

# Rampage of Institutional Racism in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*

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## Abstract

Racism can be observed in physical or verbal harassment directed at someone because they are of a certain racial or cultural origin. For instance, people, including children, may be subjected to discrimination at work or in schools based on race. Institutional racism is also pervasive in areas such as criminal justice, housing, healthcare, and employment, yet many organizations are unaware of how their rules and practices harm some people. To illustrate how Zadie Smith places race in the foreground of her intersections of American, British, and Commonwealth identity, examination of the setting, Cambridge (called Wellington) and Boston is crucial. In this context, this research paper aims to analyze Zadie Smith's novel *On Beauty* (2005) in the light of Kimberle Crenshaw's Critical Race Theory (CRT). This scholarly investigation also probes the myriad forms of institutional racism including racial politics, color-blindness and Afro-pessimism within a British University setting.

**Keywords:** Institutional racism, Black British, Race politics, Afro-pessimism and color-blindness

## 1. Introduction

The novel "On Beauty" was published in 2005 by the British writer Zadie Smith. The novel deals with the various themes like racial and cultural identity, particularly within the concept of interracial relationship. The novel engages with both academic and personal life, portraying intellectual debates among faculty members. The conflict among faculty arises primarily from factors such as race, politics, and cultural identity. The novel "On Beauty" also addresses the issues of social class and privilege, depicting characters from different socio-economic backgrounds. Zadie Smith employs humor and satire to provide a lighthearted yet incisive critique of societal norms, cultural expectations, and academic pretensions. Zadie Smith is a British author known for her novels, essays, and contributions to contemporary literature. Smith explores a diverse range of themes in her writings, spanning novels, essays, and short stories. The theme of race is central to many of Smith's works. She delves into the experiences of characters from different racial backgrounds, addressing issues of racism, cultural heritage, and belonging. Smith, having studied at Cambridge University, often sets her novels in academic environments. Her works engage with intellectual debates, clashes of ideas and pursuit of knowledge within the educational institutions.

Institutional racism refers to discrimination within political and social institutions, affecting a specific group of individuals to restrict their rights. This type of racism often reflects the cultural presumptions of the dominant group. Identifying racism in institutions is challenging, and it can lead to early school dropouts, fewer job transitions, and restricted access to housing, healthcare, and life opportunities. Recent incidents have highlighted the importance of investigating institutional racism against adolescent Black youth. In 2020, police harassment cases in America sparked protests and helped the Black Lives Matter movement gain traction. In Britain, Macpherson's Report<sup>1</sup> on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry exposed institutional racism within the Metropolitan Police Service, sparking a national conversation about systemic discrimination and the need for police reform. The Lawrence Inquiry led to significant changes in the British criminal justice system, highlighting the failures and biases that allowed Lawrence's killers to escape justice (Lea (2000)). More recently, the Brattle Report<sup>2</sup> provided a quantitative assessment of the reparations that are due for the historical practice of transatlantic chattel slavery in the regions of the Americas and the Caribbean. This report was created by The Brattle Group, an advisory organization that specializes in the

<sup>1</sup>Macpherson's Report also known as the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, is a landmark document in the history of British Race Relations, Published in 1999, it was the result of an Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager who was brutally killed by metropolitan police.

<sup>2</sup>The Brattle report is a written document that provides a quantitative assessment of the reparations that are due for the historical practice of transatlantic chattel slavery in the regions of the Americas and the Caribbean. The report was presented on June 8, 2023 during a event at the University of the West Indies (Brattle Consultants Quantify Reparations for Transatlantic Chattel Slavery in Pro Bono Paper, 2023)

field of economic and financial analysis. The purpose of this article is to explore institutional racism through critical race theory, Afro-pessimism and color blindness. The analysis evolves into a deep dive into the structural, individual and global aspects of racial dynamics in the institutional environment portrayed in "On Beauty."

## 2. Literature Review

This section presents an overview of some significant critical pieces, drawn from a variety of national and international journals; these articles specifically investigate the concerns and dynamics pertaining to Institutional or systemic racism within higher education establishments in both American and British universities. According to Mahzarin R. Banaji, Susan T. Fiske, and Douglas S. Massey, systematic racism not only creates an impact on the lives of the individuals concerned but also on institutions and society. Their paper focuses on the challenges of Black Americans and the intentional policies emerging out of American colonial history, which started with slavery but continues with diminished status, reinforcing disadvantage in all spheres of life. The article looks at how racial discrimination affects people on a personal, institutional, and societal level. It helps readers realize the widespread effects of systematic racism, affecting not only one's opportunities for success in life, such as education, work opportunities, health, and well-being but also one's mental issues, Banaji et al. (2021).

Billy Wong and Reham Elmorally investigate how university students currently perceive and interact with racial and racist issues in England. There is mounting evidence and concern over racial and ethnic disparities in minority ethnic students' experiences and outcomes in the UK's higher education system. In this article, they are interested in how students from minority and majority ethnic backgrounds in UK higher education articulate and embody contemporary discourses on race and racism. This article updates our knowledge of how college students see and feel race and racism, and it adds to our comprehension of how Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students in higher education experience racism (Wong et al., 2020). When compared to multicultural education, which aims to do away with the practice of categorizing people based on their skin color or racial identity, anti-racist education differs significantly in its theoretical approaches and effectiveness, as well as in the intended recipients of the education. By analyzing and exposing the covert power structures that were to blame for inequality and racism in institutions, anti-racist education in the US and UK criticized the liberal premises of multiculturalism. It is alleged that educational institutions, in particular, play a crucial part in sustaining white privilege, and schools are considered locations where racism and stereotypes against ethnic and minority groups are perpetuated through a variety of techniques (Peters, 2015).

Racial equality, which offers all members of an organization social equality and accessibility, is a crucial subject in higher education, according to Linda C. Tillman, this is particularly the case for professors of color, who frequently face barriers to employment, enrollment, promotion, and tenure. For them, the availability of mentoring connections that can support their professional goals and the need for racial justice is especially crucial. Racial inequality has a direct bearing on several problems in university education Tillman (2018). "Researchers have observed that white colleagues who do not acknowledge or respect work that is focused on racial and cultural concerns frequently have poor opinions about the research and scholarship of Black Americans and other faculty members of color" (Zambrana, 2015). Mahmud and Gagnon discuss the racial disparities faced by Black Minority Ethnic (BME) students in British higher education. This paper contributes to the understanding of racial disparities in student outcomes in British higher education, specifically focusing on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) students. It explores the interacting dynamics of institutional structures, individual mindsets, and implicit biases that contribute to these disparities. The paper highlights the importance of addressing these disparities and the need for further research to understand and address the underlying causes (Mahmud & Gagnon, 2020).

The paper titled "Addressing Racial Inequalities in Higher Education: Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice" by Bhopal addresses the issues of inequalities in access to elite universities that continue to exist for those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, in both the UK and the USA. Universities must listen to and address the challenges that black and minority ethnic students face in higher education. There is ample evidence to suggest that black and minority ethnic students experience disadvantages at different stages; from admissions, their experience, whilst at university and in the class of degree they are awarded (Bhopal, 2017). In the article "Kipps, Belsey, and Jegede: Cosmopolitanism, Transnationalism, and Black Studies in Zadie Smith's "On Beauty" The paper discusses Zadie Smith's novel "On Beauty" and its representation of blackness in institutional, social, and aesthetic dimensions. It explores the transnational dimensions of the black diaspora and critiques racial and economic disparities. Smith's representation thus connects to ongoing debates in Cultural Studies and Black Studies about the public and social relevance of these fields in the US and British academies (Batra, 2010).

The article titled "Mentoring minority graduate students: Issues and Strategies for Institutions, Faculty, and Students" provides recommendations for graduate students from ethnic minority groups, their faculty, and their institutions regarding how to effectively mentor and support these students' professional and career development. Additionally this article discuss about the social pressures and negative preconceptions, minority graduate students frequently encounter obstacles connected to their racial identity in their departments and programs. The perpetrator of such an inhuman inhuman act of racial discrimination induces a sense of narcissistic pride (Kumar & Christopher, 2022). Among these difficulties may be the inability to get knowledge and the informal networks necessary for success in settings where they are underrepresented, such as academic and professional ones. The study highlights how crucial mentorship programs are in assisting minority graduate students in overcoming these obstacles and achieving their academic and career goals (Thomas et al., 2007).

Similarly, Prof. David Richardson (Mohdin, 2021) points to structural problems that predominantly affect black students in Britain.

Several pieces of evidence suggest that universities institutionalize and perpetuate systemic racism. When certain black community members are being disproportionately affected by structural problems, this is institutional racism and it needs to be eradicated. Students, who have reported such occurrences contend they were excluded from the process, left unhappy, and felt their universities had betrayed them. Julia Warrenner and Vida Douglas's article entitled "Black Lives Matter in Higher Education: Conversations about Race to Transform the Lived Experience of Black (African-Caribbean) Staff in UK Universities" current investigation addresses the matter of insufficient representation of scholars hailing from Black (African-Caribbean), Asian, and South-East Asian communities within UK universities. Statistically, only 18% of academic personnel belonged to the global-majority communities during 2019-20. Furthermore, the study highlights the significance of solidarity and collective voice in initiating change, based on the lived experiences of Black staff members who have thrived and endured in predominantly White spaces of UK universities, Vida, Douglas (2023).

The paper, entitled "Being Black in a White World: Understanding Racism in British Universities," looks into the experiences of racism encountered by academics of color within British universities. The research is founded on qualitative dialogues with educators from diverse racial, religious, and ethno-national origins, and highlights microaggressions and institutional prejudice, instruction, and promotion and backing. The conceptual position is underpinned by a critical race theory and postcolonial feminist framework. The study utilizes a critical race theory and postcolonial feminist framework to explore the experiences of racism encountered by academics of color within British universities (Sian, 2017).

### 3. Research Methodology

In order to accomplish the objectives; this research paper adopts qualitative and descriptive methodology. The text book "On Beauty" (2005) by Zadie Smith has been extensively used as the primary resource for the research while research articles, text books, other research materials that were collected from universities libraries, reputed journals, scopus database, other E-resources from academic websites are used as the secondary resource materials for the analysis of institutional racism.

### 4. Historical Context and the Background to Institutional racism in Britain and the US

This section traces some important historical, political and social movements that shape the Britain today, highlighting how these events have brought issues of race, immigration, and national identity to the forefront of public discourse. These events are not isolated incidents but rather reflect deeper historical and cultural patterns of exclusion and marginalization that have shaped British society for centuries. The decision of Brexit (2020) holds great significance for the United Kingdom in light of its national socio-political and psychological circumstances. The occurrence of Brexit constituted a momentous incident that altered the dynamic between the United Kingdom and the European Union. The primary reasons for departing from the EU encompassed the desire to reclaim sovereignty, manage immigration, and diminish bureaucratic entanglements and expenditures. The UK's membership in the EU has been linked to the pursuit of public value. Directly the EU has set common standards and goals for various policy areas, such as environmental protection, consumer rights, health and safety, and human rights. These policies are seen as enhancing public value by improving the quality of life and well-being of people in the UK and across Europe. There is a growing disillusionment among the public regarding the aftermath of Brexit, including economic instability and opposition to migration. The reasons behind the Brexit vote involve economic and cultural imbalances due to globalization, policy inadequacies, allegiance to representative democracy, and perceptions of Britain's global role. A significant number of voters may have been fueled by their hate and immigrants. This leads increased discrimination, social exclusion, and a sense of alienation among minority communities. Post-Brexit, fear and hatred towards immigrants can lead to increased hate crimes, physical violence, verbal abuse, and vandalism. Brexit appealed to many people because it would prevent immigrants from entering the UK. Moreover, after the referendum, incidents of violence against minorities in the UK, "go home" graffiti, and "Leave the EU-no more Polish vermin" (Rachael Pells, 2016) cards appeared everywhere. The study by Lulle et al. (2017) found that young EU migrants in London experienced profound emotional responses to Brexit, including sadness, anger, shock, or panic, highlighting the profound impact of Brexit on their sense of belonging and security. Addressing these issues and promoting inclusivity is crucial to preventing further harm and division within society.

#### 4.1 Rhodes Must Fall Movement

The Rhodes Must Fall Movement (2015) represented another significant development in the domain of race-based politics of the present-day British University and stands as a pivotal historical context for the current paper. The Rhodes Must Fall Movement was a student-led protest movement that originated at the University of Cape Town in South Africa in 2015. The movement called for the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes, a British colonialist and mining magnate, from the university campus. The statue was seen as a symbol of white supremacy and colonial oppression, and the movement aimed to address the legacy of colonialism and promote decolonization within the university curriculum and spaces. The movement spread all over Europe and the United Kingdom. The impact of the Rhodes Must Fall Movement on British universities was significant. It sparked a wider conversation about the presence of colonial symbols and the lack of diversity in higher education institutions. Many students and faculty members began questioning the Eurocentric curriculum and demanding a more inclusive and diverse representation of voices and perspectives.

#### 4.2 Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter Movement, rooted in the racial inequality and systemic oppression faced by black communities in the United States, gained momentum in 2013 following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer. It has since grown in strength and influence, challenging not only the criminal justice system but also broader structures of power that perpetuate racial injustice. The movement has

shed light on deep-rooted inequalities in housing, education, healthcare, and employment, highlighting the urgent need for systemic change. The movement has united individuals from all walks of life, transcending racial boundaries and uniting people in the fight against racism and inequality. In Britain, the movement has gained significant traction and sparked important conversations about racism and inequality. In the UK, this entailed protests across the country and in one instance in Bristol the toppling of the statue of a slave trader, Edward Colston, and throwing him into the harbor. It has highlighted the disproportionate rates of police brutality and discrimination faced by black communities, prompting calls for accountability and reform within law enforcement. Additionally, Black Lives Matter has highlighted the need for increased representation and inclusivity in all aspects of British society, from politics to the media. As the movement grows, it is inspiring individuals and organizations to actively work towards dismantling systemic racism and creating a more equitable future for all.

#### *4.3 Politics of Affirmative Action in US/UK Universities*

Affirmative action is a set of policies and actions aimed at promoting equal opportunities for historically marginalized groups, such as women, racial minorities, and individuals with disabilities. It aims to address systemic discrimination and inequality by actively promoting their inclusion and representation in various areas, such as education, employment, and public contracting. Recent affirmative action in US higher education has included race-conscious admissions policies, which consider an applicant's race or ethnicity when making admissions decisions. Affirmative action policies can create a perception of unfair advantage, causing stigmatization and resentment among those who believe they were denied opportunities due to their race or ethnicity. The mismatch effect suggests that placing students in highly competitive academic environments can result in feelings of inadequacy and reduced self-confidence, ultimately hindering their overall success. The US Supreme Court issued a historic verdict on affirmative action on 29th June 2023, states that the race in college admissions to be invalid and ineffective. This matter involved two legal actions commenced by Students for Fair Admissions, a conservative organization, against Harvard College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The group asserted that these universities displayed prejudice against Asian American applicants by favoring other racial groups. The Supreme Court contended that the universities failed to demonstrate that their use of race was meticulously crafted to serve a compelling interest in diversity and that they relied on racial generalizations and quotas. Additionally, the Court asserted that the universities lacked substantive benchmarks for their implementation of race and that they could accomplish diversity through race-neutral methodologies. This verdict was extensively perceived as a setback to affirmative action programs, which aim to enhance opportunities for historically underrepresented minorities in higher education. Simultaneously, the ruling sparked disagreement and discussion among legal scholars, educators, students, and civil rights advocates. Some contended that the decision would undermine diversity and inclusivity, while also negatively impacting the quality of education and society. Conversely, others argued that the ruling would advance meritocracy and equity, thus eliminating racial bias and preferences.

The banning of books is another notable concern in the United States that is connected to matters of social justice. The correlation between the proscribed literature and affirmative action in America is deeply ingrained in their influence on facilitating discourse regarding the right to express oneself freely and social fairness. The book that banned in the United States and other nations has been affected by numerous elements, including political goals, social movements, and cultural changes. Books that tackle subjects like sexuality, racism, gender, religion, violence, and drugs are among the most frequently targeted by book bans. In some regions of America, the book "Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism, and You" is prohibited by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X Kendi (Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, 2023). The book pushes readers to see and reject racism in them and in society by charting the development of racist ideologies and laws in America from the colonial era to the present. Renowned writer and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates has penned many books about the history and experience of Black Americans. His autobiography *Between the World and Me* (2015) is a letter to his kid exposing the brutality and bigotry that exist in the United States. His graphic novel, *The Black Panther: A Nation under Our Feet* (2020) has drawn criticism for having explicit sexual, violent, and profanity-filled material. The book is based on the Marvel superhero character and examines the political and socioeconomic challenges of a fictitious African nation. By restricting access to certain books, book bans hinder intellectual growth and cultural enrichment, violating the constitutional rights and human dignity of African American individuals.

#### **5. Pioneers of Race-Activism in Post-War Britain**

Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, and David Olusoga argue that racism is a systemic issue deeply embedded in British institutions and society. They believe that dismantling racial inequality requires a comprehensive understanding of its historical roots and ongoing efforts to challenge and disrupt racist ideologies and structures. Hall, a founding figure of British Cultural Studies, is recognized for his extensive academic work on race, ethnicity, and identity. His work reflects his experiences as a person of color living in a predominantly white society. The Birmingham School's perspective on politics and culture developed over time in response to complex events in British post-war history, including the emergence of the anti-Stalinist New Left, adult education, mass communication, and increasing diversity. Hall's most famous works include analyses of how meanings are transmitted and received in the media and how identities intersect with dominant ways of seeing. His work also examines the global neoliberalism that began under Margaret Thatcher's rule.

Paul Gilroy, a prominent figure in British cultural studies, has argued that white men often overlook the role of race in their analyses of nationalism and fascism, perpetuating a form of white liberalism. He advocates for intervention and transformation in cultural studies, drawing from Frantz Fanon's decolonial future and emphasizing the importance of black futurities for everyone. Gilroy's work has reshaped debates on racism, nationalism, and multiculturalism, contributing to the development of postcolonial cultural theory and highlighting the complexities of race and ethnicity in a globalized context. David Olusoga, a celebrity Afro-British historian and

broadcaster, has published secret government documents in his book “The Unwanted: The Secret Windrush Files”, exposing systemic racism and discrimination faced by black British immigrants. His research and activism have sparked conversations about race, immigration, and identity in Britain, prompting a reevaluation of the country's colonial legacy (Amelia Gentleman, 2019).

## 6. Conceptual Framework

Derrick Bell is often regarded as one of the founding figures of CRT. His work, including the concept of “interest convergence” explored how racial advances for Black Americans tended to occur only when they aligned with the interest of White Americans, Cleveland (2013). Kimberle Crenshaw subsequently introduced the concept of intersectionality within CRT. Critical race theory is a conceptual framework that examines how race and racism intersect with other forms of oppression and power structures in society. It seeks to understand how racism is not just an individual act but is also embedded in social structures and institutions. Critical Race Theory (CRT) came into being in the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its emergence was a reaction to the inadequacies of conventional civil rights approaches in tackling systemic racism. Critical race theory originated in the United States; however, it can be applied and adapted to analyze racial dynamics in other countries, including the United Kingdom. Much like in the United States, the UK has faced issues of institutional racism. CRT can be used to analyze how institutions in the UK, including education, criminal justice, healthcare and perpetuate racial disparities and inequalities.

The novel “On Beauty” by Zadie Smith can be analyzed through various frameworks, including Critical Race Theory, Afro-pessimism, and the concept of color blindness, to understand and critique institutional racism in the novel. Kimberle Crenshaw subsequently introduced the concept of intersectionality within CRT. She emphasized that race cannot be considered in isolation from other factors like gender and class. Intersectionality has become a fundamental concept in understanding the complex nature of discrimination, Rouse (2022). Afro-pessimism constitutes yet another critical theoretical framework that investigates the entrenched anti-Black attitudes prevalent within contemporary societies. Afro-pessimism may not have a single renowned theoretician, but certain intellectuals and academics have played a significant role in shaping and disseminating its ideas. Notable figures within the Afro-pessimistic discourse include, Frank Wilderson is known as a significant figure in the progression of Afro-pessimism. Frank Wilderson’s literary work, “Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid”, alongside a range of scholarly essays, has played a significant role in explicating the concept of Afro-pessimism and its condemnation of anti-Blackness, Sexton (2012).

Color blindness has similarly been both a progressive ideal and a topic of criticism in discussions about race and racism, particularly in the United States. It has been both a progressive ideal and a subject of critique in conversations centered on race and racism, particularly within the United States. Its development is inseparably linked to the broader history of racial equality and civil rights. This idea was associated with attempts to combat racial segregation and discrimination. The concept of color blindness continues to be a subject of discussion in various fields such as education, employment, and social justice. Through the implementation of these frameworks, readers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how institutional racism is depicted and scrutinized in the novel “On Beauty”. Each framework provides a distinctive viewpoint into the intricate and multifarious methods by which race and racism are interwoven into the very fabric of the society and institutions depicted within the novel.

## 7. Discussion and Analysis of Institutional Racism in *On Beauty*

“On Beauty” was published in 2005. The examination of family, race, academia, and cultural identity are just a few of the complex themes explored in this novel. It is set primarily in a university town located in New England, United States. The novel examines how the personal and the political intersect and the different cultural backgrounds of the characters affect their relationships and values. Smith’s novel deeply delves into the intricate racial concerns that exist in American universities. Moreover, it establishes a thematic and philosophical connection with British universities while thoroughly exploring the multicultural and fragmented world inhabited by the characters. This serves as a means of emphasizing the hybridized nature of English culture within both the American and British academic settings. “On Beauty” provides a critical analysis of the neoliberal American university and its impact on aesthetics and beauty.

Another area of academic life that the novel explores is the intellectual debates and differing ideologies that occur within academic circles. Howard Belsey and Monty Kipps are characters that embody contrasting viewpoints on art, politics, and race, which highlights the intellectual diversity present in universities. “Maybe they even knew something of the culture war shaping up on the campus. Two days ago Kipps had argued strongly against Howard’s Affirmative Action committee in the Wellington Herald” (OB, 156). These characters serve as vehicles for exploring various viewpoints on art, culture, race, and academia. Their differences add depth to the novel’s exploration of intellectual and cultural themes, making “On Beauty” a thought-provoking work that delves into the complexities of academic life and the clash of ideas within higher education. The novel briefly touches on student life and activism within the university setting as well. The daughter of Monty, Victoria Kipps takes an active role in student activism, reflecting the culture of student involvement and protest movements prevalent in modern British institutions. Zadie Smith novel “On beauty” goes beyond addressing the institutional racism and also serves as a lens through which readers can gain insight into the historical and ongoing challenges faced by Black individuals in the field of the education. The novel explains about the historical legacies that continue to shape the present-day educational experiences and the importance to address these issues to achieve greater equality and inclusivity. The following passage from on Beauty bears witness to this claim.

Here is a young African-American lady,’ explained Monty, bringing his signet-ringed right hand down solidly on the arm of the Victorian chair, ‘who has no college education and no college experience, who did not graduate from her high

school, who yet believes that somehow the academic world of Wellington owes her a place within its hallowed walls – and why? As restitution for her own or her family's – misfortunes. Actually, the problem is larger than that. These children are being encouraged to claim reparation for history itself. They are being used as political pawns – they are being fed lies. It depresses me terribly (OB, 365).

In addition, the novel "On Beauty" provides a fictional lens through which readers can explore the border issues and dynamics that exist within the universities, particularly for black students and the themes used in the novel resonate with real-life experiences and challenges faced by students in British universities. Though this could be regarded as a fictional scenario, this state of affairs lend credence to the untold miseries of institutional racism that happen even today. For instance, the article by Boliver (2014) entitled "Hard evidence: Why aren't there more black British students at elite universities?" illuminates the real-life experiences and challenges faced by students in British Universities. Such an illtreatment triggers needless anxiety that could potentially result in psychosomatic disorders (M & G, 2023). This article unearths the humongous ethnic discrimination meted out on the black British students in the United Kingdom's most prestigious universities, notwithstanding their greater propensity to enroll in universities as compared to their white British peers. It draws attention to the glaring divergence between the number of black male youth incarcerated and the number of black male students admitted to Russell Group institutions, accentuating the urgency to rectify this incongruity.

Similarly, echos of racial prejudice and bias is also found reverberating throughout the novel. Kiki, an individual of African American descent, is confronted with a multitude of manifestations of racial prejudice and bias. The character of Monty serves as a representation of the intricate nature of racial identity. As a learned individual of Black British descent who relocates to the United States, he grapples with matters about identity, privilege, and belonging, delving into themes about racial identity that are central to Critical Race Theory. The ensuing excerpt from the novel is a standing testimony to the stand. In the novel "On Beauty", Zora writes about her thoughts in the newspaper, Today's title, "This Speaker Believes that Wellington Should Put Its Money Where Its Academic Mouth Is",

That is the question I put before all fair-minded Wellingtonians this day. Are we truly steadfast in our commitment to the equality of opportunity or not? Do we presume to speak of progress when within these very walls our policy remains so shamefully diffident? Are we satisfied with the African-American youth of this fair city (OB, 402).

Subsequently, element of Color blindness which is a distinct form of institutional racism is equally found evident in the novel. In Smith's works, color blindness serves as a metaphor for a broader theme of misunderstanding or miscommunication. It symbolizes the difficulties that can arise in relationships, whether they be romantic, familial, or societal when individuals are unable to truly see or understand one another. By exploring this condition, Smith prompts readers to question the limitations of perception and the barriers that can hinder genuine connection and empathy. Color blindness becomes a powerful tool to explore the complexities of human relationships and the challenges that arise when people are unable to fully understand each other's perspectives. Through her evocative storytelling, Smith encourages readers to reflect on the importance of empathy and the need to bridge the gaps that can separate us to foster deeper connections.

The characters Zora Belsey, Prof. Claire Malcolm, Carl, and others plan to testify against this policy during the meeting. When Zora notices that underprivileged colored children who ought to be in school are instead living on the streets, she cries out in agony and asks Zora loudly, "What are we doing here if we can't offer the huge resources of this institution to those, who need it but can't afford it?" (OB, 263) the reason behind this situation is that the color people not have constant educational sector because they can't pay it. Howard Belsey attempts to assume a color-blind perspective, based on the assumption that it promotes equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their racial origin. Howard, as a white British academic married to a Black woman, Kiki, often attempts to adopt a color-blind perspective. He believes that he treats everyone equally regardless of race. However, his well-intentioned efforts at color blindness often lead to misunderstandings and insensitivity. For example, he struggles to understand Kiki's experiences with racism and occasionally dismisses her concerns.

## 8. Conclusion

Zadie Smith's novel "On Beauty" delves into transatlantic themes of institutional racism, exploring the experiences of characters from diverse racial backgrounds and their interactions with institutions such as universities. Through this exploration, Smith highlights how racism can become embedded within institutions and impact individuals' lives. The portrayal of characters in "On Beauty" by Zadie Smith is multifaceted and nuanced, extending beyond the struggles of black students. Although the novel portrays the difficulties encountered by individuals of color, it also delves into a more extensive examination of identity, connections, and the intricacies of human interactions. Rather than solely focusing on suffering, Smith aims to convey a complex range of emotions and experiences.

Zadie Smith's novel "On Beauty" has contributed to discussions surrounding contemporary social and cultural issues. However, her work On Beauty has some limitations, in that; this chosen novel might resonate with various other movements. Smith did not necessarily intend to be a pioneer for specific protest movements. The novel's portrayal of racial dynamics within British academia offers only a limited perspective through which readers can analyze and discuss the broader issues of systemic racism, privilege, and identity within educational institutions.

Zadie Smith's examination of various themes such as race, identity, cultural clashes, and social dynamics in her literary works has resulted in extensive discussions on these topics. Zadie Smith's perspectives resonate deeply with individuals and groups who advocate for social change. Authors like Zadie Smith enrich the wider cultural debate by addressing issues through their art, which encourages readers to

reflect on their beliefs, values, and societal structures. They add to the collective conversation and inspire critical thinking about the world we live in. While "On Beauty" is a work of fiction, its themes resonate with real-world issues that are experienced globally, particularly the dynamics of institutional racism. By addressing these themes in the context of the novel, Zadie Smith contributes to raising awareness and fostering discussions about these critical global issues. Reading "On Beauty" in the context of 21st-century British universities presents a valuable opportunity to engage with ongoing discourse and challenges within higher education, particularly about issues of diversity, representation, and inclusivity.

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