

## MULTICULTURALISM IN THE NOVELS OF ZADIE SMITH

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**Abstract:** - Multiculturalism already had an impact on sociologists, offering fresh perspectives on racial and ethnic identity. It takes a special talent to write the first novels that succeed. Even so, fewer can change the world via their words. Smith's writings helped her readers by introducing them to British culture from a global perspective. While the women are excellent in expressing very personal concerns, many of which centre on identity-related difficulties, in their works, they also successfully convey societal and political complaints.

The problem of identity exploration penetrates all of the works under discussion, despite their differences, and compels a range of characters to confront both their cultural roots and those of the culture they are engaged in. The desire for individuality, the idea of traveling through time and space, accepting or rejecting categorization, battling patriarchal restrictions, and the tendency to define oneself by comparison with the identities or actions of others are all recurring themes in the artwork of British South Asian women.

**Keywords:** - Multiculturalism, British culture, identity, patriarchal restrictions racial and ethnic identity

**Introduction:** - This paper provides the distinctive elements of British literature generally and novels in particular, with particular reference to the works of British novelist Zadie Smith, a member of the multicultural community. The characteristics that make Zadie Smith stand out in her books and draw attention to the topics and other concerns they address. In a multicultural

setting, a woman must fight patriarchy, forge her unique personality, and uphold her duty to her family. Even though Zadie Smith immigrated to the UK from two distinct countries, they have similar multiculturalism-related problems. Given the requirement to delve into the historical facets of the novel genre, the wide scope of the suggested topic must be examined using a historical approach.

To gain a comprehensive grasp of Zadie Smith, her environment, and her thematic interests, one must also employ the conservative analytical methodology. A fundamental analysis of similarities and differences is found in a comparative study of literary works of art. Since the primary goal of comparative literature is to provide readers with a more thorough and sufficient comprehension of the works and their authors. Regarding the treatment of women from pre-colonial to modern times, an attempt will be made to compare the writers concerning a few chosen works. Equipment to Be Used Since this is literary research, it can be completed by closely reading and critically analyzing Zadie Smith's books to ensure that they support the study's thesis.

Zadie Smith accurately points out that there are both overt and subtle allusions to her autobiographical situations in several of her fictional works. Not working A stronger personality is more significant than biographical information because it is an intrinsic part of who we are and how we interpret the world. It cannot be forced out of our daily lives. This ambition to move up to a higher socioeconomic level is shared by Smith's immigrant heroes and their second-generation progeny. Her daughter had been immensely influenced by the strong lady that Yvonne McLean had become in both her life and her career. However, it is also evident that Zadie Smith's growth as a writer was aided by Harvey Smith's influence. Harvey Smith and his life partner were apart for twenty years. Fiction was a constant in Smith's mind throughout her adolescence.

The dynamics and complexities surrounding these issues are depicted in Smith's works, not merely strategies for overcoming marginalization or traveling back to the roots. *White Teeth* is "a beautiful portrayal of multiculturalism," according to Phillip Tew (Zadie 3). Multiculturalism, a subfield of political theory, addresses appropriate responses to religious and cultural diversity. It also brought in the diversity of cultures from the immigrant groups.

Thus, the hybrid zone where assimilation, mimicry, and other forms of intercultural blending happen is created by the continuous cultural exchange between the cultures of the immigrants and the host culture. Smith, then, cannot be ignored in the tradition of the literary canons. Murphy writes in *Zadie, Take Three* that she "wanted to go back to the fiction she had grown up on to see if it could speak to contemporary issues." For this reason, Smith should be fully regarded as a "Contemporary British" novelist. This paper's primary focus is the dissertation's theoretical underpinnings. This perspective, along with Zadie Smith's texts, will situate itself concerning Foucault's concept of power.

In addition to influencing the cultural identities of people from different ethnic and geographic backgrounds, multiculturalism has developed into a phenomenon that has caused conflicts and issues amongst those who hold different theoretical viewpoints. The political concept of multiculturalism has arisen in an attempt to address the problems that specific populations within a country experience. The claims and arguments around multiculturalism, which are intensifying, have generated conversations over whether or not this strategy is the most effective in handling diversity and immigrant integration in the political, intellectual, and popular domains. As the concept of multiculturalism grows increasingly complicated over time, people are growing more conscious of and concerned about the problematic and contradictory relationship between race, ethnicity, and national identity. This explains why "multiculturalism" has remained divisive even though it is a broadly acknowledged concept.

Raising the socially marginalized members of society to a level where they can compete with the majority is the aim of this. Though it may be perceived as a force for social equality, Kymlicka's theory is not without debate; in fact, it may be a source of conflict. It is a right that flagrantly restricts outsiders' ability to stand up for the rights of underrepresented cultural communities. The concept of power and this diversity aspect are similar.

British novelist Zadie Smith's writing was greatly affected by the socio-cultural upheavals she saw in London as "the bright new multicultural world" flourished (Nichols 62). This inspiration serves as the central idea in the majority of her novels. In some of her stories, the British government undertakes specific diversification efforts. Smith handles the subject in a way that blurs the distinctions between affirmation and denial; her essays might be understood as the dialectics of multiculturalism.

White Teeth was written before the year 2000 when violent upheavals and riots in Britain spearheaded by minority populations were becoming more common and violent. British diversity was being questioned at the time. *The White Teeth* narrative takes place between 1857 and 2000, or roughly 50 years, over. Smith examines how attitudes shift in her books and how they affect both the real world and the imaginary characters. The change can be attributed to the multiple waves of immigrants that arrived in Britain, many of whom were from countries that were once a part of the British Empire.

These writers gave English literature new settings, perspectives on national and personal histories, and a new sense of language and structure. Novels challenging writings have been presented to readers by authors such as Salman Rushdie, Zadie Smith, Andrea Levey, Monica Ali, Hanif Kureishi, and Timothy Mo. These books require readers to consider the experiences of other nations and assess Britain's place in those nations' history, in addition to acclimating themselves to new literary forms. Dubbed *The Empire Writes Back*," the phenomenon has been

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described as a challenge to those writers, such as Rudyard Kipling, Joyce Cary, Joseph Conrad, and E. M. Forster, whose narratives of the West's relationship with its imperial "possessions" in Africa or the Far East are perceived as definitive and repressive, giving voice to those who profit from colonialism and stifling those who are harmed by it.

British life has been significantly impacted by immigration in the years after World War II. Small, well-established immigrant groups may be found throughout the British Isles, primarily in and around major ports such as Liverpool and large cities such as London. The immigrants included retired seamen and servants who had married local women and lived in Britain, as well as political or religious exiles fleeing persecution in their own countries. There were several ways in which these immigrants differed from their predecessors. First, many of them came in search of better prospects, like jobs and educational opportunities, even if they included groups of political refugees. Some arrived by invitation as a consequence of recruitment campaigns run by companies like London Transport, which was seeking workers for the city's domestic bus and tube systems.

Third, since they were born in countries that were either a member of the old British Empire or the new Commonwealth, they might at least be entitled to regard Britain, even if they weren't always eligible for British citizenship. After World War II, writers like George Lamming, Sam Selvon, and Nirad Chaudhuri began to write about their experiences as immigrants in the 1950s. According to Edward Said, exile refers to "the inhalable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home, and goes on to argue that the achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left forever" (Said 2001, 173-174). The feeling of being uprooted and banished in a hostile setting is still raw and unprocessed for these early immigrant writers.

According to Bruce King, these early texts written by immigrants often convey remorse for their previous lives, a hope that their exile would not last forever, and the hope that one day they will be able to return to a more comfortable life back home. Reiterating King's definition, the second stage of immigrant writing is about building a life around new relationships. In the context of exile, these are usually modified versions of pre-existing Black, Asian, or Caribbean associations that acquire a new urgency and significance. King claims that writings in which authors assert that their generation is both a part of British history and has its history in Britain today belong to a third phase that is currently evolving. Narratives with contested events, non-linear chronologies, and unstable points of view are particularly challenging, disturbed, and interrupted in the third phase. To be realistic and to defy accepted linguistic rules, these works typically feature several voices, are dialogic, and employ a variety of discourses, dialects, and idiolects.

The two novels discussed in this article serve as illustrations of the complex structural elements, diversity of language, and point of view of this most recent immigrant literary movement. Zadie Smith portrays a variety of aspects of the British immigrant experience since World War II. A significant population that has left their home country and spread to other countries or the entire world is referred to as multicultural. The term "Jewish multiculturalism" was first closely associated with Jews due to its global expansion. During those decades, when West Indians migrated to the UK, South Asian and Asian multi-cultures established themselves in North America, the UK, and Canada, and Eastern European countries moved to Western Europe, it was commonly used as a synonym for immigration.

Multiculturalism maintains strong ties to one's home nation even after relocating. Because of this, nostalgia is usually associated with multicultural people and is strongly reflected in their creative output, especially in literature and movies. Brick Lane is the title of Monica Ali's

first novel. Though written by a first-time author, the novel was much anticipated. Since the turn of the 20th century, Britain has benefited from its position as a post-imperial multicultural society. The majority of immigrants come from former British colonies like Jamaica and India. In addition to accepting Britain as a fresh start and their mother nation, the immigrants acknowledged it as their homeland.

For the British, however, colonial history means something different. These former colonies are still seen as being under the control of Britain and its culture, even though both they and their citizens have achieved independence. As a result, immigrants to England have long been viewed as inferior and deserving of poor regard. This makes it more likely that immigrants will struggle to adjust and will inevitably feel alone and alienated in society. The word "multi-culture" has numerous definitions and meanings that explain it. "Dwellings-in-displacement" is the term used by Professor James Clifford (Agnew 310). Given that housing is a fundamental component of what it means to be multicultural, home and homemaking have a significant impact on diasporic spaces. Multi-culturalism is defined by social science professor Vijay Agnew as "the collective memory and trauma involved in such dispersion" in addition to "the dispersion of people from a particular place" (Agnew 193). Additionally, She states that "systematic racism, sexism, heterosexism, and socioeconomic exclusion cause diasporic members to often feel alienated in the host country" (Agnew 193).

If we do look back, we must do so with the knowledge that gives rise to deep uncertainties: that we will almost certainly be unable to recover exactly what was lost due to our physical alienation from India; in other words, we will essentially create fictions, not real cities or villages, but imaginary homelands, Indians of the mind instead of actual cities or villages (Smith 10). To put it simply, people experience loneliness when they leave their houses and are probably unhappy to discover that they no longer feel like they are at a genuine home. Naturally,

assimilating into the new culture is difficult. Finding one's identity has proven to be challenging for people due to differences in cultural and religious backgrounds. Psychological trauma is experienced by the majority of diasporic cultures during the period of adjusting to their new surroundings. Even after acclimating to their new surroundings, diasporic populations frequently experience issues including identity crisis, isolation, and prejudice.

Diasporic literature often explores themes of longing, loneliness, estrangement from society, and displacement. Diasporic literature, in Mari Peepre's words, "is about the search for tradition and roots by the partially acculturated second and third generation, the struggle to survive in the harsh circumstances, the battle to retain their heritage culture while adjusting to the strange, new host culture, and about the loneliness and alienation of the displaced person." The majority of these works, which are often autobiographical, represent a shift from the quiet of the immigrant ghettos to the frequently vocal introspection of the third-generation, partially hybridized host-migrant writer (Smith 80).

Smith's novels do more than just respond to marginalization or articulate a "return to the roots"; they also illuminate the shifting angles and complexity associated with such challenges. "A beautiful portrayal of multiculturalism," says Phillip Tew about *White Teeth* (Zadie 3). Multiculturalism, a subfield of political theory, addresses appropriate responses to religious and cultural diversity. Because she is multiethnic, the majority of her characters identify with multiple cultures, nations, and ethnicities.

**Conclusion:** - Multicultural societies have suffered the most in multicultural nations, especially those of Eastern descent and people of color. People in heterogeneous cultures may suffer from misidentification and prejudice because of their nationalities, cultural views, religions, customs, and family histories. It has undermined peace, harmony, and intercultural understanding in



multicultural communities. In multicultural cultures, immigrants have had to deal with social injustice, segregation, and cultural dominance.

As a result, multiculturalism's core goal of equal respect for all races, ethnicities, and religions has been undermined. One of the most prolific novelists of the post-modern age is Zadie Smith. She has addressed many issues, including race, religion, migration, multiculturalism, and cultural identity. Numerous aspiring postmodern writers are influenced by Smith's storytelling technique. She created the idea of hysterical realism with her exquisite word choice and profound comprehension of the human psyche. Smith's development of the multiculturalism theme offers a vision for emancipation, empowerment, and a thorough character analysis of how people from different cultures live together, right down to their very core.

Zadie Smith are summed up by Phillip Tew as follows: "The structure and themes found in Smith's shorter fiction, which are related to family, community, and possibilities of belonging, are incorporated into all three works. These themes include the extremes of belief, the demands of secular and religious systems of faith, the volatility of friendship and affection, the disruptive nature of seduction, passion, and sexual love, the comic possibilities of everyday realism, the silliness of everyday realism, and the silliness of the sill (Zadie: 15). Zadie Smith is well-known for her elegant interpretations of circumstances and her overall style, particularly when it comes to her ear for language. A nonlinear plot places a strong focus on coincidence, ambiguity, and unpredictable outcomes. She employs humor and sarcasm in her societal satire and language, which often borders on farce. Smith's art defies easy categorization. It is a synthesis of popular culture and exquisite literature.

Smith also illustrates the consequences of these cross-cultural encounters in his novels. Being a mixed-race novelist who was exposed to both her father's British culture and her mother's Jamaican culture, Zadie Smith is acutely aware of the suffering and uncertainty that

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result from being multiracial. She uses her character to the best of her ability to portray such bewilderment. The majority of Smith's books contain a London-based premise. Smith belongs to literary movements such as postmodernism and realism. In Smith's debut book *White Teeth*, characters from many cultural backgrounds coexist in London, a city that has truly transformed into a melting pot of cultures. It has to do with how Britain interacted with immigrants from other nations that had previously been colonized.

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