

How east is east this essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How is Britishness represented in East is East, this is England and Enoch Powell's rivers of blood speech? In its most simple form; Britishness is simply living within the nation of Britain, with a British passport and obeying and abiding to the laws and rules of the land. However, many people have and still do, see Britishness as something much more than just your nationality. People can view Britishness as a way of life where you have to abide and live up to certain values and fit in with certain stereotypes.

The ideal British citizen would be typically white, with all their ancestors and relatives coming from nowhere else but Britain. They are all 'hard working', attend the church of England, have a fry up every morning, drink tea, visit their local on a regular basis and are exceedingly patriotic for their mighty island nation, continuing to fight with their bull dog determination. However, if people do not fit into such a stereotype, then the traditional image of Britain is threatened by change and diversity; and people who live up to the British ideal feel threatened also. This is how racism is created within a society. Both This is England and East is East portray in different ways the effects and reactions of what happens when people of a different cultural background choose to live out their ethnic cultured lifestyle within Britain, whereas This is England focuses on the gang culture fuelled by hate that has been generated by the intrusion of immigrants into 'their' country.

Enoch Powell's rivers of blood speech is actual verbal attack from a man who supposed to be a future prime minister, on the ethnic minorities and immigrants that had every right to live within Britain. On the front cover for East is East, the focal point is on that of Tariq, a young man who only goes out with white English girls in order to integrate with British culture and cut

of all ties with his eastern cultures background. He is at the for front of the page standing in front of the other characters showing him as the main character within the film. Tariq is standing side on giving the viewers a cheeky look and thumbs up showing, with his white girlfriend pressing in to him (although he is not purposefully touching her). This shows him a young jack the lad who has his way with the ladies but ultimately loves them and leaves them alone. Often thought of as the common and most popular for a young English man to behave.

To the right of him in the background of the the cover we see ‘ Arthur’ (given that name in order for him to get into clubs and it also being a very typical british name, letting him integrate with british culture and society. Within the film he is depicted, almost as his brother Tariq, sidekick. Following in the footsteps of trying to get the girls, but exactly having the same technique as his brother. On the cover you see him with a slightly larger girl clinging on to him with a loving face while he leans back from her embrace with a look of distress. To the left of the cover in the background we see Nazir, an art student who not only fits within british culture but it is completely liberal as well.

This is shown by his sense of dress, being overtly modern, and they way in which he looks towards Arthur in his ‘predicament’ showing a look of humour upon his face. Next to him is ‘Ghandi’ (given his name because of his strong religious beliefs, although Ghandi was in fact a Hindu and not a Muslim). He is dressed in typically british clothes, although he still wears a skull cap due to his very strong muslim faith. He too, looks across towards Arthur, however, not with humour, but more disgust, again due to his strong faith.

Below the characters is a very apt quote from 'Time out' saying " It's the dogs b*ll**cks", a very british saying reflecting the entire films theme of an eastern family trying to fit in with british society. The front cover of this is England shows all the main characters of the skin head gang lined up against a large metal wall. All of the gang members look forwards showing menacing, violent and aggressive looks, apart from Milky (the only black member of the gang) who looks away. Even on the cover it shows the impact that racism had with the exclusion of people, even whilst in such an aggressive and harsh environment (as shown by the expressions of the other gang members). In the middle of the line of the gang is shaun, this could be considered as symbolic of him being caught up within a gang culture on his simple quest just to find friends, acceptance and a little happiness in a world where his had has left him (due to his death in the Falklands war) and he is left alone. On shauns right hand side is Milky, again possibly symbolic, due to the fact that in the last seen where Combo attacks milky, it is shaun that stands up for him and tries to stop the violent outrage.

Behind the large metal fence you can see the sky rise of the flats and the bright blue sky. The flats not only represent the poor and rough surrounding but relate to the scene in the film where combo rants about immigrants bringing over their families and cramming them into small flats. The bright blue sky relates in with the title of the film which is painted on the metal fence is red and white. These three colours being the those of the union jack, the ionic an powerful british symbol. There are three iconic and powerful scenes from East is East. The first of these is where george Khan finds

'Ghandi' trying to put back together the broken items used for the wedding ceremony.

Upon this, George asks him "who did this?", however, the son says that he does not know through out his father's aggressive questioning in which he begins to slap and beat the only one of his sons that truly valued their Islamic eastern culture. George then drags him through the street by the scruff of his neck and into the chip shop where he continues to beat him until his wife steps in. Upon doing so he throws his son into the next room shouting after him "im not finished with you yet mr", this being a typically aggressive british phrase, although showing his Islamic eastern background at the same time by beating his son. George and his wife then begin to argue furiously, with his wife challenging the whole concept of being a good muslim wife and how George continuously contradicts that when he wants his chip shop opened or when the rent needs to be paid. In british culture, a women being able to have her say is by no means wrong, however, in eastern culture it is unheard of, so as a result, George returns to his traditional ways and begin to beat her saying that he will "burn her and her children while they sleep" an occurrence that happened (although rarely) in eastern culture. The second iconic scene in East is East is the engagement.

Although this is typically Islamic in its nature, there are elements that contribute towards a traditional British society. All of the men from both families sit within the front room, dressed in full Islamic attire, whilst a picture of the daughters in law to be is passed around the room and then the wedding is arranged between the two male heads of the family. This portrayal is easily recognizable as being Islamic and eastern in culture,

however, the fact that the men are offered tea, they sit within the front lounge (reserved for special occasions) and that the sons sit there in suites reading a newspaper, are all typically british showing the massive contrast of Islamic culture trying to exist and adapt within british society. The final and most powerful, ionic scene within the film is the last scene where george, after attempting to yet again beat his wife, is pulled back by his children, where by he states that he “ knows what is best for them”. by this he means that in the traditional muslim sense of the man making decisions for the family and deciding their lives and futures for them.

However, that is simply not what the family wants or needs, as the rest of them do not try to make the Islamic culture fit into Britain, but simply try to fit in to british society. George then leaves the house walking down the typically british street with a look of anguish and defeat upon his face as he comes to accept that east is east and does not fit into western culture. On his walk his greeted in the traditional Islamic way, by a young white boy who he ahd previously and continuously ignored. However on this instance he returns the greeting as a sign of new found respect. George then opens up his chip shop and sits down at the counter where he is unexpectedly met by his wife where is using the very iconic british phrase of “ would you like a cup of tea? and george responds in the way that he done throughout the whole film, which is “ I will have half a cup”, this representing he wish to fit in with british society but “ half a cup” being symbolic of the fact that he does not do it whole heartedly.

Just as in East is East, This is England has three iconic and very powerful scenes that summarise the intense them and graphic nature of the film. The

first of these is when Combo comes out of prison and turns up at Woody's house party. Combo bursts in, in a violent uproar in which we begin to understand, from an early stage in the film, the malevolence that Combo portrays. After this he begins to tell a story from when he was in prison, about how a black Jamaican, stole his pudding continuously until one day he retaliated. However, Combo first refers to him in a very derogatory way calling the person a wog. On which, Milky looks up showing that he has taken offence by this remark.

Although Combo apologises, he continues his story, making fun of the Jamaican man, imitating his accent and continuing to use very offensive and derogatory descriptions of him. Throughout this the gang is divided, half of them laugh along with the story and the others just sit there saying nothing, with a great feel of embracement. Throughout the whole story Milky just sits there showing confidence and resilience to the remarks made by Combo. The divide that we see in the group now, exists later on when Combo asks which of them will join with him and those that will leave. The second and probably the most powerful and iconic scene from the entire film is the rant from Combo in the flat, which summarises fully, the cruel harsh and racist nature of the film. Combo starts by posing the very powerful question towards Milky of whether he considers himself English or Jamaican and in reply, he says English (most probably fearing the response he would receive if he had said Jamaican) Afterwards Combo begins to applaud him before going on to say all the atrocities that England has been through (for example the world wars) so that we are able to stick our flag in the ground (he then

points to his heart and to his head) saying “ this is England”, showing his great patriotic spirit.

Combo then begins speak aggressively of how it has all been in vain, because of the immigrants coming into Britain, and in his eyes, changing and ruining their society. He then blames them due to the fact that the rate of unemployment is so high, that it is so difficult to get houses, and due to them taking cheap and easy labour, it then makes british citizens cheap and easy. After this he begins to rant about Thatcher and the fact that real british men were getting killed in a pointless war in the Falklands. At this point shaun retaliates as he reveals that his dad died during the war. Then when the moment comes where combo draws a line saying that the gang members will have to choose to either follow him or walk away, Combo; very cleverly uses the fact that shauns dad died in order to persuade him join; saying that “ his dad would be proud” and that “ he’s got to do it for him” The final iconic and powerful scene in this is England is where Combos new group of recruits goes to the national front meeting. There they are told that England is now a forbidden and forgotten word, which drives them and angers them.

This is followed by the spokesman saying that those who have are not earning a living and are just simply taking from the country need to be sent back. This strikes powerfully within Combo as these were his exact words and the men are then fuelled by anger and power to defend their little island nation from a non existent threat. The spokesman also quotes a line from Henry V believing to be real and using it again to fuel their aggression, although ironically, the quote as well as the cause for which they are fighting

is completely fictional. The scene ends with the spokesman asking whether they will fight and if they are prepared to shed blood. This shows the horrid grotesque and graphic nature of the national front and how it influences people who just have mass amount of aggression (such as Combo) to vent.

The Rivers of Blood speech was a speech about immigration and anti-discrimination legislation in the United Kingdom made on 20 April 1968 by Enoch Powell, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West. Powell made the speech at the Midland Hotel in Birmingham to a meeting of the Conservative Political Centre at 2: 30 pm. The Birmingham-based television company ATV saw an advance copy of the speech the morning it was delivered, and its news editor ordered a television crew to go to the venue, where they filmed sections of the speech. Earlier in the week, Powell said to his friend Clement Jones, who was a journalist at the Wolverhampton Express & Star, “ I’m going to make a speech at the weekend and it’s going to go up ‘ fizz’ like a rocket; but whereas all rockets fall to the earth, this one is going to stay up”.

The title given to the speech arose from its allusion to Virgil’s line from the Aeneid 6, 86, in which the Sibyl prophesies “ wars, terrible wars, and the Tiber foaming with much blood” (Bella, horrida bella, Et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine). Powell recounted a conversation with one of his constituents, a middle-aged working man, a few weeks earlier. Powell said that man told him: “ If I had the money to go, I wouldn’t stay in this country...

I have three children, all of them been through grammar school and two of them married now, with family. I shan't be satisfied till I have seen them all settled overseas. " The man finished by saying to Powell: " In this country in 15 or 20 years time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man. Powell went on: Here is a decent, ordinary fellow-Englishman, who in broad daylight in my own town says to me, his Member of Parliament, that the country will not be worth living in for his children. I simply do not have the right to shrug my shoulders and think about something else. What he is saying, thousands and hundreds of thousands are saying and thinking – not throughout Great Britain, perhaps, but in the areas that are already undergoing the total transformation to which there is no parallel in a thousand years of English history.

Powell quoted the Registrar-General's statistics that in 15 to 20 years, there would be 3.5 million immigrants and their descendants in Britain. Powell estimated that by the year 2000, the figure would be 5 to 7 million, around one tenth of the population. Powell claimed that it was urgent to stop " further inflow, and by promoting the maximum outflow" because by 1985, the majority of the immigrant community would have been born in Britain.

Powell asserted that this was " part of the official policy of the Conservative Party". He went on to say: We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre. So insane are we that we actually permit unmarried persons to immigrate for the purpose of founding a family with spouses and fiancées

whom they have never seen. He advocated voluntary re-emigration by “generous grants and assistance” and he claimed that immigrants had asked him whether it was possible. Powell said that all citizens should be equal before the law, and that: This does not mean that the immigrant and his descendants should be elevated into a privileged or special class or that the citizen should be denied his right to discriminate in the management of his own affairs between one fellow-citizen and another or that he should be subjected to an inquisition as to his reasons and motives for behaving in one lawful manner rather than another.

He argued that journalists who urged the government to pass anti-discrimination laws were “of the same kidney and sometimes on the same newspapers which year after year in the 1930s tried to blind this country to the rising peril which confronted it. Powell said that such legislation would be used to discriminate against the indigenous population and that it would be like “throwing a match on to gunpowder.” Powell described what he thought the position of the indigenous population would be: For reasons which they could not comprehend, and in pursuance of a decision by default, on which they were never consulted, they found themselves made strangers in their own country. They found their wives unable to obtain hospital beds in childbirth, their children unable to obtain school places, their homes and neighbourhoods changed beyond recognition, their plans and prospects for the future defeated; at work they found that employers hesitated to apply to the immigrant worker the standards of discipline and competence required of the native-born worker; they began to hear, as time went by, more and more voices which told them that they were now the unwanted.

On top of this, they now learn that a one-way privilege is to be established by Act of Parliament; a law which cannot, and is not intended to, operate to protect them or redress their grievances, is to be enacted to give the stranger, the disgruntled and the agent provocateur the power to pillory them for their private actions. Powell quoted a letter he received from a woman in Northumberland, about an elderly woman living in a Wolverhampton street where she was the only white resident. The elderly woman had lost her husband and her two sons in World War II and had rented out the rooms in her house. Once immigrants had moved into the street she was living in, her white lodgers left.

Two black men had knocked on her door at 7 am to use her telephone, but she refused and was verbally abused. She had asked her local authority for a rates reduction, but was told by a council officer to let out the rooms of her house. When the woman said the only tenants would be black, the council officer replied: “ Racial prejudice won’t get you anywhere in this country. The next part of the letter that Powell quoted went: She is becoming afraid to go out. Windows are broken.

She finds excreta pushed through her letterbox. When she goes to the shops, she is followed by children, charming, wide-grinning piccaninnies. They cannot speak English, but one word they know. “ Racist”, they chant.

When the new Race Relations bill is passed, this woman is convinced she will go to prison. And is she so wrong? I begin to wonder. Powell argued that although “ many thousands” of immigrants wanted to integrate, he contended that the majority did not, and that some had vested interests in

fostering racial and religious differences “ with a view to the exercise of actual domination, first over fellow-immigrants and then over the rest of the population”. Powell’s peroration of the speech gave rise to its popular title. He quotes the Sibyl speaking in the epic poem Aeneid: As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding.

Like the Roman, I seem to see “ the River Tiber foaming with much blood”. That tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic but which there is interwoven with the history and existence of the States itself, is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect. Indeed, it has all but come. In numerical terms, it will be of American proportions long before the end of the century. Only resolute and urgent action will avert it even now. Whether there will be the public will to demand and obtain that action, I do not know.

All I know is that to see, and not to speak, would be the great betrayal. Read also: “ THE DIFFERENCES IN BETWEEN NEW ENGLAND, MIDDLE, AND SOUTHERN COLONIES”