



Silenced and self-Created: Negotiating Identity between Cultural and Individual Agency in Monika Ali's Brick Lane and Zadie Smith's White Teeth

BEHLOUL Meriem* ¹, Prof. BOUREGBI Salah²

¹Badji Mokhtar University- Annaba (Algeria)

meriem.behloul@univ-annaba.dz

²Badji Mokhtar University- Annaba (Algeria)

salah.bouregbi@univ-annaba.dz

Received: 26/06/2025

Accepted: 07/03/2026

Abstract

This article revolves around self-issues, identity construction, social and cultural identity formation in multiethnic, multicultural societies as it shows in *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*, where these two female novelists engage and try to show the role of history, origins and cultural heritage in constructing one's self and identity. It seeks to elucidate the unequal power connections that structure multicultural behaviors and perceptions in late 20th-century Britain. However, living in a multiethnic diverse society has a big role in shaping identities, especially in the aftermath of war and in postmodern cosmopolitan atmosphere, where it is very hard to preserve your own origin that is why the self can be autonomous and constructed simultaneously. The article relies on multiculturalism as an approach along with some philosophical and critical grounds.

Keywords : Ethnicity ;Hybridity ;Identity ;Multiculturalism; Self. White Teeth.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United Kingdom witnessed a substantial influx of African-Caribbean and South Asian immigrants from the countries of the former British Empire and Commonwealth. Driven by post-war economic strains and a depleted workforce, the British government facilitated this migration, promoting economic recovery through the integration of these new populations. These immigrants, particularly from the West Indies, sought better prospects in England, often considered the 'mother country.'

Scholarly analyses of post-war, multicultural Britain have investigated into the expanding realm of black and Asian British literature, a body of work penned by both migrants and their descendants. This kind of works usually tackle ideas of assimilation, dislocation, multiculturalism, identity, displacement, culture and hybridity. Moreover, they give impression of negative and positive factors of immigration on immigrants, whether as second, or as third generations, who are considered and felt strangers because of their ethnicity.

Even worse, such issues lead to an identity disorder, which, in addition to the psychological distress it causes, it also puts them in a situation that denies them the sense of belonging, feeling at home and integrating within the British society. More than that, the interactions between race and class makes it extra harder to fit in along with the gender, which reinforces the restrictions on the female immigrants' subjects as well.

This article seeks to elucidate the unequal power connections that structure multicultural behaviors and perceptions in late 20th-century Britain. It also emphasizes the protective techniques these individuals use to restore their subjectivity. These studies highlight the imperative to explore the coexistence of diverse groups within a nation that, despite its outward claims of inclusiveness, often marginalizes these cultures. The intersection of race and gender plays a pivotal role in shaping the identities of these 'Others,' who are frequently side-lined.

Authors such as Monica Ali and Zadie Smith have addressed these issues, using their narratives to give a voice to the otherwise voiceless 'Others.' Their works discuss themes of non-acceptance, the ambiguous notion of 'home,' and persistent racial and gender-based inequalities in Western societies. These themes challenge and criticise the traditional concept of 'Britishness,' revealing its exclusionary aspects and the hardships faced by those considered 'strangers' within ethnically diverse communities. This analysis is further echoed by the portrayal of Britishness not merely as a geographic or ethnic label but as an ensemble of shared values like respect, tolerance and open-mindedness.

The discourse around Britishness, complicated by its association with Anglo-Saxon and 'White' identities, is continually redefined by the contributions of ethnic minorities, predominantly black communities shaped by migration. Bradley (2007) emphasizes the importance of fostering a national pride that transcends the misuse of national symbols by extremists, celebrating unity as demonstrated during the Golden Jubilee.

Smith and Ali's literary efforts not only challenge, but also expand and reinvent the notion of Britishness to encompass the hybrid identities on Britain's periphery, enabling these individuals to claim Britain as their home. Their work facilitates the empowerment of those inhabiting liminal spaces, advocating for a broader, inclusive definition of belonging. Paul Ward (2004) reflects on this evolving concept, noting that despite the persistence of original national identities among migrants and their descendants, often due to being pushed from their homelands rather than pulled by the United Kingdom, the concept of Britishness and the sense of belonging continue to evolve

. In summary, the definition and reach of Britishness have transformed over time, and achieving a comprehensive sense of Britishness remains a complex and evolving challenge.

1-The Construction of Personal Identities in Ethnic Societies:

In fact, each individual in the universe is considered as a set of various different identities. These identities overlap to develop a social category. The term 'social identity,' is broadly defined; however, it mostly refers to people or groups who have a common label and are characterized by different traits, which means that people or groups are classified according to their gender, race, religion, or language. That is to say, social identity is defined as the product of all the experiences individuals go through, or during social interactions to build up a sense of who they are.

Philip Gleason argues that the modern concept of identity appeared in social science and psychological research in the 1950s. In fact, before the Second World War, the term 'identity' was never used as a concept of identification, but rather was a word that designated the sameness of two items or certain aspects of a thing that remained unchanged over times (Gleason, 1983, p.910). The influence of history on identity formation is a significant theme that resonates across scholarly critiques.

As emphasized by Simmel in 1950, the relationship between individuals within societies is profoundly shaped by both similarities and differences, which act as fundamental forces in all forms of development, both personal and societal. He articulates that "the practical significance of men for one another...is determined by both similarities and differences among them" (Simmel, 1950, p. 30), highlighting that cultural history is a pivotal aspect of mankind's collective experience. This interplay between historical events and individual traits highlights the deep interconnection between history and personal identity.

Although the terms 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic identity' have received a lot of attention recently, the idea of a shared culture is as old as written history. It refers to facets of interpersonal interactions between groups who view themselves as culturally different. A group of people who are somehow different from the rest of the society existing in every modern culture, so the best term to describe this group is an ethnic group. Perhaps for this reason, it is sometimes mistakenly assumed that ethnicity refers to how a minority ethnic group interacts with the rest of society. However, ethnicity can exist between national states as well as polytechnic states.

According to Angela Byars-Winston, "people create ethnic identities when they see themselves being distinct from others" (Byars-Winston, 2005, p. 223-33). Thus, ethnicity, besides some factors like age or socioeconomic positions, is frequently referred to as a marker of distinction. Expanding on this idea, Stuart Hall, in his influential work "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," argues that ethnic identity is not static, but a dynamic 'becoming' process influenced by one's cultural, economic, and political environments, both past and present (Hall, 1990, p. 225). This perspective situates ethnic identity within a fluid continuum that spans both historical legacy and future potential.

In contemporary England, the term 'ethnic' generally applies to diverse immigrant groups, each distinct yet part of the broader national textile. These groups are often understood as having common ancestries, shared historical memories, and cultural symbols that define their community, such as language, religion, or kinship patterns (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996, p. 6). The term 'ethnicity,' originating from the Greek 'ethnos' for non-Hellenic or non-Christian peoples, has evolved since its sociological coinage by D. Riesman in 1953. Despite its initial intent to describe cultural differences, the term has taken on varied meanings, reflecting its complex sociological implications (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975; Malesivic, 2004, p. 1). Thus, 'ethnicity' remains a nuanced and somewhat contentious concept within academic and societal discourse, embodying a spectrum of interpretations that underscore its inherent complexity and adaptability.

Interestingly, the question 'Who you are,' lies at the heart of personal identity. The decisions individuals make that express who they are and what are their values are related to identity. The

formation of personal identity is a complex and evolving process, influenced by external forces such as parental guidance and dominant cultural norms. These factors often raise questions about the authenticity of one's values and whether identity can truly be formed independently of these influences. Identity is inherently adaptable, shaped by both past influences and the ongoing process of self-discovery. Yet, it is also subject to change and adaptation, reflecting the fluid nature of personal development.

This inevitable change leads to the multifarious ways and motifs in which identities are constructed and selves are found. Henceforth, the representation of the immigrant experience in literature has become an integral part. The dynamics of identity are particularly pronounced among migrants and immigrants, who often find themselves in a liminal space between preserving their ancestral roots and assimilating into new cultural contexts. This tension is vividly depicted in literature, where characters are often portrayed wrestling with their dual identities as 'emigrants', those who have left their homeland, and 'immigrants', those aspiring to integrate into a new society.

In both cases, a static place and membership are theorized first, and the migrant is the one who lacks both. Thus, more than any other political figure (citizen, foreigner, sovereign, etc.), the migrant is the one least defined by its being and place and more by its becoming and displacement: by its movement. Subsequently, the context of migration studies, such as Diaspora studies, the concept of second generation both refer to the offspring of parents who migrated to locations where their children were born.

In multicultural societies, immigrants face different dilemmas in terms of their identities' construction. Since then, cultural studies focus on the way those generations cope with cultural diversity. In the same way, theorists focus on theories as hybridity and assimilation to discuss the concept of cultural dislocation and the impact of being in-between. This issue led to the question of third space and hybridity elaborated by Homi Bhabha who has for the first place called for ambiguities of identity construction and hybrid zones of the self.

Homogenizing this complex interplay, Homi Bhabha introduces the concept of hybridity, which challenges the traditional narratives of colonial dominance and emphasizes the transformative impact of cultural confluence. Hybridity involves the "reassessment of colonial," highlighting the necessary deformations and displacements within structures of domination and discrimination (Bhabha, 1994, p. 159-160). The inclusion of terms like hybrid, subaltern, and dual cultural identity or biculturalism play a pivotal role when studying the degree of assimilation or adaptation to a new culture.

Being caught in between is literally defined as biculturalism and dualism. Dual cultural identity or 'biculturalism' are terms used to describe a cultural identity that is "composed of two parts" (Hawkins, 1983, p. 198). This duality causes aimlessness and dislocation. The state of being caught in between or having a third space is also referred as being subaltern: "The term subaltern refers to someone who lives in a third space between two cultures" (Grossberg, 1996, p. 91). Moreover, the term biculturalism, nevertheless, differs from hybridity in that a hybrid identity is an amalgamated, whereas a 'dual cultural identity' consists of two aspects. These themes are very often celebrated in postcolonial and ethnic minority literature.

While several ethnic novels tackle deeply matters that are related to racism, immigration and belonging, we find also *White Teeth*, a post war novel by Zadie Smith, which highlights the difficulties faced by the second generation to demonstrate how immigration affects both those who left their homeland and those born to immigrants. In *White Teeth*, the emphasis on tradition and the past is very significant. Immigrants' daily lives and behaviors are influenced by their origins and ancestry, and the past is perceived as inevitability, particularly for the first generation of immigrants. Samad Iqbal is the epitome of a traditional guy; in addition to being proud of his heritage, he also wants his sons to uphold the characteristics of their culture:

For Iqbal, as it is for the people of Thailand, tradition equates to culture and roots, which are seen as inherently positive and immutable (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 193). While Iqbal may struggle to fully

live by these traditional values, he cherishes the notion that roots provide a vital, life-saving anchor. In Zadie Smith's "White Teeth," this metaphor extends to Samad's attempt to anchor his son with deep, unwavering roots, contrasting with his own life, which is adrift and influenced by external attractions. This narrative thread illustrates the complex interplay between identity and heritage, particularly in the context of ethnic diversity and multicultural environments.

Iqbal has an extreme respect for his historical, cultural and ethnic roots. It is quite impossible to convince him that the present is more significant and that certain things may change in the future. Samad is committed to live by these rules, unlike the individuals in the second generation who strive to forget their past and roots. The more worried he becomes with preserving his family's sense of history, the more he feels that these ideas are being eroded by contemporary British norms. Nonetheless, he frequently overlooks the fact that his sons would prefer to adopt a British identity and live their own lives than to remain in the past and adhere to their father's ideologies.

Undoubtedly, the clash between the first generation, who were strongly nostalgic about their roots, and the second generation, who seek to integrate, caused inescapable phenomenon of multicultural diverse ethnic British community, even if it is hybrid:

Hybridity in cultural identities is increasingly recognized as an inevitable outcome of multiculturalism. The concept of being "hybrid" is now understood in a neutral or positive light, representing a blend of multiple cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Rather than viewing this mixture as incomplete, it is considered a unique 'third element' that emerges from the interaction of different cultures (Moss, 2003, p. 12).

The challenges of adapting to a multicultural society are particularly pronounced for immigrants in post-war London, as depicted in Smith's portrayal. The novel highlights the difficulties faced by newcomers in establishing a sense of belonging in a new cultural landscape, where the first generation's deep ties to their ethnic origins contrast sharply with the second generation's struggle to forge their own identities amidst cultural dualities.

2-The Melancholic Multicultural Hybrid Societies:

The once overwhelmingly positive view of multiculturalism has shifted in contemporary discourse. According to Parekh, no society remains untouched by the forces of globalization, which compels nations to navigate the complex realities of integrating diverse minority groups with distinct cultures and social structures (Parekh, 2000, p. 8). These multicultural societies inherently include multiple communities, each with their own inherited traits and specific needs.

Parekh categorizes the demands of these groups into two broad types: those seeking equality for all members of society, and those demanding recognition and respect for their distinct identities within the broader societal framework (Parekh, 2000, p. 1). These expectations call for several concessions and mentality shifts inside this society. On the one hand, the established community is frequently averse to modify any of its unique and established components of national identity. On the other hand, ethnic groups naturally work to protect their own cultural practices, languages, and religions, since these are the fundamental components of their identities and are essential to their existence and survival in a majority population. Multicultural societies face a complex dilemma regarding the integration of minorities, with established civilizations typically reacting in one of two ways, as noted by Parekh (2000). They might either embrace and integrate the cultural diversity of these communities, making it a core part of their societal identity, or they could pursue assimilation, attempting to incorporate these groups into the mainstream culture to varying extents (Parekh, 2000, p. 6). This situation underscores the perennial challenge of assimilation, highlighting it as a potential outcome in multicultural settings.

Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess further elaborate on assimilation, categorizing it alongside conflict, competition, and accommodation as a fundamental type of social behaviour. Assimilation is described as a process through which individuals and communities blend by adopting the memories, sentiments, and behaviours of others, facilitated by shared experiences and knowledge, with history

playing a crucial role in everyday interactions (Park & Burgess, p. 394).

The interaction of diverse cultures within a multicultural society often manifests positively in areas like music, art, literature, and fashion, fostering innovation and new ideas. However, cultural differences can also lead to tensions and conflicts. They might vary depending on the circumstances throughout our lives. Monica Ali, in *Brick Lane*, claims that all multicultural societies do in fact share the common goal of ensuring the peaceful coexistence of all members and meeting their needs. Therefore, multiculturalism focuses primarily on the interactions between different groups, attempting to keep these civilizations together and upholding political unanimity while yet respecting cultural variety:

The challenge lies in balancing unity and diversity, striving for political cohesion without cultural homogeneity, and fostering inclusivity without enforcing assimilation. Societies must work towards developing a common sense of belonging while respecting cultural differences and maintaining plural identities without diluting a cohesive national identity (Parekh, 2000, p. 343).

To achieve these aims, a lot of energy and compassion are needed from both parties. In order to coexist happily, both new arrivals and natives need to spend more time getting to know and comprehend one another. Achieving these goals requires substantial effort and empathy from all involved parties, both immigrants and native populations. Understanding and cooperation are essential for harmonious coexistence. Zadie Smith's "White Teeth" poignantly illustrates the complexities of multiculturalism in Britain, depicting both the blending of cultures and the persisting difficulties in achieving true integration and acceptance. The narrative captures the paradox of identities merging yet facing resistance from segments of society that oppose the fundamental principles of multiculturalism, such as peaceful coexistence and equality (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 326-327).

This heartbreaking passage demonstrates the problematic perspective on multiculturalism. In The UK, the adoption of foreign cultural elements, such as giving British white girls names from other cultures, reflects a form of inspiration drawn from abroad. However, this openness is contrasted sharply by the resistance some hold against the very principles of multiculturalism, which advocate for peaceful coexistence among diverse communities. Therefore, to prevent potential discrimination, many Pakistani parents prefer to give their children English names.

Over the years, a large number of immigrants have arrived in Britain, and multiculturalism has also become an essential element of British thought and policy. The majority of immigrants, such as those from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, as well as those from the Black Caribbean, China, and Black Africa, are from former colonies. At the end of World War II, an enormous increase of immigration began. Britain experienced a labor deficit.

Zadie Smith's "*White Teeth*," a narrative set in 2000, encapsulates the experiences of first- and third-generation immigrants of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds. These characters navigate and often clash over their cultural identities within The UK's challenging multicultural landscape, providing a critical examination of multiculturalism.

As a result, Smith's book does not present Britain as an inclusive, egalitarian society that welcomes and integrates everyone. Instead, it condemns British multicultural atmosphere for labeling persons who are black or Asian in Britain as 'strangers,' a move that has disastrous effects on the development of their hybrid identity.

Hybridity has emerged as a crucial idea in the field of postcolonial theory as well as the study of culture. It has been used to describe a wide range of things that, in some way, come about as a result of cross-cultural interaction. (Klara, Kaur and Hutnyk, 2005, p. 70-71). Smith's depiction goes further, illustrating the concept of hybridity as defined by Homi Bhabha. According to Bhabha, hybridity is a transformative process where the identity of the colonized (the other) is attempted to be translated by the colonial governing identity into a universal framework, but this attempt ultimately results in the creation of something both familiar and novel. This process underscores the productivity of colonial power and its evolving nature (Bhabha, 1994, p. 6).

From the same scope, several characters in *White Teeth* are haunted by the need for purity. This theme is particularly significant because of the connection between this issue and the miscegenation worries that dominated nineteenth-century discussions about scientific racism. *White Teeth* also explores the social repercussions of interracial relationships through the characters Archie and Clara, whose marriage challenges the notions of racial purity and evokes societal shock.

This reaction highlights the deep-seated fears of miscegenation and the perceived threats it poses to racial and ethnic purity within British society. Maureen, a colleague of Archie, exemplifies these prejudices when she comments on Archie's indifference to racial differences and his marriage to Clara, a black woman, which he fails to mention until she unexpectedly appears at an office dinner (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 69).

The problem in this case, goes beyond culture. When one comes to realize that, it is not only about color, language, or social status, as it really goes to think about genes; this also makes of *White Teeth* a universal novel addressing anthropology and genetics. Furthermore, the metaphor of teeth in itself is highly significant. Despite all that grief that is caused by the question of which genes are better, in the end, we do all have white teeth.

In the other shoreline, Monica Ali's critically praised book *Brick Lane* (2003) depicts the struggles faced by Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman who immigrated to London for an arranged marriage. In Monica Ali's "Brick Lane," the challenging living conditions of the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets, East London, are vividly portrayed. Nazneen, the protagonist, resides in an area known for its high density and low rent, with statistics indicating an average of three and a half Bangladeshis per room (Ali, 2004, p. 49). This fact highlights how inhumane British society is and shows how immigrants are regarded as second-class citizens.

The Bengali community, on the one hand, wishes to maintain its traditions and culture, making a new home far from its original land, on the other hand, it illustrates how challenging fitting into London can be. Their establishment and incorporation in the British society is hindered by their limited freedom of action in all domains, particularly for women.

Despite the fact that men's ability to move outside their town and into larger urban areas is possible, but because of their work reasons, their mobility is relatively limited and restricted to specific locations. The narrative further explores the limited social mobility and visibility of immigrants through Chanu, a long-term resident who, despite living in London for three decades, is largely confined to his local neighbourhood. His rare citywide excursion reveals a life consumed by survival, with little opportunity to engage with the broader society (Ali, 2004, pp. 289, 291).

Chanu's experiences emphasise a perceived hierarchical attitude among the British, suggesting a covert continuation of imperialistic tendencies in social interactions and the workplace. This dynamic is maintained to ensure the perceived superiority of the white British majority, highlighting a reluctance to see immigrants ascend beyond assigned societal roles (Ali, 2004, p. 38).

The novel also criticizes the superficial politeness of the British, as seen through Nazneen's interactions, where courteous gestures coexist with underlying discrimination and betrayal (Ali, 2004, p. 72). This portrayal reflects broader societal barriers to integration and advancement for immigrants, suggesting a preservation of a homogenous national culture at the expense of minority inclusion.

Ali examines how a female immigrant's identity develops as a result of displacement and acculturation in a foreign setting, shedding light on the difficulties that immigrants encounter on a daily basis, in a nation like Britain where racism is pervasive and disguised. She discusses what it means to be a "stranger" in an ethnic society like Britain and the challenges the female protagonist faces as she fights to both; live in a hostile environment and come to terms with who she is. Nazneen's transformation from a passive immigrant to an assertive citizen encapsulates her journey towards self-empowerment and acceptance of her hybrid identity. By the end of the novel, she asserts her presence and claims her place in British society, challenging the invisibility imposed on her by cultural and racial biases (Ali, 2004, p. 35).

This passage refers to Nazneen's first time seeing London on foot and getting a taste of the strangeness of a big city. She's used to being extremely self-conscious and believing that everyone is looking at her, waiting to discover something wrong or judge her. In fact, no one pays her any attention as she goes around the city since everyone is so caught up in their own life. No one pays attention to Nazneen, in part because the city is so big and in part because she is a working-class lady of color. But because she can conduct her affairs in peace and make her own tiny everyday decisions thanks to her anonymity, she finds it freeing. For the first she is able to move throughout the city without restrictions.

In "White Teeth" by Zadie Smith, the narrative intricately weaves together the lives of three distinct families, the Iqbals from Bangladesh, the Joneses with British and Jamaican roots, and the Chalfens of British and Jewish heritage. These families reside in the diverse north western London suburb of Willesden, akin to the setting in "Brick Lane." The story spans from 1974 to 1999, reflecting on historical contexts including World War II and the mid-19th century, illustrating the longstanding complexities of cultural identity in the UK.

Smith's portrayal focuses on characters such as Irie Jones, a third-generation British-Caribbean, and the Bengali-born, British-raised twins, Magid and Millat Iqbal. These characters embody the personal struggles and identity crises that arise from growing up in a multicultural context where cultural differences are often not celebrated but cause friction. They are depicted as "strangers" in their own country, caught between disparate cultural expectations and value systems.

Irie's personal conflict is emblematic of the broader identity struggles faced by mixed-race individuals. She grapples with societal beauty standards and her own body image, which starkly contrasts with her cultural heritage. Describing herself as having "mountainous curves, buck teeth with a thick metal retainer, impossible Afro hair," and poor eyesight, Irie is depicted as dissatisfied with her physical appearance (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 268). Her attempt to transform her appearance—envisioning a change from a "Jamaican hourglass" to an "English Rose"—is humorously yet poignantly captured during a salon visit where she tries to straighten her hair to combat her genetic makeup (Z. Smith, 2001, pp. 266, 273).

She refers to the women's area of the hair salon as a "deathly zone" crowded with Afro-Caribbean ladies striving in sorrow trying to "beat each curly hair into submission" (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 275). It criticizes the cultural politics of beauty and the dominant white standards that elevate smooth, straight hair and make it appear more attractive than the curly Afro-Caribbean hair. In Zadie Smith's "White Teeth," Irie Jones grapples with her mixed heritage, striving to align more closely with her British identity while distancing herself from her Caribbean roots in an attempt to conform to the majority's perception of 'whiteness'. She feels invisible within her own nation, likened to being "a stranger in a stranger land" where her presence is not reflected in the societal 'mirror' of Britain—a nation that only mirrors tired, immigrant bodies but not their souls (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 266).

Meanwhile, the Iqbal twins navigate their own cultural dilemmas, caught between their father Samad's staunch adherence to Muslim traditions and their own experiences in British society. Magid, in an effort to assimilate, even adopts the quintessentially English name 'Mark Smith', distancing himself from his heritage to blend in seamlessly with his peers (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 151). Samad, determined to preserve his cultural values, sends Magid to Bangladesh, believing that a traditional upbringing away from the corrupting influence of British society will safeguard his son's moral and cultural integrity. He views assimilation as a corruption, a betrayal of tradition which he equates with cultural purity and virtue (Z. Smith, 2001, pp. 190, 193).

Contrary to Samad's hopes, Magid returns from Bangladesh more Anglicized than his twin Millat, who remained in Britain. Magid's transformation is so complete that he epitomizes an exaggerated form of Britishness, adopting an impeccable English accent and demeanour, which starkly contrasts with his father's expectations and challenges his cultural and religious identity (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 219).

Millat's identity struggle is even more turbulent. He experiences a profound internal conflict, feeling simultaneously connected to both his Bengali heritage and his life in London. This split identity leaves him uncertain of his true self, depicted as being "schizophrenic" with one foot in each culture, neither fully belonging to Bengal nor to Willesden (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 219).

Since he comes from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds, Millat is completely aware of all the prejudices that have been created about him and projected onto him that makes him unable to completely express himself and being exposed in this society because of the general occidental assumptions towards South Asian immigration. Although he makes an effort to live a pious Muslim life, he acknowledges that his subconscious is "split-level" since he finds it challenging to follow Muslim guidelines such as avoiding from sexual relations out of marriage or "purging [him]self from the West" (Z. Smith, 2001, p. 444-5). He may appear to support Islamic beliefs, but in reality, he is overwhelmed since he cannot understand them or even recall the proper way to pray. He struggles and abandons it altogether, imitating a different technique that is simpler for him to perform. Such vivid example and portrayal of characters like that, reinforces smith's theory and conviction about identity and being. She believes that good and evil are global and universal just like the world in which we live nowadays.

3-Conclusion

Monica Ali's "*Brick Lane*" and Zadie Smith's "*White Teeth*", complicatedly illustrate the profound inequalities experienced by communities marginalized due to misconceptions surrounding their perceived 'otherness' and 'strangeness.' These novels present a touching view of what it feels like to be treated as a "stranger" in one's own country, blending fictional narratives with semi-autobiographical elements to enhance the realism of their portrayal.

Monica Ali, in *Brick Lane*, emphasizes the challenges that first-generation immigrants confront as they attempt to relocate and find a new home in a foreign environment. Zadie Smith, in *White Teeth*, increases attention on the difficulties associated with growing up in Britain with a mixed-race and cultural heritage. Regardless of their differences, these books share a central theme: the sense of marginalization in a hostile atmosphere, when the laws claim to be multicultural and accepting of everyone's differences. These authors highlight the discriminatory behaviors that continue in modern British society, maintaining the unbalance of power.

Through their storytelling, Ali and Smith critically examine the British multicultural society, which, despite its outward celebration of diversity, often attempts to suppress the unique differences of its inhabitants to uphold a dominant British cultural norm. On the one hand, they express the complaints of a notably underrepresented group of people. On the other hand, they celebrate their hybridity in their works, which makes this liminal zone empowering. In the same way; they are able to destroy assumptions, binary thinking, and clean categorizations while also legitimizing black British identity.

Both authors advocate for a shift from mere acceptance to genuine integration, emphasizing the right of individuals to retain the core aspects of their identities while being fully accepted into the broader society. They challenge the conventional and predominantly white British identity, proposing instead a redefined concept of Britishness that is truly inclusive, recognizing the multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-dimensional makeup of modern Britain.

Ali and Smith promote a vision of harmonious and equal coexistence that transcends differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and religion. They are opposed to multicultural policies that perpetuate distinct and separated groups. If a nation claims to be a multicultural society, it is necessary to apply this in all policies as well as the daily life. This requires going beyond simple tolerance and engaging in regular discussions with those from all racial and cultural backgrounds as well as showing genuine respect for and accepting of everyone's differences.

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