

Multicultural Ethos in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

The novel *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith presents the real picture of Britain after the World War Second. In the novel, the novelist shows the cultural conflicts between three different families (the Iqbals, the Jones and the Chalfens) from different cultural backgrounds. This research tries to show the reality of multicultural Britain and argues how multiculturalism makes conflicts as well as mutual understanding with each other. Smith, in this book, tries to show the complex and dynamic culture of London and tries to portray the characters with diverse background and their ability to perceive relationship in the society.

White Teeth tells a story of different families, the Jones, the Iqbals and the Chalfens. Archie Jones is British in origin. He has not properly settled in England. He married Clara Bowden, a black Jamaican woman much younger than him. Such a marriage between a man with British origin and an immigrant black Jamaican creates new cultural practices. They have a daughter named Irie Jones. Samad Iqbal is from Bangladesh who had come to England with his wife Alsana Begum. They have twin sons Magid and Millat. Samad always desires his family to follow his religion that is Islamic that he finds difficult to maintain in Britain. That is why, he sends his son Magid to his homeland Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Magid becomes more English than becoming Islamic. Alsana does not like English as she cannot be away from there. She wants her sons bringing up on their own way, wish as they are the second generation immigrants. Millat, Samad's second son, in his teenage, becomes chain smoker and abuses girls in the school. He is badly treated in the Chalfen's house then he realizes the imposition of English value over immigrants. Later he turns to be a radical Muslim. Finally, the Chalfens family is the neighborhood of the Iqbals and the

Jones. This family is a Jewish family that signifies North London. Marcus, Joyce and their son, Joshua are the representative characters in this family. Both the parents are busy so they do not have time to Joshua's difficulties.

The characters in the novel suffer because they do not find the proper settlement in the migrated land, London in Britain. They struggle to adjust there and towards the end of the novel their understanding helps to reconciliation each other. In this respect Smith depicts both conflict and acknowledgement through their understanding. Furthermore, she presents multicultural societies to show people from the diverse societies and their life style.

White Teeth has been considered as one of the prominent works of Zadie Smith. It has accumulated various criticisms from different perspectives since its publication. Regarding the novel, John Clement Ball argues, "London in *White Teeth* is the setting for the whole story which occasional ventures to Jamaica, India and Eastern Europe. It is the place where the main characters live and meet. The lives of three families: the Joneses, the Iqbals and Chalfens, evolve and get engaged with one another there" (235). According to him, *White Teeth* is one of the few recent British novels that attempts to represent experiences of more than one generation and place of origin. For him London provides a meeting place of cultures, religious and political viewpoints and thus extends the opportunity of humanitarian understanding towards the characters. The novel describes the relations of white, brown and black, "The personal relations in the novel happen on many levels such as emotional, familial, intellectual and friendly going through divisions of race, culture, and age" (237). This is an example of a city where diversity spread in different aspects of a society.

Matt Thomas argues in "Reading 'White Teeth' to Improve Intercultural Communication" highlights the issue of intercultural communication:

Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth* have been placed into the multicultural setting of London, England where characters question their cultural practices and identities. *White Teeth* can be thought of as an allegorical novel since major characters are placed into exaggerated categories of assimilation and creolization. Such a critical framework suggests that the novel does not merely locate the existence of Caribbean themes and theories in the West, but actually constructs an unintentional critique, saying that cornerstone of Antillean culture have been severely misinterpreted. (15)

His interpretation of the novel is based on the theme of intercultural communication. The novel attempts to point out the misinterpretation and consequently offers advice to correct the problem of intercultural miscommunication in the west. Being first and second generation immigrants, there is difference while perceiving the other's cultural values.

Likewise, Irene Perez Fernandez in "Representing Third Spaces, Fluid Identities and Contested Spaces in Contemporary British Literature" focuses on the space as a dimension to shape the characters understanding about the society because London is a city of multi-national and multicultural identities:

White Teeth also draws upon the changes in social space in terms of the evolution of a multiethnic society. However, its take on multiculturalism and its treatment of the question of racial differences and the relations established between different racial groups in the city of London. Smith describes immigration and its consequences with certain optimism; the ethnically diverse characters portrayed in *White Teeth* relate to each other in an often funny, sometimes shocking and naïve way. Smith's intention is to present a multicultural Britain where ethnic differences are deemed insignificant. (153)

Feeling of spatial dislocation becomes a main issue to establish authentic self in migrated land. The space where people belong is an important factor in a multicultural society because spaces in such setting are an ongoing process of negotiation and change. Immigrants feel uncomfortable with the new environment with their most immediate community or their family need to negotiate a different sense of identity within their own spatial location.

O' Grandy Kathleen states, "*White Teeth* capers through the minefield of origins and the most earnest efforts of those who seek to return to their roots and desperate for the western homogenization, with deep sympathy and understanding" (190). As the story includes the experiences of character from diverse backgrounds, they have their own kind of memory of their past. The conflict between the present life and the memory of the past is the reason that results into conflict in the family. The in-between position of the culture creates dilemma within the family.

In *Literature Today*, King Bruce explains, "The themes are generational such as past versus present, assimilation versus resistance, the contrasting direction by the children of immigrants, rational versus New Ageism, the absurdities of liberal and extremists, a final day of destruction and judgment" (5). Immigrant children do not have fixed life, they lack clarity. She explores character's identity conflicts before background of their family history. The cultural origins and prehistory seem to play an important part in individual's development, chance and personal choice are the important factor to overrule any predetermined life.

Another critic Nick Bentley says, "By contemplating the dynamics of twentieth century multicultural London and the many changes which have accrued within a postmodern world, Smith's work of fiction appears to be committed to reconsider and reassess a traditional construction of both individual and national identity" (485).

White Teeth can be interpreted as a historical novel about the three families. The author parallels between places and generations and recovers interventions in past which explain the present identity problems of the characters and their involvement with one another.

Most of the scholars present multiculturalism as an interdisciplinary strategy. In the novel, the characters belong to diverse backgrounds so they do have different point of views. The first migrated family fears that living in a multicultural society might lose their cultural root. They tried to adjust between the different cultures. And at the same time the second generation is in dilemma.

Though many scholars and critics have analyzed this novel, the research analyzes Smith's motive behind raising multicultural issues in the novel. She attempts to problematize the existing multicultural spirit by presenting the characters with multiple voices. She is trying to say that in the name of multiculturalism, existing multicultural ethos is unable to acknowledge and understand the minority cultural values. The minority cultural values are hegemonised by mainstream culture. So the writer here raises the issue that in multicultural society one should acknowledge the cultural differences.

The term multiculturalism is derives from the adjective 'multicultural' in particular as used in phrases multicultural curriculum, multicultural education and multicultural society. Generally it refers to the inclusion of people of several races, religious, languages and traditions. It denotes that a society in which several cultures exist. Similarly, it means the distinctiveness of each culture. Multiculturalism is the combination of diverse cultures in terms of assimilation and integration as well as cultural awareness. It consists of cultural equality as well as inequality whereas inequality is acknowledged. Conrad William Watson states in *Multiculturalism*, "To

speak multiculturalism multicultural society then to speak of a society a state, a nation, a country, a religion or even a simply bounded geographical location on such as town or a school- composed of people who belong to different cultures" (1).

Generally, culture is a vague and vast term which includes knowledge, language, beliefs, art morals, law, customs, behaviors, other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. Culture is not static, it grows out of a systematically encouraged reverence for selected customs and habits. Culture changes with the time being with the rise of colonialism, immigration and globalization. Different culture influences the other and gets influenced as well. So, no culture can remain intact and pure.

Multiculturalism is a discipline which represents the cultural differences. Within multiculturalism, there are several dimensions in terms of society, politics, economics and education. Not only the cultural differences occur in it rather it covers the distinct circles as in the context of increasing economic and cultural globalization. On the other hand, it leads to homogenization of ideas, institutions, morals and practices, and forms of life. On the other hand, it encourages heterogeneity. Furthermore, it legitimizes its sense of differences. In multiculturalism through a process of assimilation, people gradually facilitate into common culture. Chris Barker in *Making Sense of Cultural Studies* writes:

The idea of multicultural society has become official policy in many West cultures and presents a liberal democratic attempt to promote ethnic/ racial equality. It is premised on the idea of displaying to tolerance towards a range of cultural practices within the contexts of the nation- state. As policy approach it has been influential in the education and cultural spheres where it has underpinned attempts to introduce people to a range of different beliefs,

values, customs and cultural practices. For example, the teaching of multi-faith religious education, the performance of rituals and promotion of ethnic food became facets of educational policy. As such, multiculturalism aims to express respect for and indeed celebration of difference. (127)

Multiculturalism as a policy offers liberal process to promote ethical/ racial equality. It displays the cultural practices in the nation. Its impact in education is an influential practice because of the cultivation of different cultures, values, customs, etc. similarly, the novel illustrates the impact of culture in the characters. By respecting each other's culture they become multicultural. However, they feel unease to follow other's culture due to the cultural differences.

Culturally people do have different lifestyles and they might be representative of different territories. They have differences in terms of their way of living. However, when they gather at a same place from different corners and they adjust into multiplicity then there lies multicultural society. Similarly, the novel presents the various characters in terms of the culture. Through the relationship of three families the writer shows the different cultures by which they are closed to each other. Culture matters to bond the relation each other. In the same way in the novel too culture creates the strong emotional and relationship as well as misunderstanding. While living in the diverse culture people have to adopt problems caused by the culture itself and at the same time they have to manage for better environment. Barker states, "Culture is both a name for the domain in which contestation over value, meaning and practices takes place and a tool by which to intervene in social life" (69). Culture is a kind of value in the sense that it makes the social life easy as well as it intervene social life.

The novel shows the cultural conflict because people do not have same belief, values, and ideas in their life. But while they come to know each other, they find a shelter in each other. This novel has blended both positive as well as negative qualities in making an understanding. The migrated family Samad and Alasana are hegemonized by the mainstream culture though they highly valued the Islamic norms and values. In contrast younger generations Iire, Millat and Magid practice the cultural differences and tried to be liberal. They acknowledge the cultural differences and perceive their culture in their own way. Watson states:

The two term 'multicultural' and 'multiculturalism', which though similar in appearance carry very different associations. 'Multicultural' points to the visible and universally accessible products of cultural diversity- food, clothes, music, theatre, and sometimes specialist occupations- and on the whole it has very positive resonance: we are all happy to live in multicultural societies which add to the variety and colour of lifestyles available to us, increasing the breath of our choices as consumers. 'Multiculturalism' on the other hand, when it is not simply the noun from multicultural, directs our attention away from these purely visible aspects of diversity, to the deeper philosophical and engagement with the world, and the way in which those differences jostle for recognition within national and global boundaries, sometimes in relative harmony with each other, sometimes in real conflict. (107)

Multiculturalism focuses on the products of cultural diversity. It further emphasizes on the political, philosophical implications. Similarly, it combines the differences for the recognition. Sometimes it brings the real conflict in the society. In the novel, characters carry the assumptions and beliefs to present them as who they are.

Irie, in the beginning, wants to be like English but when she knows her mother is from Jamaica, she loves to visit there then she acknowledges the cultural variation. At the end of the novel, she stands as a strong, independent, and self decisive girl. She decides to give birth to a child who she does not know whether it is of Millat or Magid. Through the characterization of Magid, Smith critiques the rigidity on root and presents him as a liberal character. He neither fully goes with the root culture nor adopts English culture. So Smith presents him as a representative character of multicultural society. Similarly, Millat does not find his self in English society. He attempts to go against the Englishness and involve in extremist group KEVIN (Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation). Smith here, portray Millat as extremist Islamic as he grows older is an example of one's choice to live in a multicultural society. In the same way, Jousha, a child of Chalfen family even does not like the way his father's scientific research. He goes against with his father and revolting for the preservation of animal rights.

In the beginning, the story develops with Archie's marriage to Clara. Though having long age gap having different racial background they are happy to each other. Archie does not have any motif to marry a black Jamaican girl. And in case of Clara as well, marrying an English man is not associated with the acceptance of everything acquired by the English values. Smith describes her "Clara Bowden was beautiful in all senses except maybe, by virtue of being black, the classical. Clara Bowden was magnificently tall, black as ebony and crushed sable, with hair plaited in a horseshoe which pointed up when she felt lucky, down when she didn't" (23). She was independent. After her marriage she observes Archie as he is not a romantic hero. She seems stronger when she finds Archie's weaknesses. She assumes Archie as "No white knight then, this Archieblad Jones. No aims, no hopes, no ambitions. A man

whose greater pleasures were English breakfast and DIY" (48). She feels he has no interest in beauty, youth, and love. She finds him with Samad and asked you never here? Why do you spend so much time with Indian? In such question Archie replies "Me and Sam? We go away back (48). Clara might have misunderstanding about Indians so Archie replies "I've known Sam for years...they are not the royal family, you know they are not those kind of Indians" (54). So the relationship of these two families comes close to understand each other. Smith writes, "Samad and Alsana Iqbal, who were not those kind of Indians as in Arcire's mind, Clara was not that that kind of black, who were, in fact not Indian at all but Bangladeshi, live four blocks down on the wrong side of Willesden High Road" (55).

In the novel, Samad desires to listen and understand the various languages like British, Spanish, American, French and Australian. Smith narrates, "From six in the evening until there in the morning: and then everyday was spent asleep, until daylight was as rare as a decent tip. For what is the point, Samad would think, pushing aside two mints and receipt to find fifteen pence, what is the point of tipping a man the same amount you would throw in a fountain to chase a wish?" (55). Samad wants to hide his profession as a waiter and wish him to known as a scientist, soldier and student. But at the same time he feels it is important to be waiter, to listen when someone says, "Lamd Down sock and rice with chips. Thank you. And fifteen pence clicked on china. Thank you sir. Thank you very much" (58). This time he assumes as an important person to understand other's language and their respect on him.

Culture creates the mutual relationship as well as misunderstanding among people from diverse cultures. In the novel, Clara has different perspectives about the West. But when she comes close with Alsana's family, she finds they are good. In the same way, Alsana also has negative attitude when she meets Clara for the first time.

After having conversations she finds the difference. It narrates, "Black people are often friendly, thought Alasana, smiling at Clara, and adding this fact subconsciously to the sort 'pro' side of the pro and consist she had the black girl from every minority she disliked, Alsana liked to single out specimen for spiritual forgiveness" (65).

Barker states, "Culture is both a name for the domain in which condensation over value meaning and practices takes place and tool by which to intervene in social life" (69). Culture is a kind of value in the sense that it makes the social life easy as well as difficult. The characters after understanding the value of culture become social in their life.

Samad does not like the education system of the west and hesitates to celebrate western festival. He says to the teacher, "What is all about this Harvest festival? What is it? Why is it? And why must my children celebrate it?" (129). He thinks it is not their tradition to follow others festival because it is not in favor of his religion In such doubt of Iqbal, the headmistress Mrs Owens replies:

Mr Iqbal, we have been through the matter of religious festivals quite thoroughly in the autumn review. As I am sure you are aware the school already recognizes a great variety of religious and secular events: amongst them, Christmas, Ramdan . . . death of Matrin Luther king. The Harvest Festival is part of the school's ongoing commitment to religious diversity, Mr. Iqbal. (129)

It is important to know that following the different aspects of society in public spaces does not matter who are you and what is your choice. It is common for everyone and should not be biased. So there must be the recognition of differences.

There occurs a problem while acknowledging the difference and adjust in a culturally diverse society. In such a society it is not always the same that you have own culture and not necessary to follow others. Watson states:

Culture by contrast is vaunted, celebrated one, still strongly associated emotionally and nostalgically with a distinctive way of life which, despite all its deficiencies speaks directly to an individual's sense of identity and belonging. And precisely because individuals recognize in themselves the emotional charge which this sense of distinctiveness conveys, they are also prepared to recognize the significance and importance of culture in the lives of others. (2)

Culture is associated with people's emotion. It makes nostalgic to the past life while living in a culturally different place. It speaks about people's sense of identity and belonging. Multicultural people have to recognize the significance and importance of culture in their life and other's. Particularly, the novel connects an emotion of culture and they come to recognize an importance to each other.

Samad fears he and his family will be affected by western culture. He highly respects his religion, Islamism that is why he wants his family also follow the same value. He shares his guilt to his friend Shiva in such a way, "I have been corrupted by England, I see that now- my children, my wife, and they too have been corrupted. I think maybe I have made the wrong friends. Maybe I have been furious. May be I have thought intellect more important than faith. And now it seems this final temptation has been put in front me. To punish me" (144). For him it is because of the place he and his family has no good friends. In his mind to follow Islamic religion is more important than becoming intellectually powerful. He warns his son to go to *Haj* but Magid did not want to do so and said "It is not fair. I cannot go on Haj. I've to go to

school. I don't have time to go Macca. It is not fair" (152). The tussle between the father and son is obvious because the time and the space affect ones mindset. For his son it is the time to go to school. This shows the conflict between two generations and the tension also is presented differently. Samad has some kind of rivalry due to cultural diversity. He is also finds the diversity might hampered his family values. John Horton writes, "Multiculturalism becomes a problem when conflicts between groups about values or their interpretation cannot be comfortably accommodated within a particular social structure" (3). In the multicultural society there exists not only a one group. Within a various groups there occurs self degradation, low self stem as Samad feels while living in Britain.

Samad is in doubt of his own decision to migrate to Britain where struggles find his self and at the same time try actively taking control of his life. His character displays the typical dilemma between is originality and immigrant identity. He feels it is toleration to being there. He points, "The idea of belonging seems like some long, dirty, lie... and I begin to believe that birthplaces are accidents, that everything is an accident. But if you believe that, where do you go? What do you do? What does anything matter?" (407). His frustration increase when he finds his sons are in two different spare of life.

There are no words. The one I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white suited, silly wig lawyer. The one I keep here is fully paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist. I sometime wonder why I bother', ... I really do. These days it feels to me like you make a devil's pact when you walk into this country. You handover your passport at the check in, you get stamped, you want to make a little money, get yourself started ... but you

mean to go back! Who would want to stay? In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Just tolerated. (407)

The country where he dreams to live happily has nothing as he expected. He does not find any respect there. His sons are standing opposite of his wish.

The Joneses and the Iqbals are worried about their children getting too engulfed by the Chalfens. Alsana fears that Chalfens is against their family values and that would have psychological affect on her son. She says, "These people are taking my son away from me! Birds with teeth! They're Englishifying him completely! They're deliberately leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion" (345). They claim down a bit after realizing the children's grades have improved as a consequence. Where British cultural tolerance has nothing seems to have changed much. The British still feel superior to the migrants and want them assimilated, whereas the non-native British want to succeed in life. The two families find their children having problems because they have to assimilate the Chalfens way of life. It narrates:

Clara and Alsana were powerless. If anything, things got worse. Irie spent more time than ever immersing herself in Chalfenism. Clara noticed her wincing at her own father's conversation, and following at the middle-brow tabloid Clara curled up in the bed. Millat disappeared from home for weeks at a time, returning with money that was not his and an accent that modulated widely between the rounded tones of the Chalfens and the street talk of the KEVIN clan. (351)

The changing behavior of the children increases the tension to their parents. And their parents claim that the reason behind this is following the Chalfens way of life. In the name of assimilating their values they are being tolerated in the British society.

The Chalfen family proclaimed themselves as they have certain standards in the society. In comparison to the other families they are trying to be different. They admired them as a happy family. Smith writes:

Every Chalfen signify them mentally healthy and emotionally stable. The children had their oedipal complexes early and in right order, they were all fiercely heterosexual, they adored their mother and admired their father, and usually, this feeling only increased as they reached adolescence...The Chalfen had no friends. They interacted mainly with Chalfen extended family...Chalfen didn't need other people. They referred themselves as nouns... Joyce challenged anyone to show her a happier family. (314)

This shows how Chalfen presents them. They present themselves as the representatives of the contemporary society. They do not like other people who are not well in their different aspect of life. Reedway Dasenbrock, in *Understanding Others* writes, "A choice between colonialist and decolonized mentalities, then clearly the decolonizers have the stronger argument. If the readers from the outside who read texts from non-western countries can be described as taking presentation of these texts, just as the Europeans once took possession of these countries, then indeed this should justify the citizens" (36). In the novel Joyce took a position as colonizers mentalities so she thinks she believes she has known the immigrants better.

Joyce Chalfen goes to Iqbal's house and engages with Alsana to know more about her twins. In her mind Alsana's children need help in order to make them civilized and moral human being. Joyce attention toward Millat, and Magid seems she has to do more to make their parents aware of their activities. She says, "Millat's going to get himself into terrible trouble with these fundamentalist people. Terrible trouble. I hardly sleep for worrying about him. You read about these groups in the

news...and it putting a terrible mental strain on Magid" (436). As white English, Joyce represents her as a well educated and intellectual. So she is confident that she is the one who can make changes in the minorities. Watson views, "In order to endorse or encourage multiculturalism either because it regards cultural diversity and difference as a good per se, or because it wishes to protect the interests of minorities..." (82). Cultural diversity focuses to preserve the interest of minorities according to Watson. In the same way, the way of Joyce concentration towards the boys shows their parents should be aware to their interest. These lines clarify, "The fact is both of these boys have serious emotional problems and it's not helped by Millat refusing to see Magid. It upsets him so much. They've been split by their religions, by their cultures. Can you imagine the trauma?" (434). She understands that the immigrant's children do not have a proper education to uplift their life from traditional to modern way. They are affected by their traditional religion and culture.

As a representative of the whites in the novel Joyce feels she has a good reputation in the society. Though her son is against parents and revolt against his father's Future Mouse projection and joints FATE for animal rights, she does not acknowledge the problem within her house. Her view is highlighted through these lines:

'The reason I don't worry about Josh, as you well known,' said Joyce, smiling broadly and speaking in her Chalfen-guide-to parenting voice, 'is because he's just trying to get a little bit of attention. Rather like you are at this moment. It's perfectly natural for well-educated middle class children to act up at this age.

In the chalfen lexicon the middle classes were the inheritors of the enlightenment, the creators of the welfare state, the intellectual elite and the source of all cultures. (435)

This will of Joyce presents how English people believe on themselves. Joyce finds problems in immigrant children and wants to teach them moral lesson. But she fails to recognize her own son.

Alsana does not like the way Joyce inquires about her sons. For her giving too concern to other family is not good so she replies, "There are two rules that everybody knows from PM to jinrickshaw- wallah. The first is, never let your country become a trading post. Very important. If my ancestors had followed this advice, my situation presently would be very different, but such is life. The second is, don't interfere in other people's family business" (441). Within a family there could be reason which is not necessary to share with other. Alsana blames to Joyce for made a part of her sons. "Two boys driven to different ends of the world. You have made a war between my sons. You are splitting them apart!" (442).

The novel presents the intergenerational conflicts, intercultural conflicts, radical religious conflict and biogenetical engineering conflicts of contemporary British society. Despite its numerous discourses; race, ethnicity, nationality and class et.al. Smith highlights the issue of forming an authentic self in a multicultural society where they could have choice to live as they are. The second generation children are more conscious about how to figure out in a multicultural society. Banting and Kymlica write:

...even as state seek to curtail the perceive 'excess' of multiculturalism, they typically emphasize that they are not reverting to older homogenizing and assimilations models of immigration, and accept the need for public institution like the schools, media, health care, and police to adopt to deal better with the realities of ethnic diversity. Immigrant groups are no longer expected to hide

their ethnic identity in public life, and can expect reasonable forms of recognition and accommodation in public institution. (8)

According to them immigrants are not always homogenized and assimilate the older values in multicultural society. They views, "As with national minorities and indigenous people, a baseline level of 'recognition' and 'accommodation' for immigrants has increasingly been accepted as an inevitable and legitimate aspect of life in liberal democracy" (9). In the contemporary British society immigrant group have freedom to their choices and their recognition is acceptable. Smith's characters mirror England's changing social environment, which especially after decolonization, has become increasingly multiethnic and multicultural.

By initiation of Archie's and Samad's children, who experience the dilemma of not belonging to an exact place and want to discover who they are, the conflicts of those second generation immigrants children of multicultural or immigrant parents come on surface. Magid at his early age tries to suppress his roots and become a full member of the white western society. He even starts to call himself Mark Smith instead of his real name. "I GIVE YOU A GLORIOUS NAME LIKE MAGID MAHFOOZ MURSHED MUBTASIM IQBAL!" Samad has yelled after Magid when he returned home that evening and whipped up the stairs like a bullet to hide in his room. "AND YOU WANT TO BE CALLED MARK SMITH!" (151). Once he is sent by his father to Bangladesh to become a proper Muslim he soon meets the Indian writer Sir R.V. Saraswati and learns from him that they (Indians) tend to believe in fate and that they should be more like English and take the action into own hands (288). Therefore, Magid decides to study law. He returns to England after agreement with Mr. Chalfen. Ironically he is more English than Millat and Irie, who grew up in London and because of this fact Magid refuses to talk with his father, who is really disappointed.

These circumstances force Magid to move to Chalfen's and he starts to work on a Future Mouse project. Magid is able to see value in all cultural practices and beliefs thus he forms as a united recognition of the world he occupies. Smith narrates:

The boy was changing his life and that was extremely fortuitous. For the first time in his life and that was extremely fortuitous...He expressed his undying affection and admiration for it every day. All Magid wanted to do, he explained to Marcus, was bring Chalfenism to the people. And you had to give the people what they wanted in a form they could understand. (427)

Smith here portrays Magid as new hope of cultural unity. He acknowledges as being pure spiritual when he was in Bangladesh and shortly after return to England he accepts the accommodation of others values.

He realizes it after experiencing the two different cultural values. So supports the scientist, Marcus for his Future Mouse projection. And he feels it is important to give value to others as well to preserve ones cultural value. John Horton argues:

Traditionally liberalism has been pictured as celebrating much of this diversity, or as at least tolerant of many differences which might not be thought valuable. Yet it has become clear that the relationship between liberalism, pluralism, especially multiculturalism, and toleration is much more problematic than this simple and confronting picture suggests. (2)

The traditional notion of multiculturalism, liberalism or pluralism is in trouble nowadays because there is not always be possibility of celebrating the differences. And at the same time there would not always toleration. He views, "There can be little doubt that one of the issues at stake is the limits of toleration" (3). The important part to acknowledge the differences come together when one's differences assumes by

another. Magid in a same way thinks it is not always good to be rigid in own values. His involvement with Marcus clarifies his standpoint.

Millat grew into a troublesome bad boy, who chases girls and does whatever he wants, combines the family religion (Islam) and heritage of his great-great-grandfather Mandal Pande with the current pop-culture. Millat chooses this identity because of realization he has been already labeled by the society as, “A Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people’s jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state . . . In short, he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country” (233). Therefore it seems only natural when he becomes a member of KEVIN, an Islamic Fundamentalist group with “an acronym problem” (295). Another reason to join such is to take vengeance on British for all the experienced racism. He is influenced by the father and the story of Mangal Pande:

Millat was there to finish it. To revenge it. To turn that history around. He liked to think he had a different attitude, a second generation attitude. If Marcus Chalfen was going to write his name all over the world, Millat was going to write it BIGGER. There would be no misspelling his name in the history books. There'd be no forgetting the dates and times. Where Pande misfooted he would step sure. Where Pande chose A, Millat would chose B.
(506)

When he becomes a member of KEVIN, he is not only repeats the action of Pande fighting the English, but also, unconsciously tries to please his father. Millat is opposite of his brother. He decides to foil the project Future Mouse, symbolizing his opposition toward Britishers.

He represents the attitude of migrants who do not want to be merged with the British and lose their cultural identity and heritage in the process. Will Kymlicka and Banting writes:

...the rise of multiculturalism is related to, and an extension of, the modern human rights revolution. The same human rights deals that inspired the struggle against colonialism, racial segregation, and caste discrimination have also inspired the struggle by other historically disadvantaged ethno cultural groups to contest the lingering manifestations of ethnic and racial hierarchy.

(9)

They argue that modern idea of multiculturalism rise as conscious act to identify oneself. They further write, "This helps explain why multiculturalism should not be dismissed as a passing fad or fashion. While its outer limits are deeply contested, its inner core is inextricably linked to widely accepted norms of freedom, equality, human rights and democracy" (10). There is not always assimilation, tolerance between the cultures, rather acquiring the cultural origins which have potential to overrule any apparently predetermined life path. Millat is aware of the historical facts of colonialism and his cultural heritage. And at the same time he finds the unequal relationship between immigrants and mainstream culture. In order to prove that he has changed much while acknowledged his cultural heritage. Smith writes, "The brothers will race toward the future only to find they more and more eloquently express their past... that place where they have just been. Because it is thing about immigrants ('fugees, 'emigres, 'travellers): they cannot escape their history any more than you yourself can lose your shadow" (466). Closer to the end of the story Millat decides he is about to change the west perception of minority, "That's it, that's the long, long

history of us and them. That's how it was. But no more" (506). Unfortunately, he chooses violence and decides to kill Dr. Perrel at the Future Mouse conference.

Irie feels lost and does not know where she belongs. She feels neither English nor Jamaican. Irie defines Jamaica as, "The land of accidents sound like Paradise" (337). She adopts and idolizes her roots, wanting to return to them in search for self. She also adopts pieces of England for herself that her roots, choosing to define her authentic self in a way that do not always perfectly within her heritage. Her dilemma of what has to accept prevents her to find out the reality of cultural diversity. So she assumes herself as a part of the crowd and even feeling loved with Millat despite being Asian. Looking for an alternative, she turns to her grandmother in hopes of exploring her Jamaican heritage. "I don't want to have a year off, I need one. It's essential- I'm young, I want some experiences. I've lived in this bloody suburb all my life. Everyone's the same here. I want to go and see the people of the world" (378). She learns that her great grandmother, Ambrosia, was seduced by captain Durhan, a white Englishman, during his stay in Jamaica. She also reads extensively British colonialism and revelations about her heritage make her feel ecstatic. In the end, her grandmother offers her to come to Jamaica. Irie, representing the second generation migrant feels displaced and not belonging, British nor Jamaican. She, as well as many of her second migrant carefully balances between her parents' and society's norms and expectations.

Feeling incomplete, Irie looks for her root and tries to figure out her own identity. When she becomes pregnant she realizes there is nothing to the root where one belongs to. It is something to acquire to adopt the situation. It is written:

Irie's child can never be mapped exactly nor spoken of with any certainty.

Some secrets are permanent. In a vision, Irie has seen a time, a time not far

from now, when roots won't matter anymore because they're too long and they're too tortuous and they're just buried too damn deep. She looks forward to it. (527)

She is confident that whoever the father of her unborn child she would claim it is a child from the imaginary land. It further narrates, "At first this fact seemed ineffably sad to Irie; instinctively she sentimentalized the biological facts, adding her own invalid syllogism: if it was not somebody's child? That is now her child seemed . . . A map of imaginary fatherland" (516).

No person can claim to be of one cultural origin. All people have been creolized in some way, and many position this within a framework stemming from colonial assimilation. O'Grandly writes, "Colonialist understood assimilation as homogenizing diverse practices and creeds into one culture, so all individual had the same goals effectively unifying diverse social sets and making assimilation appear as a positive method in societal reformation. Assimilation is interpreted by many as being a way to preserve ones identity. While cultural mixing or an acknowledgement of creolization, is misunderstood to be forfeiture of cultural values to join a multicultural mass that is devoid of individual identity" (220).

Along with the critical argument about Smith's multicultural novel, the author herself recognizes the limitations of multiculturalism. Smith confesses, "That the whole kind of 60s, 70s, liberation ethnic that you will be released by knowing your roots, that you will discover yourself. I just always thought was a crock basically and its partly true, but your roots come with baggage. And the baggage is not always fun" (interview). Smith admits the underlying motive behind her work is that rootedness remains independent for place and often, if not always subjectively drives people.

Rootedness does not, however, necessarily assist in the search for authentic self unless it is interpreted to do so.

In referencing to the theme of the "white teeth" in the novel, teeth are referenced in many chapter title of the novel (Teething Trouble, Molars, Canines: The Ripping Teeth) and also appears in as references as cultural markers within the text. Smith illustrates "teeth" as a symbol of wisdom and as an identity of a family. As Mr. Hamilton clarifies to Millat and Magid, "While you're still young, the important matter is the third morals. They are the more commonly referred to the wisdom teeth . . . because they're your father's teeth, you see, wisdom teeth are passed down by the father" (173). So here, teeth are the transformation of one generation to other generations. So, "teeth" in the novel are markers of the history, genealogy and also the individual journey through their lives. Smith also highlights the fact that having white teeth in the modern society also refers to fakeness. Hamilton in the novel further tells, "Clean white teeth are not always wise, now are they? (171). It is because whites and blacks are not equally treated in multicultural Britain though having white teeth on both races.

While living in a multicultural society, there is impossibility of purity in a conventional sense. The ideal multicultural society lies somewhere in the future where roots are not suppressed, but where they simply do not matter anymore. It is only in this society, where one does not truly know or does not really care who one is came from and why one is here, that acquires the freedom to be and live. The characters of the novel identify their authentic self through mingling of the past and present, a rootedness which clings to both personal histories and present circumstances.

In fact, in *White Teeth* characters of different cultures, races and ethnicities have encountered in each other because they want cultural harmony that would not

discriminate each other. Smith further illustrates the understanding each other's culture well. The characters in one or another way struggle to adjust in each other's culture. In order to bring the closeness between the characters, the writer reconciles through understanding.

Even though Smith's characters have difficulties in negotiating the different components of their lives, as a consequence of their inability to accept ambivalence, negotiation seems to be of fundamental importance within the world in which they live. The contact between roots and routes necessarily requires a negotiation in order to shape identity and to interact with others. Therefore, a negotiation appears to be essential when dealing with the issue of identity formation and consequently also with one's relationship with others.

To sum up, the novel *White Teeth* is a mixture of English, Asian and Jamaican languages. There is mixture of genres, mixture of reality and fantasy is the essence multiculturalism of the Zadie Smith's novel. Smith also presents the complexities and dark side of multicultural society and tries to find the resolution to have a better life. Many critical evaluations proved that the novel has tended to center on its multicultural appeal to the aesthetic of difference and to the politics of authentic self.

This is a novel written in the shadow of post-war period of Britain where immigrants from different countries make new cultural practices. Smith shifts the focus from the hegemony of whites cannot give space to practice the others original cultural values. That is why, she gives equal values to all cultures existed in the multicultural society.

Smith's use of multicultural ethos as a liberating strategy that enables her to re interpret Britain's multicultural construction and at the same time she is able to present the cultural, historical and geographical contexts to a border interrogation of

the human relationship. She succeeds in achieving a vision that construction of plural and multicultural society. Smith's views are close to the unity in diversity.

In this way, Smith's novel presents the immigrants in Britain. She criticizes the earlier notion of multiculturalism, which is supposed to celebrate liberalism and equality. In the name of liberation and equal opportunity to the immigrants, they were hegemonized by the whites. They have to follow the cultural values of whites so that they would be civilized. However, Smith in the novel portrays the real experience of immigrants and tries to give justice on them. She attempts to raise minorities' cultural values and give them space to develop their lives as who they are. There is a conflict while finding the differences among various cultures. The conflict comes to form a consciousness in the characters specially immigrants children. The research shows how Smith's *White Teeth* celebrates cultural tolerance and humanitarian values among characters.

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