

# An Analysis of The Identity Structures Built Up by The Characters in Zadie Smith's Novel *White Teeth*

Shruti Chaturvedi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Deepika Dhand<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>MATS University.

## Abstract

This paper has been prepared in order to analyze the construction of an identity of both Bangladeshi migrants (Samad Iqbal) as well as English men (Archies Jones) who emigrated from other countries. Those are close friends. Lived in the multicultural city of London in Britain. In the novel *White Teeth*, the author explores the problems resulting from immigrants from various countries living in Britain, especially those who have left behind physical artifacts (cultural properties) and intangible attributes relating to their ethnic group inherited from the past of the immigrants, who lived in Britain from the first generation to the second generation. The novel of the Smiths is interconnected with their past and also deals with their dissatisfaction with their lives in a society in which they live today. According to Smith, his work is sensitively concerned with the second generation immigrants and their beliefs, which are transmitted from ultra-modern societies via their bringing up, living standards, values, taboos, thinking processes, and the likes.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the way in which the construction of identity of different characters in the novel *White Teeth* is explored through the lenses of different theories of social scholars, such as Colonial theory, hybridity theory, and post-modern era theories of identity in the social system. This paper also explores how characters existing in the novel construct identity of themselves and how different cultural interact on their identity formation in *White Teeth*.

**Keywords:** Families, Race, Multicultural, Religion, Contemporary, identity formation, taboos.

## 1. Introduction

In the novel *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith, introduced to three families from different cultural backgrounds, which are set mainly in multicultural London. The first part of the book is white and an overview of the former British Empire, common wealth and the history of Bangladesh, Jamaica, Jews (Catholic Chalfen) in England as relevant to *White Teeth*. Subsequently, a multicultural society existed in London. Literary genre of *White Teeth* is quite complex and 500 pages novel deeply rooted Racism, Hybridity and Multiculturalism present in post-colonial period of Britain which affected to the immigrants came from different countries and resided in the London city. The English man **Archies Jone** is a forty seven year old English world war two Ophelia had mental break down and left him Archie decided to commit suicide due to grievances occurred in life but he was saved by butcher Mo Hussain Ishmael. Then he married **Calara Bowden Jone**. Jones and his friend Samad Iqbal spent most of their time in a bar. Bar name ‘‘O Connoell’’

There was an expansion of the story, which involved the family of Samad Iqbal. Samad Iqbal was born in Bengal. He also served as a British Army in the Second World War. He returned to Bangladesh to settle down over there but due to financial crisis Samad Iqbal returned to London due to financial crisis. Samad Iqbal is strongly patriarchal and he wants to control his wife and two sons Magid and Millet. Where Magid is sent to Bangladesh to learn the culture of his motherland. Where Millet lives in London with his father. Where Magid became a scientist and had a good moral character Where Millet lives in London city which is western part of the world where he learns bad habits like drug abuser, womanizer etc.

There are four sons in the Chalfen family, the tetrarch being Marcus Chalfen - Cambridge graduate - who has four sons Joshua, Banjium, Jack, and Olive. Chalfen is hot-tempered, arrogant and uses abusive words. In his research, he had operated a project called "Future Mouse project research" in which genetic experiments were carried out. There was a partnership between Magid and this project on which we worked together. In an attempt to analyse *White Teeth* in Smith's London, we need to take into account the fact that the characters are drawn from all over the world from different religions, societies, and even races. This makes the convergence of movement and race at the heart of the novel an instantly obvious one. But additionally, these characters found much more unique approaches to adapt to their circumstances. Smith portrays the colossal disaster of movement, which incorporates lost strength and status and the struggle to assimilate into another culture without losing one's local characters. This is precisely what Zadie Smith's book *White Teeth* is all about it's a fictional story of a family of an immigrant from Bangladesh to America and again to Jamaica. Smith portrayed above family member's grievances and hurdles felt in western countries like British cities like London.

### 1.1. Objective

1. The aim of this study is to investigate the theme of identity of immigrant of different countries in the novel *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith within the context of exploitation and disparity in existing in the postcolonial period of the novel.
2. Examine how Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* portrays multiculturalism and hybridity in an interesting way.

### 1.2. First Generation- Archies Jones Family-

This book presents three very different families of a totally different religion and lifestyle, and Smith presents them in a unique way. The first family in the novel consists of Archie, his nearly thirty year's younger wife Clara and their daughter Irie. A coin is always carried by Archie in his pocket, and he always makes all the plans according to the coin by tossing it when he needs to make a decision. The humanist Archie who was a white Englishman was not prejudiced against race so he had married the black Jamaican Clara who was proud of her ancestor. In their marriage Archie was a traditional husband who took care of his family. There was no denying the loyalty and fidelity of Clara to him, who lived the life he desired. Their hybrid daughter Irie on the other hand does not like her physical appearance and thus struggles among her friends, however she is happy in her life.

### 1.3. Second Generation- The Samad –Iqbal Family-

The Iqbal were the second family who consisted of Samad, Alsana and their twin sons Magid and Millat. Regardless of their numerous distinctions in ethnic foundation, the groups of the character Samad Iqbal and Archies Jones include a fundamentally the same as unique. While Archie is the cliché working English man with an atheist and Anglo-Saxon origin. Despite the fact that Samad was a Bengali Muslim, Clara

and Alsana were altogether different from each other as Clara is a Jamaican witness and Alsana is a Bengali Muslim; their friendship has continued despite the fact that they do not have much in common. For example, both Archie and Alsana paid little respect to their differentiated societies. Another case is the way that both Alsana and Samad Iqbal were Bengali.

#### 1.4. The Third Generation-

##### Chalfen Family-

In the novel were the Chalfen with four smart, well - educated children. Both the Jewish Marcus and his wife Catholic wife Joyce are very rational people but do not have any friends. Their family dialogue deals with a range of different subjects and the children were lucky because they got all the guides they needed for their lively hood for instance. Following authors explained Hybridity, Multicultural, and Identity in decent manners

In *Walter Theory* (2008;2) view ,Smith 's bibliography consists of three novels, namely *White Teeth* (2000), *Autograph Of Man* (2002) , and *On Beauty* (2005) considering the fact that reception of her novel first novel *White Teeth* by addressing multiplicity of themes such as cultural hybridity identity ,religious ,fundamentalism , post –colonialism and multiculturalism in a single novel. According to Matthew Walker Paproth (*Walter*, 2008) Smith in *White Teeth* demonstrates the problem of living in a post -modern world. Smith's characters for instance, Archie Jones and *Samad Iqbal* struggle in order to find happiness in a fractured and chaotic world.

##### Second generation of SAMAD IQBAL'S family;

According to *Fernandez's* (2009; 145) Interpretation, the immigrant offspring are exposed to London's cultural, when she utters. They (second generation ) are not trying to fit into a culture but rather to find their own space by drawing from the culture they have been brought up in and to what extent there is conflict between first and second generation .

The harvest festival, but the indication is disallowed. His children deceive him into taking a part in this festival as they witness him deceive his wife by indulging in their music teacher, Ms. Poppy. This shows how postmodern individuals are reduced from their ethical values and customs and this affirms (*Lyotard's Malpas* 2006; 91) THEORY.

Also Samad goes to the O' Connell poolroom where he and Archie meet as usual to discuss life that day Samad talks about his rebellious sons uttering ‘ ‘ Because there's rebellion in them , Archie I can see it small now but it is growing I tell you . I don't know what is happening to our children in this country ‘ ‘ (WT; 240.241).’’ They won't go to the mosque, they don't pray, they speak strangely. People call it assimilation when it is nothing but corruption. ‘ ‘CORRUPTION’’ (WT; 248) .This proves (Fredric Jameson's) theory, in Schizophrenia .in which the post-modern individual experiences a reality where no longer coherent as a whole (*Sarup* 1993; 146,147).

#### 2. Third family Chalfen -

In *Baudrillard's* Theory that we are simulators, we are simulacra ‘ ‘ (*Kellner* 1989; 61) which means she is aware that she is empty inside but she is always haunted by feelings of fruitfulness and inauthenticity.

##### Smith's WT multicultural London

In *Walters* (2008; 99, 100) perspective , a multicultural society contains more than one nation in recent times there are original propensities to defend these sub- national collections particularly since their ethnic culture has influence on modern nation each culture has influence on modern nations. Each cultural is viewed as a gathering of authentic norms for example, habit faith language and different perspectives, all

are worth conserving. Multicultural society makes an atmosphere wherein various societies are commonly powerful compared to one another. Profitably, multicultural society can influence many fields of life positively, mainly in ground of literature art, music, clothes and it could bring a new wave of ideas and motivation. However in both cases, identity is matter of alteration and hardly stay fixed.

Stranger or immigrants along with native people need enough time to understand one another to live peacefully together but it offshoots human equality and human rights (WT;326,327) as Samad highlights this trend in this paragraph.

This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow and white, this has been the century of the great immigrant experiment ... and Irie Jones humming a tune. it is only this late in the day, and possibly only in Willesden, that you can find best friend Sita and Sharon, constantly mistaken for each other because Sita is white ... and Sharon is Pakistani all the mixing up ... it is still hard to admit that ... no more English that the Indian and no more Indian than the English this confirm (*Baudrillard's*) theory.

The Importance of History in the Construction of Identity; It can be seen that history has a great role in a multicultural society, and the past. Moreover, Millat does not find the link between him and his familial history; as a result he finds another link of belonging and joins a major Islamic group named Kevin.

*Walter* (2008; 13, 16) the second generation offspring of the families of the families of Iqbal and Jones a separated way of life that is completely identified with the original culture cannot be permitted so easily. Metaphorically, although the white color represent represents purity and innocence, here it represents the degeneration of that wisdom because of turning into yellow.

It can be seen that we never appreciate the conflict of societies in multiracial England. According to Kathleen O'grady's view (*Walter* .2008; 15) 'WT capers through this minefield of 'origins'.

The Issues of Identity Construction in Postmodern and Multicultural London. First generation immigrants have identity problems for their children in WT. It can be seen that the three second generation immigrants' children; Millat, Magid, and Irie avoid their roots and develop independent identities in different ways. In the historical timeline as stated about the people follow Structuralism, Hybridity, and multiculturalism theory. (Matthew Walker Paproth (*Walter* 2008) *Baudrillard's* Theory.

The paper centers around the theme of identity structure in multicultural society as it appears in Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth*. Zadie Smith narrates finely about the struggle between the identity of character and the historical background of the three-generation family. It portraits, inherited cultural heritage, cultural origin and impression that is the center character. I think Zadie Smith is more influenced by a novel by (Salman Rushdie *Midnight Children* 1981). That was described by Salman Rushdie in her essay saying that Britian in undergoing critical phase might be total cultural of the existence society'' Britian. (Salmn Rushdie 1959 ' *Midnight Children* ') The white teeth is underlined where dilemma is quite implicit in the conflict among the individual trying conformity to achieve His\Her. Identity on contrast they could not do so due to dominating culture prevailing in migrated place Hybridity of theory and methodology.

Hybridity in English literature usually means works exhibiting a gland of western and eastern influence through the term biology and popularized by postcolonial theory. It deals with the issue of intermixing modes of resistance and voice as mentioned (Ruside's *Midnight children*).

Post-Structure Theories – Explain the hybridity to explain cultural outward appearance that comes out with from colonial encounter social scientists those paying attention to diaspora as well as migration globalization etc. The paper advances the theory of hybridity to be the systematic succession

(methodology) that helps to analyze the white teeth and throw the light on the theme of identity termination in multicultural society.

### 3. Hybridity and multiculturalism;

There are different meanings associated with hybridity for instance in cultural studies hybridity denotes register of duty cross-over peak n- mix boundary crossing experience style mating of world growing migration this diaspora life intensive intercultural communication every day. Hybridity refers to the process of the emergence of culture in which its elements are being continually transformed or translated through irrepressible encounters. Hybridity offers the potential to undermine existing forms and representation (A Dictionary of Sociology 2005, as cited in Warner 2007; 5). According to Edward Said a Palestinian American theorist ‘ ‘ Cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous ... and independent ‘ ‘ (Said 1995 to 347). Thus, hybridity can be seen as not only a result of globalization, immigration and colonization, but as constant circumstances in every culture.

Hybridity takes place in condition inequality during attempt impassivity on culturally practice's quoted in (Grabham 2006) moreover Bhabha explore hybridity in contest post-colonial period as resilience. Bhabha explore affirm that social-articulation difference from the minority perspective in complex on going negotiation that speak to authorized cultural hybridity that inverse moment of historical transformation quoted in (Karidy 2002- 319, 2000). In hybridity Irie is best example of hybridity for mixed race but also behaves in a particularly manner that our naturally hybrid. However the novel content lots of humor element is difficult to determine whether Irie action fact simply teenage experimental curiosity or can be read as top ethnic assimilation or isolation depending on circumstances she suffers heavy period to strengthen her hair to impress Millat, Millat whose mostly dated white girls one cannot conclude where Irie wanted to be white or in only obliged with idea pleasing Millet understanding physical duty in contrast to her waiting straight hair. She impresses Shakespeare's poem as being an ode to black and women with reference to (Smith 2000 Chapter 11). The novel she collected the response she got from society to develop her own view on hybridity culture and identity because of her mixed series of hybrid children. Has one cannot define Irie has Jamaican or English Irie surprises the Chalfen family and their sophistication. This will be quoted by (Zadie Smith 2000 Chapter 12).

Before analyzing the elements of hybridity in the novel **White Teeth**, I decode the meaning of hybridity as defined by glow. Hybridity refers to the process of the immersion of the culture in which elements are being continually transformed through irreparable encounters. Hybridity offers the potential to undermine existing forms of culture authority and representation. A directly (of sociology 2005 as Cited in Warner 2007; 5).

In this definition, hybridity is narrated as a known culture. According to Edwards (1995; 147). Palestinian, American theorist cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous and interdependent so does hybridity is not only result of globalization, immigration and colonization. So it is very difficult to determine a particular culture. As proclaimed by Homi K Bhabha hybridity is an interdependent construction of post-colonial identities that combine intersecting binary oppositions in complex and ambiguous ways (Myer 2008; 171). The Bhabha's version of hybridity gestures more directly to the unequal position of power within which hybridity is created (Prabhu 2007; 9). Hybridity could happen in many forms including fashion, style, language, way of thinking and even qualities (Parseno 2011.). If we analyze **White Teeth** novel there is a hybrid clash which significantly impacted Jone of Bowden, and joy-chalfen on construction of Irie as a Jamaican roots and religion following clear Para concept of construction of Irie identity among these two

families “when Alsana Iqbal found out that she was pregnant, she asked Aechie” Does the child will resemble half black and white? (WT 61) while Calra told her husband of the probability of the child having blues eyes then ARCHIE guesses this probability will happen after that not half white and half black” and her blues eyes changed to black two weeks of her low mildness. Fundamental changes .IRIE believed that she is not Jamaican but belongs to English society (WT351) further IRIE thought that she is ugly because of her big size, her buck of teeth are black glasses , braces , and African dark skin (WT351)

#### 4. Research Methodology

Following strategy formulated to conduct the proposed research on *White Teeth* Zadie Smith

1. A destructive research method was obtained
2. The proposed research is divided into two step
3. Primary data collected by the source i.e. Novel *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith
4. Secondary data from different authors and the view given by them in relation to *White Teeth*
5. The impact of hybridity and multiculturalism in the post-colonial period on different characters of the *White Teeth* written by Zadie Smith was evaluated by relevant theories of the foresaid problem.
6. I also throw the light on the issue of in the novel *White Teeth* Very specific elements of theories like hybridity Culturalism identity through exemplify statement coated in the novel.
7. Very specific elements of theories like hybridity culturalism ethnic identity and cultureless biasness found in *White Teeth* novel.

Data collection- A process of gathering the data that can be used as data analyze is called data collection (Kabir 2016).

**Analyzing data** – Review of white teeth novel Zadie Smith was this primary source for the data. After this I figured out some of the related to research problem and made analyze on the Hybridity, Multiculturalism in post-colonial theory. In this case about hybridity and Multiculturalism Homi K Bhabha major character of *White Teeth* novel. In this connection it informed researcher analyzed the novel character by applying the principle of certain element of post-colonial theory about hybridity and Culturalism.

#### 5. Literature Review-

The first research was conducted by **Pourviesh and Pirnajmuddin** (2014). The title of this study is Hybridity in Graham Green’s *The Quiet American* and the comedians. These novels were written but **Using postcolonial themes.**

1. The second researcher was conducted by Istari (2018). With a journal article entitled “ The Impact of Hybridity and Mimicry on Indian Immigrants’ Identity: A Postcolonial Analysis in Jhumpa Lahr’s *The Lowland*.
2. The third research was conducted by **Waworuntu and Arianto** (2019). The title of the research is ‘Hybridity of the character in my son the Fanatic Short Story’ by HANIEF KURESHI.
3. The fourth research was conducted by **Zohdi** (2017). The title of this study is lost – identity; A result of ‘Hybridity and Ambivalence ‘ ‘ In **Tayeb Salih’s** season of migration to the North.

#### 6. Multiculturalism

As per multiculturalism means multicultural society found in London city depicts the life of immigrants

and refugees. All three generations in the white teeth novel set light on the different characters explored in the novel. In this connection the construction of different individual identity and the state diaspora as dilemma due to misconnection racism partiality social stratification like power gain rich and poor etc. The suffering of immigrants of different origin is nicely portrayed in précises old generation thirst for keep their own identity new generation attempt to western nice their identity to get rid different country. – The culture is a reflection of abstract entity diaspora (PARKEH NP). Which helps a group of people with conspicuity? Principal of their own conception of good life cultural grow out of conceiving and unconscious interaction with each other. Multiculturalism's aspect may be understood to investigate the impact of legal implications of multiculturalism policies in a multicultural society. Or in the network social of society. Multicultural offences are described as " (*Salad Bowl* " *Burgeres* 2005 31 Page). Meaning that distinct cultural that are found within a locality do not emerge into each but our to be absorbed and defined separately.

In *White Teeth* novel, the author referred to different families the immigrant's IQBAL family and the Jones family. Although they have a similar national identity, they also have a different perspective towards religious and cultural values. The impact of Multiculturalism intrigued me. Assimilation some of the migrants try to maintain their ethical identity and roots from outside of the world.

First generation immigrants' peoples have had no effect of Multiculturalism. But Second generation definitely impacts British values and norms on them. Majority of Muslims in London consider that Multiculturalism celebrates variety in four - music are close but it's off shoot human equality and human rights (WT 326 327) as samad highlights the trained in this paragraph'' This has been a century of stranger brown, yellow and white. This has been a century of great immigrants' experiment and Irie Jones Humming Tunes; Sita and Sharon are mistaken for each other because Sita is white and Sharon is black

## 7. Conclusion

Using the method of dental analysis, one is easily able to find a clear imprint of cultural hybridity and genetic hybridity on novel white teeth. An examination of the post-colonial theory of hybridity according to Homi K Bhabha. As an example, both problems in IRIE can be considered as ethnic problems as well as genetic problems for her hair to be stronger. Second, she suffers from a lack of English language proficiency due to the fact that she came from a different country, her mother being Jamaican.

According to the study, there was also a fear among the parents that their children would have the same beliefs and values as another immigrant, as it was depicted in the novel, showing how the parents are realizing their young daughter is growing up predominately with Asian values and beliefs. The clara fears that Irie will become alienated from her black Jamaican heritage. As Smith's described Calara she has an ocean pink skin surrounding her daughter and fears tied would take her way (WT 381).

## References

1. Braun, Michele. "The Mouseness of the Mouse: The Competing Discourses of Genetics and History in *White Teeth*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 48:2 (2013), 221- 236.
2. Bergholtz, Benjamin. "'Certainty in Its Pure Form': Globalization, Fundamentalism, and Narrative in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*." *Contemporary Literature*, 57:4 (2016), 541-568.
3. Cuddon, J.A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Penguin, 2014 Kellener D. (2006-1989)

4. Fernández, Irene Pérez. “Exploring Hybridity and Multiculturalism: Intra and Inter Family Relations in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.” *Odisea* (Almería, Spain), No. 10 (2017), 143–154.
5. Ferandez, LP (2009- December) Maczynska, Magdalena. “‘That God Chip in the Brain’: Religion in the Fiction of Zadie Smith.” In Tew, Philip (ed.). *Reading Zadie Smith. The First Decade and Beyond*. Bloomsbury, 2013, 127-140.
6. Walter L. Tracely (ED).(2008)
7. Piazza, Roberta. *The Discursive Construction of Identity and Space among Mobile People*. Bloomsbury, 2022 Homi K Bhabha (New York culture routledge 1994 PRINT).
8. Lyotard Malpas ( 2006; 90;9)
9. Pope, Ged. *Reading London’s suburbs*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2015
10. Sarup M, (1993;146;147)
11. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 7th ed., ed. By Dinah Birch (Oxford: OxfordUniversity Press, 2009), 16-22. Status: Postprint (Author’s version) Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2014. Ebook Smith, Zadie. “Love Actually.” *The Guardian*, 1 Nov 2003,<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/nov/01/classics.zadiesmith>. Accessed 16 Mar 2019.
12. “Western.” Collins Dictionary. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/western>. Accessed 18 Mar 2019.
13. Robinson, Marilynne. “The Book of Books: What Literature Owes the Bible.” *The New York Times*, 22 Dec 2011 Accessed 18 Mar 2019.
14. Quinn, Anthony. “The New England.” *The Books: The New York Times on the Web*, 30 Apr 2000, <http://movies2.nytimes.com/books/00/04/30/reviews/000430.30quinnt.html>. Accessed 16 Mar 2019.
15. PRH Publishers. “Zadie Smith.” Penguin Random House, <http://www.zadiesmith.com/>. Accessed 19 Mar 2019.
16. Kaufmann, Eric. “Is God Returning to Europe?” *Prospect Magazine*, issue 140, Nov 2007, <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/isgodreturningtoeurope>. Accessed 16 Mar 2019.
17. Drápal, Dan. “Moralistický terapeutický deismus.” 29 Oct 2018, <http://dandrapal.cz/moralisticky-terapeuticky-deismus/>. Accessed 22 Mar 2019.
18. Arikan, Seda. “‘History’ and ‘Root’ in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.” *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, vol. 6, issue 2, p. 1679-96, Feb 2013, Accessed 16 Mar 2019