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Beyaz Cadı Avında: Postkolonyal Bir Gotik[a]

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Özet

Helen Oyeyemi, *Beyaz Cadı Avında* (2009), geleneksel anlatıları yabancılaştırır, klasik doktrinleri alt üst eder ve eserine gündemi ekler. Romanları daha çok gotik edebiyat kapsamında okunsa da etnik mitoloji ve folkloru da içine alarak sayısız bakış açısı sağlar. Oyeyemi, geleneksel gotik özellikleri birleştirmenin yanı sıra, İngiliz tarihinde tekrar eden göç, bir arada yaşama ve entegrasyon modellerini vurgulamak için kültürel motiflerinden de yararlanır. Gotik söz dağarcığını ve anlatım modelini kullanan roman, İngiliz ulusunun yabancı düşmanı eğilimlerini, günümüzde göç politikalarıyla devam eden sömürge döneminin bir mirası olarak sorgulamak için sömürge sonrası bir hikaye inşa eder. Bu nedenle, bu makale, romanı, kültürel gotik unsurları aracılığıyla İngiliz kimliğinin işgalcileri olarak etiketlenen ırksal ötekilere ve göçmenlere karşı saf beyaz İngilizliğin yabancı düşmanı endişelerini eleştiren bir postkolonyal gotik olarak yorumlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Helen Oyeyemi
Yabancı Düşmanlığı
Gotik
Cadı Vampir

Makale Hakkında

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White is for Witching: A Postcolonial Gothic

Abstract

In *White is for Witching* (2009), Helen Oyeyemi defamiliarizes traditional narratives, subverts the classical doctrines, and inserts recent issues. Although her novels are mostly read within the scope of gothic literature, she introduces ethnic mythology and folklore that provide myriad perspectives. As well as incorporating the traditional gothic features, Oyeyemi draws from cultural motifs of her Nigerian roots to highlight the recurring patterns of immigration, coexistence, and integration in English history. Using the vocabulary and the pattern of gothic narration, the novel constructs a postcolonial story to question the xenophobic tendencies of the English nation as a legacy of the colonial era that endures today through immigration policies. Therefore, this article reads the novel as a postcolonial gothic criticising the xenophobic concerns of pure white Englishness against racial others and immigrants labelled as invaders of English identity through the elements of cultural gothic.

Keywords

Helen Oyeyemi
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About Article

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Introduction

In her third novel, *White is for Witching* (2009), Helen Oyeyemi, a Nigerian-British author, weaves a narrative fabric that is made up of several distinctive forms but intermingled into a metaphor. In the novel, Oyeyemi defamiliarizes traditional narratives, subverts the classical doctrines and inserts recent issues. Although her novels are mostly read within the scope of gothic literature, she includes ethnic mythology and folklore in them providing myriad perspectives. Her works present a rhizomatic structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 7–15). There are heterogeneous connections tied to any other with any thread (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 7–8). Her intertextuality and rewritings can be characterized as the rupturing of coherent structures or narratives, breaking apart an apparently familiar tale by recreating them with new strands (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 9). Rather than following a linearity or/and offering a clear illustration, she attempts to deterritorialise readers. She creates a critical contemporary panorama of the world with intertextual historical, political, and cultural facts with a quite imaginative space and characters. This acknowledges her style along with her roots as an immigrant in a country where whiteness stands for Englishness. Hence, English settings in her novels contradict the postcolonial depiction "of London as a utopian space of cultural and social transformation" (McLeod, 2004, p.16). Her depiction of this space is not only disturbing but also threatening for her characters and readers, as well.

Oyeyemi's *White Is for Witching* is set in Dover of a Kentish atmosphere through which cultural phobias and xenophobic fears are attributed to the Other as a national threat. The setting bears the political, cultural, and social problematisation of foreigners through hospitality to define the borders of Englishness. Dover is a metaphorically important spot because it serves as a port and a bump. Its white cliffs connotate Englishness and its imperial borders. Thus, the Dover of the novel is also metaphorical in terms of a national fortress. Likewise, Cambridge is depicted as an exclusive British domain where none of the foreign characters feels comfortable. It is as if a 'tomb' everybody "would be afraid" to be, "built in the fourteenth century" with "the faces […] from enormous frames" of "all former masters " (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 88). Buckley and Ilott state that:

> Dover (as representative of the xenophobic nationalism that focuses on borders and exclusion), and Cambridge, (in which ideas of a meritocracy reinforce a classist snobbery by refusing to acknowledge differences in opportunity), are juxtaposed productively in Oyeyemi's early work, in which her characters' sense of belonging and national identity is constantly negotiated yet never complete. (2017, p.6)

Xenophobic nationalism attributed to Dover and the hospitality of Cambridge are the only two threads interwoven into the fabric of the novel. The rhizomatic structure of the text is enriched with social, cultural, and psychological references entangled within the trappings of the Gothic tradition. The novel includes traditional Gothic aspects like the haunted/ing house, a female struggling with insanity, and the uncanny doubling that exists with twins and possessions. As well as incorporating the traditional gothic features, Oyeyemi also draws from cultural motifs of her Nigerian practices, like "abiku," and "soucouyant" to highlight the recurring patterns of immigration, coexistence, and integration in English history. Using the vocabulary and the pattern of gothic narration, the novel constructs a postcolonial story to question the xenophobic tendencies of the English nation as a legacy of the colonial era that endures today through migration policies. Therefore, this article discusses the novel as a postcolonial gothic criticising the xenophobic concerns of pure white

Englishness against racial others and immigrants labelled as invaders of English identity through the elements of cultural gothic.

Oyeyemi's Gothic

White is for Witching follows the mysterious disappearance of Miranda Silver. She has a pathological disorder called pica, which causes her to eat inanimate items like chalk and plastic. There are shifts in the story with multiple narrative perspectives starting with the protagonist Miranda, her twin Eliot, her lover Ore, the house/29 Barton Road, and Nigerian housekeeper Sade. Miranda has vanished at the beginning of the book, and the plot retrospectively follow Miranda's path while each narrator provides an explanation. Oyeyemi interweaves many perspectives, styles, and thoughts with each narrator. Out of many, she foregrounds the xenophobic imperialist ideology through the house, 29 Barton Road, which speaks on behalf of Anna Good called the goodlady. Through the narration of the house, the story of Anna Good and her hatred of Others because of her deceased husband during the WWII, are explained:

> 'I hate them,' she said. "Blackies, Germans, killers, dirty . . . dirty killers. He should have stayed here with me. […] She spoke from that part of her that was older than her. The part of her that will always tie me to her, to her daughter Jennifer, to Jennifer's stubborn daughter Lily, to Lily's even more stubborn daughter Miranda. I can only be as good as they are. We are on the inside, and we have to stay together, and we absolutely cannot have anyone else. […]They shouldn't be allowed in though, those others, so eventually I make them leave. (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 74)

It embodies xenophobia through the hatred and promise of the goodlady to keep her following generations distant from Others. With the French husband of Lily, the house is used as a guest house which dispels all others. This motivation of the house, empowered by the white English supremacy of the goodlady, shows the gothic imprints, especially on black guests defined as those others. The xenophobic tendency is based on the Other as an item of anger and hatred, and thus the house acts as a sanctuary of whiteness controlling the invasions of Others. With imperial nostalgia[1] , the house/goodlady sets a wall against the immigrants to preserve the pure nation, and this wall around the beloved ones turns them into prisoners. The xenophobic guard of the goodlady clashes with the new cultures and histories so bitterly that they constitute the elements of gothic. In conjunction with the guarding of the goodlady, the feelings of "loss and transgression" are precisely two fundamental characteristics of postcolonial gothic (Ng, 2007, p. 18). These senses are supported by the "fragmented histories," memory, and remembrances and "expose the fault-lines in colonial ideologies and political and economic systems" (Rudd, 2010, p. 3) to render postcolonial gothic.

Oyeyemi recontextualises the old tradition of gothic to discuss the postmodern times of identification in a postcolonial context. Englishness and whiteness are haunted by the colonial history that reflects "the physical and psychological trauma associated with migration, displacement, racism and contested national identities" (Buckley and Ilott, 2017, p.10). Using the elements of gothic to examine the traumas of the identity process challenges the classical Western form of the gothic writing. Reversely, she reconfigures the discourse of gothic Others with the twists in the novel.

Oyeyemi reflects these colonial traumas through the monster/vampire, asylums, hauntings, and twins as the fundamentals of the gothic tradition. She revisits the Western-dominated gothic genre through the practices of colonial violence and dominance. As known widely, Gothic has always been quite appropriate for racial and imperial narratives since "the monstrous, the supernatural, and the terrifying, are typically linked to the foreign" (Brantlinger, 2006, p. 153). This idea is relevant from the early examples of Gothic tradition because "the Imperial Gothic contains a host of ghostly and monstrous figures that not only frighten the reader but also demonstrate the latent fears and desires of imperialist discourse" (Höglund, 2005, p. 245). Therefore, it cannot be considered a coincidence to see foreign locations like Italy in *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Transylvania /Romania in *Dracula* (1897), and Geneva/ Germany in *Frankenstein* (1818), Arabia in *Vathek* (1786) in English literature. These settings are addressing the romanticised places as the reminiscent of Oriental mind. Moreover, the stimulation of frightening, mysterious and unknown is linked to colonial settings, characters, and traditional practices. Therefore, "gothic writers were quick to realise that Britain's growing empire could provide a vast source of frightening 'others'" (Paravisini-Gebert, 2002, p. 229) to replace the villainous heroes, antiheroes, and monsters. In accordance with the imperial expansion, the subject of others has shown itself in the form of foreignness, ethnic differences, and cultural practices and with indigenous people via a firmly Eurocentric perspective.

The Gothic turns into an ideal intersection to obscure the fraught nature of coloniser/colonised dynamics. The "anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries" shows the consequences of subjugation followingly (Botting, 2013, pp. 1-2). The anxiety is stemming from the realization of the fact that subjugated peoples might aspire to occupation in England, recalls the Derridean anxiety concerning the displacement of Englishness and pure identity. This threat of invasion is related to the anxiety that "the English are displaced, figuratively if not physically: their Englishness admits of Otherness, and England becomes an alien nation" (Schmitt, 1997, p. 3). Strangely close to what has been pointed out, Oyeyemi strikes the attention to the racial issues and displacements of the early twenty-first century. The metaphors given through the choice of setting and characters support the engagement with the migration into England. The invasion of the past is replaced with the immigration of the recent, and thus, there have appeared new readings of gothic narratives through the anxieties of reverse colonisation. With the idea of being colonised by "the marauding, invasive Other, British culture sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous forms" (Arata, 1990, p. 623). Oyeyemi applies the very same idea to her story. Although it is faithful to the classics of gothic narration with its features and themes, there are other gothic elements replicating the cultural practices of Oyeyemi's ethnic heritage, and thus she enriches the field of gothic narrative. "The Gothic as a hybrid form, incorporate[s] and transform[s] other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions in relation to newer modes of writing" (Botting, 1996, p. 14). Thus, Oyeyemi interweaves the threads of the gothic by mingling them with those of her cultural background. *White is for Witching* suggests the hybridization of coloniser and colonised that blurs this binarism by harmonising the Nigerian Yoruba elements and English characters.

White is for Witching

Although enigmatic at the very beginning in terms of narrators and the in-medias-res beginning with the question of where Miranda Silver is, the novel in general revisits the classical elements of the gothic tradition. First, as a gothic child figure with a twin brother, she is suffering psychologically and is "admitted to an adolescent psychiatric unit"(Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 21). Twins are depicted as weird with their habits and manners. Eliot wears "a black balaclava" in August (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 75), and "read[s] Moby-Dick"(Oyeyemi, 2009,p. 59) as a fan of Poe. Likewise, Miranda is interested mostly in conventional gothic stories of "Grimm's Fairy Tales. Perrault, Andersen, Le Fanu, Wilkie Collins, E. T. A. Hoffmann" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 96). She is exactly like "one of those Gothic victims, the child-woman who is too pretty and good for this world and ends up dying of tuberculosis or grief—a sweetheart-shaped face and a river of blue-black hair" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 97). Another narrator, the Nigerian housekeeper is also named Sade as an explicit allusion to Marquis de Sade.

Mostly the events take place in the house of the Silver family which "[has] two big brown grids of windows with a row of brick in between each grid" as if "funny square eyes, friendly, tired." The house has been transformed into a guest house. Located "opposite […] a churchyard […] with the graves beneath," the house is " like […] a castle," with "the steep, winding staircase with the gnarled banister" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 16). The setting is quite loyal to classical gothic tales. Yet, within time, as usual, "the castle gradually gave way to the old house: as both building and family line, it became the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (Botting, 1996, p. 3).

As stated earlier, in the novel, the house also dangerously represents the nostalgia of Englishness through the xenophobic character, the goodlady. It has a humiliating racist discourse for the black characters. Relatedly, Alison Rudd points out the importance of Gothic as a "strategy" that paves a way "to expose and subvert past and continuing regimes of power and exploitation, and to re-inscribe histories that have been both violent and repressed" (2010, p. 2). Thus, Oyeyemi reminds the dehumanizing and humiliating perspectives of the colonial past. This xenophobic ideology is personified via the home on the cliffs of Dover. Historically marked as an English border [2], Dover becomes a synecdoche of Englishness.

In the novel, the house, at 29 Barton Road of Dover was haunted by the Silver family's maternal ancestors. The house filled with the hatred and fear of others defends itself by violently attacking foreign Others. It seeks national and racial homogeneity. Hence, this haunted/ing realm of xenophobia is illustrated in the novel to highlight the fierce colonial past and disturbed postcolonial present of England. Like the geographical borders of England with the cliffs in Dover, the house is the border of a pure Silver family and trespassing is not welcomed because of the fear of transgression. Moreover, the powerful hatred of the house shows itself with the shooting of Lily Silver in Haiti. Her presence in Haiti is not acceptable for the goodlady since she jeopardizes the borders and puts Englishness into a racial mixture. Since there is a connection between the Silver matriarchal line, it is seen that Miranda, but actually the goodlady, is smiling at the death of Lily since her soul will be within the borders of the house and there will be no threat anymore: After informed about Lily's shooting, Miranda "looked down and, for a moment, appeared to be smiling. She wasn't smiling. She wasn't in control of her face" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 12). At this

point, it is interesting that what Miranda is experiencing is the in-betweenness of possession. She shows both the internalization of the goodlady out of her consent and the rejection of the ideologies she has inherited inside herself. She cannot metaphorically digest the situation and thus suffers from pica syndrome: "she really can't help herself […]she is feasting on plaster" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 9). However, these cravings can be read as a metaphorical desire to have borders of identity like those chalky Devon's cliffs. Ilott mentions this consumption as a sign of "the national borders resurrected within her own body" (2015, p. 64). Moreover, as pointed out by Burton:

> Miranda's desire to eat chalk equally resembles a desire to deconstruct the physical border of the white cliffs that exist outside of her, conveying an active attempt to reject the internalised racist ideologies she has inherited from the goodlady. As a character representing her nation through acts of consumption, Miranda can be read as an ambivalent figure who transcends the boundaries that are constructed by her ancestors (2017: p. 81).

Therefore, Miranda's act of starving herself through pica can be read as a desire to suppress the goodlady's influence and her control within herself as an ambivalent figure. Moreover, the introduction of the character Ore supports the ambiguity of Miranda towards the colonial biases and xenophobia of the goodlady. Their romantic relationship is above all borders and constructions of pure Englishness. Although Ore is an adopted girl of a white British family, her identity problematises the separation of 'us' and 'them' because of her black skin. This division shows itself even in the gothic architecture of Cambridge where "walls and windows forbade [her]. They pulled at [her] and said, You don't belong here. Again and again, over textbooks and plates of mush in the hall, [she] gritted [her] teeth and said, Yes, I do."(Oyeyemi, 2009, pp. 94-95)

It is obvious that Ore's being is defined by her appearance and colour in a traditional British institution. Racial judgement is a reflection of the former colonial days and her black British identity places Ore on the margins of society against her will. However, the desire of Miranda for Ore not only proves the absurdity of the racial fears but also puts Miranda in a hybrid situation in terms of devouring Ore as a racial other. "Consumption that blurs the lines between bodily and national borders turns Ore's body into a stage for nationalist politics hostile to immigrants and their descendants" (Ilott, 2015, pp. 65–66). It should be kept in mind that, destroying/consuming the other to clear alterity is at the heart of xenophobia; the drive to expel alterity. The bodily desire of Miranda for Ore and the national desire of the goodlady create ambivalence for the characterisation of Miranda but the violent consuming practice of Miranda is directly linked to her maternal ancestor, the vampiric goodlady: "Ore's smell was raw and fungal as it tangled in the hair between her legs. […] Miranda had needed Ore open. Her head had spun with the desire to taste. She lay her head against Ore's chest and heard Ore's heart. The beat was ponderous. Like an oyster, living quietly in its serving-dish shell" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 115). Intimate desires are accompanied by fierce cravings and vampiric tastes. However, Miranda is quite conscious of such a monstrosity part of her desire and thus constantly tries autosuggestion with the words "Ore is not food,' or "manage your consumption" and behave yourself" and she fears that '[she is] a monster' (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 115, *italics are original*). It is obvious that her love and desire are juxtaposed with the violence and hatred of the goodlady. Also, the traditional vampire quality is attributed to the white British woman, the goodlady. Thus, comes other gothic

features that are not familiar in the western gothic tradition. Oyeyemi challenges the traditional forms of gothic vampires with her cultural motifs of Yoruba heritage.

Oyeyemi blends the ethnic story of soucouyant with the traditional western vampire narratives in the creation of the goodlady, who "is very beautiful, […] but very strict […] and she makes no exception to any rule. […] She's like tradition, it's very serious when she's disobeyed. She's in our blood" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 44). The goodlady, materialised as a house, is a composition of foremothers and aims to protect everybody in her bloodline through the house. The goodlady with her unbreakable tie to the house itself turns into a catalyst of the generation upcoming with the house and embodies violent xenophobia. The violent practices and racist discourse of them are associated with a monstrous power, a soucouyant, through which she tries to shield her family from the possible dangers of others.

Soucouyant has been thoroughly studied by Giselle Liza Anatol, and it is located among the "mythology of nocturnal, bloodsucking creatures" that "turns into a ball of fire after leaving its skin behind" and "in the tales […] the soucouyant or old female spirit sheds her skin at night and flies about sucking the blood of children and of careless travellers" (Gadsby, 2006, p. 67). In the novel, the soucouyant description is loyal to its origins and is defined as, "the wicked old woman who flies from her body and at night consumes her food, the souls of others – soul food! – in a ball of flame. At dawn, she returns to her body, which she has hidden in a safe place" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 89). It is quite clear that the hidden safe place of this wicked old soul is the house. Moreover, Miranda identifies herself with it and she believes that her great-grandmother is the soucouyant possessing her and the house: "We are the goodlady. [. . .] The house and I' (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 130). The xenophobic house and the goodlady fuse into Miranda - as in the role of the gothic child - and become the soucouyant to dominate, protect and preserve the Englishness.

Sade, the Nigerian housekeeper, recognizes Miranda's possessed/haunted being by her ancestors and asks whether "[t]hey're calling [her],[…] [her] old ones" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 61). According to Yoruba rituals, "the ancestors have the ability to directly intervene in daily life" (Cousins,2012, p. 50). It is believed "the deceased, in going to Orun [the ancestors' realm], enter a spirit world rather like earth, from which they revisit the living periodically" (Peel, 2004,p. 174 qtd in Cousins, 2012, p. 50). Miranda connects with her deceased foremothers: Anna Silver, Jennifer, and Lily, and these spirits can easily be associated with abiku. The abiku is "a class of evil spirits, who cause children to die" because after entering "a child, he takes for his own use, and for the use of his companions, the greater part of the food that the child eats, who in consequence begins to pine away and become emaciated". These evil spirits should find human tenements since they "suffer from hunger, thirst, and cold since nobody offers sacrifice to them and they have no temples" and they"[endeavour] to improve their condition by entering the bodies" (Ellis, 1894). Such practice causes emaciation, boniness and then death. These spirits of Silver maternal figures show themselves constantly on an untouched dinner table with the begging "Eat for me... Eat for us" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 79). When they ask her for the foods she craves, "What will you eat? Tell me and I will bring it to you" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 79), Miranda refuses to eat anything because of her pica. Moreover, this eating disorder and her anorexia can easily be associated with the desire of suppressing her monstrous blood craving or vampirism. As Helen Cousins asserts "framed through abiku, the pica is reconfigured from a self-harming eating disorder

to a sacrificial act intended to protect others from these dangerous, possessing, vampire-like spirits who sustain themselves parasitically" (2012, p. 51).

Distorting the vampire characterisation of the western gothic style, Miranda refuses to be the evil, yet it is her alter and/or possessing being which chooses to be the evil uncanny villain of the story. However, Oyeyemi's strategy seems to disturb the identity of the characters. Miranda is a twin quite identical to each other and a composition of her foremothers like "a cube [...] four stiff faces in one" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 80). With the Silver females only, Oyeyemi alludes to the monstrous racial obsession of the Englishness – pure whiteness – with the bad deeds like in the example of witching. As the title suggests white is associated with witching. The house states that Anna Silver as the mother of itself curses foreign nations and races.

> White is for witching, a colour to be worn so that all other colours can enter you, so that you may use them. At a pinch, the cream will do. Four years later, Anna Good put the cream dress on again, and an expensive white coat that Andrew had bought her, and she did some witching. (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 73)

She transforms her fear and hatred "from the whites of her eyes and woven itself into [its] brick until [it] came to strength, until [it] became aware"(Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 73). From that moment onwards, the house takes on the mission of soothing her anger and grief through xenophobic behaviours. On the other hand, the witching of Sade is also related to whiteness. Her knitting "like beaten egg white" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 75) protects black Ore from the goodlady and saves her life miraculously. Like these allusions and the white cliffs of Dover as explained earlier, Oyeyemi questions the im/possibility of pure Englishness. Even Miranda's pica and her obsession with consuming chalk (a reference to the white chalk border cliffs of Dover) can be seen as the choking racial purity of English nationhood. Specifically, Miranda's intimacy with a black girl, her refusal to be a vampiric monster and even her hybrid blood (French father) are the motifs of the global and hybrid nationhood. Hence, Oyeyemi has examined the impossibility of a pure white nation with the xenophobic vampire goodlady haunting the house. English and foreign nations intervened in one thread forming a rhizomatic being.

Equally important in characterisation, adopted Ore by a white English family, is black and reflects the identity issues. Ore refuses any racial identification because of her colour: "I may be adopted, but I know exactly who I am" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 94). She does not want to be forced into a black identity that would make her Englishness questionable. She refrains from Nigerian Society calling her sister at the university and does not want to enrol the society. She cannot stand hearing the Nigerian meaning of her name and in order not to hear she "put[s] [her] hands over [her] ears and growl[s]" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 126). However, these practices of Ore are stabilised by Oyeyemi in a scene in which she turns into a white one in the shower of Miranda: "Where [Ore's towel] had touched, was striped with black liquid […] The black's coming off,' someone outside the door commented" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 128). In this scenario, she "concentrate[s] on making [herself] colourfast;" she tells herself: "I know what I look like" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 136). Oyeyemi underlines the fact that her Englishness is not related to any desire to be white, and her racial heritage is not related to any inclination to highlight the ethnic identity of any sort. Ore like Miranda is an encoded binary individual being, black and white.

Conclusion

Authors with ethnic origin, especially, those writing postcolonial gothic reissue the traditional gothic tradition to recall colonial practices and discourse. This is quite suitable for the trauma experienced during the imperial times, whence as in the general sense, postcolonial gothic writes back to render monster makers monstrous. The tension given through the binaries well fulfil the discourse of Gothic and the displacement of traditional concerns with those once marginalised turns into the characteristics of postcolonial gothic. However, within the twenty first century, postcolonial gothic manifests the neocolonial and/or neo imperial modes of expression to criticise political realities, the truths of postcolonial today and voicing out the new-old otherings. Discussing both the traditional colonial violence of the past and new political atrocities that are shaped by the new migrancy waves, postcolonial gothic of Oyeyemi issues historical and racial hatred while recalling the national monsters/witches to shed light on the rhizomatic relations of identities, history, culture, and fear in a globalised world.

In her novel, Oyeyemi, with great diverted examples from past and present to history and culture, tries to discuss how England has been constructed out of differences. She issues the current immigration waves with the those of past like "the Angles and the Saxons and the Druids and the Celts and the Picts […]" (Oyeyemi, 2009, p. 124) to explain the complexity of English cultural heritage. Moreover, she remembers the colonial past of England and her mutual interactions to highlight the problematisation of the immigrants and xenophobic feelings towards them. Mingling the nations, cultures, and even the narrative strategies, Oyeyemi creates a world of horror illustrating the reality of the present and hybrid characters who struggle to obtain equal rights and happiness. Hence, the tradition of gothic seems to be the most suitable era to discuss the problematisation of the Other and to defeat the fear of the unknown. Moreover, the postcolonial perfectly function within a Gothic setting. As claimed "the Gothic is, and has always been, *post*-colonial […]where the colonial encounter—or the encounter which may be read or interpreted through the colonial filter—proves a catalyst to corrupt, to confuse or to redefine the boundaries of power, knowledge and ownership" (Hughes and Smith, 2003, p. 1).

In comparison to the older examples, "contemporary use of the gothic strikes a darker and more disturbing note. It is the horror now that is real, and the resolution that is fanciful" (Sage and Smith, 1996, p. 5). Since the politics of border and nationhood are one of the most fragile issues of the twenty-first century, "solipsism that locates fear and terror in the breasts of the majority population threatens to obscure the effects of the racism-as-usual that continues to poison social and political life" (Ware, 2009, p. 100). Thus, Oyeyemi redefines the terror of these feelings through gothic narrative. As Tabish Khair states "as a narrative of terror, gothic "depends on a perception not just of ambivalence but also of opposition and 'irreconcilable' difference" (2009, p. 132). This terror in the narration is used to reflect the ambivalence and 'irreconcilable difference' of binarism. Thus, Oyeyemi combines the tradition of the gothic with a postcolonial understanding. She questions the postcolonial themes and practices of Other, reterritorialisation, and identity crises through gothic features of haunting/ed setting, monstrosity, and vampires. Intermingling the Other, to be more precise, the fearful and uncanny Other, which is quite common both to postcolonial and gothic literature, the novel tells the haunting colonial ideology that still reigns over the

Englishness understanding. While showing the Others of the house, the novel voices out their inbetweenness, hybridity and disturbing ambiguity. Oyeyemi enables a hybrid voice that silences neither cultural nor racial hybridity. The cautionary tale of a girl, Miranda, insists on the idea that the real monsters in society are those who have xenophobic feelings, and it gives its moral and political lesson via the combination of gothic and postcolonial ideologies.

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Endnotes

[1] Rosaldo, Renato. Representations, Spring, 1989, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989), University of California Press, pp. 107-122

[2] For Further information, visit: https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-19343382