

**‘Success in Britain comes with an awful lot of small print’:  
Greg Rusedski and the precarious performance of national  
identity**

BLACK, Jack <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1595-5083>>, FLETCHER, Thomas  
and LAKE, Robert J

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/26168/>

---

This document is the author deposited version. You are advised to consult the  
publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

**Published version**

BLACK, Jack, FLETCHER, Thomas and LAKE, Robert J (2020). ‘Success in Britain  
comes with an awful lot of small print’: Greg Rusedski and the precarious  
performance of national identity. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1-20.

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

# 'Success in Britain comes with an awful lot of small print': Greg Rusedski and the precarious performance of national identity

Jack Black<sup>1</sup>  | Thomas Fletcher<sup>2</sup>  | Robert J Lake<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Academy of Sport and Physical Activity, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK

<sup>2</sup>School of Events, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

<sup>3</sup>Department of Sport Science, Douglas College, New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada

## Correspondence

Jack Black, Senior Lecturer, Academy of Sport and Physical Activity, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK.

Email: j.black@shu.ac.uk

## Abstract

Sport continues to be one of the primary means through which notions of Englishness and Britishness are constructed, contested, and resisted. The legacy of the role of sport in the colonial project of the British Empire, combined with more recent connections between sport and far right fascist/nationalist politics, has made the association between Britishness, Englishness, and ethnic identity(ies) particularly intriguing. In this paper, these intersections are explored through British media coverage of the Canadian-born, British tennis player, Greg Rusedski. This coverage is examined through the lens of 'performativity,' as articulated by Judith Butler. Through a critical application of Butler's ideas, the ways in which the media seek to recognise and normalise certain identities, while problematising and excluding others, can be more fully appreciated. Thus, it was *within* newspaper framings of Rusedski that hegemonic notions of White Englishness could be performed, maintained, and embedded.

## KEYWORDS

Britishness/Englishness, Greg Rusedski, Judith Butler, performativity, Tim Henman, Whiteness

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2020 The Authors. Nations and Nationalism published by Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism and John Wiley & Sons Ltd

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Sport continues to be an important means through which notions of Englishness and Britishness are constructed, contested, and resisted. For most, these identities are taken for granted, part of the quotidian and iconography of everyday life. Because our sense of nationhood seems so obvious and natural, it is often difficult to conceptualise our sense of self without reference to some idea of national identity. The very 'essence' of national identity has at its heart the demarcation of boundaries, between 'us' and 'them.' Indeed, being seen to belong to a national collective privileges some groups at the expense of others (Poulton, 2016; Skey, 2013). Increasingly, work on belonging and national identity has focused on those groups that are frequently excluded from dominant narratives of nation (Black, 2016a; Burdsey, 2016; Dashper, Fletcher, & Long, 2019; Fletcher, 2011, 2012a, 2015; Fletcher & Lusted, 2017; Fletcher & Spracklen, 2014; Fletcher & Swain, 2016; Ratna, 2014; Whigham & Black, 2019). Findings have shown a consistent pattern whereby Black and minoritised ethnic groups (more often than not defined by their phenotypical appearance as being 'non-White') have been interpreted as a threat to a dominant White, middle-class, 'English' culture (Black, 2016b, 2019; Fletcher & Hylton, 2016, 2018; Fletcher & Spracklen, 2014; Gibbons & Malcolm, 2017).<sup>1</sup> In particular, the legacy of the role of sport in the colonial project of the British Empire, combined with more recent connections between sport and far right fascist/nationalist politics, has made the association between Englishness and ethnic identity(ies) particularly intriguing (Fletcher & Lusted, 2017). At the same time, questions of identity, nationalism, 'race,' and migration, as well as concerns over social cohesion and inclusion, have been central to British government sport policies for over 40 years (Skey, 2013). More recent discussions have considered whether or not the United Kingdom is and should be a multicultural society and the extent to which understandings of 'race' and racial difference structure this debate and the place of sport within it (Carrington, Fletcher, & McDonald, 2016). It is perhaps surprising, then, that the body of research that explores the nexus of Englishness, race, ethnicity, and sport remains underdeveloped.

In what follows, these intersections are explored through media coverage of the Canadian-born, British tennis player, Greg Rusedski; beginning with his decision to represent Britain in 1995 until his retirement from tennis in 2007. With regard to this coverage, Butler's (1997, 1999) notion of 'performativity' is drawn upon. Throughout Butler's career, continued attention has been given to the relationship between subjectivity, power, and identity, with specific consideration given to gender. Developing upon work which has critically considered 'Whiteness' (e.g., Frankenburg, 1993; Garner, 2007; Hylton, 2019; McIntosh, 1988), we employ Butler's (1997, 1999) notion of performativity in order to elaborate upon the contingency of those identities considered 'outside' social norms, with particular attention given to those who are frequently considered to be 'outside' national norms. Here, media coverage of Rusedski is used to examine how he attempted to 'perform' his Britishness and how such a performance conflicted with hegemonic forms of Englishness as well as common English-British confluences. Specifically, this will be used to draw attention to the contingency and precarity that underscored Rusedski's media framing.

Furthermore, given the current political situation in the United Kingdom, differentiation is required for us to correctly examine national identity in contemporary British sport. Demands for autonomy from Scotland and Wales, rising English nationalism, ongoing sectarian conflicts in Northern Ireland, and constant debate surrounding its 'backstop' during Brexit negotiations bring into question whether a single 'Britishness' has ever been more vulnerable or of less relevance than today (Institute for Government, 2019). In what follows, we begin by contextualising the relationship between national identity and 'the other.'

## 2 | NATIONAL IDENTITY, 'RACE'/ETHNICITY, AND THE CONTINGENT OTHER

Smith (1995) has made a powerful case that all nations are constituted by core 'ethnies,' around which may cohere other ethnic groups. Such core ethnicities lend their distinctive character to the nation and, whatever their numbers,

it is they who tend to define the character of the nation and who provide it with its sense of meaning and purpose (Kumar, 2006). In part, these discussions often centre on a process of national identity formation that frequently concerns itself with working out who is included and who is excluded. Indeed, as Smith argued, ethnic sentiments of collective belonging that enter into public life inevitably breed exclusiveness and intolerance, and therefore, lead to conflict. These ethnic sentiments require regular reinvention and, clearly, 'race,' and ethnicity are likely to play a defining role in this process. For Skey (2013, p.42), while particular national signifiers, such as places, people, or symbols (like sport), may be viewed by a substantial majority as largely axiomatic, the questions of 'who' or 'what' belongs to the nation and 'why' are always part of an ongoing process of contestation: 'After all, these choices by definition exclude other possible selections, and therefore the debate about what it means to be an authentic member of the nation both reflect and constitutes wider relations of power.'

Indeed, national cultures are not repositories of shared symbols that the entire population accesses with equal ease. Rather, they are to be approached as sites of contestation where competition over definition takes place. As Bhabha (1990) states, the 'great influx of ex-colonials, immigrants ... and asylum seekers has eroded the bases of traditional narratives and images of a homogenous national identity, revealing their fragmented and hybrid character. Today, every collective cultural identity has become plural' (cited in Gibbons & Malcolm, 2017, p.7). Many Western societies are reluctant to accept serious levels of cultural difference because that difference is feared to dislodge the dominant White culture. To that end, Skey (2013, p.70) suggests there is a 'managed limit' to the tolerance of difference and otherness; 'these "others" must be carefully positioned or domesticated if they are not to threaten the homely space of the nation.' In other words, for those (principally White) communities for whom national belonging is taken-for-granted, members of Black and minoritised ethnic groups may represent a significant source of ontological insecurity.

At the same time, there is a danger of assuming that difficulties over national belonging are confined only to 'visible' Black and minoritised ethnic groups. While we would caution against any argument suggesting that being White does not equate to some degree of privilege in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, we also advocate that being White does not guarantee privilege in the same way, or to the same extent as other White people. Within the White racialised hierarchy there are numerous strata with varying degrees of acceptability, or 'shades of White' (Long & Hylton, 2002), such that some of those who appear phenotypically White, including Irish, Jewish, and those from new migrant communities, such as Eastern Europeans, continue to occupy marginal positions.

Therefore, it is apparent that, when determining who belongs to 'the nation,' the concern may not necessarily be 'otherness' per se, but rather, the extent of that 'otherness,' coupled with an (in)ability to manage or minimise it. It is our contention that there are degrees of acceptability which, to some extent, define an upper threshold of acceptable difference (Fletcher, 2012b; Fletcher & Spracklen, 2014). In order to contextually locate these differences, we can turn to the relationship between sport, English/British identity, and the British Empire.

### 3 | SPORT, EMPIRE, AND ENGLISHNESS

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a unitary state that encompasses several 'home nations' (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) with many distinct and intersecting ethnic identities. Any attempt to discuss a singular notion of Englishness—in whatever context—is contested, due to the ambiguity, multiple meanings, and disputed nature of such a concept. As Kumar (2006: 427) asserts, there is 'a conspicuous absence in the English case of any sustained tradition of reflection on English nationalism and English national identity.' Instead, 'When the question of English national identity became a matter of public debate in the 1990s, it was often remarked how little there was to go on' (Kumar, 2006, p.6). In part, this lack of any significant 'national attribute' can be explained by the fact that the differentiation between England/English and Britain/British is regularly (con)fused, with the terms often being conflated and applied interchangeably (Gibbons & Malcolm, 2017).

In part, this conflation is one that is brought to bear in discussions on sport, Britain, and the British Empire (Black, 2015; Gibbons & Malcolm, 2017; Whigham & Black, 2018). Notably, while sport is widely considered to have been central to the expansion of the British Empire, this expansion, and the role of sport in this, was largely commanded by a hegemonically dominant English culture. As noted by Malcolm (2012, p.51) and others (Fletcher, 2015; Fletcher & Walle, 2015; Whigham & Black, 2018), in order to fully account for the relationship between sport and colonisation we must therefore also consider the process of 'internal colonisation' whereby 'the English component is increasingly considered the primary source of attachment' (Gibbons & Malcolm, 2017, p11).

Historically, sport was the domain of the White English elite. Their agenda at the outset was to export the laws and codes of their games, first, to the colonies, and then the rest of the world. Hence, a set of English/British laws would accompany teams and individuals touring the colonies, and matches would be played with the desired etiquette and civilisation of the British (Williams, 2001). Thus, sport has been described as having an educative role within the Empire (Malcolm, 2012), providing a form of 'colonial tutelage.'

In the United Kingdom, sport developed most significantly during the Victorian era. It was viewed as an institution wholly symbolic of Empire, bourgeois English nationalism, and elitism. The English regarded sport as an extension of the nation and as a theatre for articulating their cultural supremacy. For Williams (2001), sport was an institution expressing a distinctively English set of ideologies. It was important for understanding how the English imagined themselves, inculcating the qualities of temperament, strategy, diligence, hard work, pride, respect, and 'manliness.' These 'English' qualities were very specifically imagined as idyllic, unspoiled, and conspicuously White, and thus their sporting performances became 'intimately bound up with notions of white supremacy' (Williams, 2001, p.18).

Indeed, underlying the imperial agenda of cultural homogenisation was the assumption that White populations were more advanced, civilised, and rational than other groups within the colonies, as articulated by Crabbe and Wagg (2005: 210) :

In the racialised culture of this empire, white settlers ruled indigenous "coloured" populations, and part of the pretext for this political arrangement was the supposedly greater rationality of white people, against the sensuality, lack of emotional restraint or intelligence of the "native."

For Crabbe and Wagg, the importance of these conceptualisations is not in their legitimacy, but the Anglocentric determination of acceptable 'sporting' attributes and, perhaps more importantly, their presence within a discourse defined along the lines of 'race' and nation. Within this discourse, White elites have engaged in emphasising their inherent domination and 'authenticity,' while other ethnic groups compete over their right to occupy this traditionally White cultural space.

Drawing from the above discussion, the following sections will consider how such forms of 'authenticity' can be considered via the work of Judith Butler and her account of identity (Butler, 1997, 1999, 2005, 2009; Butler & Spivak, 2009). Specifically, these sections will seek to examine how the performance of certain national codes prescribes a form of regulated exclusion which, though ontologically unstable, works to both maintain and uphold hegemonic conceptions of what constitutes national identity (Calhoun, 1997; Edensor, 2002). Notably, these forms of regulation will be considered in relation to the press' framing of Greg Rusedski.

## 4 | BUTLER AND PERFORMATIVITY: REPETITION, CONTINGENCY, AND POWER

Drawn from her study of gender and sexuality in the widely acclaimed, '*Gender Trouble*,' Butler's (1999) work offers a Hegelian-inspired, Foucauldian application of how the self is defined and, more importantly, how this self-definition is performed in accordance with social norms and values, which constitute the subject's formation, as well as its

possible inclusion and exclusion within certain social contexts. Specifically, in the case of gender, Butler's work 'moves away from settled, essentialised notions of gender and the stable subject in favour of a more fluid, complex account of identity and subjectivity' (McQueen, 2016, p.75). We are particularly concerned with exploring the contingency and precarity of identity and, for this, Butler's notion of performativity must be underscored, as it feeds into, and helps to articulate the idea of, contingency.

## 4.1 | Performativity

In outlining Butler's understanding of 'performance,' we turn to Blackshaw's (2017) helpful comparisons with the work of Goffman ([1956]1971) and his considerations on the significance of performativity as it pertains to the presentation of self. First, Blackshaw (2017: 120) notes how Goffman's understanding of performativity, as detailed in his 'front-stage' and 'back-stage' personas, is not just concerned with how one performs 'the self' but also how 'performativity comprises, not merely singular acts in order to perform a "personal front", but also established or institutionalized roles.' Indeed, while Goffman's work considers how such 'established' performances prove constitutive of our identity, Blackshaw (2017: 120) adds the following:

Goffman's understanding of the self is "fixed" and "deep" rather than "liquid" and "aesthetic"; he constructs an understanding of the self at the "centre" of things and this understanding is underpinned by a foundationalism which, in Butler's terminology, "presumes, fixes and constrains" the individual subject.

In other words, in the case of Butler (1999), identities are not merely 'masks,' which are then socially acquired and performed, rendered deep within our individual psyches, as Goffman would argue; rather, our identities are repeatedly performed, which helps to bring them into being. While Blackshaw (2017) applies Butler's understanding to his work on leisure identities, what we can glean from his comparisons is how Butler's (1997, 1999) notion of performativity relies upon a number of 'repeated stylisations,' which privilege the experiences that come with such performances, and which locate these experiences as we learn to be.

Scholarly work on national identity has adopted Butler's notion of performativity in order to consider how national identities are socially constructed through forms of practice that serve to constitute 'the nation' but which also work to 'nationalise' the subject (Lavi, 2013). This can include partaking in national occasions, events, and holidays, as well as singing anthems or waving/flying flags of a nation. However, while 'The insights arising from the performance theory suggest that national identity, just like gender identity, is the result of repeated acts, lacking an ontological origin,' it is the lack of such an origin, which results in national identity failing to 'achieve [any] stability and coherence "once and for all"' (Lavi, 2013, p.699). It is our contention that this lack of stability may usefully be extended via Butler's attention to contingency and precarity.

## 4.2 | Contingency and precarity

Key to Butler's (1997, 1999, 2005) understanding of the human condition is a move away from structuralist accounts of power and its effects on the subject towards a consideration of power as it is repeated through a contingent range of sites, strategies, and struggles. Consequently, while accepting that the individual is subject to relations of power that serve to both make, but also constrain, the subject, Butler (2005) infers a level of agency from which, through a performative politics, the subject can deploy a range of repertoires that seek to challenge established norms. More importantly, this politics is levelled with a sense of contingency, in that, one is required to continually negotiate their performances of identity, which, as our previous discussion on 'race' and ethnic identity suggested, can help highlight

'way[s] of conducting, acting, dressing, speaking, being and living with and through a racialized body' (Hylton & Lawrence, 2015, p.769).

More recently, Butler (2004) extended this line of enquiry to include the notion of 'precarity.' While acknowledging that human interdependence resides in forms of precariousness—we are, as individuals, interdependent on those around us—it is the social prescribing of certain norms and values, which both privileges and marginalises particular individuals/groups with a level of 'precarity' (Butler, 2004). Significantly, however, Butler does not refuse such forms of precarity, but rather sees a form of egalitarianism inherent to the precariousness that humans share (Butler, 2004).

To this end, if we extend Butler's ideas on contingency and precarity further, it is evident that her notion of the subject is one grounded in a certain vulnerability, yet one in which our 'vulnerability consists in and is comprised of our radical relationality' (Edkins, 2006, p.110). Whereas the third section of Butler's *'Gender Trouble'* (1999) (*'Subversive Bodily Acts'*) seeks to apply this 'radical' form in order to provide the subject with a positive significance (Žižek, 1998), it is important to highlight that such 'relationality' is grounded in performances that are centred on 'the reproduction of [social] norms' (Butler, 2009, p.x). As noted, this confers a level of repetition on those *particular* norms that enable and constitute the subject, via performances that are reiterated through an indeterminable set of social norms that aim for a sense of determinedness (Butler, 1993). It is this inherent incoherence that opens these norms to processes of making and remaking, but which can also reveal a level of contestation. Indeed, while 'Such norms are made and re-made ... sometimes *they enter into crisis in the remaking*' (Butler, 2009, p.xi [italics added]).

Butler's notion of the subject proves illustrative of the extent to which the subject is continually being made, remade and 'worked on,' all the time being unsure of what is required of them—the correct way to act, speak and be—yet, nonetheless, remaking the self as it is orientated in accordance with social norms that can be challenged and put under 'crisis.' It is here that we wish to examine how this orientation is reflected in ways of being that are both contingent and, more specifically, repeatedly reproduced amidst social norms that, in the case of both national (especially 'English') and ethnic identities (especially Whiteness), are frequently believed to be under 'crisis' (Black, 2015, 2016b, 2018; Fletcher & Hylton, 2016, 2018; Gilroy, 2004). Of course, context is important here, given the fluid and dynamic nature of identity construction and reformation. While Black and minoritised ethnic groups might share a range of experiences, we would caution against any attempt to essentialise and homogenise these experiences.

### 4.3 | Applying Butler

As noted in the previous section, there are ways of being (or at least, seen as being) national, indeed, of being 'other,' that complicate assessments of how identity is constructed and, more importantly, bounded, to certain requirements. This is particularly difficult for those considered to be 'outside' the nation as it is they *who subsequently have to navigate these difficulties*. Yet, as Butler would suggest, it is this sense of vulnerability that underscores *all* subjectivities, with a 'proliferation of subjectivities' emerging from contingent forms of hegemonic power (Klement, 2014, p.23). Indeed, as Hall (1990, p.225) asserts, identities are 'subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power.' This is echoed by Valluvan (2018, p.442), who notes that identity 'is not primarily a question of what you are or what you opt to be, but a question of what you are allowed or required to be.' If we consider that within contemporary society the media can help distinguish between who does and does not belong, then an opportunity exists to examine Butler's ideas in accordance with an interrogation of those media discourses that seek to specifically exclude certain individuals whose 'identity' proves problematic. We argue that, through a critical application of Butler's ideas, we can more fully appreciate the ways in which the media seek to recognise and normalise certain identities, alongside those examples that suggest an exclusionary potential. Therefore, we ask, how does the media's recognition of a certain sporting athlete frame them in accordance with preceding social norms, in this case, those associated with 'the nation,' and on what grounds does this recognition reveal a level of contingency in media framings of 'the nation' and national identity?

In what follows, we offer a critical application of Butler's ideas by examining how they are reflected in British newspaper coverage of Greg Rusedski. We draw specific attention to how press coverage of Rusedski was contingently forged across a number of intersecting discourses concerning his identity and eligibility to represent 'Britain.' Moreover, while we remain open to Butler's fluid account of subjectivity, what we hope to elaborate upon and, to a certain extent, critique, is how such contingency was constituted in media discourses that proved critical of this performance. We believe that this presents a certain contention in Butler's work, especially with regards to the extent that her account of performativity relies upon a certain level of knowing or socially learning *which performances* to enact in order to be both accepted by, but also, challenging of, hegemonic norms. Within the context of national and ethnic identities, it is in this way that we believe a better understanding of the relationship between contingency and performativity can be achieved.

## 5 | METHODOLOGY

The approach adopted in this paper is broadly congruent with previous British sport-media narrative analyses (e.g., Griggs & Gibbons, 2014; Malcolm, 2012; Poulton & Maguire, 2012). It provides a discourse analysis, uncovering the dominant narratives expressed through articles from the British broadsheet press. As Bignell (1997) contends, news discourse consists of ideological representations, selecting the topics to be reported, and setting the significant terms. These ideological representations underpin the dominant frames through which sporting performances can be contextualised at particular historical moments. Sporting performances and other events in an athlete's life provide fertile ground to draw broader ideological insights into representations of the nation, alongside highlighting also structures of class, gender, and ethnicity.

This study draws from a comprehensive examination of newspaper articles featuring commentary on Greg Rusedski in the leading English/British (London-based) broadsheets throughout his professional career, namely *Times/Sunday Times*, *Guardian/Observer*, *Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph*, *Independent/Independent on Sunday*, *Financial Times*, and *Daily Mail*.<sup>2</sup> Being a broadly middle-class sport, it was the broadsheets that seemed, perhaps naturally, to take more of an interest in tennis and in critical discussions of Rusedski's identity. These articles were obtained digitally, through InfoTrac, Newsstand International, and other digital repositories. All articles featuring Rusedski's name were initially examined (over 1,000), but of these, approximately 350 included meaningful data related to the framing of Rusedski's national identity, and so were shortlisted for detailed analysis.<sup>3</sup> Open coding was used to group relevant findings from the text of these sources, and repeated rereading and analysis of the data allowed for the emergence of several themes, outlined below. Of most interest were detailed and in-depth feature articles and more critical pieces discussing aspects of Rusedski's identity and/or personal life, but the frequency of these articles emerging was inconsistent throughout his career.

The themes that emerged were often located within or contextualised in relation to one or several specific periods of his career, when the media took a heightened interest in Rusedski, and this often coincided with critical questioning of his British identity. Four major themes were identified: (a) querying Rusedski's British identity and motives for relocating, seen mostly during the period of his initial move to Britain and his first Wimbledon Championships, as a British player, in 1995, but also revisited during two particular lowpoints: his infamous outburst against a Wimbledon umpire in 2003, and his testing positive for Nandrolone in early 2004 and subsequent acquittal; (b) Rusedski coming up short in his rivalry with Henman, seen throughout his career but most frequently during the highpoint in their rivalry from 1997 to 99, when both were in the world's top 20 and competing for the attention of the British press; (c) personal descriptions of Rusedski's accent, personality, appearance, physique, and playing style that positioned him as an outsider, seen throughout his career; (d) Rusedski's dubious British identity, seen throughout his career but heightened during the two lowpoints in 2003 and 2004.

Aligning with these four themes in what follows, first, the framing of Rusedski's decision to represent Great Britain is examined in accordance with previous athletes who followed a similar path. This will highlight how Rusedski



was contingently aligned with a history of 'complication' surrounding Britain's utilisation of 'foreign' athletes. Second, Rusedski was framed as different from his compatriot and archrival Tim Henman as both a player and person. Comparisons of both men elicited wider contentions in the distinction between England and Britain and revealed how these distinctions sought to frame Henman as in some way 'more' English/British than Rusedski. Third, specific attention is afforded to how the media remained critical of Rusedski's ability to 'perform' his British identity, specifically in relation to his framing as an outsider in relation to Henman. Finally, we draw attention to how Rusedski's contingent performances drew upon ethnic narratives that hegemonically framed Rusedski as inferior to Henman.

## 6 | 'THAT GREAT BRITISH TRADITION OF BRINGING FOREIGN BODIES INTO THE BLOOD LINE': CONSTRUCTING RUSEDSKI'S 'FOREIGNNESS'

When considering Britain's imperial past, discussions on who is and who is not British must be understood as heterogeneously framed and decidedly contingent. Before 1981,<sup>4</sup> any individual born within the British Empire/Commonwealth of Nations was considered a British subject and therefore was eligible to compete for Great Britain (or the United Kingdom, depending upon the context) in sporting competitions. In addition, there is Great Britain's multinational state structure, which, in the case of tennis, means that athletes from England, Scotland, and Wales can represent Britain. As a result, despite Rusedski being born in Canada, his English parentage—his mother was born in Yorkshire before relocating to Canada at the age of 4 years—meant that Rusedski could travel—and was very clear to point out that he had always travelled (Dickson, 1997, *Daily Mail*)—under a British passport. Consequently, after clearing the residency requirements stipulated by the International Tennis Federation, Rusedski was afforded eligibility to play for Britain in 1995. It is important to note that tennis players only officially compete for their nation in events like the Davis Cup, Fed Cup, or Olympic Games. While competing at Grand Slams (e.g., Wimbledon) and all other tournaments run by the Association of Tennis Professionals/Women's Tennis Association/International Tennis Federation, they officially represent themselves. However, given the often intense pressure on players to perform during their 'home' contests, and the banal nationalism on display within them—for example, through the invented traditions that celebrate the 'Englishness' of Wimbledon—home players are often considered 'unofficial' national representatives (Lake, 2017a, 2018).

Britain's penchant for drawing upon non-British-born athletes from the Commonwealth was widely noted within newspaper commentaries. Aufenast (1995) highlighted that 'great British tradition of bringing foreign bodies into the blood line to cover our own lack of home-grown talent' (*Independent*), with others noting that Rusedski 'join[ed] a long line of "foreigners"' (Hunt, 2004, *Financial Times*) or 'instant Brits' (Barnes, 1995, *Times*), who had subsequently 'worn British or English jerseys and provoked mixed feelings in the nation's sports fans' (Hunt, 2004, *Financial Times*). While Richards (1998) commented that this was now 'a growing trend in international sport' (*Financial Times*), for Barnes (1995) it was important that Rusedski 'accept that comparisons will be made with Lennox Lewis, another one-time Canadian, Zola Budd, Robin Smith, Graeme Hick, et al' (*Times*).

Accordingly, while Barnes (2007) believed Rusedski was 'a lot more English than Kevin Pietersen' (*Times*)—a South African-born cricketer who opted to play for the English cricket team—in other examples, Rusedski's 'foreignness' remained a prominent feature in the press' coverage, despite Britain's complicated history of including athletes born outside of Britain (Marqusee, 2001; Wagg, 2007). Here, Rusedski was referred to as 'a typically brash North American' (Phillip, 1998, *Daily Telegraph*), a 'lanky Canadian import' (*Independent* 1998), and 'a grinning Canadian chancer' (Barnes, 2003, *Times*) who, despite efforts 'to immerse himself in all things English' maintained a 'whiff of moose and the Mounties about him' (Edmondson, 2005, *Independent*). Accordingly, for many, Rusedski's decision to represent Britain was considered to be a decision based upon financial gain and commercial profit, rather than an 'emotional' or 'national' attachment to England/Britain.

Consequently, in various articles, Rusedski's decision to play for Britain was believed to be attributed to his desire to benefit from the financial gain that he would receive as one of the country's top tennis players—upon his

arrival in May 1995, he immediately became Britain's top-ranked player—as well as the marketing and commercial endorsement incentives that this would induce. Thus, Hayward (1997) referred to Rusedski as a 'mercenary' (*Guardian*), and Speck (2007) noted that many 'had a hard time believing [Rusedski's] motives were dictated by an allegiance to the flag rather than the extra sponsorship contracts on offer' (*Daily Mail*). These questions were compounded by various references to the publication of an autobiography of Pat Cash (a retired Australian tennis player), which noted that 'Rusedski defected to Britain from Canada purely for financial gain' (Harris, 2002, *Independent*). These comments resonated given Cash's elevated status as a former Wimbledon champion and BBC commentator for the Wimbledon Championships and because, for a time, he served as Rusedski's personal coach.

However, what remained significant in these reports was how the 'commercial incentive' was considered antithetical to a specifically 'English' style of athletic performance. Here, attempts to link this 'English' style with a growing resentment towards the professionalisation of sport was noted by Bayley (2003) :

tennis is revealing of the larger current English crisis, as is the BBC's Wimbledon coverage with its crass tabloid sensibility powered by a crude and hopeless nationalism. ... Maybe we should have expected all of this as soon as Greg Rusedski showed off a new sponsor whose logo he wears, along with his heart, on his sleeve. Given the choice from Rupert Murdoch's portfolio of publishing interests, his advisers chose, not The Times Literary Supplement, but ... The Sun. (*Independent on Sunday*)

This 'professionalism' was believed by some (e.g., Bayley, 2003) to stand at odds with 'the English sensibility' :

Greg Rusedski is a great professional tennis player, perhaps a tad too professional for some. Our problem is that professionalism is deeply at odds with the English sensibility. ... For the English, practising towards a sort of perfection seems rather ungentlemanly. (*Independent on Sunday*)

Whereas Bayley's (2003) remarks 'playfully' seek to evoke a rather nostalgic English sporting ethic, grounded in a gentlemanly amateurism and an underlying 'muscular Christian' view of sport, more generally, it was clear that Rusedski's outsider status was one that positioned him alongside other Canadian sportsmen who had opted to represent England/Britain over Canada. Without any of the historical backdrop that was noted in reports at the start of this section, Moore (2001), in a piece on the Canadian-born professional footballer, Owen Hargreaves, argued how

Hargreaves, who has a British passport, said: "I'm committed to England. I would never play for Germany. I'm not German and I'm not Welsh". This was said in a Canadian accent but, while he may sound like Greg Rusedski, unlike the tennis player and his fellow Anglo-Canadian Lennox Lewis, Hargreaves appears to have based his decision to forsake the Maple Leaf on emotion rather than the greater professional opportunities available on this side of the Atlantic. (*Independent*)

While this example highlights that issues of 'emotional' performance proved integral for distinguishing one's legitimacy to represent England/Britain, it was in comparisons with Tim Henman that Rusedski's 'performances' drew particular attention and criticism.

## 7 | ENGLISH OR BRITISH? PRECARIETY AND CONTINGENCY IN THE FRAMING OF RUSEDSKI

To reiterate, Butler asserts that 'who counts as a subject and who does not' is a form of 'performativity [that] becomes linked with precarity' (Butler, 2009, p.iv). Concerning national identity, Edensor (2002, p.99) has similarly highlighted that

In order to retain their power, performative norms need to be continually enacted, whether these are the spectacular disciplinary performances of national identity or the unreflexive habits of everyday life. And prescriptive conventions and common-sense values are rarely disrupted if they are performed unreflexively and uncritically. The continuance of normative performances reveals the ways in which power can define and inscribe meaning and action on bodies.

He goes on to add the following:

This continual re-enactment means that rather than being fixed, performance is an interactive and contingent process which succeeds according to the skill of the actors, the context within which it is performed and the way in which it is interpreted by an audience. Even the most delineated social performance must be re-enacted in (even slightly) different conditions and its reception may be unpredictable.

We contend that while notions of precarity clearly underscore how one is required to perform national identity and, despite social performances of national identity needing to be re-enacted, it is the 'unpredictability' of these performances that continues to uphold its hegemonic significance. Accordingly, despite the numerous mentions that sought to focus on Rusedski's various 'failed' attempts to perform his Englishness/Britishness, we draw attention to how these performances were enacted through a level of contingency that ultimately failed to elucidate on what *the correct performance* was. Certainly, this is not to ignore the fact that, when compared to Henman, Rusedski repeatedly failed to match those English/British conceptions, which were subsequently performed and upheld by the press' framing of Henman; but, instead, it was the relatively restricted manner in which this comparison was regulated that proved to highlight how such comparisons were inherently illusive and, ultimately, imagined (Butler, 1997). This contingency reveals how it was not simply the case that Rusedski proved unable to perform Henman's 'natural' Englishness, but that newspaper reports continually failed to elucidate on what that 'elusive' and 'correct' quality could be (Kumar, 2006). In the case of Rusedski, these confusions became embedded in, and reflective of, common English-British connotations, whereupon the press' comparisons of Rusedski and Henman revealed a decidedly English inflection that both positioned and framed Rusedski as failing to perform its English-centric version of Britain.

In fact, in one notable incident at the 1995 Wimbledon Championships, Rusedski played wearing a Union Jack bandana. Despite being given the bandana by *The Sun* newspaper, his wearing of it was widely lauded. Much of this coverage focused on perceptions that Rusedski was trying *too hard* to be 'British,' with Roberts (2004) remarking, 'Rusedski sometimes tried to embrace his adopted country with too much ardour; not least when he appeared at Wimbledon wearing a Union flag bandana at the behest of *The Sun*, for whom he had a ghost-written column' (*Independent*). Amidst such derision also stood his lingering 'Canadianness' as follows:

Rusedski did not assist his cause by overdoing his public relations exercise at Wimbledon when, against advice, he dared to wrap a red, white and blue bandana around his head. The expansive patriotic gesture was, on reflection, particularly ill-considered because he happened to make it on Canada Day, exacerbating the anger felt in his former homeland. Not once since he changed allegiance has he publicly paid tribute to his tennis origins (Jones, 1995, *Times*).<sup>5</sup>

In each instance, it was clear that Rusedski's British 'performance' was *something* that 'he didn't get ... quite right' (Barnes, 2004, *Times*). It was evident, therefore, that despite Rusedski's attempts to perform his Britishness, he failed to make the mark. As one *Times* headline summarised after Rusedski announced his retirement: 'Poor old Greg. So very nearly brilliant, so very nearly British' (Barnes, 2007).

There were also those who preferred to rest Rusedski's Britishness on his sporting performances (Eaton, 2004, *Independent*; Edmondson, 2005, *Independent*) and, in so doing, openly alluded to the contingency of this acceptance. On his defeat by the Frenchman, Cedric Pioline, at the 1997 Wimbledon quarter-final, Garner (1997) noted

The British were indeed a fickle bunch yesterday. In the morning Rusedski was championed as their own but once he lost the fans were quick to disown him. As one steward remarked: "If he had won he'd have been British; now that he's been knocked out he is not British anymore". (*Independent*)

The concern that, 'If Greg Rusedski wins, he's English; if he loses, he's Canadian' (Hughes, 2001, *Sunday Times*) was a consistent narrative throughout his career. Following victory in the third round of Wimbledon in 1995—his first as a British contender—Duncan (1995) remarked 'If he was of dubious nationality yesterday morning, he is very much British today.' Yet, the precarity of this acceptance could be identified in Roberts' (1995a) later comments: 'Graft the maple leaf on to the rose. Our Canadian, Greg Rusedski, is the darling of the Centre Court, truly Greg Briton—at least for the moment' (*Independent* [italics added]). Furthermore, even when successful—most notably, when Rusedski reached the 1997 US Open final and, subsequently, earned a world-number-four ranking—his performances (and British national identity) remained intimately tied to Henman:

Rusedski's racket has been shouting, but you still get the impression that the media is listening with only one ear—the other is cocked back down the rankings, waiting for Henman to catch up. The reporting of Rusedski's outstanding achievements has been less than ecstatic, and you cannot help feeling there is a touch of 'if only it were Tim' in there somewhere. (Mann, 1997, *Guardian*)

Evidently, both Rusedski's sporting success and his (successful) performance of the 'correct' national identity were notably contingent and precariously formed (Butler 1997, 2009; Butler & Spivak, 2009). This was captured well by Broadbent (2003), who remarked that 'Rusedski has discovered that success in Britain comes with an awful lot of small print' (*Times*). However, what we draw attention to is how such contingency rested upon a clear sense of ambiguity. In other words, while Henman was 'obviously' English and while Rusedski's Englishness/Britishness was conveniently predicated on his sporting success, in many instances, newspaper reports wryly commented that Rusedski's ability to correctly perform his Britishness was an impossibility because neither he nor the press had any solid conceptualisation of what this vision of Britishness was. Indeed, at times the press openly acknowledged the contingency that befell Rusedski:

After victory ... Rusedski is more British than he had been for a while. But that is the way things are with Rusedski. His entire career ... has been based on the principle of the swingometer ... [which] is doomed to oscillate endlessly between the two extremes of "British" and "Canadian". By one of those Nostradaman coincidences, the swing to British always corresponds with his success on the tennis court. (Barnes, 2003, *Times*)

Subsequently, while Roberts (1997) acknowledged that 'Nobody could fairly say that Rusedski has not done his best to integrate' (*Independent*), Barnes (2003) added that 'It is a shallow thing indeed, this nationality business, and it really shouldn't matter much, if at all ... But matter it does' (*Times*).

These examples highlight that Rusedski's performances were consistently marked by a sense that he was 'trying too hard' or that, regardless of how hard he tried, his performances would always fail to elicit *the correct kind of performance* that, for the press, would fully endear him to the British public. As a result, a clear sense of contingency and precarity was notable in the above examples. Yet, it is here that we believe an underlying contention in Butler's ontology exists. Indeed, as Butler (2009, p.xi) remarks

If what “I” want is only produced in relation to what is wanted from me, then the idea of “my own” desire turns out to be something of a misnomer. I am, in my desire, negotiating what has been wanted of me.

Admittedly, while we cannot determine whether Rusedski ‘felt’ British—clearly, despite his numerous proclamations that he did, the press remained largely unconvinced—Butler’s (2009) extract is notable for pointing to the inherent nonexistence of the subject, for whom their desire is itself a wanted requirement of a contingent set of societal norms. Nonetheless, as is clear from the press coverage, such a socially defined sense of ‘want’ was, in the case of Rusedski, not desirable. That his successes were often viewed as revealing a subtle longing that it should have been Henman - for example, after Rusedski reached the US Open final - is illustrative of this.

To this end, we consider that in view of both our data and Butler’s (2005, 2009) work, analyses of ‘the other’ put the notion of the subject in not just a precarious and contingent position, but a largely paradoxical one, forged as much through a sense of negativity that, in the case of Rusedski, continually ignored the limits of these narratives when framing him. In other words, how could Rusedski challenge hegemonic social norms pertaining to Englishness/Britishness when the people who are supposed to be ‘in the know’ (i.e., British/English press) did not know what this state of being represented and/or entailed (Kumar, 2006)? Instead, as noted by Barnes (2007), ‘There was *something* about Rusedski—that still disconcerting grin, the wariness behind it—that meant he was never fully assimilated into British life’ (*Times* [italics added]). In what follows, we consider how this *something* took on a particularly ethnic distinction.

## 8 | ‘HENMAN IS BRITISH IN A RATHER MORE BRITISH SORT OF WAY’: CONFLATIONS OF ENGLISHNESS/BRITISHNESS

An important aspect of constructing ‘the nation’ in media discourses is drawing upon certain depictions of the ‘other’ that help define the boundary between the ‘national self’ and the ‘foreigner.’ Accordingly, while ‘[national] identity is conceivable through identifying difference,’ Edensor (2002, pp.24–25) argues that ‘this is an ongoing process of identification rather than the reified continuation of absolute antipathy, even if it involves the same others continuously being distinguished from the self.’ In the case of Rusedski, this notable other became apparent through the frequent comparisons made with fellow British tennis player, Tim Henman.

The following examples are significant for highlighting the ‘internal’ contradictions that are brought to bear within multi-national state figurations, such as Britain (Black, 2018; Black & Whigham, 2017; Whigham & Black, 2018, 2019). Despite Rusedski clearly being eligible to represent Britain, in much of the coverage surrounding Rusedski, he was often framed as being both ‘foreign’ and non-English, especially when compared to Henman’s more ‘obvious’ Englishness. Rudimentary distinctions were made around issues of birthright and accent, and these extended into discussions around their comparative physiques, playing styles, and personalities. Rusedski’s perceived overreliance on his booming serve—with his ‘draught-excluder shoulders’ (Barnes, 1995, *Times*) he held the world-record fastest serve for several years—was considered antithetical to a specifically English style of play, which was traditionally a more stylish, well-rounded ‘all-court’ game (Roberts, 1995b, *Independent*). It was also noted that Rusedski had ‘to overcome Henman’s significant advantages in personality (born in Oxford, talks proper, looks like he needs mothering)’ (White, 1997, *Guardian*). In opposition to Rusedski’s ‘big-serving’ game, ‘Henman ... as Oxford as the dictionary ... play[ed] his tennis in a classical serve-volley style’ (Roberts, 1997, *Independent*). While Rusedski was ‘brash’ (Jones, 1995, *Times*) and ‘arrogan[t]’ (Jones, 1996, *Times*), Henman was ‘amiable but vulnerable’ (Miller, 2003, *Sunday Telegraph*). Here, Barnes (2004) noted that ‘Henman, British to the point of self-caricature, had something Rusedski would never have. The Wimbledon crowd not only loved his success, they also identified with him. He was not, even remotely, Canadian’ (*Times*).

A number of articles dwelled on the 'obviousness' of Henman's Englishness. To this end, Henman's English 'performance' was unquestionable and, when compared to Rusedski, was always a 'natural' occurrence. In so doing, Henman was 'the classic middle English gentleman' (Dickson, 1997, *Daily Mail*), from whom 'The Canadian-born Rusedski ... will never be clasped to the public's bosom as warmly' (Marks, 2002, *Independent*). In view of 'the rampant good manners of Tim Henman,' Lawton (2003) exclaimed 'The boy is incorrigibly English, which of course for tormented Rusedski, despite his notional support of Arsenal [Football Club], will never quite be' (*Independent*). After all, Barnes (1996) noted 'Henman is British in a rather more British sort of way' (*Times*). Indeed, the divide drawn between the mild, good manners of Henman's 'English' professionalism and Rusedski's brash posturing is one echoed across a spate of novels that have sought to define the English character, most notably J.B. Priestley's *English Journey* (2012). For Kumar (2003), it is this 'middle-class' depiction of Englishness that serves as a marker of English distinction and, in the aforementioned examples, proved integral to the press' delineation between the English Henman and the 'Canadian-born' Rusedski.

While the above examples reflect a notable and widely cited conflation between English and British, we contend that, regardless of whether Henman was considered either English or British, he was, evidently, always considered *more* English and even *more* British than Rusedski (Barnes, 1996). Moreover, while Henman might be English or British, Rusedski was only ever going to be British, given the widely held view of 'British' identity as a more inclusive, progressive, and modern term than 'English' (Moss, 2012). Kenny, English, and Hayton (2008: 7) contend

Britishness ... remains for many liberal writers a more attractive national identity than Englishness. In part, this is because members of various ethnic and immigrant minority groups have found space within the broad set of values, laws and attachments which the British identity encompasses.

We wish to highlight the ways in which, in view of Butler's notion of performativity, Henman was conceived as performing all the established national norms that were believed to be associated with Englishness/Britishness (Fletcher & Lusted, 2017; Lake, 2015, 2017b). Indeed, in spite of the ambiguity surrounding Rusedski, Henman did not need—nor was he expected—to perform *his* Englishness/Britishness. If we consider that media discourses and, in this case, newspaper discourses can play a formative role in framing national athletes in ways that prove reflective of what 'the media' consider to be evocative of a national sense of belonging, then in what ways can we ever substitute hegemonic narratives with opportunities for resistance? Was there any possibility that Rusedski's newspaper framing could elicit a challenge to established forms of representations of England/Britain and Englishness/Britishness? In view of these questions, closer attention will be paid to those instances where Rusedski sought to perform his Britishness and how such performances were received and framed through media discourses.

## 9 | 'I FELT LIKE O.J. SIMPSON ON TRIAL': CONTINGENCY, HEGEMONY, AND RUSEDSKI'S WHITENESS

As highlighted earlier, there remains ample opportunity to empirically examine the interconnections between national and ethnic identity and, with the present study in mind, between English/British national identities and ethnicity. While the previous sections have highlighted the ongoing (con)fusions surrounding English/British confluences, and the level of precarity that was afforded to Rusedski's performances, this final section offers further insight into how Rusedski's performativity was marked by a contingent and, indeed, hegemonic form of Whiteness. In a theoretical discussion that shares in Connell's (2005) analysis of hegemonic masculinity, it was clear that, contra Butler, Rusedski's ability to perform the 'correct' identity, or even to challenge what could be referred to as a hegemonically 'English' style of play (as embodied contemporaneously through Henman's playing style), was further hindered by a latent hegemonic White Englishness.

Rusedski's style of play was often noted for being more physical and aggressive, compared to Henman's more creative and thoughtful approach. This was apparent in the following examples whereby, according to Pat Cash, '[Rusedski] hasn't Tim's flair but he's as tough as anybody' (Independent, 1998). Indeed, for Broadbent (2003, *Times*), Henman 'remains the brain of British tennis, Rusedski the brawn.' Rusedski's physicality and lack of finesse was considered an affliction, brought about by an excitable temperament. For Bayley (2003, *Independent on Sunday*), 'Rusedski's lack of restraint, his untempered explosion of frustration, were profoundly at odds with the English personality.' Rusedski's perceived flaws in style, personality, and temperament were inevitably contrasted with Henman who was described as having 'a calmer, more collected on-court persona' (Hodgkinson, 2005, *Daily Telegraph*) and demonstrating a 'businesslike efficiency, marching around the baseline, poker-faced' (Preston, 2002, *Guardian*).

What these examples draw attention to is how the distinction between Rusedski and Henman followed a hegemonic form of Whiteness, whereby (and in no way are we intending to reify racial/racist classifications) Rusedski was 'positioned' as, in some way, ethnically inferior to Henman's more emotionally controlled and hegemonically 'White' style of play (Lake, 2020). These distinctions clearly mimic the widely cited differences between Black and White athletes, with Black athletes being framed as 'naturally' aggressive, explosive, and emotional while White athletes are framed as more emotionally controlled and naturally intelligent (Carrington, 2009).<sup>6</sup> These distinctions were evident in the above comparisons between Rusedski and Henman, but they could also provide more obvious forms of racial prescription. Take, for example, the following remark from O'Hagan (1995), who referred to Rusedski competing at the 1995 Wimbledon Championships, with the statement 'This year you're our Great British Tennis Hope' (*Independent on Sunday*). Indeed, the moniker 'Great White Hope' was originally coined to help distinguish White boxers—drawn from the 'White race'—to help beat Black boxer, Jack Johnson, who, during the Jim Crow era, was World Heavyweight Champion from 1908 to 1915 (Carrington, 2009). While the reference stands at odds with the previous examples of Rusedski, which frame him along the same lines as a 'Black' athlete would historically have been, it nonetheless reveals the extent to which Rusedski's framing was marked within a discursive regime embedded in discourses of ethnicity and contingency.

In other instances, comparisons between Rusedski and Black athletes were more explicit. In 2003, after an expletive-filled outburst during a loss against Andy Roddick at Wimbledon, Rusedski was compared with the Jamaican-born Canadian sprinter, Ben Johnson who, after winning the 100m final at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, later tested positive for anabolic steroids. This comparison proved illustrative of the extent to which Rusedski's performances could allude 'memories' of Johnson's own scandal:

The public ostracising of the Canadian-born Greg Rusedski after his foul-mouthed outburst at Wimbledon brought back memories of Ben Johnson. ... When he won he was the Canadian champion. ... A couple of days later ... the glory became shame, the underdog became a mongrel; a little bit Canadian, a lot Jamaican. And so Ben Johnson, superstar, was downgraded to 'Johnson, the Jamaican-born cheat.' (Walsh, 2003, *Sunday Times*)

What is ironic is that Rusedski would suffer through a doping charge himself, in 2004, after testing positive for the anabolic steroid Nandrolone, which gives this comparison, coming 6 months earlier, an eerie feel of foreboding.

In another example, while explaining his decision to represent Britain, Rusedski would himself refer to feeling like an ethnic outsider. He went as far as comparing himself to the African-American athlete and former American footballer, O.J. Simpson, who, in 1994, stood trial for the murder of his ex-wife and friend:

I felt like O.J. Simpson on trial. The Canadian press were appalling. They called me a traitor, and accused me of turning my back on my country and my support, and even accused me of failing to pay back the money that had been invested in me ... many of them had signs saying "Go Home Rusedski" or wore t-shirts with "Death to Greg" written on them, or with pictures of my face and a hangman's noose. (Stafford, 1995, *Independent*)

Clearly, Rusedski is not a Black athlete, and therefore has not faced anywhere near the same levels of racism experienced by many Black athletes in sport, but what the references to Johnson, Simpson, and the 'hangman's noose' all evoke is, nevertheless, a rather strange reliance on racial imagery that stands awkward within the context of a White athlete. Nevertheless, they resonate with exclusive conceptions of White Englishness, which serves to 'other' White and 'non-White' alike. In sum, while Rusedski's 'English' ethnicity failed to match the natural ability of Henman, another marker of his failure to 'perform' the correct identity was made by alluding to a latent form of White ethnic comparison.

## 10 | CONCLUSION

This article has traced a number of important and, indeed, paradoxical contentions within the press' framing of Rusedski. This has been supported by Butler's (1997, 1999) notion of performativity and specifically, how such performativity can serve to elaborate upon our understanding of subjectivity, identity, and 'the other.' In this instance, Butler's work has been applied to critically consider how the notion of performativity is constituted in media discourses that focus on an 'outsider' sporting athlete. This approach has been supported with wider comments on the importance of national identity and ethnicity in temporally constructing reiterated forms of national and ethnic acceptance.

Undeniably, the sport of tennis in Britain is symbolic of White Englishness, whereby a degree of everyday White privilege exists and is taken for granted, meaning that the (in)actions of other ethnic groups are marked and racialised. Goldberg (1996) observes how in 'Whiter' spaces racialised bodies are placed under super-surveillance; they are subjected to a panoptic form of 'White governmentality' (Hesse, 1997) that seeks to oversee, control, and regulate their behaviour and practices. The normalising of the White English way in tennis thus serves two interdependent purposes. First, it maintains a White (English) stranglehold on the dominant codes of the game, and second, aids in rendering the expressive traditions of others as intrusive adaptations. It is in view of these findings, however, that we believe that this article offers a critical extension of Butler's thesis.

While criticisms have been levelled at Butler's failure to consider intersecting forms of identity construction (Namaste, 2009), we also remain sceptical of the ability of Butler's argument to forge subversive forms of subjectivity that stand opposed to traditional binary classifications, and which challenge the performance of hegemonic social norms. If, as argued by Butler, the subject presents a certain 'opacity,' serving as a conduit to hegemonic norms, then identifying those 'limits' where one can critique both oneself and the social world merely resubmits the subject to a 'deeper' form of opacity from which the subject is, in some way or another, required to know their own ontological limitations. In short, *how* is one to know *which* identities are to achieve a sense of self 'outside' hegemonic social norms? As noted in the above analysis, these contentions are laid bare when we consider how hegemonic (media) discourses routinely frame their own limitations through an inherently contingent and, at times, paradoxical process.

To this extent, while it is clear that differences *between* subjects are largely contingent and that this contingency provides a formative part of how hegemonic social norms make and remake the subject (Butler, 1997, 1999, 2005), we nonetheless believe that these *differences* are constitutive of such norms, especially when considered in the context of those social norms that underscore the nation and national identity. It is in this sense that we steer away from definitions of the subject which remain tied to identifying those points of contention that 'reveal' the subject's social distinction, towards a conception of 'the subject,' 'the nation,' and 'the other' that fundamentally embodies this *difference* as inherent to their contingent functioning.

This is apparent when we consider how Rusedski's framing proved amiable to a number of inherent contradictions within debates on Englishness *and* Britishness. Indeed, whereas the above findings reveal contradictions in Britain's history of athletes born outside of the United Kingdom, and while Rusedski's performances were contingently framed as either 'trying too hard' or routinely being outperformed in comparisons with Henman's 'natural'



Englishness, it is in the framing of Rusedski, alongside wider ethnic narratives pertaining to whiteness, that these contradictions are laid bare. That is, if we consider that for Hylton and Lawrence (2015, p.776), our 'ideological versions of Whiteness ... retain "racial superiority",' then what our findings reveal is how such 'superiority' is *inconsistently* positioned in the performance of identity and subjectivity. Here, we see Rusedski's identity as related to a hegemonic form of whiteness that routinely marked Rusedski as 'ethnically' inferior to Henman.

Specifically, however, we propose that these notions are inherently inconsistent and that such inconsistency is often obfuscated. Indeed, while White identity is not just phenotypic, but also performative and contingent, it is through performing such contingency that discourses of whiteness become omnipresent, underscoring all facets of everyday life, including sport. Accordingly, rather than reproducing a structuralist form of hegemonic power, we instead propose that it is the ability of social norms to incorporate, but also, obfuscate, their inherent differences, which helps to maintain their hegemonic power.

This is of considerable significance when considering how the transnational causes that gave the English a sense of identity—Protestantism, industrialism, imperialism—are either weak or absent and where the European Union, for many, is as much a threat as a promise (Black, 2018). The presence of a large minority of non-European, non-White, citizens continues to be a source of anxiety to a considerable section of the White majority in the United Kingdom. In addition, the Scottish, and to a lesser extent Welsh and Irish, show a disposition to pull out of the United Kingdom and to make their own arrangements with Brussels. Amidst Brexit discussions, loyalists in Northern Ireland have also touted the possibility of unification with Ireland (Wright & Mahon, 2019). Looking at the matter in one way, we might be tempted to say that the protective layers that allowed the English to ignore questions of national identity have now all fallen away. The questions are back with a vengeance.

It is in this way that we believe Rusedski served as a marker for later contentions regarding British multiculturalism, which both emerged and developed in the United Kingdom at the start of the 21st century. We see this in the comparisons that can be made between Rusedski's 'outsider' status and other notable 'outsiders' (Black, 2016a). This highlights how 'the perpetual struggles between differing groups of white men, all of whom attempt to impose their own version of whiteness and masculinity, should invite a more nuanced and intricate reading of white male supremacy' (Hylton & Lawrence, 2015, p.768). We echo Garner's (2007, p.67) contention that White/Whiteness is 'interpreted as encompassing non-material and fluid dominant norms and boundaries,' suggesting that Rusedski's 'interpretations' within the press served an ideological purpose that self-referentially allowed for a number of contradictions to be 'performed' in discourses on Englishness and Britishness. In short, it was *within* newspaper framings of Rusedski that hegemonic notions of White Englishness could be performed and, more importantly, maintained and embedded.

## ORCID

Jack Black  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1595-5083>

Thomas Fletcher  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4618-5480>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>We use the term Black and minoritised ethnic rather than Black and minority ethnic in order to stress the process of minoritising; that is, in societies where Whiteness prevails, Black and minoritised ethnic communities are actively excluded and subordinated. This is processual.

<sup>2</sup>It is arguably the case that the *Daily Mail* has moved away from its broadsheet format, into more of a tabloid, over the last decade or so, but during the period under examination, the paper was still classified as a broadsheet.

<sup>3</sup>Most of the articles uncovered at the first stage were basic match reports that offered little beyond scores and performance reports, so these were not shortlisted unless they included data pertinent to the construction of Rusedski's identity.

<sup>4</sup>In 1981, the UK Parliament enacted the British Nationality Act which reclassified British and colonial citizenship. After this, individuals born in the United Kingdom, British Dependent Territories, and British Overseas Territories were considered British citizens.

<sup>5</sup>What is interesting in this case is the author's claim that Rusedski wore the bandana on Canada Day (July 1), thereby perceived as a snub to his former country, but this is simply not true; the match in which he wore the bandana was actually

played on June 30. What is interesting is how he and numerous other writers repeatedly made this claim over the years, thereby exacerbating the issue, 'fanning the flames' of tensions, and concomitantly, slandering Rusedski's character (see Lake, 2020).

<sup>6</sup>These distinctions also mimic the widely cited differences drawn between amateurs and professionals during the broadly defined 'golden era' of tennis (before the Second World War), when, allegedly, the former played a more aesthetic style and with greater flair, while the latter a more prescriptive and 'mechanical' style (Lake, 2015, 2020). Aligned with assumptions that British amateur athletes played sport, as if through innate breeding, 'the right way,' similar distinctions were made, also, when comparing British with American players around the turn of the 20th century (Lake, Eaves, & Nicholson, 2018).

## REFERENCES

- Bhabha, H. (Ed.) (1990). *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.
- Bignell, J. (1997). *Media semiotics: An introduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Black, J. (2015). Portraying Britain's past: English national newspaper coverage of the 2012 London Olympic ceremonies. In G. Poynter, V. Viehoff, & Y. Li (Eds.), *The London Olympics and urban development: The mega-event city* (pp. 320–334). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Black, J. (2016a). 'As British as fish and chips': British newspaper representations of Mo Farah during the 2012 London Olympic Games. *Media, Culture and Society*, 38(7), 979–996.
- Black, J. (2016b). Celebrating British multiculturalism, lamenting England/Britain's past. *Nations and Nationalism*, 22(4), 786–802.
- Black, J. (2018). The United Kingdom and British Empire: A figurational approach. *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 22(1), 3–24.
- Black, J. (2019). From mood to movement: English nationalism, the European Union and taking back control. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 32(2), 191–210.
- Black, J., & Whigham, S. (2017). 'Team GB' or 'team Scotland'? Media representations of 'Britishness' and 'Scottishness' at London 2012 and Glasgow 2014. *Journalism*.
- Blackshaw, T. (2017). *Re-imagining leisure studies*. London: Routledge.
- Burdsey, D. (2016). One guy named Mo: Race, nation and the London 2012 Olympic Games. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 33(1), 14–25.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The power of mourning and violence*. London: Verso.
- Butler, J. (2005). *Giving an account of oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Butler, J. (2009). Performativity, precarity and sexual politics. *AIBR. Revista de Anthropologia Iberoamericana*, 4(3), x–xiii.
- Butler, J., & Spivak, G. (2009). *Who sings the nation-state? Language, politics and belonging*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Calhoun, C. (1997). *Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Carrington, B. (2009). *Race, sport and politics: The sporting Black diaspora*. London: Sage.
- Carrington, B., Fletcher, T., & McDonald, I. (2016). The politics of 'race' and sports policy in the United Kingdom. In B. Houlihan (Ed.), *Sport in society* (3rd ed.) (pp. 222–249). London: Sage.
- Connell, R. (2005). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Crabbe, T., & Wagg, S. (2005). 'A carnival of cricket?' The Cricket World Cup, 'race' and the politics of carnival. In S. Wagg (Ed.), *Cricket and national identity in the postcolonial age* (pp. 204–222). London: Routledge.
- Dashper, K., Fletcher, T., & Long, J. (2019). Intelligent investment? Welsh sport policy and the (in)visibility of 'race'. *Leisure Studies*, 38(6), 762–774.
- Edensor, T. (2002). *National identity, popular culture and everyday life*. Oxford: Berg.
- Edkins, J. (2006). Remembering relationality: Trauma time and politics. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Memory, trauma and world politics* (pp. 99–115). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fletcher, T. (2011). "The making of English cricket cultures": Empire, globalisation and (post) colonialism. *Sport in Society*, 14(1), 17–36.
- Fletcher, T. (2012a). "All Yorkshiremen are from Yorkshire, but some are more 'Yorkshire' than others": British Asians and the myths of Yorkshire cricket. *Sport in Society*, 15(2), 227–245.
- Fletcher, T. (2012b). "Who do 'they' cheer for?" Cricket, diaspora, hybridity and divided loyalties amongst British Asians. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(5), 612–631.
- Fletcher, T. (2015). Cricket, migration and diasporic communities. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 22(2), 141–153.

- Fletcher, T., & Hylton, K. (2016). 'Race', Whiteness and sport. In J. Nauright, & D. K. Wiggins (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of race, ethnicity and sport* (pp. 87–106). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Fletcher, T., & Hylton, K. (2018). Race, ethnicity and Whiteness in the governance of the events industry. *Journal for Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 10(2), 164–179.
- Fletcher, T., & Lusted, J. (2017). Connecting 'Englishness', Black and minoritised ethnic communities and sport: A conceptual framework. In T. Gibbons, & D. Malcolm (Eds.), *Sport and English national identity in a 'disunited Kingdom'* (pp. 95–109). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Fletcher, T., & Spracklen, K. (2014). Cricket, drinking and exclusion of British Muslims? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(8), 1310–1327.
- Fletcher, T., & Swain, S. (2016). Strangers of the north: South Asians, cricket and the culture of 'Yorkshireness'. *Journal for Cultural Research*, 20(1), 86–100.
- Fletcher, T., & Walle, T. (2015). Negotiating their right to play. Asian-identified cricket teams and leagues in Britain and Norway. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 22(2), 230–246.
- Frankenburg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of Whiteness*. London: Routledge.
- Garner, S. (2007). *Whiteness: An introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Gibbons, T., & Malcolm, D. (2017). Nationalism, the English question and sport. In T. Gibbons, & D. Malcolm (Eds.), *Sport and English national identity in a 'disunited kingdom'* (pp. 1–16). London: Routledge.
- Gilroy, P. (2004). *After empire: Melancholia or convivial culture?* London: Routledge.
- Goffman, E. (1956[1971]). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin.
- Goldberg, D. T. (1996). In/visibility and super/vision. In L. Gordon, T. Sharpley-Whiting, & R. White (Eds.), *Fanon: A critical reader* (pp. 179–202). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Griggs, G., & Gibbons, T. (2014). 'Harry walks, Fabio runs': A case study on the current relationship between English national identity, soccer and the English press. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 49(5), 536–549.
- Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 222–237). London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hesse, B. (1997). White governmentality: Urbanism, nationalism, racism. In S. Westwood, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Imagining cities: Scripts, signs, memories* (pp. 86–103). London: Routledge.
- Hylton, K. (2019). *Race and sport: Shaming the colour line*. London: Routledge.
- Hylton, K., & Lawrence, S. (2015). Reading Ronaldo: Contingent whiteness in the footballmedia. *Soccer & Society*, 16(5–6), 765–782.
- Institute for Government. (2019). *What is the Northern Ireland backstop?*, <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/northern-ireland-backstop> Accessed on 29 May, 2019.
- Kenny, M., English, R., & Hayton, R. (2008). *Beyond the constitution? Englishness in a post-devolved Britain*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Klement, K. (2014). Butler, Judith. In R. Butler (Ed.), *The Žižek dictionary* (pp. 23–26). London: Routledge.
- Kumar, K. (2003). *The making of English national identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kumar, K. (2006). Empire and English nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, 12(1), 1–13.
- Lake, R. J. (2015). *A social history of tennis in Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Lake, R. J. (2017a). "Tennis in an English Garden": Wimbledon, Englishness and British Sporting Culture. In T. Gibbons, & D. Malcolm (Eds.), *Sport and English national identity in a 'disunited kingdom'* (pp. 49–64). London: Routledge.
- Lake, R. J. (2017b). Tim Henman, British tennis and the social construction of English identity in the 1990s and 2000s. *Sport in Society*, 20(11), 1745–1764.
- Lake, R. J. (2018). The Wimbledon championships, the all England lawn tennis club and 'invented traditions'. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 11(1), 52–74.
- Lake, R. J. (2020). 'Vive le defecteur!' An analysis of the British media's construction of Greg Rusedski's national identity in the 1990s/2000s. *Sport in History*, 40(1), 78–105.
- Lake, R. J., Eaves, S. J., & Nicholson, B. (2018). The development and transformation of Anglo-American relations in lawn tennis around the turn of the twentieth century. *Sport History Review*, 49(1), 1–22.
- Lavi, L. (2013). Making time for national identity: Theoretical concept and empirical glance on the temporal performance of national identity. *Nations and Nationalism*, 19(4), 696–714.
- Long, J., & Hylton, K. (2002). Shades of White: An examination of Whiteness in sport. *Leisure Studies*, 21(2), 87–103.
- Malcolm, D. (2012). *Globalizing cricket: Englishness, empire, identity*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Marqusee, M. (2001). In search of the unequivocal Englishman: The conundrum of race and nation in English cricket. In B. Carrington, & I. McDonald (Eds.), *'Race', sport and British society* (pp. 121–132). London: Routledge.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Centre for Research on Women.

- McQueen, P. (2016). Post-identity politics and the social weightlessness of radical gender theory. *Thesis Eleven*, 134(1), 73–88.
- Namaste, V. (2009). Undoing theory: The 'transgender question and the epistemic violence of Anglo-American feminist theory. *Hypatia*, 24(3), 11–32.
- Poulton, E. (2016). Towards understanding: Antisemitism and the contested uses and meanings of 'Yid' in English football. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(11), 1981–2001.
- Poulton, E., & Maguire, J. (2012). Plastic or fantastic Brits? Identity politics and English media representations of "Team GB" during London 2012. *JOMEC Journal*, 1(2), 1–30.
- Priestley, J. B. (2012). *English journey*. Ilkley: Great Northern Books.
- Ratna, A. (2014). Who are ya?. The national identities and belongings of British Asian football fans. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48(3), 286–308.
- Skey, M. (2013). *National belonging and everyday life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smith, A. D. (1995). *Nations and nationalism in a global era*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Valluvan, S. (2018). Racial entanglements and sociological confusions: Repudiating the rehabilitation of integration. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 69(2), 436–458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12284>
- Wagg, S. (2007). 'To be an Englishman': Nation, ethnicity and English cricket in the global age. *Sport in Society*, 10(1), 11–32.
- Whigham, S., & Black, J. (2018). Glasgow 2014, the media and Scottish politics: The (post)imperial symbolism of the Commonwealth Games. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 20(2), 360–378.
- Whigham, S., & Black, J. (2019). London 2012, Glasgow 2014 and athletes as political symbols—The precarious positioning of athletes within the evolving contemporary politics of the United Kingdom. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 17(1), 47–65.
- Williams, J. (2001). *Cricket and race*. Oxford: Berg.
- Wright, O., & Mahon, B. (2019). *Doubts over Brexit push Ulster loyalists toward reunification*, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-doubts-pushing-ulster-loyalists-towards-reunification-wp5wpxv7m#>. Accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2019
- Žižek, S. (1998). *Tarrying with the negative: Kant, Hegel, and the critique of ideology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

- Aufenast, J. (1995). 'Whatever happened to ... Zola Budd?' *Independent*, 25 January 1995.
- Barnes, S. (1995). 'New arrival quickly starts to feel at home', *Times*, 27 June 1995.
- Barnes, S. (1996). 'Congratulations Greg, you are now a true Brit', *Times*, 28 June 1996.
- Barnes, S. (2003). 'Thanks be to Henman, the man who gave a nation cause for hope', *Times*, 24 September 2003.
- Barnes, S. (2004). 'Farewell to quasi-Brit who never quite got it right', *Times*, 9 January 2004.
- Barnes, S. (2007). 'Poor old Greg. So very nearly brilliant, so very nearly British', *Times*, 9 April 2007.
- Bayley, S. (2003). 'Well played! Or why an English gent should never win at tennis', *Independent on Sunday*, 29 June 2003.
- Broadbent, R. (2003). 'England's dynamic duo', *Times*, 23 June 2003.
- Dickson, M. (1997). 'I made Greg a top 10 player only to get the sack', *Daily Mail*, 30 September 1997.
- Duncan, J. (1995). 'Step-by-step guide to a national front: John Duncan on how to switch sporting passports without risking egg on the face', *Guardian*, 23 May 1995.
- Eaton, R. (2004). 'Rusedski on a mission to right the wrongs', *Independent*, 21 June 2004.
- Edmondson, R. (2005). 'Rusedski restates British credentials' *Independent*, 21 June 2005.
- Garner, C. (1997). 'British tennis falls back to earth', *Independent*, 4 July 1997.
- Harris, N. (2002). 'Rusedski's grit bodes well for Wimbledon', *Independent*, 21 June 2002.
- Hayward, P. (1997). 'Gentleman Greg: True Brit and no joke'. *Guardian*, 10 September 1997.
- Hodgkinson, M. (2005). 'Henman wins bragging rights', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 February 2005.
- Hughes, R. (2001). 'Henman's rally cry', *Sunday Times*, 24 June 2001.
- Hunt, B. (2004). 'Team-mates and turncoats', *Financial Times*, 16 July 2004.
- Jones, S. (1995). 'Rusedski and Henman end four years of cup failure', *Times*, 17 July 1995.
- Jones, S. (1996). 'Maturing talent born to carry nation's great expectations', *Times*, 13 January, 1996.
- Lawton, J. (2003). 'Henman makes progress in typically English fashion', *Independent*, 27 June 2003.
- Mann, A. (1997). 'Why I love Greg Rusedski', *Guardian*, 7 November 1997.
- Marks, K. (2002). 'Henman ready to stand up to Rusedski serve', *Independent*, 18 January 2002.
- Miller, D. (2003). Winning ugly will never be Henman's style, *Sunday Telegraph*, 6 July.
- Moore, G. (2001). Bayern's hero Hargreaves set on England, *Independent*, 11 May 2001.
- Moss, S. (2012). British identity: The state of the union, *Guardian*, 5 February.
- O'Hagan, S. (1995). Burden of the Brits, *Independent on Sunday*, 25 June 1995.
- Phillip, R. (1998). Unfriendly rivalry, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 February 1998.

- Preston, E. (2002). Henman wins mind game: Rusedski put in his place by No1 after all-British argument, *Guardian*, 5 January 2002.
- Richards, H. (1998). Cash, kin and flags of convenience, *Financial Times*, 6 November 1998.
- Roberts, J. (1995a). Centre court hails rampant Rusedski, *Independent*, 29 June 1995.
- Roberts, J. (1995b). Rusedski instils fresh optimism, *Independent*, 17 July 1995.
- Roberts, J. (1997). Accent on success for Britain's leading men, *Independent*, 29 December 1997.
- Roberts, J. (2004). Mighty-serving Canadian who embraced union flag to boost UK tennis, *Independent*, 9 January 2004.
- Speck, I. (2007). Goodbye Greg, *Daily Mail*, 9 April 2007.
- Stafford, I. (1995). Rusedski enjoys a bumpy ride, *Independent*, 31 October 1995.
- The Independent. (1998). Cash slams British snobs, *The Independent*, 5 December 1998.
- Walsh, D. (2003). Loss of face just not British, *Sunday Times*, 29 June 2003.
- White, J. (1997). Why Britain's grand slam loser got the nation's vote, *Guardian*, 16 December 1997.

**How to cite this article:** Black J, Fletcher T, Lake RJ. 'Success in Britain comes with an awful lot of small print': Greg Rusedski and the precarious performance of national identity. *Nations and Nationalism*. 2020; 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12614>