

Sabyn Javeri-Jillani: Neither Night Nor Day

Pre-reading

3. Find information about UK immigration and the present-day situation using the links that you find below. Matrix groups: Groups A-D each use their link. Afterwards, in groups of four consisting of students from each basis group, help each other answer the questions below.
 - <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/>
 - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/2019#main-points>
 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4220002.stm
 - <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/lifestyle/article/interracial-dating>
 - a. Name the main reasons why people have immigrated to Britain.
 - b. Until recently immigrants to Britain mainly came from a fairly small number of nations. Which nations and why these nations?
 - c. What has happened in recent years?
 - d. What have you found out about the number of immigrants in London?
 - e. What is said about the new economic migration to Britain?
 - f. What are the benefits and problems of Britain as a multi-cultural society?

4. Exotic words. Use the internet to find the Danish translation, the explanation or a photo. Use max. 15 minutes.

English	Danish	English	Danish
curries		attire	
kebabs		dupatta	
naan		lace purdah	
pakora		jeans	
bhaji		jacket	
halal		shalwar kurta	
biryani		chador	
agarbati		hijab	
		bindi	
		don (vb)	
		chappals	
		shalwar kameez	

1. Use the following words to fill in the blanks:

busy – pollute – occasional – bargaining – appearance – infidel – filthy – clean – white trash – bloodthirsty

“Unlike in the _____ bazaars of Lahore or Karachi, they don’t shout out the prices. The price here is to be judged by the _____ of the customer. A pound each for the poor and _____ refugees. Fifty pounds for the blacks who _____ the shops with their very existence. No _____, only fixed prices for the _____ Indians – let them go to Southall and bargain with their _____, snake-in-the sleeve Sikh brothers. And for the old masters, the goras, whatever you wish to give, Sirji! But nothing here is for free and the whites too have to be categorized: the “white shirts” who belong to the good _____ working class and enjoy the _____ curry, and the “white trash” who prowl the street looking for a “paki” to look him in the eye so they can kick up trouble. Later, you can bleat racism all you want, but can you bring your dead son back to life? No. It is this _____ that the shopkeepers dread the most.”

This excerpt is from the first part of the story.

- a. List the various groups of people mentioned. What do you know about them? Share your knowledge in class.
- b. What do you think the attitude is to immigrants in the story?

Post-reading

2. Read the following mini essay on “Neither Night Nor Day” written by a student. Do you agree with the student in this interpretation? Compare the issues mentioned here with what you came up with yourselves.

The short story, “Neither Night Nor Day”, deals with the main character’s identity crises because she is torn between two cultures. She was born in Pakistan and now lives in London, and she is unable to decide what her identity is. She wears western clothes, but she loves mangoes, the smell of curry and Bollywood films. She doesn’t understand or take an interest in issues like wars in Palestine or Iraq that other Muslims would pay attention to. Also she wouldn’t wear a hijab or chador which other Muslim women would wear for modesty and as a symbol of their identity, perhaps even to protest against western culture. The white man who asks her if she is lost actually asks her an important question. At that time of day when it is neither night nor day London is grey and the things that remind her of Pakistan are colourful. She wants to stick to her roots but also to

embrace her new identity, “why can’t I be both” she says. This is something that most immigrants would never understand because they cling to their original national and cultural identity.

Her British husband, Jack, is very tolerant and appreciates some Asian things but he is confused by her and he can’t understand why she is fascinated by the royal family and other colonial things. She says that she has found a home in London and that it is good to be where the sun and the moon can co-exist and shine together, where it is neither night nor day.

3. Written task. You have found a student’s notes for an essay about this story. Try to make sense of them. Use the keywords as inspiration to write a passage for a group essay. Each member of the group gets a part. Look through your keywords before writing and ask the others for help if there are words or phrases you do not know how to use. When you have written your part, read it to the others. You may want to adjust parts using advice from the other members of the group. Finally connect the various parts for the joint essay to be handed in.
 - A. White, black, Indian, Pakistani
 Purdah-covered heads
 Halal only
 Only fixed price for the infidel Indian
 The white trash
 The enemy within – the kind that want to assimilate
 Obviously written by an insecure male, otherwise known as the all-knowing, self-righteous mullah
 It is a sin to trash anything with the name of Allah on it
 Music is the devil’s best friend
 FOB
 - B. My dark skin and western attire
 She too is wearing jeans. Her head is covered with a hijab
 Fast food from McDonald’s and Burger King quickly replaced halal-only Turkish burgers ... just as jeans and kurta soon gave way to shorts and crop tops
 A white man, a rarity in this part of London and often called a “foreigner” by locals, approaches me, asking if I’m lost
 A young girl with bleached golden hair and blue contact lenses
 She wears a red top and a tight pair of jeans
 When you have pounds in your pocket and a flat in Knightsbridge, nobody will call you a “Paki”

- C. Jack is my husband
His precious Persian carpet
Jack isn't too crazy about my curries and Bollywood movies
Jack loves Asian culture
He practises yoga, reads Naipaul and Rushdie
He can spend hours reading about Islam
Jack doesn't understand my fascination for the ordinary
Jack doesn't understand my adoration for the royal family
Jack doesn't understand why I don't want to live in my country
Jack can't compartmentalize me
- D. I hesitate as I put out my hand to bin the paper
I'm not the one who's lost
I want to stay aloof, uninvolved, and think of myself as a first-generation immigrant,
holder of a newly printed British passport, and then as a Muslim, and much later as a
woman
Sailing in two boats
Sitting on the fence
Mangoes
For a second, I feel a gleaming pride in belonging to the land that produces a thing of
such joy
I am part of a nameless mongrel humanity with nothing to claim as my own
A hybrid without firm beliefs
- E. But here in London, it is neither night nor day
The sun here has no warmth
But before I leave the smells and colours of my childhood behind for the odourless,
grey landscapes of my present, there is one last thing I have to do
I throw open the windows to air out the room
I spray the flat with perfume
The sky is lit up with stars although it is not yet night
Only in London, can the sun and moon shine together