the opposites of rhythm and sign, nature and culture, instinct and will, unconscious and conscious (97). This balancing of self and the superstructure results in the individual being a “not-me in me, beside me, outside of me, where the me becomes lost” (163). This disjointed and joined individual is a “heterogeneous... body,...a text” (163). The individual, for Kristeva, is fragmented; the individual may continue to be fragmented through the repression of their own nature by culture and as a result of an ignorance of their unconscious, or they may continuously join the opposites of their fragmented psyche to form an ever-changing self. Besides Kristeva’s enlightening emphasis on the spoken and written words rather than symbols as a whole and her inexplicable exclusion of the archetypes, Jung’s and her theories are congruent. Given the congruency between Jung and Kristeva, I will refer to Kristeva’s theories periodically.<sup>4</sup>

Jung writes of the “dialogue” that occurs between the unconscious and the conscious, in this instance the “‘other’ voice” which is the “inner critic or judge” that wells up from the unconscious and the ego during the process of individuation (Jung “The Transcendent Function” 301, 291). While words are the most recognizable form of language, symbols also serve as a dialect. Dialogue can also occur through “enrichment and clarification of the affect,” engaging fantasies, and creating and examining various forms of art such as writing and drawing (290-92). The best example of the dialogue that occurs during the individuation process can be found in *The Red Book* wherein Jung describes and then examines his own fantasies. Jung dialogues with his own soul: “My soul spoke to me in a whisper, urging and alarming” (Jung, *The Red Book* 347).

Kristeva’s concept of dialogue is complimentary to Jung’s, which is best observed in *The Red Book* and *Desire in Language*. Dialogue in *The Red Book* and Kristeva’s *Desire in*

*Language* are strikingly similar, despite the fact that *Desire in Language* was written after the contents of *The Red Book* were composed but before it was published. *The Red Book* begins with a conversation between the spirit of the times (the conscious), the spirit of the depths (the unconscious) and Jung. The spirit of the depths forces Jung to talk to his soul which is depicted as an archetype, “a living and self-existing being” of Jung’s unconscious (Jung, *The Red Book* 129). This dialogue with his soul takes him down to hell: “hellish webs of words...you are the first who gets snared in [words]...with words you pull up the underworld” (351). Yet, words are also the “saving symbol,” because they bring opposites together: “in words the emptiness and the fullness flow together,” “sense and nonsense...produces the supreme meaning” (392, 351, 120). Similarly, as described in *Desire in Language*, a sort of dialogue occurs between the unconscious (the mother; rhythm; instincts; desire) and the conscious (the law of the father; culture; the signified structure of language, grammar). If the individual is able to bring together these seemingly disparate components, “a poetic language” which is “one and other” would be created wherein the “pursuit of truth in language” could be striven after (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 24, 69). For both Jung and Kristeva, language is the problem, but it is also the solution whereby opposites are brought together in dialogue so that the individual can come to know and be their self.

Additionally, madness is recognized by both Jung and Kristeva as being a component of language and discourse. The spirit of the time calls Jung’s words madness, but the spirit of the depth recognizes the so-called madness as a state of being, of simply being, which is connected to laughter as worship, a type of invocation (Jung, *The Red Book* 122). Similarly, Kristeva theorizes about carnival, carnivalesque discourse which is free of censorship in the form of grammar and fixed meanings and is a protest to social norms (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 78).



Madness and carnival are signs that the individual is coming to know their self, according to Jung's and Kristeva's cosmology.

The dialogue that takes place between the parts of the self reflects and is reflected by dialogue between the individual and others. Jung writes that “the capacity for inner dialogue is a touchstone of outer objectivity,” for being able to recognize the other in the self (Jung “The Transcendent Function” 299). Unfortunately, both the individual and society perform poorly at dialogue. The individual being a microcosm and culture a macrocosm which reflect one another, both the individual and society suffer from a psychic epidemic, a type of possession, a “loss of soul,” a split conscious (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 140). The individual is cut off from their instincts and from various aspects of the unconscious and its archetypes through over-identification with reason and the ego. (181). For the individual, the symptoms are apparent in the symbols manifest in fantasies and dreams and in psychological maladies (181). As for society, the symptoms of “wars...social upheavals...conquests... religions” stand as symbols of the cultural epidemic of the split psyche (188). The solution for these maladies exists at the individual level through individuation. For Jung, the individual has become fragmented as a result of consciousness but can achieve wholeness – a tenuous, constantly shifting wholeness – through integration of the parts of the psyche. After doing so, the individual is no longer a victim of their own psyche and society but molds self and society to their will (Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche* 40).

### **Discourse in Williams' Works**

Williams, similarly, emphasizes the power of language and its ability to build connections within the psyche. He writes, “We are defined by our ability to resonate and shape sounds. Word.” (Williams, *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* 171). He cites slang “‘word,’ ‘word up,’

‘word life,’ ‘word is bond’” as being evident of the subconscious knowledge of the power of language (171). Sound vibrations, such as is emphasized in mantras, and not just the meaning of words are central to the effectiveness of words (171). Music, similar to Jung’s use of painting and other methods to raise the unconscious and expand the conscious, is perhaps among the most effective forms of language. Williams observes that people move their heads to music as if saying yes, as if they were in dialogue with another. Music not only taps directly into the heart but also “appeal[s] to other aspects of the emotional core,” presumably even the often positive emotional response which occurs during rationalization (xi). Then, music appeals to both the conscious and the unconscious. Consciously, the individual could engage the meaning of the lyrics or the aesthetics of the rhythm. Unconsciously, “Music speaks directly to the subconscious” (xii). Williams says, “To program a drumbeat is to align an external rhythmic device to an individual’s biorhythm” (xii). Arguably, the individual’s biorhythm aligns with the instincts. Break-beats are said to be “the missing link connecting the diasporic community to its drum-woven past” (101). Spoken word and hip-hop has an ancient ancestry, such as from the African griot or storyteller, and, as such, is “a return to ancient rites...an ancient tradition” (108). Music has the potential to reconnect the individual with their instincts and unconscious, disconnection from the unconscious being the primary malady of humanity according to Jung. Though not stated as such, Williams’ writing indicates that music, whether in the form of spoken word or hip-hop or any other form of expression, can be a means of individuation.

Williams’ experience with individuation is similar to Jung’s. In the *Dead Emcee Scrolls*, Williams, while looking at graffiti in the abandoned subways of New York, finds a spray paint can which has pieces of paper rolled up with unintelligible writing. After repeated failure to interpret the text, Williams begins copying the text in a journal while keeping his eyes on the

scrolls. Surreally, the text is rendered interpretable in his own handwriting (xvi-xx). Like with automatic writing, words are manifested through the workings of the unconscious. After the contents of the unconscious are made conscious, the contents have to be processed rationally, the meaning and significance being examined. Williams writes that the scrolls “forced [him] to decipher [his] own life and purpose” (xxix). He writes that the scrolls changed him (xxix). By bringing the unconscious into the conscious and utilizing the unconscious and the conscious in turn, Williams progresses along the path of individuation. *The Red Book* is similarly constructed. Jung depicts the contents of his fantasies brought about primarily through active imagination<sup>5</sup>. After stating his fantasies, Jung examines them critically, trying to decipher their meaning and their relevance to his life and society. Through this process, Jung engages in individuation. Both Williams’ and Jung’s works consist of coaxing the unconscious to surface and then critically engaging the subconscious content in order to integrate it into the conscious. In this way, Williams’ description of self-realization and self-actualization and Jung’s method of individuation are strikingly coherent. Both act as a means of finding meaning.

What distinguishes Williams from Jung is the degree to which they elaborated on their experiences and theories. The difference is that Jung took his experiences with *The Red Book* and went on to write other works which delineated his method. It is worthy of note though that after publishing *The Dead Emcee Scrolls* Williams has composed other works; for instance, in *US(a)* and the album *Martyr Loser King* Williams attempts to convey theories that he had previously formulated from a different perspective. Still, it is not systematized enough to be as useful as one would desire. Williams’ choice of format for his latest works may just be preference, but it can also be taken as an indication that he is still working at refining his theories. Jung writes that it took him forty-five years to render his experiences into a scientific language, to find a suitable

language to convey the process of individuation (Jung qtd. in Shamdasani, “Introduction” 88). Perhaps Williams will eventually do the same.

### **Words, Discourse, and Loss of Meaning in *White Teeth***

The nature of words is directly addressed in *White Teeth*, and a loss of meaning is evident. *White Teeth* cites dictionary definitions multiple times. The final section of the book has the definitions of fundamental and fundamentalism as an epigraph. Fundamental is defined as “1. Of or pertaining to the basis or groundwork; going to the root of the matter. 2. Serving as the base or foundation; essential or indispensable. Also, primary, original; from which others are derived....4. Of a stratum: lowest, lying at the bottom. (OED qtd. in Smith, *White Teeth* 341). Fundamentalism is defined as “The strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs or doctrines; esp. in the inerrancy of religious texts” (OED qtd. in Smith, *White Teeth* 341). Though given a dictionary definition, the meanings of both terms are not so simplistic. Fundamental in *White Teeth* is, consistent with the dictionary definition, associated with origin and roots, but no one can figure out what the origin is or whether or not roots are sustaining or caustic. Fundamental loses its meaning. The association of words are even tricky. Fundamentalism is not necessarily fundamental, as is indicated by the dictionary definitions. Though fundamentalism originally referred to adherence to scripture, it is now used as a slur – used at worst against whole demographics and at its most innocuous against those who spread extremism and commit violence – and is often used against those who are mentally and spiritually expansive and peaceful when compared to those who sling the term. Also worthy of note, though fundamentalism is most often applied as a slur to Islam in *White Teeth* and in current affairs, it was originally coined and referred genially to Protestant Christians (OED). In *White Teeth*, the term is used even more broadly to refer to Jehovah’s Witnesses, scientists, animal rights

activists, and even by cultural groups (Islam) against members of their own subgroups (KEVIN). Fundamentalism does not seem to have a coherent meaning any more. By extension, being labeled a fundamentalist loses its meaning as well.

Loss of meaning is addressed by Jung and Kristeva as well but in a different sense. In *The Red Book*, Jung describes how the unconscious is a state that contemporary society would view as madness – the place where sense and nonsense merge – which temporarily takes away the individual’s ability to dialogue as part of a renewal, “which produces the supreme meaning.” (120, 122). Similarly, Kristeva talks of a “loss of meaning” that results from *jouissance*, *jouissance* being associated with both the unconscious drives, which is to be avoided since the individual may lose themselves to it, and the bringing of the unconscious into awareness, the goal of which is to “know itself, to communicate” and as a result “loses itself” (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 163). Certainly, whether it is Jung’s individuation or Kristeva’s *jouissance*, the process is perilous, a means by which meaning can be lost and/or gained.

Jung’s and Kristeva’s loss of meaning (the result of coming to know and bringing together different parts of one’s own psyche, the mad disorientation that results from a new perspective) is different than the loss of meaning (the failure to see different perspectives) experienced by the characters of *White Teeth* which results from over identification with the ego which is based on the superstructure, whether it be the dominant culture or a subculture, rather than on knowledge of the psyche as a whole (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 163). The loss of meaning experienced by the characters in *White Teeth* is, rather, “pathologizing by discourse” known as othering, as discussed in “Othering, Identity Formation and Agency” by Sune Jensen, through associating the individual, particularly those from minority groups with crime and aggression (63).

This distortion of discourse and othering is indicated by the characters' relationship with words and texts. It is said of Marcus Chalfen that if he were confronted with the idea that "truth is a function of language" that Marcus would dismiss the individual confronting him with the idea as weird or as fools and fundamentalists who should not be suffered (Smith, *White Teeth* 26). Millat Iqbal does not even try to read his holy scriptures, the Koran, because he believes that intellectualism is beyond him; yet, despite not knowing what his holy scriptures say and being truly unaware of the tenets and morality that it speaks of, Millat calls all others fundamentalists (367). Hortense Bowden is told that she must not interpret the Bible and that her intuition is invalid, the privilege of which is reserved for the anointed of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are all men (321, 319). Though not using the term fundamentalism, Hortense labels others wicked without any solid foundation to do so (404). The loss of meaning experienced by the characters of *White Teeth*, rather than being a result of awareness of and integration of the unconscious, seems to be the result of mindless over identification with the superstructure, the loss of individuality which results in projection, seeing their own extremism and violence in others rather than in themselves. In this way, everyone other than the characters themselves and those likeminded with the characters are deemed guilty of fundamentalism. The meaning of the word is lost. All of these characters engage in pathologizing by discourse, othering.

### **Case Studies of Stilted Individuation, Progression, and Regression**

The Chalfens serve as examples of over identification with the ego and the pathologizing of discourse whereby they use language as a tool to domineer, which is recognized as a form of projection. Their lack of awareness indicates that they have not engaged in re-vision nor re-representation. Samad has a degree of awareness and vacillates between integrating and repressing the unconscious and the drives. However, his awareness surfaces in brief stints and his

repression leads to the unconscious welling up to possess him. Though Samad has a modicum of awareness, he fails to re-vision his self and society and does not engage in re-representation. Millat actively struggles with his identity and seems to be on the verge of re-visioning and re-representation. However, his dogmatic adherence to fate and identity created for him by others (as opposed to an engagement in myth making and self-realization) stunts his progression and leaves him tentatively regressed. Millat strives towards re-vision and re-representation but, instead, enacts a painful charade.

### **The Chalfens: A Poverty of Self-Realization and Wealth of Narcissism**

As a more in depth look at the failure to go through the process of self-realization and individuation and the distortion of discourse, I present the Chalfens as an example. The Chalfens' failure at individuation is evident from their narcissism and over-identification with the superstructure. Kristeva says that the first step in transformation is the dissolving of narcissism and, narcissism being anchored in the ego, of the ego (162). Their failure to go through the process of individuation also shows in their use of language, which they wield to dominate others rather than to explore their own identity. Joyce's and Marcus's pathologizing by discourse is a form of projection, the act of placing one's emotions and complexes onto another. The Chalfens lack awareness and have not engaged in re-vision, let alone re-representation.

In the chapter titled "Canines: The Ripping Teeth" in *White Teeth*, the reader first encounters the Chalfens and their harmful use of language and discourse, and a loss of meaning is evident as concerns their labels for their selves. The chapter is well titled; Joyce and Marcus Chalfen's beliefs and actions have a rending effect, "congeniall[ly]" tearing at other characters' roots and identities (260). The "Chalfen way," which has been employed for generations, includes dismissing the fools, fools being anyone who is religious (those who value spirituality),

environmental/animal rights activists (those who empathize with nature and animals), or “anyone who failed to grasp the simple fact that social and scientific progress were brothers-in-arms” (those who do not value science above all else) i.e., anyone who is not like the Chalfens themselves (260). Also indicative of “Chalfenism,” the Chalfens overtly stereotype others more than any other characters in *White Teeth* (262). Yet, as it turns out, Joyce and Marcus’s son defies the Chalfen norm and becomes an animal rights activist, going against the Chalfen’s own stereotype of themselves. There appears to be no true Chalfen way, much like there is not a coherent meaning for fundamental and fundamentalism. As discussed above, this loss of meaning is tied up with the Chalfen’s failure to know their selves, narcissistic over-identification with the ego staunchly based on the mores of the superstructure rather than knowledge of their own psyche (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 63). The Chalfens are neither aware of the oppressive nature of the superstructure nor their own alienation from their own selves.

Among the Chalfens, Joyce provides some of the most poignant example of estrangement from the self. Joyce’s self-perception and self-definition is narcissistically skewed. In her book *The New Flower*, Joyce describes herself as a “lapsed-Catholic horticulturalist feminist” before she goes on to use gardening as a metaphor for relationships (Smith, *White Teeth* 258). Joyce’s perception of herself is not accurate. For instance, though she claims to be a feminist, Joyce is confounded by Neena’s homosexuality, wondering “Who pollinates and who nurtures” (289). Joyce is unable to see women as anything but nurturers. Further proof that Joyce is out of touch with her nature is the narrator’s assertion that “Truth was truth to the Chalfens” (26). Nature, the collective conscious of the unconscious, is “beyond truth and error,” such binaries being the domain of the ego (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 82). Still, nature/the unconscious can only be ignored and/or repressed for so long before it either results in awareness or projection (94). As



indicated by the examples just given, Joyce's primary identity is that of nurturer, though her nurturing is actually caustic to others (pathologizing by discourse) and to herself (cultivation of the conscious will to the detriment of her nature).

The Chalfens' anthropocentrism demonstrates their estrangement from their own nature/self and provides a foundation for their othering and reinforcing the mores of capitalism. Marcus attempts to rule nature through the Oncomouse, a mouse whose genes have been manipulated so that its health and life span are predetermined. Joyce declares to herself: "for illness was to Marcus, nothing more than bad logic on the part of the genome" (26). Both Joyce and Marcus believe that they can consistently have power over nature. This narcissism renders both Joyce and Marcus unable to empathize, unable to see the subjectivity of other beings, the self in the other. One of the most striking instances of othering is Marcus's relationship with the mouse. He ponders:

To determine a mouse's future stirred people up. Precisely because people saw it that way: it wasn't determining the future of a cancer, or a reproductive cycle, or the capacity to age. It was determining the future of the mouse. People focused on the mouse in a manner that never failed to surprise him. They seemed unable to think of the animal as a site, a biological site for experimentation into heredity, into disease, into morality. The mousiness of the mouse seemed inescapable. (146)

That is, the mousiness of the mouse, its inherent value as a subject, is inescapable to others but not to Marcus. Marcus brushes the experience of the mouse aside with the statement that it's natural, that "all animals are in a sense programmed to die" (147). Though Marcus speaks the truth, he refuses to take into account that suffering is not eased just because death is fate. He is unable or unwilling to empathize. Because of this, he is able to misidentify the nature of the mouse and to justify dominion over it. The mouse is other and a commodity in a capitalistic society.

Joyce also engages in some of *White Teeth*'s most memorable pathologizing by discourse. A form of "pathologizing by discourse" (Jensen 63), using language as a form of slander in the guise of nurturing, Joyce attempts to nurture Magid by diagnosing him with ADHD. She misreads what she perceives as "just so many signs" as a result of her begrudging her husband's and Magid's affinity for one another (Smith, *White Teeth* 360). Carelessly using psychoanalysis, Joyce takes her analyst's diagnosis of Millat out of context and embellishes it ("Millat's inner life – his karma, I suppose you might call it in Bengali – the whole world of his subconscious shows serious illness"<sup>6</sup>) as a means of attacking Alsana Iqbal, Millat's mother (366). Joyce's error is that she is always trying to nurture others but never cultivates her self (261). When she does cultivate, it is through projection rather than actually appreciating the individuality of others.

It should also be noted that the Chalfens engage in projection as a result of their failure to connect with their selves and others. The Chalfens deny their unconscious and its effect on them. As a result, he projects: "all others were fanatics" (Smith, *White Teeth* 353). It could also be considered a form of possession which results from repressing the unconscious. Jung writes,

[Modern man] is blind to the fact that, with all his rationality and efficiency, he is possessed by powers beyond his control. The gods and demons have not disappeared at all, they have merely got new names. They keep him on the run with restlessness, vague apprehensions, psychological complications, an invincible need for pills, alcohol, tobacco, dietary and other hygienic systems – and above, all, with an impressive array of neuroses...alarming degree of dissociation and psychological confusion. We believe exclusively in consciousness and free will, and are no longer aware of the powers that control us to an indefinite degree, outside the narrow domain where we can be reasonable and exercise a certain amount of free choice and self-control. (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 127)

The Chalfens are driven towards Chalfenism and science as another person would be driven towards some of the vices listed above. Contrary to what they think, Joyce and Marcus do not

have control over their selves, their freedom being unknowingly arrested. They have lost their roots and so have lost their selves.

Joyce and Marcus Chalfen use language to dominate others instead of as a means towards individuation. They have not made it past their own narcissism. Consequently, they have not been able to progress through the first step of self-realization/individuation. They are unaware of the damages wrought by their own disconnection to their selves and others and by capitalism. They are a voice for the mores of capitalism and so have failed at re-representation.

### **Samad Iqbal: Towards Self-realization and regression to the Superego**

Samad makes it to the second step of self-realization, as outlined by Kristeva. The individual loses faith in the superstructure, the ego begins to break apart, and the “instinctual drive” surfaces (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 162). Then, “an aimless drifting ensues” and “an infinite abyss where there are no more words” (162-63). At this phase, the individual appears fragmented, but the individual is actually encountering *jouissance*, a *jouissance* which the individual must flee lest they be consumed by it (163). Arguably, Samad is experiencing this phase. However, by embracing the superstructure as a means to battle the anxiety caused by individuation, Samad is taking a step backwards into narcissism and ego inflation. Samad vacillates between and other times simultaneously experiences being controlled by his instincts and reinforcing the mores of the superstructure onto his self. Samad moves between partial awareness and unawareness, between brief stints of integrating the parts of the psyche and losing awareness of his self to domination of the conscious and subsequent domination by the unconscious. Samad does not adequately engage in re-vision and is unable to engage in re-representation.

Samad seeks connection with the self and others through connection with his roots, which he detrimentally conflates with culture rather than his self or his instincts. Jung considers roots to be related to “age-old convictions and customs” and the instincts (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul*, 73). However, Samad errs in considering roots to be tradition and culture, particularly Islam, the law of the father (Smith, *White Teeth* 161). Islam, at least Samad’s Islam, represses the instincts. As such, it is merely a subculture within the dominant culture, just another version of the law of the father which really represses the roots rather than getting back to them. Samad would have to go back farther in history to find a spirituality aligned with the instincts, past Islam, past Hinduism, perhaps to an earth religion or a self-defined gnostic form of Islam or Hinduism.

While Samad does not err in inflating the importance of rationality, he does esteem the will (the conscious and the ego) over the drives (the unconscious); yet, Samad is unable to free himself from his drives, and his self is further unbalanced towards the conscious. Rationality being to him the “most overrated Western virtue,” Samad compulsively pursues religion and faith (Smith, *White Teeth* 196). In the cosmology of Islam, according to Samad’s understanding, humans are weak and lack control. He explains that Islam means “I surrender” to God to the point of giving over one’s will and life (Smith, *White Teeth* 240). Yet, despite this turning over of one’s will to God, Samad’s ascetic version of Islam requires significant exertion of the will to curve his drives. In this sense, Samad’s religion cultivates the conscious and suppresses the unconscious. Despite denigrating rationality, Samad also seems to practice an “intellectual faith” (348). Samad does not actually surrender his will to God. Rather, he exerts his will on behalf of his God. The narrator explains that Samad’s desperately adhering to Islam is a result of being “pulled down to the depths” by his lust (161). Samad losing himself to his lust coincides with the statement above that the instincts well up and that the individual is threatened by being lost in

jouissance. Samad's experience is also in keeping with Kristeva's assertion that when men try to distance themselves from the law of the father, Western culture and rationality in this case, that their superego "perpetuate[s] itself as trace through a symbolic ascesis renouncing sexual jouissance" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 154). In other words, Samad's conscious resistance of culture, Western culture, pulls him all the more strongly into the culture of the superego, Islamic culture in Samad's case, which is manifested in a self-discipline that only serves to alienate him more from his drives and so casts him further under the influence of culture, the law of the father. Samad resists both culture and his drives, not enough to be free from either, just enough to be alienated from his self.

Still, there is a limit to which the conscious can repress the unconscious; if repressed for too long, the unconscious will deluge the conscious, and possession will occur. The narrator of *White Teeth* remarks that, despite Samad's glorification of tradition and Islam, "that didn't mean he could live by them, abide by them, or grow in the manner they demanded" (161). Samad finds himself "at a moral crossroads" (121). He vacillates between awareness and repression. Samad, early on, sees himself as the stupid, morphine addict which he became during the war and longs for the "erudite, handsome, light skinned Samad Miah" that he once was (94). Yet, this awareness never lasts long. Samad quickly represses these realizations by means of religion. As a result of over-identification with the ego which focuses on institutionalized religion, Samad begins to project his other traits out. As a result of being detached from his roots, of being "exiled from [his] own soul," Samad attempts to "conquer other lands" in the form of his sons' futures (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 73). He projects his own shortcomings and hopes for himself upon his sons. Samad becomes "a father under protest" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 151); he reinforces the culture, rationality included, which has repressed him. Samad has lost his self to

the point even of possession. Samad speaks “against his will, for something more bestial than his will was now doing the talking” (Smith, *White Teeth* 112). Jung explains that when the instincts “get lost, the conscious mind becomes severed from the instincts and loses its roots, while the instincts, unable to express themselves, fall back into the unconscious and reinforce its energy, causing this in turn to overflow into the existing contents of consciousness.” (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 73). Samad has lost touch with his roots to the point that they possess him. He lives in the law of the father while the archetypes of the unconscious possess him.

Samad is left with self-hatred, an identity that rends him and, as a coping technique, forces him to overidentify with the superego (Smith, *White Teeth* 94). As discussed above, Kristeva explains that the first step in the transformation of the individual towards the inclusion of the unconscious is the dissolving of narcissism. Samad has seen the ugly and stupid aspects of himself and so has made it to the first step of self-realization. However, Kristeva says that “the body seems to need an identity” (163). As a result, rigidity or decay of identity and one’s relation with the instincts occurs. The individual may move forward in integrating the unconscious or may further identify with the superego. Samad seems to over-identify with the superego when his ego fails him and, consequently, his individuation is stilted. He does not manage to re-vision his self and society and does not engage in re-representation.

### **Millat Iqbal: Another Case of Progression and Regression**

Millat is stuck in the second stage of self-realization as well. He is caught between times, being neither modern nor getting back to his roots. He is between cultures, being neither wholly Western/scientific nor Eastern/Islamic. He exists between states of being, being neither rational nor driven by faith or instincts. He gropes for a place to fit in, experimenting with voice and identity. Millat tends to wear his identity derived from these different times, cultures, and states

of being as a mask, rather than identifying it as his self. Still, Millat does not rework these cultural identities in order to form his own unique identity; rather, he wears his prefabricated masks in turn as suits his purpose. One would think that Millat would excel at re-vision, since he is able to balance and merge identities; however, his skill at working vying subjectivities does not equate to an ability to engage in self-realization or individuation. At first, Millat seems as if he will become aware and vocal. In the end, Millat does not engage in re-vision or re-representation.

Early on, Millat questions dialect and the culture associated with it. He rhetorically questions, “What’s wrong with ‘a’ encyclopedia?...Why’s everyone in this house always puttin’ on fuckin’ airs?” (Smith, *White Teeth* 200). He rejects the normative and experiments with dialect: “What they want...is to stop pissing around wid dis hammer business and jus’ get some Semtex and blow de djam ting [the Berlin Wall] up, if they don’t like it, you get me?” (198). Millat rebels in an almost militant manner against division, division by literal walls, division by culture, division of the self. Millat’s newfound voice is quickly dismissed by Irie, Millat’s peer who is putting on a proletariat voice and trying to force others to do the same, as not being his own voice<sup>7</sup>. Millat continues to try to re-vision himself but is continually met with social castigation because of it<sup>7</sup>.

Being unable to form his own identity due to the pressures of society, Millat takes on the identity of multiple subcultures. He becomes the sign of the subcultures. Kristeva writes that the sign is dyadic (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 41). The sign resembles that to which it refers, but it also contains within itself its opposite. This dyadic principle is fundamental to dialect (i.e., the signs in the novel, Kristeva’s chosen focus for language in *Desire in Language*, containing within itself the synthesizing of contradiction) and to the individual (i.e., the writer as both actor

when writing and author as the producer of the finished work) (41). Millat could use this dyadic principle to write his own identity, choosing from the various signs who he wants to be and creating an amalgam that is to be his own identity. Instead, he takes up identities already written for him, merely alternating them instead of molding them to his own purpose. He becomes an actor in other people's scripts instead of creating his own and so does not engage in re-vision.

Millat is aware of his voicelessness and of his failure to form his own identity, but he does not solve the dilemma constructively, projecting instead of utilizing introspection. He is not only the commonplace daredevil, drug user, etc. of the various subcultures to which he belongs; he is also labeled as an unwanted Eastern immigrant bum (Smith, *White Teeth* 194). He becomes angry at having neither "face [nor] voice" within society (194). Instead of forming his own identity and voice, he projects when being projected upon. To a racial slur, Millat responds, "First: I'm not a Paki, you ignorant fuck. And second: you don't need a translator, yeah? I'll give it to you straight. You're a fucking faggot, yeah? Queer boy, poofter, batty-rider, shit-dick" (192). He is denigrated so he denigrates others, not only verbally abusing the racial slur using merchant but also another minority. Another solution to the projection of others, Millat puts on the image of trouble, the uniform for trouble including Nike and its "mark of corporate approval" (193). Thus, Millat's identity is clearly not a self-made identity. Finally, finding others who are angry and voiceless like himself, Millat joins KEVIN. Certainly, Millat is now a part of an organization that has a voice, but it is not his voice. Millat dogmatically implements KEVIN's dictates, denying the West with its monomaniacal pursuit of free-will and what he considers the irrational faith of his father for the rational tenets of the fundamentalist Islamic organization KEVIN (368). However, Millat is still pursuing a similar path to his father and of modern man, consciously repressing his desires instead of coming to know his unconscious and projecting.



Being submersed in the dictates of KEVIN, Millat comes closest to losing his self to his ego and the superego. Yet, Millat uses KEVIN as a means of securing a social position and of exerting a voice not his own, unlike his father who is subject rather than wielder of his religion. While it may appear that Millat is engaging in re-representation, he is merely representing the tenets of a subculture which alienates him from his self and others.

In the end, Millat becomes his fate, which is equivalent to saying that he loses hope in re-visioning and re-representing his self. He decides to pursue his destiny. Millat thinks to himself:

Because there aren't any alien objects or events anymore, just as there aren't any sacred ones. It's all so familiar. It's all on TV. So handling the cold metal, feeling it next to his skin that first time: it was easy. And when things come to you easily, when things click effortlessly into place, it is so tempting to use the four-letter F-word. Fate. Which to Millat is a quantity very much like TV: an unstoppable narrative, written, produced and directed by somebody else. (436)

Millat does not try to exert his will on his own behalf. He is not motivated by science nor God like the others. He acts because he feels as if he has no other choice, so he embraces it. Fate, according to Jung, is linked with both the supra-conscious and the unconscious. It must be understood that the supra-conscious, conscious, and unconscious, if plotted as a diagram, would not be linear but would be circular with the supra-conscious and the unconscious running into one another with no clear distinguishing line. The supra-conscious is unconscious in that it is beyond normal consciousness (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 81). The symbols contained within the supra-consciousness "anticipates future conscious processes" (81). The fate that is alluded to by Jung still acknowledges the role of the conscious and the will. The fate of the supra-conscious is not destiny. The unconscious, on the other hand, is "a largely autonomous psychic system containing autonomous archetypes" (80). Since Millat feels himself subject to fate, it is likely that Millat is experiencing the influence of his unconscious archetypes. Since archetypes can be autonomous, it is arguable that Millat experiences a type of possession by the archetypes<sup>8</sup>.

The influence of the archetypes over Millat is questionable. The archetypes, which are “inherited with the brain structure,” are systems of readiness for action, and at the same time images and emotions (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 189). They are “the roots which the psyche has sunk...in the world” (189). The archetypes, in this way, are vital to individual wellbeing. In modern society, possession by the archetypes, experienced as “loss of soul,” does not result from giving oneself over to them but from denying them (140). The archetypes cannot be done away with by bringing them to consciousness. Repressing the archetypes builds up energy in the unconscious which eventually spills out in “symbolic happenings” which is effectively the voice of the unconscious (86). Rather, the archetypes have to be integrated into the individual’s identity of self (140). The question is, then, to what extent has Millat merely repressed the archetypes and to what extent has he integrated them. Considering that Millat compares his experience of life to a TV show, “an unstoppable narrative, written, produced and directed by somebody else,” it seems that Millat’s archetypes have possessed him (Smith, *White Teeth* 436). Millat’s archetypes have not been integrated into his conscious but dictate his fate. It seems that Millat has failed at re-vision.

Still, it could be argued that Millat merely feels controlled externally. The possibility that Millat is being controlled externally is and is not true in a sense. He is controlled by outside influences, but only because of psychological poverty. Millat goes on to explain that, though life seems like TV, he realizes that it is not the same. Life has consequences. Whether it is Millat or the narrative who goes on to explain is unclear. It is explained that “even to think this is to look to the movies for reference” (Smith, *White Teeth* 436). Millat has not had the experience of war to live through unlike his father and his ancestors, so he has no “analogies or anecdotes” to refer to (436). Instead, he refers to movies, *The Godfather* in particular. Over and over, Millat has

rewound and played it in slow motion and recalls that it does not matter how much the characters doubt their actions because they still fulfill their fate (436). In contrast, myths, a common expression of archetypes, change over the years<sup>9</sup>. Millat has no such myths, no evolving archetypes, to follow. He only has a movie which unerringly transmits the cultural values of one particular time. Millat is not on a path of individuation. He does not claim the myths of society and make them his own, rewriting them to suit his perspectives and needs. Rewriting such myths could have been a path towards self-realization, re-visioning, and re-representation, but, instead, he follows cultural models dogmatically.

Still, the reader is left questioning how much of Millat's experiences are based on his acceptance of culture and how much his experiences are based on the autonomous actions of the archetypes. There is no definite answer. What is clear is that Millat has not successfully gone through the process of individuation, has not developed his own identity or voice, and has not engaged in re-visioning and re-representation.

Since the path towards self-realization and re-visioning, there still might be hope in the characters enacting re-visioning and re-representation. Individuation is not linear, being the "circumambulation of the self" (Jung qtd. in Shamdasani, "Introduction" 80). Regression may follow progression. Regression is not harmful as long as it does not continue one-sidedly. The Chalfens practically never begin the process of individuation, over-identifying with their own ego and the superstructure. Samad progresses but then regresses as a maladapted coping mechanism. Millat is stuck in a middle stage of individuation. Since individuation is not linear, certain characters in *White Teeth* who seem to be regressing, Millat particularly, may actually still be on the path towards individuation, considering that the story is left unfinished.

## Symbol Formation and Myth Making

To reiterate, individuation is self-realization which occurs through dialogue with the unconscious. Jung describes the process as follows: “To do this he must first return to the fundamental facts of his own being, irrespective of all authority and tradition, and allow himself to become conscious of his distinctiveness” (Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche* 59). In order for individuation to occur, the individual needs to disconnect from “mass symbols, i.e. –isms” (48). The mass symbols that the individual must disconnect from include philosophies such as empiricism and Marxism but also religious philosophies such as Islam. Instead, the individual needs to engage in their own symbol formation.

Kristeva’s final stage of self-realization occurs when the ego is torn apart and when “I” continually makes itself over again, posits itself as a displaced symbolic witness of the shattering where every entity was dissolved” (164). This stage goes on indefinitely with the individual constantly revisioning their self. New symbols have to be created. New cultural myths have to be created that is congruent with the new “I.”

These new symbols and myths can be new creations but can also be works of re-visioning. An example of re-visioning symbols can be found in Williams’ reimagining and repurposing of the word loser. Though the Chalfens nor Samad nor Millat engage in symbol or myth formation<sup>10</sup>, others have. Others have moved past the void of fragmentation, past the anger, past the despair, to a point of self-creation simultaneously painful and joyous in itself and cathartic to others.

## Notes

1. The term “talking cure” was first used by Anna O. (Schultz & Schultz 298). She used the term to refer to her conversations with her doctor; these conversations under hypnosis temporarily resulted in the relief of her symptoms. Anna O. was a patient of Josef Breuer, an acquaintance of Sigmund Freud. Freud used the case of Anna O. as a foundation for psychoanalysis.

2. Applied psychoanalytic theories will not be referred to in this work. Certainly, the Neo-Freudian psychoanalysts and the Neo-Neo-Freudian psychoanalysts – e.g., Anna Freud’s ego psychology, Melanie Klein’s object relations theories, Alfred Adler’s individual psychology, etc. – are of note. Yet, they are not within the scope of this paper.

3. Jung, if he were psychoanalyzing Lacan, would likely argue that Lacan suffers from an imbalance, being lost in “a hubris of the conscious mind” as a result of being cut off from his unconscious, both instinct and the archetypes (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 73). Lacan describes Jung’s process of psychoanalysis “as a rite of passage to some archetypal, or in any sense ineffable, experience” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 674). Jung admits himself that there is not a “reliable method of interpretation” (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 189). However, that by no means translates to it being impossible to understand the symbols generated by the individual. Rather, the analyst must draw from knowledge of the archetypes, the analysand’s experiences and relation to the symbols or sequence of symbols, and the analyst’s own understanding and experiences. Jung states, “Anyone who wishes to interpret a dream must himself be on approximately the same level as the dream for nowhere can he see anything more than what he is himself” (191). It seems, then, that Lacan’s dismissal of Jung’s theories is due to his failure to go through the process of individuation himself. Lacan’s overidentification with the conscious self explains Lacan’s view of the individual as essentially fragmented.

4. Jung’s and Kristeva’s theories are similar in that they both focus on uniting opposites and the divergent parts of the psyche. However, Kristeva seeks to distance herself from Jung. Kristeva mentions, “Jung’s dead end with its archetypal configuration of libidinal substance taken out of the realm of sexuality and placed in bondage to the archaic mother” (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 276). It is worthy of note that Jung’s theories are not divorced from sexuality. He talks about the drives rooted in the unconscious and even the tantric as experienced by elevated consciousness. Most importantly though, Kristeva dismisses the archetypes as a part of the psyche. She does not give a sufficient reason for dismissing the archetypes. Arguing that Kristeva has not gone through the process of individuation and so fails to understand the significance of the archetypes does not completely hold up. Jung’s and Kristeva’s experiences were similar. Kristeva, like Jung, even asserts that “no scholar, no orthodox theoretician can find his way through any of my essays unless he has personally experienced” the final step of self-realization where the “I” is continually dissolved and reformed (164). There does not seem to be any solid foundation for either dismissing Jung’s archetypes or for rejecting Kristeva’s dismissal of archetypes. As such, Jung’s theories relating to the archetypes will be retained as valid in this paper. Besides Kristeva’s emphasis on spoken and written words rather than symbols as a whole and her exclusion of the archetypes, Jung’s and her theories are congruent, and, as such, Kristeva’s theories will also be referred to regularly.

5. Active imagination includes anything that suppresses the conscious, clearing the mind so that unconscious content can surface (Jung, *The Transcendent Function* 284). Active imagination techniques can include anything from doing Buddhist meditations to practicing alchemy (Shamdasani, "Introduction" 89).

6. Actually, in the next paragraph that follows, it is explained that Millat knows that his subconscious is split; it is split between what culture desires of him (asceticism, intellectualism, Eastern morals, Western mindset) and what he is naturally inclined to (the oversexed, violent, decadent life of a gangster). Joyce is part of Millat's problem, pressuring him to be other than what he is.

7. Granted, not everyone is repressing Millat's voice. Clara defends Millat in a timid manner saying that she does not think that they should squelch the children's opinions (Smith, *White Teeth* 200). It is too late though; Millat has already consigned himself to his room.

8. How much the archetypes control Millat's fate is questionable. Jung says of the archetypes that they have "traces of personality," but do not have an I (Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 283). If there is no I, then the archetypes are not autonomous. Elsewhere, Jung writes that "archetypes are, as a rule, autonomous entities" who reside at least partially outside of the individual's will (Jung, *The Earth has a Soul* 140). Archetypes can be autonomous to the extent that they can act as "dominants" (140). The archetypes are capable of controlling the individual, because the archetypes have "a consciousness in itself" (172). Since publishing *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Jung refined his theories. The quotes stating that archetypes are autonomous come from his later works and are, as such, more trustworthy.

9. For instance, the oldest stories about Lilith depict her as having a dual nature, a savage destroyer but also a divine mother as well as a holy seductress, evil and holy, destroyer and creator. According to Siegmund Hurwitz in *Lilith, the First Eve: Historical and Psychological Aspects of the Dark Feminine*, the *Priestly Codex*, the best-known Lilith myth, is heavily influenced by patriarchy; Lilith is demonized for refusing to be submissive (Hurwitz, *Lilith* 120). Today, though the *Priestly Codex* version of Lilith prevails, she is increasingly being seen as a figure of reverence, a strong-willed female figure. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the myth is going through the same evolution as humanity, through the path of individuation. In the beginning, all aspects are recognized in Lilith; opposites are united. Then, with the advent of patriarchy, certain aspects are denigrated and repressed. Lilith's lascivious, rebellious side is emphasized as an example of what not to be. Finally, those aspects denied to Lilith are being reintegrated, and her darker aspects are being embraced.

10. Some might argue that the Chalfens do engage in symbol formation rooted around science. For instance, Joyce says that Marcus is greater than God since he creates creatures that even Yahweh could not design. However, such a statement has little to do with science and is primarily the result of Joyce's delusional narcissism.

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## APPENDIX A: APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Integrity

September 6, 2019

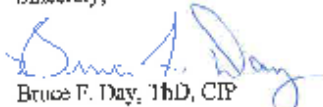
Stacy Sexton  
983 Turner Ave.  
Huntington, WV 25705

Dear Stacy:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*Re-vision and Re-representation: An Exploration of Awareness and Voice in Marxism, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism, and Psychoanalytic Theory.*" After assessing the abstract, it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction, it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,



Bruce F. Day, PhD, CIP  
Director

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