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The National Identity and Racism in the
Fiction of Black Immigrant Writers in Great
Britain

Master Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

With the world being shattered after the Second World War, decolonization was accelerated and led to the eventual decline of prior global powers, one of them being the British Empire. The empire on which the sun never sets was disintegrated and economically exhausted after the devastating war. Moreover, its economic decline was marked by a desperate want of labour force. Therefore, a myriad of ethnic minorities from all over the former Empire came running when their mythical mother country was in distress.

The new era commencing with the fall of the Empire ushered various alterations to the order of Great Britain. The massive influx of immigrants was the most significant. The diverse array of people of various cultural and ethnical backgrounds flooded the country and changed so inevitably its homogenous character. In this respect, the newly multicultural society and its inhabitants, former and contemporary, were compelled to adjust, negotiate and recreate their sense of belonging to the state which was, however, not welcoming towards the newcomers. This hostility resulted in their sinking into racial stereotyping and discrimination and acting harmfully towards coloured immigrants. Thus, the two aforesaid concepts, the sense of belonging and the issue of racism, are principal in this thesis. They are examined theoretically and analysed within the two novels. Hence, this thesis can be structured into two parts.

The first part concentrates on the various themes connected with the overall issue of immigration and provides some approaches of prominent scholars to their conceptualisations that will emerge as fundamental herein. In the opening section, the label diaspora and its theory, as being at the forefront due to the post-war mass migration, is elaborated on in great detail. With respect to diaspora, the history of Caribbean and Bengali diaspora is also overviewed in this part. The following section inspects briefly the question of citizenship in relation to the multicultural policies. What's more, the British post-war situation and its nationhood are encapsulated as having a crucial impact on the development of national identity. Hence, the third section sheds light on the conceptualization of national identity, alongside the terms of nation and identity. Post-war migration not only questioned the sense of national belonging, but also manifested intolerance towards minorities within the British society. Thus, last but not least, the fourth section draws the concepts of race and racism closer to the reader.

The second part of this thesis is devoted to the analysis of two selected novels. The introduction to this part contains a clipped account of its authors, Andrea Levy and Zadie Smith, and focuses primarily on their relation to Caribbean and Bengali diaspora, as well as, their own coming to terms with being distinct from mainstream society. The novels dealt with in this thesis are *Small Island* and *White Teeth* and they are dissected on the basis of the theoretical background stated in previous sections. Thus, this thorough analysis aims to depict the lives of diasporic immigrants as the focal characters of the novels. Most importantly, the analysis primarily targets the characters' development of national identity within the confines of hostland and with cultural heritage as their burden. Furthermore, as both authors analogously approach racism in their novels as inevitable in the lives of coloured immigrants, this issue is illuminated as well.

In closing, it is worth noting that two terms recurring in this thesis are utilized contrary to their ordinary usage. The terms of West Indian or Caribbean and Bengali are commonly employed when speaking about members of geographically large entities comprising of several countries. However, henceforth, they refer solely to inhabitants of Jamaica and Bangladesh. Furthermore, the terms such as black, brown and white are, for the purposes of this thesis, used solely when referring to minorities and as neutral terms without any additional loaded meaning.

1 DIASPORA IN BRITAIN

The last fifty years have brought about alterations involving the movement of people on a previously unseen scale. Decolonisation, the break-up of Empires and countries as well as forming new ones, has contributed profoundly to the destabilization of the world population. In the question of the United Kingdom, the years following the Second World War constituted an important period of immigration. The works of the majority of scientists in the field of sociology concentrated vastly on the arrival of the Caribbean and Asian population and the establishment of their diaspora.¹

With the growth of cultural diversity within previously homogenous communities, many scholars have engaged in the theory of diaspora. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to explore this phenomenon; introduce the term, its conceptualization and development throughout centuries. But most importantly, it depicts migration to Britain surrounding the Second World War. Moreover, the war is brought to the fore as a crucial catalyst of a post-war migration overseas. People of former British colonies were leaving their homelands in pursuit of better lives, mostly from the 19th century onwards. Owing to political reasons, the destination of most migrant's travel was Great Britain, as it was a notional guarantee of a better future.

1.1 Diaspora

From time immemorial, human beings have migrated from their homelands and settled in foreign countries. Experts in this field label them as diasporic immigrants leaving behind universal designation – immigrants. It is a widely held view that immigrants are being commonly labelled as a powerless minority living in exile and longing for acknowledgement. That is why many scholars have evaded this term. In contrast, the label 'diasporic' has fundamentally positive connotations, ensuring its holders of potential empowerment constructed on the ability to mobilize international support and influence in both the homeland and the hostland.²

The term *diaspora* is of Greek origin and is derived from the verb *diasperein*

¹ Catherine Hall, "Histories, Empires and the Post-colonial Moment," in *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, ed. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 65.

² Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 190.

consisting of two parts, i.e. the verb *sperein* (sow or scatter about) and the preposition *dia* (through or over).³ Diaspora is an age-old part of human history, and so its meaning has proliferated over time. In the classical world, the notion of diaspora, written with a capitalized D, was utilized solely when referring to Jewish dispersion. From that time on, diaspora was applied as a label for “the traumatic expulsion and mournful exile from one’s ancestral home.”⁴ Thus it has been broadened to include analogous diasporas known also as ‘victim diasporas’ as that of a Greek or African dispersion.⁵

In the course of the 1980s, big importance was attached to diaspora due to mass migration. The eminent scholar of contemporary diaspora William Safran made a point that many people considered themselves diasporas or the title was conferred upon them by others. Consequently, its rather metaphoric use clustered a variety of people, i.e. political refugees, expatriates, expellees, alien residents, immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities.⁶

Throughout the 1990s, social constructionists accepted the previous conceptualisations but attempted to decompose one of the pivotal diasporic ideas, i.e. the connection of the homeland with the ethnic community. Subsequently, as the identities were henceforth constructed and deconstructed, there was a need to comprehensively conceptualise this notion. With that, many urged the need for a complex understanding of this concept.⁷

Turning now to the definition of this phenomenon, diaspora is intrinsically applied to situations of dispersal or the spread of people from their original homeland. When defining this term, professor Cohen claimed diasporas are “positioned somewhere between nation-states and [are] ‘travelling cultures’ in that they involve dwelling in a nation-state in a physical sense, but travelling in an astral or spiritual sense that falls outside the nation-state’s space/time zone”⁸ and so he regarded them as being in the midst between physical and emotional world.⁹

³ Michele Reis, “Theorizing Diaspora: Perspectives on ‘Classical’ and ‘Contemporary’ Diaspora,” *International Migration* 42, no. 2 (2004): 44.

⁴ David Chariandy, “Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary Caribbean Literature: ‘No Nation Now but the Imagination,’” in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnel (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 246.

⁵ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2-4.

⁶ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 4-5.

⁷ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 9,11.

⁸ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 95.

⁹ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 95.

In the field of investigating diaspora, each scholar has proposed his own definition proceeding from the perusal of diasporic literature. Many still associate the phenomenon with the Jewish dispersal. Professor Safran, propounded the homeland as the crucial characteristic of diaspora.¹⁰ In his opinion, diasporic immigrants “retained a collective memory of their original homeland; they idealized their ancestral home, were committed to the restoration of the original homeland and continued in various ways to ‘relate to that homeland’.”¹¹ Furthermore, Safran believed that a diasporic group cannot be fully accepted by the host country as they are espied as embodiment of otherness.¹²

Safran’s approach to diaspora was further elaborated by other scholars. When comparing their definitions, it can be concluded that they hold the view of several principal characteristics of diaspora, i.e. the presence of at least two countries included in the dispersal; the maintenance of a bond of any kind with the homeland contributing highly to the development of the diasporic group; last but not least, there needs to be a will of people to bond with each other leading to their survival as a cultural unit. Furthermore, many have reported that migrant consciousness is maintained through shared habits, memories, religion or language. These features are additionally transmitted across generations in order to preserve their cultural heritage.¹³

Moreover, diaspora is nowadays conceptualized in terms of a process which affects not only the dispersed people but also those residing in the host country. A considerable number of scholars have perturbed themselves with the triangular relationship between the host land, homeland and diasporic immigrants. It is believed that diaspora group’s relationship towards their host is shaped mainly by the policy of the host country either in the place of dispersal or towards their home country. The attitude of diasporic immigrants towards their homeland, where usually the ambivalent feelings of longing and distancing prevail, might seem complicated. Despite that, the possibility of return is overwhelmingly refused. When it comes to host society, it endeavours to provide social, emotional or cultural assistance, however, awaiting political, economic or material support of their government in return. Citizens’ attitude to immigrants is founded on their tolerance

¹⁰ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 3-4.

¹¹ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 4.

¹² James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 304.

¹³ Butler, “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,” 192-194.

or intolerance towards ethnic minorities; analogously they fear losing their status and property because of diasporic immigrants.¹⁴

Many authors, contributing to the usage of contemporary diaspora, proclaim cultural cosmopolitanism unlike homogenous nationalism to be the determining authority in the current international world. Cultural pluralism compels many to indulge in cultural theory, cultural hybridity in particular. Herein the elaboration of Bhabha will be mentioned. Diaspora's cultures, in Bhabha's terms, occupy the position of in-betweeness or so called third space, overlapping cultural heritage and the present culture they are exposed to. When bridging the elements of two cultures, the immigrants become cultural hybrids, excluding proper hierarchy.¹⁵

There is also the pressing need nowadays to study the second generation of immigrants. While the first generation seems to uniformly keep the notion of ancestral home alive and reproduce it in the host country, the second generation is accustomed to the culture of the country of residence. Being born and bred in that country they acknowledge its culture as their own, relinquishing the one of their parents. Schwartz applies acculturation, a process of cultural borrowings regarding language and habits of the mainstream society, as being lucid among the second generation of immigrants.¹⁶ The second generation, as they have not experienced 'post-migration trauma,' crucially forsakes their homeland when forming their sense of belonging.¹⁷

1.2 Postcolonial Britain

The Second World War heralded the financial and economic collapse of the British Empire. Being devastated and with a disintegrated Empire, Britain developed various tactics to assure the world of its position as a global power, as well as to uphold its

¹⁴ Judith T. Shuval, "Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm," *International Migration* 38, no. 5 (2000): 46-47.

¹⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; New York: Routledge, 2005), 5-11, 64.

¹⁶ Seth J. Schwartz, Marilyn J. Montgomery, and Ervin Briones, "The Role of Identity in Acculturation among Immigrant People: Theoretical Propositions, Empirical Questions, and Applied Recommendations," *Human Development*, no. 49 (2006): 2.

¹⁷ Krystal Perkins, Shaun Wiley, and Kay Deaux, "Through which Looking Glass? Distinct Sources of Public Regard and Self-Esteem among First- and Second- Generation Immigrants of Colour," *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 20, no. 2 (2014): 214.

influence concerning world affairs. Stephen Holmes of the Dominion Office pointed out the British Commonwealth as being the only power Britain had while reconstructing.¹⁸

Thus, a wide range of immigrants migrated to Britain in the post-war years primarily to help with its development and also to escape political, religious or economic pressures of their homelands. Nevertheless, Caribbean and other immigrants have a long established history in Britain, overlapping four hundred years analogous with the Empire's history abroad. Immigrants regarded Britain as their second home. Furthermore, they have decided to leave their native countries in pursuit of better lives and with the intention of permanently settling in Britain. Those immigrants are widely recognized as diasporic immigrants.¹⁹

For the purposes of this thesis, the immigration of Caribbean and briefly also of Bengali diaspora will be discussed in the forthcoming sections.

1.2.1 Caribbean Diaspora

From a historical viewpoint, the permanent settlement of immigrants of Caribbean origin can be traced back to 16th century Britain. Mistakenly, it is asserted that those descendants resided there only for a short period of time and having no skills they were a burden to society. Contrary to these stereotypes, "they were not exotics."²⁰ Some of them were well educated and, what's more, successful in their fields, but they were hardly ever recognized. Misconceptions stemmed from the fact that this minority were still considered victims of slavery, having been transported overseas against their will. Those who were not forcibly dragged off their homeland were not taken into consideration. It is no wonder that awareness of Caribbean immigration to Britain did not come until World War II.²¹

1.2.1.1 Immigration Growth Prior to the Second World War

The predecessors of today's West Indians, African slaves and Indian workers, were, due to

¹⁸ Francine McKenzie, "In the National Interest: Dominions' Support for Britain and the Commonwealth after the Second World War," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, no. 4 (2006): 553-554.

¹⁹ Colin Holmes, "Immigration," in *Britain since 1945*, ed. Terry Gourvish and Alan O'Day (Houndmills: Macmillan Education, 1991), 211.

²⁰ Jeffrey Green, "Before the *Windrush*," *History Today* 50, no. 10 (2000): 30.

²¹ Green, "Before the *Windrush*," 29-30.

policies of Colonial powers, forcibly transported to Jamaica in the course of the 17th and 18th century for the purpose of helping with its development into a sugar-cane island. Jamaica, being the largest British island then, soon became the leading producer of sugar worldwide guaranteeing affluence for British planters. The time of prosperity, however, ended with the free trade leaving Jamaica to compete with other sugar producers. Eventually, it led to the loss of its prominent position on the British market, resulting in economic decline.²²

What's more, with the prohibition of slave trade in 1807 and the overall abolishment of slavery in the British Empire in 1833, Jamaican inhabitants were forced to migrate as it was the sole solution to heavy island unemployment. Finding employment in other Caribbean countries and in the USA seemed successful for a while, but with the economic depression of 1929, migration of West Indians to the USA was confined. At that time the Second World War burst out providing opportunities for overseas employment in the British armed forces and war industries.²³

It is believed that around 12,000 West Indians entered Britain, either voluntarily or involuntarily. They were received favourably due to their participation in defending the mother country at war. With the end of the Second World War, the majority of West Indians repatriated, but having no prospects and no employment in their home country, they soon intended to return to Britain.²⁴

1.2.1.2 Post-war Migration to Great Britain

Broadening their horizons during war times whilst serving and working in Britain, the Jamaicans preferred to return there.²⁵

Nevertheless, despite the labour shortages, Britain originally recruited the workers from the European countries, being resistant to employing colonial workers. The representatives of the British Ministry of Labour rejected this idea and as a reason they stated the problems of shipping, accommodation and explained that Jamaican workers were not capable of performing the necessary work outdoors or in coalmines because it's either

²² Zig Henry, "The New Commonwealth Migrants 1945-1962," *History Today* 35, no. 12 (1985): 28-29.

²³ Dilip Hiro, *Black British, White British* (1971; London: Grafton Books, 1991), 13-15.

²⁴ Henry, "The New Commonwealth Migrants 1945-1962," 27-29.

²⁵ McKenzie, "In the National Interest," 553-554.

too cold or too hot for them. The government also feared they would not be motivated enough to look for a job especially due to unemployment benefits.²⁶

Manifestly, these arguments were in dispute with the arrival of the *Ormonde* troopship of 1947 with 110 Jamaicans aboard. The troopship proved the government wrong as its passengers had no difficulties with the above stated problems. Demanding the support of Britain, the Jamaican governors made a tenacious effort to help its inhabitants to migrate to Britain, assuring the British Ministry of Labour that more workers would follow considering those on the *Ormonde* troopship as the first in line. It has been proven that around 6,000 Jamaicans applied for work in Britain within 6 weeks. Eventually, European supplies dried up, which was when the Caribbean immigrants sought their chance and the British government no longer resisted.²⁷

With the British National Act passed by the British government in 1948, Caribbean immigrants were enabled to enter, settle and work in Britain. Hence more Jamaican immigrants flooded Britain. The first wave of post-war migration is considered the *Empire Windrush* troopship of 1948. This time is regarded as the outset of Caribbean diaspora in Britain.²⁸

The immigrant vessel *SS Empire Windrush* sailed from Kingston, Jamaica and arrived on 22nd June 1948 at Tilbury Docks, London. The ship carried nearly 500 passengers – colonial workers, brought to Britain to compensate for labour shortages, particularly in state services, including the National Health Service, London Transport or British Army, and to help with the war effort and with re-building of the country. Some of the passengers had already been to Britain before, defending the mother land during the war and now motivated to start a new life there.²⁹

1.2.1.3 The Myth of the Mother Country

As already noted, Jamaicans faced tough conditions after their repatriation from Europe. Therefore, the prime motives for migration were economically-driven, along with higher

²⁶ Clive Harris, "Post-war Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army," in *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, ed. Winston James and Clive Harris (New York, London: Verso, 1993), 21-25.

²⁷ Henry, "The New Commonwealth Migrants 1945-1962," 28-29.

²⁸ John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* (1989; Houndmills: Macmillan Education, 1990), 44-45.

²⁹ Richard Cavendish, "Arrival of the *SS Empire Windrush*," *History Today* 48, no. 6 (1998): 38.

standards of living overseas and the will to secure a better future for their children in Britain.³⁰

In terms of the *Empire Windrush*, the overall mood among the passengers was optimistic, as reflected in the song called “London is the place for me,” having been composed in the course of the voyage. In general, Caribbean people regarded Britain as “the mother country, the land of hope and glory.”³¹ After all, they were filled with hope as a result of their colonial education. From an early age, educated West Indians were brought up to be annexed to British values such as church marriages, marital fidelity, dressing for dinner, literature and so forth. Children of West Indians were also very often named after famous British statesmen or soldiers. Unsurprisingly, the most celebrated events were the Queen’s birthday, along with Empire Day. Furthermore, they were encouraged to speak Standard English, leaving commonly known creole English, founded in the times of slavery, behind. Caribbean personality traits with their behaviour, sexual morality, social class or music, their inheritance from slavery, were collectively supposed to be suppressed.³²

1.2.1.4 Life after Windrush

Soon after reaching the shores of Britain, passengers encountered various problems. Due to their mass migration, they had to face difficulties with accommodation and finding employment. In spite of being skilled they failed to find a job, and after several weeks they accepted whatever job offer they came across. This can be illustrated by the case of a West Indian, who used to work as a police sergeant in his homeland and had to come to terms with being a bus driver overseas. The housing problems were certainly evident in the case of a young Jamaican girl who was forced to live in one room with four men. When applying for a job the blacks were turned down, whilst the job offer was still advertised. Sooner or later it was apparent that black people were treated differently. Paradoxically, being foreigners in a hostile environment manifested their ability to stick together and help each other in need, either with housing or when looking for a job. This gave rise to closed

³⁰ Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 2-4.

³¹ Hiro, *Black British, White British*, 20.

³² Hiro, *Black British, White British*, 20-23.

communities of Jamaicans and deepened their estrangement from the white British society.³³

1.2.2 Bengali Diaspora

South Asian diaspora has, similarly to Caribbean, a long history of migration dating from the 16th century. The aim of the following paragraphs is to introduce immigration from Bangladesh.³⁴

While the Bengali community has been formed only recently within British, the outburst of its immigration had started with the imperial trading routes as early as the 17th century. From the 1850s, a large number of Bengalis were employed in British shipping lines and this trend continued during the world wars. While in the 1920s only a small number of settlers reached the kingdom, whereas in the 1940s a proper community of Bengalis was established.³⁵

The independence of India in 1947 reduced employment opportunities, but also encouraged migration to Britain. In Britain, a cheap labour force was required in post-war years and, as Jamaicans did, Bengalis also fulfilled its needs. However, the process of their incorporation into society was rather complex as their family ties with their home country remained strong. The period of the 1950s and early 1960s was marked by the expansion of the Bengali influx within the British ‘open door’ immigration policy. The doors closed with the Immigration Act of 1962. Despite that, those previously staying in Bangladesh were encouraged to join their families overseas. That’s why, as Jamaicans formed the closed communities, Bengalis also coupled with their families and ethnic cognates in Britain.³⁶

³³ Hiro, *Black British, White British*, 26-36.

³⁴ Claire Alexander, Shahzad Firoz and Naaz Rashid, “The Bengali Diaspora in Britain: A Review of the Literature,” *Bangla Stories*, accessed April 15, 2015, http://www.banglastories.org/uploads/Literature_review.pdf.

³⁵ Alexander, Firoz and Rashid, “The Bengali Diaspora in Britain.”

³⁶ Alexander, Firoz and Rashid, “The Bengali Diaspora in Britain.”

2 MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

In view of all that has been mentioned in the above chapter, Britain has a well-established history of diasporas. Strictly speaking, the British Isles had been populated by various ethnic minorities long before the outburst of the Second World War. Prior to the 20th century, the islands witnessed an influx of refugees owing to political, economic or personal reasons. Barring Caribbeans and Asians, other ethnic minorities have entered Britain since the 1950s onwards. The British Commonwealth was, at that time, yielding to serve as a moral example to the rest of the world. Accordingly, the government introduced a policy of equal opportunities for all citizens of the former Empire regardless of their race. Being allowed to enter Britain freely, a high amount of immigrants were attracted to settle there and subsequently change the character of the country. Overall, immigration has transformed the majority of mono-ethnic Britain into a multicultural nation.³⁷

The following sections discuss the theory of multiculturalism and its development. The chapter delves deeply into the citizenship of immigrants in the framework of British immigration policy.

2.1 Multiculturalism

Before going any further, there is a need to clarify what is meant by the term multiculturalism. Oxford Dictionaries state the adjective multicultural and define it as “relating to or containing several cultural or ethnic groups within a society.”³⁸ Although, a generally accepted definition of multiculturalism is notoriously lacking. As professor Tariq Modood conceived, this phenomenon is understood differently in various countries depending on its current policies, socio-historical and political ideologies and on the origin of certain definitions.³⁹

³⁷ Hiro, *Black British, White British*, 200-208.

³⁸ “Multicultural,” *Oxford Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press, accessed February 16, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/multicultural?q=multiculturalism#multicultural__6.

³⁹ Clare Beckett and Marie Macey, “Race, Gender and Sexuality: The Oppression of Multiculturalism,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 24, no. 3/4 (2001): 310.

Multiculturalism was first admitted in public discourse in the 1960s and early 1970s, as opposing the ideology of liberalism, which strictly differentiated between the public and private sphere with cultural practises being the fundamental idea of the latter. Quite on the contrary, multiculturalism, being the prime idea of racial justice,⁴⁰ is modelled on the idea that all cultures have “the right to be authorized as authentic in the public sphere and should be given social support.”⁴¹

With the emergence of mass migration, a diverse array of cultural groups have been marginalized and excluded as being too distinctive from mainstream society. Thus different multicultural policies took place in order to unify the fractured society, namely assimilation and integration.⁴²

Roughly speaking, according to Barnor Hesse, multiculturalism has developed in three stages. In the 1960s, the dominant idea was to assimilate ethnic minorities into the majority culture in view of the fact that it was accompanied by the littlest possible disturbance and change to the mainstream society and its inhabitants. The flaws of the assimilation process were the concerns of the host population such as the biological and cultural blending with minorities leading to a change of a national character and the unwillingness of immigrants to renounce their cultural heritage as being inclusive of the language or religion. This approach was soon considered as intolerant and degrading to minority cultures.⁴³

Thus, the assimilation or ‘colourblind’ process was abandoned in the early 1970s. From that time on, people were allowed to retain the components of their homelands, their ethnic heritage, habits and interests. Otherwise they were supposed to cling to the rules of mainstream society, have the same image of society in their minds and, moreover, feel a sense of belonging to that society. This process was commonly designated as a model of integration.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Satoshi Adachi. “Social Integration in Post-Multiculturalism: An Analysis of Social Integration Policy in Post-war Britain,” *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 20, no. 1 (2011): 108.

⁴¹ Adachi, “Social Integration in Post-Multiculturalism,” 108.

⁴² Beckett and Macey, “Race, Gender and Sexuality,” 310-311.

⁴³ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 14-15.

⁴⁴ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 14-15.

The concept of multiculturalism, promoting cultural diversity, developed from the idea of integration in the 1970s and came to be described as a peaceful co-existence of various cultures, hence the word ‘multi’ in the title. Currently, the label multicultural society has been used as an umbrella term for people who “demand equal status, rights, power and opportunity to participate in and shape the collective life of the wider society...Minority communities anticipate the wider society to accept them as equals and to recognize and reflect their presence in its major institutions and self-understanding.”⁴⁵

Manifestly, the above mentioned processes are inclusive of the concept of culture. Generally, the term culture is understood to consist of “the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society”⁴⁶ and in addition it is “virtually burnt into the genes of people, forever distinguishing and separating them.”⁴⁷ Therefore, it is universally presumed that the cultural heritage of an individual cannot be easily relinquished especially when settling outside of his ancestral country.⁴⁸

2.2 Immigration and the Question of Citizenship after the World War II

Generally, citizenship is institutionalised equivalent of nation. Immigrants coming to Britain with the intention to settle there were allowed to become its citizens when obeying certain policies and regulations. But citizenship is more than that, as the concept of nationhood influences it greatly. The unity of the cultural and political sphere has been substantial in creating an ideal citizenship.⁴⁹

Citizenship, according to Kymlicka, is a way of treating people equally in compliance with the law.⁵⁰ In Young’s opinion, society is composed of social groups which are either dominant or oppressed. Dominant, known as universal or white middle class

⁴⁵ Bhikhu Parekh, “A Commitment to Cultural Pluralism,” *The Power of Culture*, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://kvc.minbuza.nl/uk/archive/commentary/parekh.html>.

⁴⁶ “Culture,” *Oxford Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/culture>

⁴⁷ Steven Vertovec, “Multiculturalism, Culturalism and Public Incorporation.” *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 19, no. 1 (1996): 51-52.

⁴⁸ Tariq Modood, “Remaking Multiculturalism after 7/7,” *Open Democracy*, accessed February 21, 2015, https://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-terrorism/multiculturalism_2879.jsp.

⁴⁹ Eleni Andreouli, and Caroline Howarth, “National Identity, Citizenship and Immigration: Putting Identity in Context,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 43, no. 3 (2013): 364-366.

⁵⁰ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 174.

men, is frequently left out of any further examination. Oppressed, on the other hand, attracts the attention of many entitling various groups being culturally or otherwise exploited. The theory of multicultural citizenship is deeply rooted in citizenship policies. Liberal states have been keen on blending multicultural citizenship into the established universal, and so to unify the multi-culturally fractured society. In accordance with that, they applied certain policies already noted in this chapter.⁵¹

The British Empire, which has been consequently divided into the British Commonwealth, India and the colonies and protectorates, has been considered as a “White Man’s Club.”⁵² Therefore, the presence of people with dark skin was accompanied by fears and prejudices. However, Britain found her position in need of a labour force, which has launched the mass migration of the 1940s. During that times Britain established a liberal immigration policy, culminating in the passing of the 1948 British Nationality Act. Owing to that, all subjects of the former British Empire took advantage of possessing the same rights as its white citizens, for instance, permission to settle there, vote or find a job.⁵³

When entering Britain, immigrants tended to settle in such places which were already resided by their ethnic cognates. It worked on the assumption that such communities would protect the newcomers and help them with settling in. Therefore, they refused to assimilate and due to their closeness they succeeded in preserving their cultural heritage. The collapsed process of assimilation resulted in discrimination from the major white community.⁵⁴

The expression ‘multicultural’ embodies a merely diverse society as being a result of immense immigration, but also the policies controlling such a society. Multicultural policies endeavour to build a bridge among minorities and state.⁵⁵ However, the sizable number of immigrants could no longer be absorbed within British society and as a shortage of job vacancies occurred, the government underpinned the calls for a restriction of

⁵¹ Christian Joppke, “Multicultural Citizenship,” in *The Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 247.

⁵² Hiro, *Black British, White British*, 198.

⁵³ Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Post-war Era* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 14-15.

⁵⁴ J.A.S. Grenville, *A History of the World from the 20th to the 21st Century* (1980; New York: Routledge, 2005), 540-541.

⁵⁵ Kenan Malik, “The Failure of Multiculturalism,” *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2015): 28.

immigrants entering the country. But it was not earlier than the late 1950s when the government began to take an action.⁵⁶

It was its conservative side which called for combating criminality, housing, employment and other problems connected with the co-existence with immigrants in the 1950s. When changing the immigration policy, they firstly needed to modify the Act which legally opened the immigration door. While exercising the restrictions, the government feared of two changes. Firstly, the alteration of Britain's position in the world and Commonwealth affairs, and secondly the relationships of black immigrants, already rooted in Britain with white citizens were at stake, and might have sparked racially-motivated differences. Due to these discrepancies, the government did not urgent new immigration restriction policies. Ultimately, the tolerance of the British public was exhausted with the riots of 1958 in London's district of Notting Hill and Nottingham, which brought this agenda back in to the limelight resulting in the passing of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962.⁵⁷

The government tried to restrict the flow of immigrants, but as far as the already settled Caribbean immigrants are concerned, the policy of equality among all citizens was introduced. It was characterized by the promotion of a decent livelihood, standard of living and education for all, employment and maintenance of the law and order of the country. Above all they stressed a freedom of choice of a way of life. In a nutshell, the policy of multicultural integration was introduced.⁵⁸

Multiculturalism in Britain reacted to racial contradictions and inconsistencies brought about by Enoch Powell's speech 'Rivers of Blood' of 1968. Yuval-Davis confirmed that multiculturalism emerged out of the realization that "the melting pot doesn't melt, and that ethnic and racial divisions get reproduced from generation to generation."⁵⁹ As claimed by many, while culture was celebrated, the issues of oppression within society were eluded and therefore the critique of multiculturalism came forth.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain*, 45.

⁵⁷ Shamit Saggat, *Race and Politics in Britain* (Worcester: Billing and Sons, 1992), 69-73.

⁵⁸ Grenville, *A History of the World from the 20th to the 21st Century*, 541.

⁵⁹ Barnor Hesse, *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2000), 7.

⁶⁰ Hesse, *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms*, 7.

As Modood mentioned, the policies regarding multicultural citizenship resonate with the racial equality of citizens. Race is perceived as being something one cannot control and therefore should not be punished for.⁶¹ Kymlicka, in connection to multiculturalism raises, the issue of identity. He examines minorities as having an undermining impact on national identity. National identity, seen as a binding element of the nation's citizens, transpired as unstable and was challenged by the influx of immigrants.⁶² Thus, in the next sections, the two terms, i.e. racism and national identity, having been enmeshed with the policy of multiculturalism, are exhaustively defined and clarified.

⁶¹ Tariq Modood, "Multicultural Citizenship and Muslim Identity Politics," *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 12, no. 2 (2010): 162.

⁶² Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 191.

3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Diaspora and multicultural citizenship are terms which have been primarily contested with the notion of national identity. The sense of belonging is a recurring theme in the diasporic literature. It is apparent that multicultural citizenship in Britain has changed not only the character of the country but has also forced all its citizens to question their identity on the basis of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and provide an attempt to illuminate the concept of British national identity and its transition throughout the decades of mass migration. Before moving on to the substance of this account, two terms need to be elucidated, i.e. nation and identity. The following sections illustrate the development of these terms as well as national identity, and discuss thoroughly the different approaches to their conceptualisation.

3.1 The Concept of Nation

This section closely discusses the concept of ‘nation.’ Etymologically, the word ‘nation’ comes from the Latin word *natio* meaning literally “large group with common ancestry.”⁶³

The original meaning, with regard to nation, dates back to the Middle Ages when it was used within universities when describing groups of students descending from the same region. From a political standpoint, the label ‘nation’ has been used since the 14th century when it came to refer to those involved in the affairs of state, either due to their inheritance, rank or conferred participation. The concept of nation emerged in the 18th century with the Declaration of Independence, beginning with ‘we, the people of United States.’⁶⁴ The substance of nation, however, occurred later during the French Enlightenment when referring to nation as “a community of individuals enjoying the same political rights, whatever their origins.”⁶⁵ Ensuing the idea of the French Revolution, the nation was supposed to exist only when vacating oppressions and absolute monarchy and while embracing the idea of “common political will of the people.”⁶⁶

⁶³ “Nation,” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Douglas Harper, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=nation>.

⁶⁴ “The Concept of Nation,” *Parliamentary Assembly*, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=11332>.

⁶⁵ “The Concept of Nation.”

⁶⁶ “The Concept of Nation.”

Towards the end of the 18th century, Europe was still divided into empires leaving only few states deviating from the political system of monarchy. At that time, the German conception of nation emerged as a probable reaction to the French domination. Germans rather regarded nation as “a collective entity with a specific language and culture and specific historical traditions.”⁶⁷ This understanding differentiated itself from the French comprehension of nation only as the union of individuals. Nations grew in importance in the course of the 20th century. Owing to the world wars, nation was regarded only as a community with its members no longer having ensured the same rights. People of one nation were compelled out of their territory to be a minority within a different state, however, still realizing the profound sense of belonging to their original nation.⁶⁸

György Frunda, Romanian politician, pointed out that the above stated definitions are still of use today thus there is no need to introduce new concepts. Besides, many scholars are convinced of the impossibility of formulating its unified definition as it is closely interconnected with various aspects which have been continually misused and altered, i.e. political ideologies and different legal systems.⁶⁹

‘Nation’ was in the past regarded as “the most perfect form of human association.”⁷⁰ Manent argues, however, that it was considered the catalyst of the negative historical events in the 20th century and, therefore, the sociologists lacked the interest in further inquiring this concept. The scholars have rather substituted the concept of nation by nationalism as being the bearer of the crucial nation’s ideas, and, what’s more, this concept has already included “the judgment and condemnation.”⁷¹

In pursuit of defining nation, both laymen and scholars have very often misinterpreted this term. Misrepresentation stems not only from different historical periods in which the definitions have been produced, but also from the different standpoint of its authors. Therefore, the term nation embodies a multitude of concepts, i.e. country, state, society or culture.⁷²

⁶⁷ “The Concept of Nation.”

⁶⁸ “The Concept of Nation.”

⁶⁹ “The Concept of Nation.”

⁷⁰ Pierre Manent, “What is a Nation?,” *Intercollegiate Review* 42, no. 2 (2007): 24.

⁷¹ Manent, “What is a Nation?,” 24.

⁷² Andreas Pickel, “Nations, National Cultures, and Natural Languages: A Contribution to the Sociology of Nations,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 43, no. 4 (2013): 425-427.

It is noteworthy that nation contests most frequently with the concept of state. These two were equated during the French Enlightenment when state was considered “the legal personification of the nation, of all its citizens.”⁷³ Max Weber defines state as a community of people within a given territory, however, so far it has not been accomplished by all states.⁷⁴ One of the pioneers of the nationalism study, Nira Yuval-Davis, noted that there exist nations whose members have never established or had a state, as exemplified by the Kurds or the Palestinians, or more contemporarily by the Basques and Catalonians. Despite often being confused, the relationship of these two concepts is “virtually everywhere a fiction.”⁷⁵

This notion is confirmed also by Rasmussen who has claimed that the difference between them is rather vague. So vague that the label nation-state almost replaced its component terms in the past. This lack of clarity was caused by defining the state as established only due to the existence of national identity. Furthermore, the relationship between the territory of one state and the place resided in by one nation came to be understood as being synonymous. Rasmussen has asserted that, even though there is a blurred line between these two concepts, they need to maintain separate.⁷⁶

What follows are attempts by several scholars to give a universal conception of nation. The aforementioned Rasmussen gives his opinion on the concept of nation. To him, members of one nation are linked together by bloodlines that can be actual, but also based on the myth that people are recognized as members of one nation by common cultural heritage and its outcomes. Rasmussen’s theory is short of one attribute. He is abandoning, in the theory of nationalism anchored, the notion of territory, proclaiming that the members of one nation are bound together by shared territory.⁷⁷

Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983) surveyed in depth ‘nation,’ as indicated by the title, as an ‘imagined community.’ Unlike states, nations, not having a real objective existence, are present only in the minds of those few who believe in

⁷³ “The Concept of Nation.”

⁷⁴ Simeon Mitropolitiski, “Weber’s Definition of the State as an Ethnographic Tool for Understanding the Contemporary Political Science State of the Discipline” (paper presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal, Quebec, May 16, 2011)

⁷⁵ Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (1997; Gateshead: Athenaeum Press, 2008), 11-12.

⁷⁶ Peter Ravn Rasmussen, “‘Nations’ or ‘States’: An Attempt at Definition,” *A Nation, States & Politics*, last modified July 20, 2001, <http://scholiast.org/nations/whatisanation.html>.

⁷⁷ Rasmussen, “‘Nations’ or ‘States’.”

them. Anderson affirmed that “members of the smallest nation will never know the most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁷⁸ By that, he examined people of one nation as possibly having the same origin, but as they are separated through years of displacements, their sense of belonging to a nation is only imagined, founded on overarching features.⁷⁹

Uberoi and Modood have claimed that the characteristics of nation stem from its common features, i.e. language, traditions, common history, symbols, political and legal institutions. In the same way, members belonging to one nation also have several attributes in common which, however, differ from those constituting nation. Additionally, in their opinion, inhabitants of one nation “have common features in a different sense of believing that features of their nation – like is homeland, history, traditions and so on – are theirs”⁸⁰ and it does not necessarily mean they ethnically related, as is exemplified by Switzerland or Canada. This definition is at the heart of the approach to national identity which will be further described herein.⁸¹

The following definition concludes the conceptualization of nation as suggested by various scholars and deems that it is “a specific political, social, economic and cultural community, often with a common language, culture and history, living in neighbouring territories, with ‘independent’ political institutions and social organisations; it presupposes a politically sovereign people, a master of its own territory, with its own economic life and its state or, failing this, which aspires strongly to these things.”⁸² Its author is Professor Mick, who summed up the endeavours of various scholars into the thought that such a definition can always be made, however, it will never be general or valid in perpetuity.⁸³

3.2 The Concept of Identity

Unlike nation, identity is a relatively recent phenomenon. The origin of identity can be firstly be distinguished in academic discourse. Unfortunately, scientists have been

⁷⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; London: Verso, 1991), 6.

⁷⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4-6.

⁸⁰ Varun Uberoi and Tariq Modood, “Has Multiculturalism in Britain retreated?,” *Soundings* (13626620), 53 (2013): 131.

⁸¹ Uberoi and Modood, “Has Multiculturalism in Britain retreated?,” 131.

⁸² Rasmussen, “‘Nations’ or ‘States’.”

⁸³ “The Concept of Nation.”

employing this term rather casually steering clear of applying some importance to the essence of its conception. As a result, laymen and scholars, when asked about its meaning, could barely respond.⁸⁴

Originally, the word identity comes from the Latin word *idem* (the same). For a wonder, identity has been encoded in the English language since the 16th century. Initially, its meaning was associated particularly with the philosophical matters of mind and body and linked to the philosopher John Locke, who began to refer to identity as “the unity of self.”⁸⁵ Throughout the centuries, identity was used in reference to personality or individuality but rather free from proper conception. In the 20th century, identity was hardly ever employed, even less when immigration was discussed. Moreover, its rare occurrences in literature have been considered as not important, as they are contradictory with our contemporary understanding.⁸⁶

In the 1950s, Herberg employed this term when indicating that religion is “the most satisfactory vehicle for locating oneself in society and thereby answering the ‘aching question’ of identity.”⁸⁷ By this, Herberg has documented what has been already introduced before, i.e. the search for one’s identity. In the following decades, various scholars called for the conceptualisation of identity, especially due to its significance in the lives of minorities. Overwhelmingly, scholars have taken for granted that their readers are familiar with the term and therefore felt no need to explicate it within their academic outputs. But, throughout the years, it has reached an impasse, and as it has been used to cover many things, it resulted in meaning nothing.⁸⁸

Similarly, the prominent scholar of the theory of identity, psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson shared this view on the subject and disclosed that the term was used without any clarification and rather unnaturally. When defining this concept, he has applied the psychosocial approach of Sigmund Freud and has used the concept of ego identity. By that, he has considered identity as being formed by the inner development of one’s personality located deep under the surface of the human psyche. He described

⁸⁴ Philip Gleason, “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” *The Journal of American History* 69, no. 4 (1983): 910.

⁸⁵ Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” 911.

⁸⁶ Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” 911.

⁸⁷ Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” 912.

⁸⁸ Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” 913.

identity as “something that ‘comes upon you’ as a re-cognition, almost as a surprise rather than as something strenuously ‘quested’ after.”⁸⁹ He also claimed that the experience of searching for one’s identity is embedded in every human being.⁹⁰

Parekh defines identity as something that distinguishes us from other people and is a distinctive part of our personality from birth. He has pointed out that identity is being implemented in us, not taking into account the influence of society. Furthermore, he has proposed features such as “our humanity, gender, culture, religion, values, moral commitments, dominant passions, psychological and moral dispositions, and so forth”⁹¹ as being the ones which constitute us. Thus they are inseparable parts of our identity and by abandoning them we would hardly be able to define ourselves. Concurrently, he asserted that those characteristics can change through time and people are unconsciously altering with them, and thus altering their identity.⁹²

Contrary to Parekh, sociologists are of the opinion that identity is a product of the interaction between the individual and society. They proclaimed that the unity of self is not anymore “a solid, given entity...It is rather a process, continuously created and recreated in each social situation that one enters.”⁹³ Likewise, Hall has rejected personal identity as being identical through time. Furthermore, he has propounded collective identity as a shared sense of belonging to a certain community based on common history and ancestry and so contributed to the theory of ethnic identity.⁹⁴

The discrepancy between the approach of sociologists and psychologists to identity is a staple in the theory of ethnic identity as the theory of identity was concerned mostly with ethnicity in the second half of the 20th century. According to Horowitz, ethnicity “easily embraces groups differentiated by colour, language and religion; it covers tribes, races, nationalities, and castes.”⁹⁵ Members of a certain ethnicity connect predominantly with those with whom they share the previously noted features, and so feel

⁸⁹ Erik H. Erikson, “The Concept of Identity in Race Relations: Notes and Queries,” *Daedalus* 95, no. 1 (1966): 147.

⁹⁰ Erikson, “The Concept of Identity in Race Relations,” 147.

⁹¹ Bhikhu Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” *Political Quarterly* 80 (2009): 251.

⁹² Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 251-253.

⁹³ Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” 918.

⁹⁴ Stuart Hall, “Introduction: Who needs ‘Identity’?,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 4.

⁹⁵ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 53.

the pride in who they are. Nevertheless, when the bond is not established, negative feelings of shame and disconnection predominate. In general, the ethnic identity of a community develops on the “highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions.”⁹⁶ Scholar Femminella distinguished ethnic ego identity as an inherited part of a psyche. As far as it is inherited, an ethnic community can flourish regardless of the place of their residence still possessing its characteristic features.⁹⁷

Stuart Hall, occupying himself with Caribbean diaspora, regards identity as a ‘production’ rather than “an already accomplished fact...which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.”⁹⁸ In terms of migrant identities, Duveen has pointed out that identity is about identification with a certain group, as well as being distinguished not only from this group but also from all the others. Mead addressed the importance of identity in establishing social interactions and the development of self. As with Mead, psychologists also point to social interactions as being essential in forming one’s identity. Furthermore, the policy of a state is also crucial when forming a migrant’s experience. Particularly, the immigration policies of assimilation or integration are determinants when creating boundaries between us (inhabitants) and them (diasporic immigrants).⁹⁹

W. E. B. Du Bois, and later also Paul Gilroy, regarded immigrants’ identity as possessing a double consciousness; on one hand identity is a product deeply ‘conditioned’ by society. On the other hand, it is crucially determined also by the birth within that society.¹⁰⁰ To quote Du Bois, it is the inner conflict seen as joining of two souls “in one black body.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Alicia Fedelina Chávez and Florence Guido –DiBrito, “Racial and Ethnic Identity and Development,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 84 (1999): 41.

⁹⁷ Gleason, “Identifying Identity,” 920.

⁹⁸ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Routledge, 2006), 222.

⁹⁹ Andreouli, and Howarth, “National Identity, Citizenship and Immigration,” 364-366.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 161-162.

¹⁰¹ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 161.

3.3 National Identity

National identity is a relatively recent phenomenon, coming into use in the 1950s with the expansion of immigration. It substitutes earlier terms such as ‘national character’ or ‘national soul.’¹⁰²

By definition, proceeding from Uberoi and Moddod, national identity is by many believed to be a sense of belonging to one nation based on the sharing of a territory, language, history, traditions, symbols and institutions of politic and legal nature.¹⁰³

Parekh has juxtaposed national identity with the identity of political community as resembling a number of features; people participate jointly in the organization and collective affairs, share central values, commitments and so forth. Meanwhile, he interposed that as such, national identity is alterable and cannot be defined by several features as it would denigrate others. He held this view particularly in regard to the events of the twentieth century, for instance, many Germans came to dislike what they discovered of their identities in regard to the Second World War. Not all Britons, similarly to Germans, are comfortable with their imperial history and with the conquering of weaker societies in particular. In his conclusion, he implies the necessity of constant reassessment of national identity being in concordance with history, but also tallying with the present.¹⁰⁴

Pursuing the definition of national identity, many scholars keep sharply on differentiating of individual national identities and so forestall intercultural adaptation. Every nation is supposed to feel a collective identity, which might be exclusive of and demeaning to outsiders. Viewing national identity, it has the force of both unity and disintegration. Parekh infers that “no definition of national identity can be purely formal and culturally neutral, but its content should be as widely acceptable as possible.”¹⁰⁵

Broadly speaking, national identity is supposed “not only to unite but also to inspire members of the community to live up to an idealised vision of how they should live, to evoke and mobilise their sense of collective loyalty, and to make it a matter of pride and joy to belong to the community.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 251.

¹⁰³ Uberoi and Moddod, “Has Multiculturalism in Britain retreated?,” 131.

¹⁰⁴ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 253-254

¹⁰⁵ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 255.

¹⁰⁶ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 255.

3.4 Englishness vs. Britishness

The disintegration of the British Empire and the growth of immigration in the 1940s onwards brought about challenges to British national identity and what British actually meant. Turning now to Britain and investigating its national identity, two terms, namely Englishness and Britishness, cannot be omitted.¹⁰⁷

At first, national identity in the British Isles has been in a viewfinder of historians who are mostly responsible for its satisfactory conception. The following is a brief report on the historical bloom of British national identity.

The question of Britishness can be traced back to the beginning of the 18th century. In 1707, Great Britain was established when comprising states Wales and England welcomed Scotland in to the union. Over the whole of the 18th century, island inhabitants referred to themselves as Britons and to their country as Britain. However, it is necessary to mention that their individual identities were not suppressed, but various conflicts and agendas of the nation came to intervene in the lives of their inhabitants and so in these situations their national identity was British.¹⁰⁸

By the end of the 19th century, Britain was a world power and its Empire covered one fifth of the world's land. Surprisingly, at that time the quest for an English national identity developed. There were two reasons for abandoning a British identity. First was the secularization of Europe. Britain had been a protestant nation in history and it was predominantly religion which functioned as a bond between its inhabitants. However, with the rise of Germany and the United States, Britain needed to secularize so as to maintain its position. Secondly, the movement of nationalism rose in prominence. In Britain it was cultural nationalism with an emphasis not on common citizenship as it was previously, but on common ethnicity, language, history, religion and race. However, inhabitants felt particularly strongly and distinctive of their Englishness being, however, being suppressed with regard to the affairs of Britain as a world power. This suppression continued with the prominent rise of the British Labour Party in the parliament and linked together the

¹⁰⁷ Uberoi and Modood, "Has Multiculturalism in Britain retreated?," 131.

¹⁰⁸ Krishan Kumar, "'Englishness' and English National Identity," in *British Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kevin Robins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 43-44.

substances of ethnic and national issues as well as individual parts of the union with the result of dampening individual countries.¹⁰⁹

The transition was afoot in the second half of the 20th century. The decline of Britishness and the British Empire no longer being a unifying force, Britain found it difficult to develop a new identity. The quest for a new identity was challenged by the post-war migration and the alteration of Britain into a multicultural society. The features typically describing and belonging to one nation were now shared and the minorities usually did not regard them as theirs. Cultural diversity was a cause of arguments among cultural groups. Furthermore, immigrants were considered as invaders not sharing language, values, norms or equal treatment. Despite their differences, they shared certain aspects, such as institutions, symbols and production of a collective history, which might consolidate them. The importance of a sense of national identity was apparent. The problems lay in the inability of cultural groups to adapt.¹¹⁰

In literature, Englishness and Britishness are employed significantly. Nonetheless, unified conception is absent. Apart from historians, scientists of other disciplines have also weighed in. George Orwell acknowledged the difficulties found in complex nomenclature of British national identity. Having said “we call our island by no less than six different names, England, Britain, Great Britain, the British Isles, the United Kingdom, and, in very exalted moments, Albion,”¹¹¹ he confessed that all members of the country are aware of the significant differences between one another. Though, when it comes to confrontation with a nation outside of the kingdom, Britons display the possession of unified national character. Hence, Orwell used the terms British and English interchangeably.¹¹²

Correspondingly, Krishan Kumar holds the long-lasting view of Britishness being another term for Englishness and that these two are equals. This notion is fostered by the ubiquitous dominance of the English language, English law and English culture within the British Isles since ancient times. The predominance of English influence, however, resulted in a problematic search for one’s identity for other members of the union. Likewise, the

¹⁰⁹ Kumar, “‘Englishness’ and English National Identity,” 44-48.

¹¹⁰ Uberoi and Modood, “Has Multiculturalism in Britain retreated?,” 131-132.

¹¹¹ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12.

¹¹² Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*, 12.

English identified themselves only in connection to other countries in the United Kingdom.¹¹³

In crucial periods of its history, “Britain had stood with her face to the oceans, her back to Europe”¹¹⁴ allowing its development as an independent country staying true to itself and at the same time being open to the world. National identity, as having a political basis, is partly constructed in the sphere of state institutions. Thus, since the 1960s, national identity has been in the spotlight of British politics and contested mostly through connection to race. Enoch Powell, being the advocate of British individualism and with it connected moral virtues, proclaimed British people have never been able to assimilate immigrants and suggested either their repatriation or restraints of their rights.¹¹⁵

Powell’s viewpoints were partially shared by Margaret Thatcher. She, also an adherent of individualism and ethnic identity, differed from Powell in one important aspect. To wit, she was persuaded of the possibility to assimilate minorities into the majority of society. To her, Britain featured a distinct genius, identity, soul or essence, and what would turn against such a country cannot possibly succeed. Tony Blair emphasized the long tradition of tolerance, cultural plurality, cordiality in regard to different ways of life and social compassion as central to the British identity. Putting himself in opposition with Powell, he prized the British society for her openness and being inclusive and should persevere to be so.¹¹⁶

The imminent successor of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, promoted integration in regard to the London bombings of 2005 as British citizens were also involved and prepared to kill their fellow citizens.¹¹⁷ He promoted the foundation of a common purpose unifying all Britons based on a revival of historical narrations. However, his approach was negatively received and its critique by many resulted in the eventual revelation that British national identity is label of empty nature. David Cameron, the current prime Minister, opposed multiculturalism and further proclaimed that instead of British history, identity is

¹¹³ Krishan Kumar, “Negotiating English Identity: Englishness, Britishness and the Future of the United Kingdom,” *Nations and Nationalism* 16, no. 3 (2010): 475.

¹¹⁴ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 257.

¹¹⁵ Andreouli, and Howarth, “National Identity, Citizenship and Immigration,” 365.

¹¹⁶ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 261.

¹¹⁷ BBC News, “Brown Speech promotes Britishness,” *BBC News*, January 14, 2006.

supposed to be reinforced by language, traditions and state institutions as inherent of Britons.¹¹⁸

Associated with politics, Parekh proposed that the political community “should be inclusive and respect the prevailing ethnic, religious, cultural and other diversities”¹¹⁹ in order to become unbiased and culturally open and so build a politically unified nation based on human rights for all.¹²⁰

In the past, black people in Britain would hardly ever regard themselves as English. As demonstrated by Bernie Grant, the black council leader and MP of the 1980s, who called himself British because “it includes other oppressed peoples, like the Welsh or the Scots. It would stick in my throat to call myself English.”¹²¹ The minorities in England are aware of the racial connotations of the label ‘English’ therefore they prefer to be acknowledged as British. The situation has been changing though. English daily life has been intertwined with black experience in fashion, music, cuisine and business. Nowadays, comfort “between blackness and Englishness”¹²² can be found even among those who thought it impossible once. Many, however, emphasize that to adopt Englishness does not mean abandoning Britishness as these two constitute each other. As many surveys indicate, most of the island’s inhabitants are inclined to call themselves British or British and English, only some are exclusively English.¹²³

Similarly to this part, further in analysis, the terms Britishness and Englishness will be used interchangeably.

¹¹⁸ Irene Morra, *Britishness, Popular Music, and National Identity: The Making of Modern Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 34-35.

¹¹⁹ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 255.

¹²⁰ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” 255

¹²¹ Kumar, “Negotiating English Identity,” 479.

¹²² Kumar, “Negotiating English Identity,” 480.

¹²³ Kumar, “Negotiating English Identity,” 479-480.

4 RACISM

It is broadly accepted that mass migration has turned Britain into a culturally diverse nation. The country was tolerant towards cultural differences brought with the colonial workers during the war, but when becoming certain that non-white immigrants were about to settle in Britain, their ethnicity started to emerge as a problem as Britain was not committed to the equality of the minority and majority society.¹²⁴

Untangling the challenge the immigrants posed to national identity in the previous chapter, it is necessary to also mention that even though they were capable of retaining their cultural legacy and pride, they were seldom preoccupied with it. Their main concerns were racism and inequality of the white society towards them.¹²⁵

In this chapter, concepts of race and racism come to the fore as being crucial episodes in the lives of newly-welcomed and rooted immigrants in Britain.

4.1 Theorizing Race and Racism

Before proceeding to racism, there is a need to define race as these two terms abound. In the past, race was comprehensibly used with a fixed and constant meaning. However, the events, not only of the 20th century, but also the previous ones, which severely threatened the civil rights of people all over the world questioned its theoretical background. In an attempt to transform its understanding, biologists, anthropologists and social scientists abandoned the biological viewpoint, and rather approached it from historical and social viewpoint. From the beginning of the 20th century, only a minority of scholars devoted themselves to this phenomenon though. Their number has rapidly increased, and therefore the theory of race has been continually revised with the focus placed on its continually changing meaning.¹²⁶

From the 16th to 18th century, race was a categorizing term and a polysemous word used interchangeably, similarly to breed, sort, kind, type, or species. By the end of the 17th century, race was uttered with a growing tendency when talking about class of people or even things. The course of race did not emerge within science at first but was pervaded by a need to rationalize the already established diversity within human society.

¹²⁴ Adachi, "Social Integration in Post-Multiculturalism," 108-109.

¹²⁵ Kenan Malik, "The Failure of Multiculturalism," 24.

¹²⁶ Howard Winant, "Race and Race Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), 181-182.

Consequently, race saw an emergence in written texts during the 18th century while being widely employed when referring to Whites, Blacks and Indians. Patently, racial categories were determined by the biological race theory.¹²⁷

It was German psychologist and physician Blumenbach who first classified members into certain races on the grounds of their inherited characteristics - phenotypes, such as skin colour, hair, facial features, cranial capacity, size of the brain, nose shape or eye colour while omitting ancestry. Thus, the reference has signified “a new ideology about human differences and a new way of structuring society that had not existed before in human history.”¹²⁸ Thereafter, various scholarly men sought to provide a clear set of biological criteria when conceptualizing race.¹²⁹

Except for the biological race theory, scientific works explored race as a ‘natural’ category and its characteristics as essential, given and immutable. When it came to slavery, its support and also critique were greatly justified as being inevitable to the human progress, and therefore ‘natural.’ Slaves were considered as non humans being distinct from humans on the basis of their physical traits. In the biological and ‘natural’ view on race, the movement of social Darwinism and eugenics obtained widespread support.¹³⁰ The underlying idea of social Darwinism was natural selection and class stratification. Similarly, Francis Galton, who coined the term eugenics, proclaimed his belief in procreation of better elements in society, highly discouraging procreation of ‘weak elements’ or their mutual blending as having consequences on the genetic quality of mankind.¹³¹

The aforesaid biological perception of race was upheld till the 20th century. Nevertheless, along with the growth of democracy and the mass mobility of coloured people in the first half of the 20th century, there was an increasing concern over the introduction of a sophisticated race concept as the biological one had been in need of

¹²⁷ Audrey Smedley, and Brian D. Smedley, “Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on the Social Construction of Race,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 1 (2005): 19.

¹²⁸ Smedley, and Smedley, “Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real,” 19.

¹²⁹ William Q. Lowe, “Understanding Race: The Evolution of the Meaning of Race in American Law and the Impact of DNA Technology on Its Meaning in the Future,” *Albany Law Review* 72, no. 4 (2009): 1115-18.

¹³⁰ Winant, “Race and Race Theory,” 174-175.

¹³¹ Anne Lee Martínez, “Eugenics,” *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Health* (January 2014): *Research Starters*, EBSCO host (accessed March 19, 2015).

revision and lacked plausibility. W.E.B. Du Bois, pioneering this idea, opposed the notion of categorizing people based on their physical traits and has subscribed to the belief that the race concept preserved the historical and sociological classification. He argued that race is “a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily agitating together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life.”¹³² Even though he partly concurred that the differing criteria might be of physical stemming, he prompted the psychological and spiritual contrasts as being the ones which differentiated races. Later, Du Bois tried to come up with his own set of criteria distinguishing races, but arrived at the conclusion that due to the intergroup sexual reproduction and mixing, racial categories are not so strictly separated and the development of new categories would not be by any means beneficial. Rather, he was inclined to examine the cultural aspects of race turning to social, cultural, experiential and historical aspects, keeping in mind particularly black people and their struggles through times of slavery.¹³³

The debate about race gained fresh prominence with many arguing that race classification is unsatisfactory, misleading and obsolete, and its kernel is not in biological superiority. This idea was fuelled by the works of Du Bois and Appiah, who attempted to provoke debates on deserting race wholly and substituting it more likely with culture or ethnicity. The substitution of ethnicity is, however, debatable as many argue about its relation to racism characterized as ethnic prejudice or even discrimination. In a similar way, Corlett forsook race especially due to the connections it has to our understanding of racism and the impossibility to divide people into various races upon their physical characteristics.¹³⁴ Furthermore, employing race in this context was “a strategy for dividing, ranking and controlling”¹³⁵ and such classifying of people brought about and promoted certain prejudicial attitudes, arguably of a racist nature. These misapprehensions in race concept have resulted in severe detriment of psychological, physical or social nature commonly known as racism.¹³⁶

¹³² Polycarp Ikuenobe, “Conceptualizing and Theorizing About the Idea of a ‘Post-Racial’ Era,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 43, no. 4 (2013): 448.

¹³³ Ikuenobe, “Conceptualizing and Theorizing About the Idea of a ‘Post-Racial’ Era,” 448.

¹³⁴ Ikuenobe, “Conceptualizing and Theorizing About the Idea of a ‘Post-Racial’ Era,” 449-50.

¹³⁵ Lowe, “Understanding Race,” 1120.

¹³⁶ Ikuenobe, “Conceptualizing and Theorizing About the Idea of a ‘Post-Racial’ Era,” 448.

Racism as a word entered a context in the 1930s in order to come up with a term which would describe the theories of Nazi Germany and its persecution towards Jews. It is necessary to point out that this word already existed earlier however, the opinions and behaviour which are considered racist were volatile. Frederickson alleged that racism was not a relatively modern term, as explained by many, but rather a manifestation of the ancient phenomenon of xenophobia. Furthermore, he positioned racism as being more than just thinking badly about a distinct group. Racism, in his opinion, proposed to establish a hierarchical ordering of the society, so called racial order, as based on the laws of nature and God.¹³⁷

“Racism is prejudice or discrimination against other people because of their ‘race’ or because of what is thought to be their ‘race’ (their biology or ancestry or physical appearance).”¹³⁸ The above formulated definition of racism was produced by Professor Boyd. Universally, racism is a term frequently used, but to date there is no consensus about its definition. Boyd has encompassed biology and behaviour in his formulation but various scholars have included derision, disdain or hatred as well when defining it. Above all, prejudice, discrimination and hostility are ascribed to racism and grounded in stereotypes that population of a distinctive genetic background behaves in an unappealing way being blameless as it is encoded in their genes.¹³⁹

The above mentioned stereotypes are frequently linked to racism having a tendency to differentiate between two groups; defining one as inherently ‘good’ or ‘self’ whilst the second is ‘bad’ or ‘other,’ and a sense of belonging to one or another is based on the group’s history. While the ‘good’ is an embodiment of positive connotations, the ‘bad’ is articulated as damaged and damaging, ill, infectious and dangerous. Till the present day, two ‘other’ groups were used with extraordinary frequency, being the Jews and Blacks.¹⁴⁰

Generally speaking, there are several factors which motivate racism. Racists are predominantly motivated to discriminate against others due to fears they have of the target

¹³⁷ George M. Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5-8.

¹³⁸ Kevin Reilly, Stephen Kaufman and Angela Bodino, “Toward a Definition of Racism: Some Test Cases,” in *Racism: A Global Reader* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 15.

¹³⁹ Reilly, Kaufman and Bodino, “Toward a Definition of Racism,” 15-16.

¹⁴⁰ Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 128-129.

group, and they also feel a sense of power over the discriminated. Last but not least, superiority is also deemed as one of the motivators for racism as the racist feels supremacy over the discriminated group based on differences in ethnicity.¹⁴¹

Racism is regarded to be a negative aspect of society when asserting one race superior to the others. Lewis Gordon, however, pointed out that racism is “the self-deceiving choice to believe either that one’s own race is the only one qualified to be considered human or that one’s race is superior to other races.”¹⁴² From everlasting, the white race was considered superior and also the normative criteria for humanity. On the other hand, members of other races, particularly Blacks and Browns, were problematized members of society, at least in accordance with historical events.¹⁴³ Hiro emphasizes historical events as the basis for an aversion towards those races, as the white population associate people of dark pigmentation with “negative attributes [such] as dirt, poverty, inferior social status, low intelligence, animal sexuality, primitiveness and violence.”¹⁴⁴ In Gilman’s terms, archaic connotations adhere to blackness as illness understood as sexual deviation or madness.¹⁴⁵

With the influx of immigrants, racism rooted in biological difference came to be substituted by the racism of cultural differences of a superior race towards minorities. Modood examines cultural racism as the blending of cultures in one place leading to social conflicts and the eventual disintegration of social bounds.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ J. Angelo Corlett, *Race, Racism, and Reparations* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 70-72.

¹⁴² Ikuenobe, “Conceptualizing and Theorizing About the Idea of a ‘Post-Racial’ Era,” 459.

¹⁴³ Robert Miles, and Malcolm Brown, *Racism* (1989; London: Routledge, 2003), 13.

¹⁴⁴ Hiro, *Black British, White British*, 281.

¹⁴⁵ Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*, 131-132.

¹⁴⁶ Tariq Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 27.

5 ANDREA LEVY AND ZADIE SMITH

The authors dealt with in this thesis both have ancestral roots in a British former colony as they are both offsprings of Jamaican immigrants in Britain. This chapter provides an introduction to these writers and places emphasis particularly on their family background and literary beginnings.

5.1 Andrea Levy

Novelist Andrea Levy was born in London on March 7 in 1956 to a family of Jamaican descent.¹⁴⁷ Her family history is tied up with the arrival of 492 Jamaican immigrants who embarked on the 1948 *Empire Windrush*. Her father, Winston Levy, was one of them. He left Jamaica anticipating better opportunities in the United Kingdom. Serving in the RAF and travelling with British passport as a British citizen, Winston Levy did not expect the mother country to be inimical towards him. Despite all the problems he encountered, he fell in love with England and decided to stay. Andrea's mother, Amy Levy had concerns about migrating to Britain, as she was knowledgeable of the difficulties and unequal treatment of the coloured immigrants. Yet she joined her husband ere long, six months after the *Empire Windrush* docking.¹⁴⁸ The disillusionment of Andrea's parents is demonstrated in the following quote:

“...they [parents] soon found that they were foreigners in England, and this shocked them. The things they thought of as quintessentially English - manners, politeness, rounded vowels from well-spoken people - were not in evidence. They suffered bad housing - by no means the plight of black people alone in those post-war days: the signs in windows read "no niggers, no dogs, no Irish". My dad faced incredible hostility when looking for somewhere to live because of the colour of his skin. He had a job with the post office. My mum, a trained teacher in Jamaica, had to sew to make a living here. She worked in sweat-shops with other foreigners - Czechs,

¹⁴⁷ Andrea Levy, "Author," *Andrea Levy*, accessed February 28, 2015, <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk/author/>.

¹⁴⁸ Andrea Levy, "This is My England," *Guardian*, February 19, 2000.

Poles, Greeks - all fall-out from the war. She had one advantage: she spoke English. And one disadvantage: she was black (or coloured, as we were termed then).”¹⁴⁹

When it comes to Andrea’s upbringing, she grew up as a citizen of Great Britain, living in North London, educated in a British school, learnt British history, read Shakespeare and spoke with a Cockney accent. When she was younger, she felt the embarrassment in regard to her family and their place of origin as she was the only black child among the whites at school.¹⁵⁰

Born and brought up in England, Levy regarded it as her sole home. She talks about herself as English as it is the only society she is familiar with. When asked about identity, she asked herself “So what am I? Where do I fit into Britain, 2000 and beyond?... Sometimes it makes my head hurt–sometimes my heart”¹⁵¹ to answer this question, she explored the history of her family. Particularly, she took interest in her family’s slavery past and discovered that “’mother’s, mother’s, mother’s, mother was born a slave. She had children by her white English master, who probably had several other children by his slave women and by his white English wife.”¹⁵² Thus she realized that it might be possible that British people, even of white complexion, could have been related to black people of the Caribbean in the train of the long history these two countries share.¹⁵³

However, she is aware of her non-English look. People with whom she has been in contact with knew nothing of her origins. Most importantly, they did not take an interest and hence she felt a sense of not belonging and being a foreigner in her own home.¹⁵⁴ At the same time she pointed out no intention of being assimilated:

“...to take on the majority white culture to the exclusion of all other. (I cannot live without rice and peas. I now dance like a lunatic when Jamaica wins anything. And I will always make a noise when moved by emotion.) I will not take up a flag and

¹⁴⁹ Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵⁰ Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵¹ Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵² Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵³ Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵⁴ Andrea Levy, “How I learned to stop hating My Heritage,” *Guardian*, November 3, 2014.

wave it to intimidate. And being English will not stop me from fighting to live in a country free from racism and social divisiveness.”¹⁵⁵

In the past, she was scared to call herself black as she has never been to the Caribbean and she did not grow up in a black community; her friends were not black and also her parents were not proud to be black. But, as more and more coloured people of the former Empire migrated to Britain, she began to take an interest in her ethnic heritage.¹⁵⁶

5.1.1 Literary Career

She started writing when she was over thirty years old while taking an evening writing course taught by Scottish poet Alison Fell in 1988. As she mentioned in the interview with Razia Iqbal on the BBC, she was told to start with something she knows about thus she wrote about her family.¹⁵⁷ She also read African American women writers, for instance Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou or Alice Walker, and influenced by it, she explored the field of being black in Britain as being the theme she yearned to read about at the time of her youth.¹⁵⁸

Examining the experience of *Empire Windrush* and her father’s, she considers her writing as a chronicle of black immigration to Europe, displaying the bond between black and white British citizens and their common history. Furthermore, she wanted to write about the *Windrush* experience in an entertaining way, but at the same time, longed to show the difficulties of black Britons’ lives.¹⁵⁹

5.2 Zadie Smith

Zadie Smith was born as Sadie in London in 1975 to a mixed-race family.¹⁶⁰ Similarly to Andrea Levy’s family, Smiths also can function as a portrayal of a post-war situation in Britain and its “transformation from elegant playground of the fortunate few to the mass

¹⁵⁵ Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵⁶ Levy, “This is My England.”

¹⁵⁷ Andrea Levy, “Other Media,” *Andrea Levy*, accessed March 3, 2015, <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk/other-media/>.

¹⁵⁸ Black British Women Writers, “Andrea Levy,” *Black British Women Writers*, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.vub.ac.be/TALK/BBWW/index.php?id=46>.

¹⁵⁹ Andrea Levy, “Other Media.”

¹⁶⁰ British Council, “Zadie Smith,” *British Council*, accessed February 20, 2015, <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/zadie-smith>.

factory of everybody.”¹⁶¹ Her mother of Jamaican descent, Yvonne McLean, arrived in Britain aged fifteen in 1969. Working shortly as a fashion model and later as a secretary, she entered Brunel University, studying to become a psychoanalyst. At the age of 21 she married twenty years her elder Englishman Harvey Smith, a commercial photographer and paper salesman.¹⁶²

Brought up in a working class part of North-West London, where a large number of immigrants settled in the post-war era, in a mixed-race family, she encountered various racially motivated problems. Her response to it was to behave as well as the white children would behave and even better, especially not to turn other people’s attention to herself. Most importantly, her mother’s origin along with the place she was brought up are articulated as having a slight impact on her. In terms of national identity, she regards herself as British asserting that she is not an immigrant but “...people who had that experience [migration], who felt separated or cut in two, who had moved from country to another, who had that sense of leading two lives”¹⁶³ influenced her greatly in her literary career. Furthermore, in regard to her origin, she commented that she has never wanted to be white, rather she has aspired to become middle-class accompanied by living in big houses with pianos and cello lessons.¹⁶⁴ She concludes by being “aware of not being middle-class; much more aware than of being black as unusual thing.”¹⁶⁵

5.2.1 Literary Career

As a child, Zadie wrote poetry. However, later in life she longed to pursue a career in journalism and studied English literature at Cambridge. About her experience in Cambridge, she touched upon being the only black girl there and so she was perceived as an exotic creature. While studying, she published several short stories in the May Anthologies with considerable success resulting in her hiring an agent for the upcoming novel *White Teeth*.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Philip Tew, *New British Fiction: Zadie Smith* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 26.

¹⁶² Tew, *New British Fiction*, 26-27.

¹⁶³ Tew, *New British Fiction*, 28.

¹⁶⁴ Tew, *New British Fiction*, 27-29.

¹⁶⁵ Tew, *New British Fiction*, 28.

¹⁶⁶ Aida Edemariam, “Learning Curve,” *Guardian*, September 3, 2005.

She drew inspiration for her writing from the works of other writers rather than in experience of her family. Smith has considered her ethnic inheritance as an inseparable part of her life. However, she did not let her family's stories of racial tensions govern the characters of her novels. Rather, her writing strives to be a portrayal of racial optimism within the multicultural Britain, which might seem imaginative but at the same time, as Smith points out, it concerns the confident vision of the future.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, the main purpose of her literary outputs is the transposing of multicultural friendships as something her ancestors were not able to achieve.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Stephanie Merritt, "She's Young, Black, British – and the First Publishing Sensation of the Millennium," *Guardian*, January 16, 2000.

¹⁶⁸ Merritt, "She's Young, Black, British – and the First Publishing Sensation of the Millennium."

6 SMALL ISLAND

Andrea Levy's fourth novel *Small Island* (2004) delineates the *Windrush* generation and Caribbean migrants entering Great Britain in search of better lives. According to Stein, much of black British literature entails historical changes as well as the quest for one's identity and so structurally resembles the bildungsroman. Levy's novel is not an exception.¹⁶⁹ It is the overlapping first-person narration of four characters, newly-arrived Jamaicans Gilbert and Hortense and white British couple Queenie and Bernard. The lives of these two couples are confronted in a shabby house in post-war London. *Small Island* is a novel admired specifically due to its writer "treatment of some of the most profound and enduring legacies of empire."¹⁷⁰ Crucially, Levy contemplates the turning points in the lives of those who migrated to Britain and concerns herself particularly with the racial struggles of the newcomers and their quest for a sense of belonging to the host country.

Starting with the prologue, the novel is built around nine sections namely "1948" and "Before" in alternate order. The chapters within section "1948" are concerned predominantly with the era after the *Empire Windrush* docking. The past lives of the four protagonists are brought to life in the 'Before' section of the novel. Interweaving chapters titled "Hortense," "Gilbert," "Queenie" and "Bernard," depending on the standpoint from which that particular chapter is told, unify the fragmented story.

Moreover, as many reviewers argued, employing the technique of four narrative viewpoints offers the opportunity to provide historically accurate narration based on the thoughts of its true characters. Such narrative shifts therefore place the characters on an equal level, parrying privileging anyone. Phillips further evaluates her writing as imaginary, but at the same time persuades the reader of her being directly involved in the plot.¹⁷¹

The story is largely set in London. Yet, in retrospect, Levy recurs to Jamaica and India. In Duboin's opinion, Levy contrives to bring together the struggles of immigration following World War Two, the decline of the Empire and the colonisation in reverse

¹⁶⁹ Mark Stein, *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 27.

¹⁷⁰ David James, "The Immediacy of *Small Island*," in *Andrea Levy: Contemporary Critical Perspective*, ed. Jeannette Baxter and David James et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 53.

¹⁷¹ Mike Phillips, "Root Manoeuvre," *Guardian*, February 14, 2004.

leading to a cultural transformation changing Jamaica and Britain irretrievably into small islands.¹⁷²

6.1 Jamaica and Britain as ‘Small Islands’

The reference of the title ‘small island’ is linked to the presence of two islands in the plot of the story. Levy involves the locations of Jamaica and Great Britain as playing an important part in the development of the narration and its characters. From close reading of the novel, it is evident that these locations stand for much more than just geographic entities.

The perception of these islands is contoured by its inhabitants sojourn abroad during the war. Gilbert, volunteering in the RAF, repatriates home and becomes aware that Jamaica is “no universe: it ran only few miles before it fell into the sea,”¹⁷³ moreover, he adds that “Jamaicans are all small islanders...”¹⁷⁴ Likewise, Bernard coming home from India observes that “England had shrunk. It was smaller than the place I’d left,”¹⁷⁵ because of its smallness in order to catch a breath he has to stare at the sea. The quotes above manifest the shift in perception of homelands and propound applicability of the phrase ‘small island’ to the re-evaluated ancestral countries built by the experience of moving and change. It follows that the already mentioned islands are not as small, owing to their size, on the contrary, they are being regarded as such by their small-minded residents.

Bernard and Gilbert seem to regard their homes as suffocating places they do not wish to be in; the small island of Jamaica, despite being the largest island in Caribbean, is referred to by Gilbert and many as a land of no opportunities, whilst Britain, seen as the mother country to diasporic immigrants and former centre of the whole Empire, is to Bernard a land full of immigrants whom he is not accepting, distinguishing himself by saying that he is “civilized man”¹⁷⁶ among uncivilized creatures.

¹⁷² Corinne Duboin, “Contested Identities: Migrant Stories and Liminal Selves in Andrea Levy’s *Small Island*,” *Obsidian* 12, no. 2 (2011): 2.

¹⁷³ Andrea Levy, *Small Island* (London: Headline Publishing Group, 2004), 196.

¹⁷⁴ Levy, *Small Island*, 196.

¹⁷⁵ Levy, *Small Island*, 424.

¹⁷⁶ Levy, *Small Island*, 401.

6.2 *Windrush Generation and the Myth Deconstruction in Small Island*

Levy depicts the outset of Caribbean diaspora to the mother country positioning two Jamaicans in the white British society. Even though the arrival of immigrants can be viewed as a symbolic repatriation of children to her mother's womb, as evidenced below, Levy contrasts the immigrants' expectations before entering Britain and the harsh reality of everyday life emerging with their arrival.

Standing on one side are the children of British Empire, Gilbert and Hortense and behind them all citizens of former colonies being brought up in the myth of Britain as the mother country. At a young age in every school in Jamaica inhabitants are taught about British geography, history, "...where in Britain are ships built, where is cotton woven, steel forged, cars made, jam boiled, cups shaped, lace knotted, glass blown, tin mined, whisky distilled."¹⁷⁷

As a result of colonial propaganda, they refuse to believe in anything other than the mother country embracing them and nurturing them as her children. This clearly illustrates Gilbert's quote regarding Britain just as "mother...a beautiful woman – refined, mannerly and cultured...Mother thinks of you as her children; like the Lord above she takes care of you from afar...admired over and over."¹⁷⁸ Gilbert further notes when "you hear mother calling – she is troubled, she need your help...leave home, leave familiar. Shiver, tire, hunger – for no sacrifice is too much to see you at Mother's needy side."¹⁷⁹ He as well as other colonial men is willing to lay down his life and sacrifice everything for the sake of the 'mother.'

Similarly, Hortense, Gilbert's wife, who is studying to become a teacher, is working hard at the Jamaican school being ascertained of her knowledge paying off in the future as she dreams of settling in London. Arriving in England 6 months after Gilbert, she expects him to find a nice place for them to stay in. In England, she wants to find a job as a teacher and is carrying around two letters of recommendation feeling proud of her achievements back at home and emphasizing to her husband that she will be soon

¹⁷⁷ Levy, *Small Island*, 141.

¹⁷⁸ Levy, *Small Island*, 139.

¹⁷⁹ Levy, *Small Island*, 139.

employed as a teacher in a good school.¹⁸⁰ From this, the evidence of colonial people being unaware of the reality in Britain is obvious.

The myth of being important to the mother country is instilled in them also by their parents. Despite never leaving the small island of Jamaica, they were sure of the mother country welcoming their children warmly after a long journey. Furthermore, they have dreamt of their children having better future in London, the metropolis of the Empire. Therefore when their sons are going to war, they uniformly consider it to be a mission, which makes them proud of their children. As Miss Ma points out Britain needs such men “like my [her] son. Men of courage and good breeding”¹⁸¹ and emphasizes so the importance of serving the empire while the refusal would lead to the overall disappointment of parents but also of the Empire as her children would not be willing to help their ‘mother.’ The situation being the opposite, that the Mother country would disappoint them, was unexpected though.

The truth awaiting Gilbert and Hortense in Britain meant a bitter awakening. In regard to their occupation, he as an ex-RAF volunteer and she as a teacher, they were not allowed to do what they had pursued.

Gilbert dreamt of building his career in law applying for the RAF volunteers’ rehabilitation courses. However, being rejected, he found employment in the lowest paid job as being the only one he was able to arrange and he works as an account clerk in the postal service. Gilbert veraciously refuses the picture of the mother country as a beautiful woman anymore and the awakening from his dreams is marked by comparing the mother country to an old tramp, offering no solace after a long journey moreover looking down inquiring “who the bloody hell are you?”¹⁸²

The failed meeting of Hortense and Gilbert in the docks might be seen as a foreshadowing event of her continuous disillusionment after arrival. Firstly, the taxi driver considers her English unintelligible even though she was the best in her class at English pronunciation at home, even having been awarded for her recitation of Keats’s poem “Ode to the Nightingale.” In England, her speaking abilities are regarded incomprehensible and

¹⁸⁰ Levy, *Small Island*, 32.

¹⁸¹ Levy, *Small Island*, 59.

¹⁸² Levy, *Small Island*, 139.

the whole exacting schooling meaningless. The only reason is that West Indians achieved a better education than the English working class they come across.

Secondly, her white gloves that she is wearing as a proper white British lady does, are encountered with the shabby house and even shabbier room Gilbert found for them to live in. As she enters the room, she cannot hide her disappointment, “just this? This is where you are living? Just this?...You bring me all this way just for this?...Is this the way the English live?”¹⁸³ Obviously, Hortense expected more than just one room employed as bedroom, kitchen and living room. What’s more, the room she is supposed to live in is not befitting for the teacher she is. Knowing from the books she has read, the British live in beautiful, big and clean palaces, with this being far from the reality she imagined and dreamt of in Jamaica.

Thirdly, her world crumbles when she is not accepted as a teacher. Hearing a white woman at the Education Authority office “I’m afraid you can’t teach here,”¹⁸⁴ not even opening the letters of recommendation perplexes Hortense, but the woman further continues that Hortense is not qualified to teach in England. Being haughty and always proud of her honey-coloured complexion, family and education, giving her a chance of living “a golden life”¹⁸⁵ in England, Hortense faces the harsh reality of being black and an immigrant in hostile Britain. Eventually, she abandons her rather utopic notion of Britain while Gilbert, already in the know of the matters in England, points out that Hortense is now “reeling wounded after a sharp slap from the Mother Country’s hand.”¹⁸⁶ What’s more, not only did they have to face their inner disappointments, they also were confronted with the different treatment of white inhabitants.

Jamaicans were faced with humiliation from its white inhabitants on the basis of their skin colour resulting in the lack of job opportunities. Without his RAF uniform, he is just ‘darkie’ in a white country. Being subjected to humiliation at work as patent from his colleagues’ behaviour, he transfers it also to his personal life when screaming at Hortense while she is mopping the floor on her knees. He confides to be too early to see his wife being forced to do something beneath her. While Gilbert seems to deal with the

¹⁸³ Levy, *Small Island*, 21-22.

¹⁸⁴ Levy, *Small Island*, 453.

¹⁸⁵ Levy, *Small Island*, 38.

¹⁸⁶ Levy, *Small Island*, 458.

disillusionment through laughter as being his “war effort,”¹⁸⁷ disillusioned Hortense, who is supposed to teach others, is constantly ambushed by novelties.

6.3 Caribbean Identity in *Small Island*

Windrush docking, in Levy’s opinion initiates British multiculturalism being inclusive of an emerging sense of black Britishness.¹⁸⁸ Within her novel, two Caribbean immigrants are striving to shed their past and penetrate into the new vicinity.

As mentioned in *The Myth of the Mother Country*, West Indians were raised attached to a British way of life and values. Throughout the novel, extensive parts are devoted to the self-perception of Caribbean people as British as given predominantly by their colonial schooling. When remembering the experience of colonial education, Gilbert recollects wearing a proper clean uniform, practicing the pronunciation of p and q, reciting the canals of London, knowing the practices of the parliament, while his war comrade, white English soldier, was not even conscious of the existence of Jamaica.¹⁸⁹ Further, the process of acculturation in connection to the colonial education is a recurring theme in the novel interwoven with the experience of the detachment across the Atlantic. Gilbert began to fully question his identity on the basis of his newly approached culture in the British environment and his encounter with Jamaica as an island of economic failure and no future.

Caribbean diaspora, as influenced by enthusiasm for the British Empire, has denoted its common will for uprooting from the small island in the Caribbean moving to the mother country. By many, Jamaica is perceived as an insular paradise. Its inhabitants, however, regard it with less enthusiasm. As Gilbert points out, “the palm trees that tourists thought rested so beautiful on every share were my prison bars.”¹⁹⁰ Jamaicans were not only willing to leave their homeland, but also never to go back as Gilbert further remarks, man should never look at the roots of a ripped tree¹⁹¹ suggesting the total renouncement of his past once he is settled in Britain. The account of Gilbert’s arrival from war encapsulates

¹⁸⁷ Levy, *Small Island*, 273.

¹⁸⁸ Claudia Marquis, “Crossing Over: Postmemory and the Postcolonial Imaginary in Andrea Levy’s *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*,” in “Special Issue on Andrea Levy,” special issue, *EnterText* 9 (2012): 40.

¹⁸⁹ Levy, *Small Island*, 141-142.

¹⁹⁰ Levy, *Small Island*, 334.

¹⁹¹ Levy, *Small Island*, 93.

his sense of belonging to Britain as his mother country leaving Jamaica as being only the country of his origin. His yearning to become a citizen of a foreign nation is fuelled by the failures of Jamaica to meet his expectations on so many levels. His later wife Hortense developed within herself the craving for living in London when considering her manners being distinctively British.

In Jamaica, due to the inheritance from colonial times, the class system was still taken seriously. Skin colour played an important role when discussing one's class identity. The legacy of this they carried with them also to the mother country as they did not want to be associated with people of a darker skin. However, in England people were either black or white and the differences regarding the tone of one's skin vanished.¹⁹² As far as Hortense and her national identity are concerned, her honey-coloured skin inherited from her father is ensuring her belonging to a higher class of Jamaican society.¹⁹³ Whilst contemptuously considering her fellow citizens of a dark coloured complexion "the bitter chocolate hue,"¹⁹⁴ she places herself above them on the same level as white people, stepping so into her own recognition as aspiring to be characterized as British throughout the whole novel. As Ellis explains, "Levy's novel inscribes a new sense of Britishness, born in the colonial space of Jamaica and articulated anew in the mid-twentieth century metropolitan space of London."¹⁹⁵

Jamaica, being represented by Levy as a non-developing area, contrasts those inhabitants attached to British landscape with those considering themselves islanders from birth to death. For instance, Gilbert's cousin Elwood is a prototype of one rejecting British influence and not willing to participate in "a white man's war."¹⁹⁶ He is trying to persuade Gilbert that independent Jamaica will be full of opportunities with the black man in charge. Therefore, he cannot comprehend why Gilbert is willing to fight again to leave this land when there is certain hope present. Moreover, he is not able to gather why anyone would be

¹⁹² Levy, "This is My England."

¹⁹³ Levy, *Small Island*, 38.

¹⁹⁴ Levy, *Small Island*, 38.

¹⁹⁵ Alicia E. Ellis, "Identity as Cultural Production in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*," in "Special Issue on Andrea Levy," special issue, *EnterText* 9 (2012): 80.

¹⁹⁶ Levy, *Small Island*, 129.

willing to lose his life for white people.¹⁹⁷ Elwood is the opposite character to Gilbert and their different views are mostly discernible when the question of identity is dealt with.

6.4 Briton's Identity in *Small Island*

This novel is bestowed on important events in British history, namely the arrival of *Empire Windrush* and the Second World War. As Rogers comments “being English comes with a lot of imperial baggage”¹⁹⁸ one of them being the self-conception fuelled by the sense of superiority of the British nation. However, the influx of immigrants and their settlement within the confines of Anglo Saxon Britain foreshadowed its questioning of national identity.

Negotiating the British nationhood of the postcolonial era filled with immigrants of former colonies was difficult for such an Imperial power and its consciousness. National identity of Britons has been shattered and the disintegration of the Empire challenged once-persistent views of all Britons about their superior status in the world.

The preface of the novel is set in the African pavilion, which is viewed as a ‘third space’ between Africa and Britain as they are being seen as “partial imitation”¹⁹⁹ in Duboin’s terms. Britain and Africa are not portrayed truthfully rather the main concern is the clash of their cultures. Meanwhile, Levy’s portrait of exhibition confined in the metropolis of the Empire is assessed as the reminder of the past. Queenie’s father uttering towards her while at the exhibition that she has the whole world at her feet.²⁰⁰ It is the recurrent motif of white inhabitants constructing their British identity on the basis of their colonial superiority. The persistence of British national identity founded on the basis of its Empire is most visible in the name “Queenie.” Her actual name is Victoria, as making reference to Queen Victoria, the monarch associated with all the triumphs of the former Empire. Her parents are responsible for her nickname, which serves as evidence of their inclination to the imperial past. Nevertheless, Levy positioned her novel at the time of the Empire disintegrating, compelling its citizens to rethink their identity.

¹⁹⁷ Levy, *Small Island*, 209.

¹⁹⁸ David Rogers, “Postscript: Englishness in Transition: Swift, Faulkner, and an Outsider’s Staunch Belief,” in *The Revisionsof Englishness*, ed. David Rogers and John McLeod (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 171.

¹⁹⁹ Duboin, “Contested Identities,” 6.

²⁰⁰ Levy, *Small Island*, 7.

As for the two British subjects, being the focus of Levy's narration, the concept of national identity of those experiencing the alteration of their homelands can be analyzed. Bernard Bligh occupies the position of a quintessential advocate of the colonial British national identity as instilled in him through colonial superiority. Queenie defends him by saying that he was "brought up to see the world in one way – to believe himself, as a white Englishman, to be superior to almost everyone else,"²⁰¹ she actually defends the whole nation as the idea of superiority has been imprinted in them through centuries of colonial rule.

The child of Queenie and Michael, the Jamaican soldier, is representative of an early racial mixing of white British and Caribbean diaspora. Ellis further announces it to be "the birth of British multicultural identities in the postcolonial world."²⁰² However, this mixing is neither expected nor accepted by the mainstream society of the post war era. Queenie, therefore, refuses to look after her son. This situation resembles the one Gilbert and Hortense entered when they were rejected by their 'mother,' Britain. Even though this event foreshadows the transformation of Britain into multicultural nation, the Britons are yet not prompted to embrace it.

6.5 Racism in *Small Island*

As Lima points out, diasporic immigrants are settling in a country to which they internally feel they belong despite not always feeling a sense of belonging.²⁰³ The perception of being excluded from the white society is eclipsed in their confrontation with racism.

The reader is introduced to the themes of racism from the very beginning of the novel. As Queenie enters the African pavilion of the British Empire Exhibition, she is fascinated by the scenery and, most importantly, also by its people:

"We were in the jungle. Huts made out of mud with pointy stick roofs all around us. And in a hut sitting on a dirt floor was a woman with skin as black as the ink

²⁰¹ Levy, *Small Island*, 490.

²⁰² Alicia E. Ellis, "Identity as Cultural Production in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*," 78.

²⁰³ Jo Pready, "The Familiar Made Strange: The Relationship between the Home and Identity in Andrea Levy's Fiction," in "Special Issue on Andrea Levy," special issue, *EnterText* 9 (2012): 16.

that filled the inkwell in my school desk.... But then suddenly there was a man. An African man. A black man who looked to be carved from melting chocolate ... A monkey man sweating a smell of mothballs. Blacker than when you smudge your face with sooty cork. His lips were brown, not pink like they should be, and they bulged with air like bicycle tires. His hair was woolly as a black shorn sheep. His nose, squashed flat, had two nostrils big as train tunnels. And he was looking down at me ... He could have swallowed me up, this big nigger man.”²⁰⁴

It is likely that this scene is the outset of the following events and, to a certain extent, does not distinguish the imperial past with its inherited racial stereotypes and a lack of knowledge from the postcolonial period, which is still marked by the black representation of otherness by some.

The racism underlying the plot of this book is laced with the stereotypes of white British people towards coloured inhabitants of the Empire. The coloured are regarded as being uncivilized, therefore when Queenie is caught in conversation with one she is astonished of him speaking good English, and while shaking his hand she finds it “warm and slightly sweaty like anyone else’s.”²⁰⁵ Visiting the exhibition as a child she is credited with a lack of knowledge of those ‘exhibited’ people from which her racist thoughts stem. Later in life, she is open-minded in regard to coloured immigrants because she had a good first experience.

Later in life, she is forced to offer her house to black immigrants who are having difficulties in general with finding a place to stay due to the racial conviction of whites. Queenie is not a racist, “don’t worry, I don’t mind being seen with you”²⁰⁶ she says to Hortense when walking on the street side by side. Rather she is practical and in need to make ends meet while having no messages of her husband serving in India. Similarly, a middle-aged white British woman provides Gilbert with a cough sweet at the end of a working day. He regards it as salvation, “not for the sugar but for the act of kindness.”²⁰⁷ In the character of Queenie and this woman, Levy attempts to demonstrate the white

²⁰⁴ Levy, *Small Island*, 5-6.

²⁰⁵ Levy, *Small Island*, 6.

²⁰⁶ Levy, *Small Island*, 330.

²⁰⁷ Levy, *Small Island*, 328.

character, as not all of them are racists but some of them are compassionate and supportive towards the occurrence of the ‘other’ race in Britain.

While Queenie’s facet of racism is rather mild, the following instances involve the threatening nature of people’s hatred towards ethnic groups, in this account towards Blacks, and at the same time ignoring the British colonial legacy. As exemplified by Queenie’s neighbour Mr Todd, who is outraged by the behaviour of Queenie’s tenants. They did not step off the pavement and so his English sister had to do that herself as there was not enough space. Additionally, he remarks that “it would help relations around here if all our coloured brethren understood how to behave.”²⁰⁸ Calling them brethren but keeping in mind their inferior status, and believing black immigrants should accept overall society as being dominant and in accordance with the policy of assimilation. Furthermore, in continuous fear of Queenie, which is generated from the racial stereotypes, and in the absence of her husband, Mr. Todd considers it his responsibility to watch over Queenie, as she is a delicate white woman surrounded by dangerous black creatures.

Queenie’s husband Bernard can be, without hesitation, assigned as another racist character of this book. While returning from the war, he is astounded by the black presence on the British streets, “What a sight! On our street.”²⁰⁹ Moreover, he, designating Blacks as “volatile creatures,”²¹⁰ is shocked when he encounters his house being resided by them. Being an unashamed racist, he claims “everyone had a place. England for the English and the West Indies for these coloured people...I’ve nothing against them in their place. But their place isn’t here”²¹¹ meaning that he does not care for Blacks while they are in the West Indies, it is their presence in England which causes him anxiety. What’s more, Bernard learnt that his father was shot dead during the race riot consolidating his racist thoughts regarding the black minority.²¹² Bernard’s viewpoint is even more exasperated when the black people call her wife by her first name as if she were one of them.²¹³ From all that has been stated above, it is patently obvious that Bernard is not prepared for the population outcomes of war as he is resistant to coexistence with the black minority in his

²⁰⁸ Levy, *Small Island*, 118.

²⁰⁹ Levy, *Small Island*, 428.

²¹⁰ Levy, *Small Island*, 467.

²¹¹ Levy, *Small Island*, 439.

²¹² Levy, *Small Island*, 429.

²¹³ Levy, *Small Island*, 471.

house. Moreover, he sees West Indians defined solely in regard to their race. Thus, his reaction to Queenie's pregnancy and the arrival of a black child is more than surprising.

Bernard constantly insults black people, but when it comes to a baby of "dark skin fresh as a polished shoe. Flat nose...tiny black fingers," he sidelined the phenotypes and racial stereotypes and declares that he is "a dear little thing" persuading Queenie to keep him. Despite thinking that this might be a turning point on the way to Bernard's reconciliation and acceptance of post-war Britain, his conviction is no more than forestalling the black people bringing up this child, as he mentions "that poor little half-caste child would be better off begging in a gutter!"²¹⁴ This notion is vocally supported by the reaction to Gilbert's moving speech almost at the end of the book. Gilbert condemns the white race as being empowered to rule all the others and emphasize the need of all to be equals. Bernard's last words in the novel are the cruel response: "I'm sorry...but I just can't understand a single word that you're saying"²¹⁵ which underlines him still living in the past.

Furthermore, Queenie defends Bernard's behaviour as he was brought up to believe in his white superiority. Queenie on the other hand is seen as non-racist but she decides to give the child to Gilbert and Hortense to raise as she does not even know "how to comb his hair."²¹⁶ By that, she seems to realize the consequences of her actions and now contemplates the stares of the neighbours when they would encounter the black baby with white parents on the street. She concludes that Britain is yet not prepared for this.²¹⁷

Turning now to the encounters of Black characters in the book, they are confronted with racism on a daily basis while shopping, on the street, in dealing with other people, when looking for work, or for instance Gilbert, when looking for a place to stay, he express his desperation as to "how many gates I swing open? How many houses I knock on? Let me count the doors that opened and shut quick without even me breath managing to get inside. Man, these English landlords and landladies could come up with excuses."²¹⁸ According to Baldwin, Levy's fundamental goal is to show that black people are eager to be recognized

²¹⁴ Levy, *Small Island*, 525.

²¹⁵ Levy, *Small Island*, 526.

²¹⁶ Levy, *Small Island*, 520.

²¹⁷ Levy, *Small Island*, 521.

²¹⁸ Levy, *Small Island*, 215.

as human beings and the white people should cease to regard them as exotic rarity.²¹⁹ Yet, as Gilbert's quote illustrates, he as well as Hortense seems to be unaware of the reasons for the different treatment from white citizens. This is the aftermath of their colonial education as no one ever mentioned to them that in England they will be perceived as invaders particularly due to their colour complexion.

They have to register the violence, derision and insults daily without properly knowing why their race is the one being treated as a subsidiary. As Hortense walks on the street with Queenie, wearing the hat and her clean coat, she is assured that Queenie is not scared of being seen with her, but it's "this young Englishwoman, and not I [Hortense] who was dressed in a scruffy housecoat..."²²⁰ this quote affords that it is Hortense who is ashamed of being seen with such an English lady, pointing at the bitter ignorance that it is the colour of her skin causing other people to attract their attention.

The whole novel is larded with various abusive names given to black characters. Words such as darkie, wog, coon, blighter, nigger, jigaboo, sambo and jungle boy are used in order to humiliate and demean the 'other' race. Apparently, the abusive words originated in the biological nature of race as based on the phenotypes. Furthermore, white people refer to the blacks as people 'of your kind' or 'people like you' to illustratively point out the difference between the two races and demonstrate the superiority of one over another.

²¹⁹ Ann Murphy, "Stranger in the Empire: Language and Identity in the 'Mother Country,'" in "Special Issue on Andrea Levy," special issue, *EnterText* 9 (2012): 129.

²²⁰ Levy, *Small Island*, 330.

7 WHITE TEETH

Zadie Smith's debut novel *White Teeth* (2000) offers an insight into the British society and detects the struggles of first immigrants, their multi-ethnic families and their second generation children. It is the omniscient narration of London-based characters centring on two lifelong friends; Bangladeshi Samad Iqbal and Englishman Archibald 'Archie' Jones, who met while serving in the war, and their wives interlink later, also with their children. The aims of the novel are primarily the disputes between the first generation immigrants and their British-born children, who, however, are facing the same difficulties; i.e. the culture shock, loss of identity or racism.

The novel consists of four parts, having been titled after one of the characters and two years that are important in his/her life; "Archie 1974, 1945," "Samad 1984, 1857," "Irie 1990, 1907" and "Magid, Millat and Marcus 1992, 1999." Similarities can be found also in their structure as they are moving from the present to the past, with the exception of the last section proceeding from the present to the future. Additionally, each part contains a chapter with a name concerning teeth; "Canines: The Ripping Teeth," "Molars" or "Teething Trouble." Undoubtedly, Smith, employing the modernist features of writing, is proposing highly controlled narrative, building parallels and correspondences, weaving its individual parts together, forcing the reader to look at the structure to find the meaning.²²¹ Paproth explored Smith's writing and explained that "in order to understand fully the various parallels and connections between these sometimes disparate characters, we must connect the dots, we must become textual detectives, and we must understand the ways that their lives, perspectives, and outlooks mesh together when viewed in the way that Smith presents them to us."²²²

According to many, central to Smith's novel is humour. As Claire Squires says, "Smith's representation of the multiple identities inhabiting her native Willesden Green sets the scene for *White Teeth*'s stories of origins, roots and cultures. Smith also finds a tone in which she will deal with the complex issues of her fiction: one that is comic, sympathetic, and-essentially-optimistic."²²³ Nick Bentley points out that this novel is not

²²¹ Matthew Paproth, "The Flipping Coin: The Modernist and Postmodernist Zadie Smith," in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. Tracey L. Walters (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 21.

²²² Paproth, "The Flipping Coin," 21.

²²³ Tew, *New British Fiction*, 46.

the very example of Horatian comedy of hypocrisy and expediencies of the main characters. Rather, Smith stresses the characters' perversities, humour and imperfections and proves herself to use irony as a defusing aspect for suffering or even death, and so avoids political correctness. Archie's attempted suicide might be a site for laughter as he flips the coin to decide whether to commit suicide or not, further supplementing "in fact it was a New Year's resolution."²²⁴ Furthermore, the suicide is interrupted by the halal butcher's owner, behind which Archie parked his car in an attempt to die when inhaling exhaust fumes. The owner declares "we are not licensed for suicides around here...If you're going to die around here, my friend, I'm afraid you've got to be thoroughly bled first."²²⁵ As confirmed by Reichl and Stein, "the use of laughter and strategies of unsettling humour contribute to the empowerment of the (post)colonized."²²⁶

Apart from humour, location is also a focal point of Smith's novel. As apparent in Claire Squires quote, the plot of the story takes place in Willesden Green, London, where Zadie Smith was brought up. However, Smith, similarly to Levy, travels retrospectively through various destinations as to be connected to her multi-ethnic characters. In the book, the Europe at the time of the Second World War, Jamaica or Bangladesh, are also portrayed.

7.1 Rootedness in *White Teeth*

The metaphor of the title is apparent in individual sections as it contains chapter titles connected with the subject of teeth. The recurrent themes are root canals in the title of three chapters; "The root canals of Alfred Archibald Jones and Samad Miah Iqbal," "The root canals of Mangal Pande" and "The root canals of Hortense Bowden." These chapters comprise of the immigrant experience as Samad is of Bengali ancestry, Hortense of Jamaican descent; also involving Archibald, who is British.

In the discourse of this novel, the multiculturalism is contributive to the author's probable employment of white teeth as being the unifying representative of sameness. All people within the most multiracial society are brought together on the grounds of the

²²⁴ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 3.

²²⁵ Smith, *White Teeth*, 7.

²²⁶ Susanne Reichl, and Mark Stein, introduction to *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Postcolonial* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005), 11.

possession of white teeth. It is the skin colour which distinguishes and separates them, as encoded within the concept of racism.

Furthermore, according to Michele Braun, Smith uses the extended metaphor of teeth as “a signifier of rootedness in first and second generation immigrants and their families.”²²⁷ The author uses the idea of roots when examining her character’s past. In “The root canals of Alfred Archibald Jones and Samad Miah Iqbal,” she goes back to war when the ‘accidental’ friendship of Archie and Samad was formed. She considered it “the kind of friendship an Englishman makes on holiday...only on holiday. A friendship that crosses class and color, a friendship that takes as its basis physical proximity and survives because the Englishman assumes the physical proximity will not continue.”²²⁸ Significantly, Smith acknowledges the importance of roots further in connection to rootedness within postcolonial times as the first immigrant generation is not willing to abandon their ancestral past.

7.2 Diaspora in *White Teeth*

The book is concerned with immigrants from different cultural backgrounds. As many describe, *White Teeth* is a novel proposing “definitive representation of twentieth-century British multiculturalism.”²²⁹ As stated in the novel, Smith evaluates the 20th century as the century of “strangers, brown, yellow and white...the century of great immigrant experiment.”²³⁰ The multicultural society, based on the co-existence of minorities, is presented in the adoption of exotic names by British mothers and, contrarily, Pakistani parents give their children Anglophone names. Although, their choice is explained as accompanied by “less trouble,”²³¹ prudently manifesting the precaution taken by immigrants to assimilate in Britain. However, Smith does not only contrast the immigrant and white British background but also the first generation of immigrants with their children as adopting the British culture they were born into.

²²⁷ MFA Creative Writing Portfolio, “British Colonial Diaspora in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*,” *MFA Creative Writing Portfolio*, accessed February 27, 2015, <https://alisaridout.wordpress.com/2013/10/24/british-colonial-diaspora-in-zadie-smiths-white-teeth/>.

²²⁸ Smith, *White Teeth*, 96.

²²⁹ Raphael Dalleo, “Colonization in Reverse: *White Teeth* as Caribbean Novel,” in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. Tracey L. Walters (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 91.

²³⁰ Smith, *White Teeth*, 326.

²³¹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 327.

Set in the period of 1970s to 1990s London, the novel evolves around two families; the Bangladeshi Iqbals with their twins Magid and Millat and the Joneses, Archie Jones, his wife of Jamaican descent Clara and their daughter Irie. Therefore, the above mentioned characters can be divided into two groups, those who were born elsewhere and came to Britain as the first immigrant generation and those born and bred within the British confines as the second immigrant generation. Diasporas of colonial cultures, namely of Jamaica and Bangladesh, are personified in the characters of Clara Bowden-Jones, her mother Hortense and Samad Iqbal with his wife Alsana, who are considered the first immigrant generation, and whose families bond through their ethnic richness.

Tardily, the third family reappearing in this novel are the Chalfens of Jewish and Irish origin. It is necessary to note here that even though the Chalfens are representatives of the ‘original’ Jewish diaspora, they are, however, not considered diasporic immigrants in a right sense as they are already third generation residing in Britain. Therefore, the Joneses and the Iqbals will be brought to the fore herein, at least as far as, diaspora is concerned.

First to be analysed will be Caribbean diaspora; Clara and Hortense. Clara married Archie, an Englishman, at the age of 19, most likely to escape her genetic roots and much to the dislike of her mother Hortense. Hortense’s mother Ambrosia Bowden was impregnated by English Captain Charlie Durham, though Hortense is the product of racial blending she does not completely agree with owing to the past memories and relations regarding white superiority. While the British are afraid of penetration and infection,²³² immigrants are mostly fearful of dissolution and disappearance²³³ as the genotype would become hidden by phenotype.²³⁴ Thus, Hortense rendered saving Clara’s genes as not putting all her effort “into marrying black, into dragging her genes back from the brink.”²³⁵ When it comes to her daughter, she disapproves of her marriage and ceases to speak to her as the racial blending is continuing within her family tree and she is not comfortable with the genes decaying from her family.

Second to be described is Bengali diaspora; Samad and Alsana. Serving the Empire during the Second World War, which was forced upon Samad through “a colonial

²³² Smith, *White Teeth*, 327.

²³³ Smith, *White Teeth*, 327.

²³⁴ Smith, *White Teeth*, 327.

²³⁵ Smith, *White Teeth*, 327.

education and a sense of patriotic duty”²³⁶ and arriving in Britain in post-1945, he encountered various difficulties as most of the newcomers, and his were concerned with looking for a job. Throughout the novel, Samad emphasizes his achieved education from Bangladesh, complaining about only being a waiter in his cousin’s Ardashir Indian restaurant. As with many immigrants, also he is attached to his cultural roots, as is particularly visible in his arranged marriage to Alsana. Later in the book, he explains his disillusionment after 20 years living in England and feels that:

“you make a devil’s pact when you walk into this country. You hand over 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? Cold, wet, miserable; terrible food, dreadful newspapers – who would want to stay? In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Just tolerated.”²³⁷

The first generation of immigrants are trying their best to fit into British society, Nevertheless, their cultural inheritance and country’s reluctance are core discrepancies to achieving that. As argued in the *Diaspora* chapter herein, the relationship of the diasporic immigrants to their host country is in large measure built on the ability of the host country to acknowledge them. Samad is of the feeling that in this sense Britain failed as they are “never welcomed, only tolerated.”²³⁸

In general, people surrounding Samad are more open to the adoption of the British way of life. Contrary to his friends and even his family, Samad finds it difficult clarifying that “we are split people...half of me wishes to sit with my legs crossed, letting the things that are beyond my control wash over me. But the other half wants to fight the holy war.”²³⁹ His wife Alsana confirms, “my husband combats the Third World War every single bloody day in his head...”²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Z. Esra Mirze, “Fundamental Differences in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*,” in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. Tracey L. Walters (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 189.

²³⁷ Smith, *White Teeth*, 407.

²³⁸ Smith, *White Teeth*, 407.

²³⁹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 179.

²⁴⁰ Smith, *White Teeth*, 235.

Samad worships cultural unity and is obsessed with the preservation of Indian tradition within his family, “tradition was culture, and culture led to roots, and these were good.”²⁴¹ He is furthermore obsessed with debates about his family history, particularly about his great-grandfather Mangal Pande. As Paproth contemplates, Samad’s cultural and historical recurrent tendencies might suggest that “the weight of history might represent an attempted avoidance of a painful present.”²⁴² His family, however, are not submitting to Samad’s obsession with cultural traditions and Bengali legacy.

He confronts his wife and points out that she does not care of their Bengali heritage. She questioned him about what being a Bengali actually is and goes to an Encyclopedia to look it up, “oi, mister! Indo-Aryans...it looks like I am Western after all,”²⁴³ she further screams at her husband, “you go back and back and back and it’s still easier to find a correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It’s a Fairy-tale!”²⁴⁴ Samad and other first generation immigrants are going through post-migration trauma, and their inherited culture functions as the solace – a reminder of their ancestral homes while not being accepted in their new homes. Nevertheless, they are constantly influenced by novelties in regard to British culture and the inhabitants’ unwillingness to pursue and acknowledge their place in the country.

As far as the multicultural theory is concerned, the first phase of assimilation forces the characters to abandon their past. Developing this notion, Samad propounds that he as well as his children and family are being corrupted in British society owing to the government policy of assimilation. As an example, he states Alsana’s sister whose “children are nothing but trouble. They won’t go to mosque, they don’t pray, they speak strangely, they dress strangely...no respect for tradition. People call it assimilation when it’s nothing but corruption.” As a result, he is reluctant towards the new way of life and its culture as confirmed by the example of the Harvest Festival celebration. He asks why his children have to celebrate it when it is considered a pagan festival, squeezing the Muslims celebrations off the calendar.²⁴⁵ When celebrating this festival, Samad is persuaded of the corruption influencing his children and their moving away from Bengali traditions.

²⁴¹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 193.

²⁴² Tew, *New British Fiction*, 53.

²⁴³ Smith, *White Teeth*, 236.

²⁴⁴ Smith, *White Teeth*, 236.

²⁴⁵ Smith, *White Teeth*, 129.

However, not only his children are corrupted. Samad himself is having a short affair with Poppy Burt-Jones, which can be perceived as a culmination of his western corruption.

Smith portrays Clara, and also Alsana, as well as other women of this novel, as strong and independent. In comparison with her husband, Alsana is seemingly more comfortable with her life in England. She presents Bangladesh as being the land constantly under threat of natural or other disasters during which people die,²⁴⁶ leading the reader to a conclusion that she ridicules the melting within the British society, contrasting it with the serious danger awaiting them in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, though, she is afraid that Chalfens will take away her son, Millat, claiming them to be “birds with teeth! They are Englishifying him completely! They’re deliberately leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion!”²⁴⁷ Perturbation stems from the fact that Alsana, similarly to Hortense and also Clara, are agitated by the blending with whites as the new born mixed-raced baby would become “legacy of unrecognizable...and their Bengaliness thoroughly diluted.”²⁴⁸ Neena, her niece, however, concludes “he’s second generation - you always say it yourself - you need to let them go their own way.”²⁴⁹ Their sons, Magid and Millat do not share their parent’s viewpoint.

As already noted, the novel further elaborates the perception of England by the second generation of immigrants and the adjustment of the white population to their presence. Being of “disadvantaged or minority backgrounds,”²⁵⁰ Millat and Magid, sons of Alsana and Samad, and Irie, daughter of Clara and Archie, are challenged by the white population despite being born in England. Poppy, Samad’s lover, is a representative of the host country population, who seems to accept the differences and tries to teach her students that “we can learn about each other through each other’s culture, can’t we?”²⁵¹ As Procter comments, it is a result of the multicultural policy of 1970s with an embedded “key

²⁴⁶ Smith, *White Teeth*, 211.

²⁴⁷ Smith, *White Teeth*, 345.

²⁴⁸ Smith, *White Teeth*, 327.

²⁴⁹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 346.

²⁵⁰ Smith, *White Teeth*, 308.

²⁵¹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 156.

initiative in educational reform”²⁵² following the tensions between a diverse array of ethnic minorities. However, from Joyce Chalfen’s dialogue with Millat:

“you look very exotic. Where are you from if you don’t mind me asking?’ ‘Willesden’, said Irie and Millat simultaneously. ‘Yes, yes, of course, but where originally?’ ‘Oh’, said Millat, . . . ‘You are meaning where from am I originally.’ Joyce looked confused. ‘Yes, originally.’ ‘Whitechapel’, said Millat, . . . ‘Via the Royal London Hospital and the 207 bus,”²⁵³

it is obvious that some white inhabitants are not as open to the newly established pattern of British society. Moreover, she seems to deny the possibility of them already been born in England, stemming from the stereotypes of white superiority and repudiating completely the long history of diasporas bound with Britain.

The second immigrant generation function as representatives of cultural hybridity and acculturation when borrowing British stereotypes. They are stuck between two places, two states, two cultures as they are exposed to Bengali traditions at home but taught Britishness at school. The second generation within this novel inclines mostly to the British way of life. The refusal of their ancestry is best demonstrated in Magid’s name change. He, in front of his white friends, calls himself Mark Smith resulting in a furious reaction from his father “I give you a glorious name like Magid Mahfooz Murshed Mubtasim Iqbal . . . and you want to be called Mark Smith!”²⁵⁴ Mark Smith is just a piece of further established ‘malaise.’ In the lives of immigrants, the feelings of shame regarding their cultural background usually prevail. Additionally Magid is stressing his will to be a member of a different family and as apparent from his delineation,²⁵⁵ he sees himself rather as a child of white parents obeying enthusiastically the habits and customs of the mainstream culture. His brother Millat further contemplates that being of a different skin colour than the majority of society will always cause disagreements and further he and his cognates will never be recognized as they have “no face in this country, no voice in this country.”²⁵⁶

²⁵² Tew, *New British Fiction*, 56.

²⁵³ Smith, *White Teeth*, 319.

²⁵⁴ Smith, *White Teeth*, 151.

²⁵⁵ Smith, *White Teeth*, 151.

²⁵⁶ Smith, *White Teeth*, 234.

7.3 Diasporic Identity in *White Teeth*

Englishness is, in *White Teeth*, exemplified by the Chalfens as being a typical white, educated and middle-class English family. They are originally members of Jewish diaspora still inclining to bond with their akin as possessing the “good genes”²⁵⁷ mainly in regard to education. In spite of being of Jewish descent, they are already settled and successfully penetrated into the society recognized as rightful British or “more English than the English”²⁵⁸ as Irie declares. Their sense of white superiority is prudently detectable when Irie and Millat are invited to study at Chalfens’ house twice a week with their son Joshua. Mr Chalfen detects it being a guinea-pig project “bringing children of disadvantaged or minority backgrounds into contact with kids who might have something to offer them.”²⁵⁹

Irie is, on the other hand, striving to identify herself with English manners, as well as with the beauty ideals of English society. Thus she straightens her hair and tries to look like white people. She suppresses her ancestral culture due to the fact that she does not have a black model in her life, apart from her mother. Denying her cultural hybridity, albeit, she is of mixed Jamaican and British origin, she embraces Englishness, “the purity of it”²⁶⁰ as England is the country she grew up in. Her endeavouring the identification with being British is supported by the Chalfens. The narrator mentions Irie’s “fifteen-year-old’s passion for them [the Chalfens].”²⁶¹ Her passion is not confined only to the Chalfens, overwhelmingly Irie is obsessed with the English in general, striving to become one. Moreover, not knowing where she belongs, she needs to be constantly reassured of who she is, expecting the Chalfens to proclaim her the right English. Insinuating herself into England, Irie views it as “mutinous act,”²⁶² but similarly the former newcomers the Chalfens she also believes in becoming a true English person. In the closing of the novel, she embraces her cultural hybridity, though. Longing to abandon her family and fuse with another, she is described “a unique animal, a new breed.”²⁶³ She therefore resolves to not be English or Jamaican but to reside in the position in-between. Furthermore, by

²⁵⁷ Smith, *White Teeth*, 314.

²⁵⁸ Smith, *White Teeth*, 328.

²⁵⁹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 308.

²⁶⁰ Smith, *White Teeth*, 328.

²⁶¹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 328.

²⁶² Smith, *White Teeth*, 328.

²⁶³ Smith, *White Teeth*, 342.

acquainting herself with Jamaican culture, she acknowledges it as a part of her personality and no longer denies her ancestral roots.

The immigrants are struggling to define their places within the former colonial metropolis. They are split in half between longing to come home to their roots, and at the same time, moving to the future, accompanied by abandoning the past. As recorded by the stated quote below, Samad is caught somewhere in the midst while at the war:

“What am I going to do, after this war is over...Go back to Bengal? Or to Delhi? Who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?”²⁶⁴

He declares him being a different man influenced highly by fighting side by side with the British. From the quote, his struggling to redefine his identity is evident. Furthermore, Samad, when entering Britain, realizes his sense of loss regarding the identity and he proclaims his belief “that birthplaces are accidents, that everything is an accident...if you believe that, where do you go? What do you do? What does anything matter?”²⁶⁵ He strives to reconcile his double self as Bengali, or British, but is stuck between dealing with the situation by attaching himself to Bengali traditions while fighting against Britishness. Furthermore, Samad is trying to define himself based on forcing his sons to embrace Bengali traditions, the religion of Islam in particular.

It is noteworthy that religion plays an important role especially in the lives of two characters, one of them being Samad and the other Hortense and it is an important aspect when examining their diasporic identity. Samad is obsessed with roots as they are, in his viewpoint, implemented within religion. Furthermore, he wishes to return back to his roots, to the East, to live as he always intended²⁶⁶ in compliance with religion far away from the corruption of the West. He contradicts himself when in conversation with Archie, he utters that he is “no religious man”²⁶⁷ contributing to Mirze’s opinion that Samad’s “attachment to faith, however, is not motivated by a desire for righteousness; rather he latches on to

²⁶⁴ Smith, *White Teeth*, 112.

²⁶⁵ Smith, *White Teeth*, 407.

²⁶⁶ Smith, *White Teeth*, 145.

²⁶⁷ Smith, *White Teeth*, 101.

religion as to fight off his disenfranchisement as an immigrant.”²⁶⁸ Likewise, Hortense is obsessed with Jehovah’s Witnesses being an assurance of her belonging somewhere which her mixed origin cannot grant her. Both characters employ religion as steady element in their lives. Smith also contrasts religious characters with their secular children presenting the children and their refusal of ancestral religion as a symbolic turn away from their roots, their ancestral identity.

Samad’s struggle to find a place within the corrupted environment of the Western country is brought forward by him wiping the differences between generations as there is only one which is indivisible and eternal.²⁶⁹ Moreover, he conforms to the notion of being influenced by what other people think of him and his family as the representatives of Bengali nation within the United Kingdom.

Iqbals’ twins are likewise caught in the state of in-betweenness, as their parents robbed them of their belonging to Bengali culture by their immigration to England but at the same time primarily Samad prohibits and cannot come to terms with their belonging to an English national identity. Smith in the characters of these two brothers displays two ways of dealing with the loss of identity by the proclivity of Millat to Bengali traditions, and Magid’s adjustment to British culture. However, their routes reach a dramatic twist.

Millat, initially devoted to the culture of his ancestors, begins to question his identity following his encounter with the Chalfens family. He has found himself in the place of in-betweenness, “Millat was neither one thing nor the other, this or that, Muslim or Christian, Englishman or Bengali; he lived for the in between, he lived up to his middle name, Zulfikar, the clashing of two swords.”²⁷⁰ His life changes when he moves away from his western corruption, and as the only way to reach a sense of belonging and a solution to the constant suppression of his diaspora sees in entering KEVIN, the fundamental religious organisation.

Magid, on the other hand, sympathizes from an early age with the English identity by wanting to be called Mark Smith, celebrating the pagan Harvest festival and adopting the British way of speaking with proper pronunciation. Owing to that, Samad sends him to Bangladesh in order to be raised in concordance with Islam requirements. However, he

²⁶⁸ Z. Esra Mirze, “Fundamental Differences in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*,” 188.

²⁶⁹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 289.

²⁷⁰ Smith, *White Teeth*, 351.

returns to the surprise and horror of his father as a more proper Englishman aspiring to a career in law and therefore already assimilated within the British landscape.²⁷¹

The novel resolves when all characters are brought together to witness the FutureMouse experiment on New Year's Eve 1992. All diasporas present in this book along with religious groups of Jehovah's Witnesses and KEVIN, FATE, an organization protesting against animal cruelty, and the whole scientific community seem to recreate a British society, a space where all people regardless their disunited features, are able to flourish together and so proposes the optimistic view on multiculturalism. Jakubiak, however, claims that the optimism regarding multiculturalism is just "an illusion' of reality."²⁷² Despite that, Smith proclaims the room in the Perret Institute in London as "a new British room, a space for Britain, Britishness, space of Britain, British industrial space cultural space"²⁷³ functioning as an epitome of a diverse British society occupying the same place and heading forward in pursuit of a common goal; a future where all races can reside in the same nation absent of the necessity to define one's identity or emphasize heritage and colour complexion as exemplified by Irie's newborn being of uncertain origin.

7.4 Racism in *White Teeth*

Similarly to *Small Island's* characters, also *White Teeth* is also larded with racial traits, even though, it was not Zadie Smith's main aim. As she puts it aptly "I wasn't trying to write about race. . . . Race is obviously a part of the book, but I didn't sit down to write a book about race. So is a book that doesn't have exclusively white people in the main theme must be one about race? I don't understand that."²⁷⁴ However, as Rahman claimed, the anger present within the racism theory is omitted in *White Teeth* and that, in his opinion, divorces the book from reality of multiracial London with racial riots fuelled by wrath.²⁷⁵ The issue of racism is therefore not focal in *White Teeth*. Nevertheless the characters are victimized in terms of it.

²⁷¹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 407.

²⁷² Tracey L. Walters, introduction to *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, by Tracey L. Walters (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 6.

²⁷³ Smith, *White Teeth*, 518.

²⁷⁴ Chris Hastings, "I didn't steal Books from Library, said Mother of Zadie Smith," *Daily Mail*, April 2, 2011.

²⁷⁵ Tew, *New British Fiction*, 48.

The first encounter with racism within the novel involves the Iqbal family and follows Powell's "River of Blood" speech, leading to their moving from East London to the North, to Willesden, being considered a more 'liberal' environment. As mentioned in the chapter above, Samad is against the celebration of the Harvest festival, seeing it as the pagan holiday turning his children to abandon their ancestral religion of Islam. However, his concerns raise ironic remarks of all present at school and are followed by them making fun at his expense.²⁷⁶

When it comes to Clara, she is entangled in racism indirectly when Archie's boss, paradoxically named Mr. Hero, indicates that she should not come to a company dinner. He attempts to blame other colleagues who will be there with their wives and Clara is "a real beauty-incredible legs,"²⁷⁷ pointing that other women might not like her being temptation for their husbands. Furthermore, he contemplates Enoch Powell's speech as being distasteful and he would like to spit on it. Contradictory, he adds that Powell actually has a point and so turns himself to be a racist. Eventually, Archie is given food vouchers as compensation for not seeing his toothless mixed raced wife at the dinner. Yet, Archie is unaware of the racial motives of this act as they state that they were in need to turn down a number of guests and he and his wife 'regrettably' were the ones chosen.²⁷⁸ As the above stated act demonstrates, Archie lacks the racial prejudices characteristic of his colonial predecessors further alleging, "why couldn't people just get on with things, just live together...in peace or harmony,"²⁷⁹ however, never saying these words out loud.

The regards of white Britons towards minorities is demonstrated more by the chairwoman at the school where Millat, Magid and Irie go. She is persuaded of her not being racist because she scored well on the self-diagnostic test. Moreover, she has read the rainbow coalition promoting ethnic minorities. Furthermore, Joyce Chalfens asks Millat about his country of origin and when he answers that he is from Willesden, she keeps asking expecting in all probability to hear some exotic country contributing highly to her being not directly racist, but regarding British citizens generally as white when it comes to their skin colour.

²⁷⁶ Smith, *White Teeth*, 128.

²⁷⁷ Smith, *White Teeth*, 72.

²⁷⁸ Smith, *White Teeth*, 73.

²⁷⁹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 194.

Being born in Britain, the children of Samad and Clara consider themselves British citizens. Nevertheless, even they are faced with racism on a daily basis. As children, they travel on the bus when they hear the “the oldest sentence in the world”²⁸⁰ that “they should all go back to their own,”²⁸¹ as being a general statement made usually by white inhabitants towards those who are, upon their look, considered foreigners and intruders of their Anglo Saxon land. Further, when they reach Mr. Hamilton’s house during the Harvest festival, he ambushes them with a story of killing people of black skin regarding them as ‘niggers’ in Congo. Moreover, he is told that their father fought in the war on the British side, which is attended to with a slight insult when he remarks that “certainly no wogs”²⁸² were involved in the war as British would not know what food they should provide them with. When hearing this, the children are threatened and leave his house.

The typical racial stereotyping is obvious from Hamilton’s first reaction when seeing three “dark-skinned children”²⁸³ on his doorstep demanding of them to leave. Furthermore, he adds that he does not have any money so if their intention is robbing him they have nothing to gain.²⁸⁴ As mentioned in the introduction of this paragraph, this scene proposes that white Britons have instilled in them the stereotypes regarding other races, claiming them to be problematic and they would rather steer clear of being in contact with them.

²⁸⁰ Smith, *White Teeth*, 163.

²⁸¹ Smith, *White Teeth*, 163.

²⁸² Smith, *White Teeth*, 172.

²⁸³ Smith, *White Teeth*, 168.

²⁸⁴ Smith, *White Teeth*, 169.

8 COMPARISON OF THE NOVELS

As based on the previous analysis of *White Teeth* and *Small Island*, their mutual similarities and recurrent motives are evident. Therefore their reciprocal comparison, focusing predominantly on the approaches to immigrant issues, seems more than appropriate when drawing to the close of this thesis.

Both Andrea Levy and Zadie Smith have written their stories as a representative portrayal of the multicultural society in Britain, set however, in different periods. Andrea Levy's *Small Island* traces the outset of Caribbean diaspora in 1948 in Great Britain telling of the interwoven lives of two families, Jamaican and British, black and white. Similarly, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* maps the presence of Caribbean and also Bengali diaspora during two decades between the 1970s and 1990s, yet retrospectively both authors restore various periods being relevant in the lives of its characters. In spite of its settings being separated by nearly 22 years, they are both tackling the identical issues burdening the newcomers as well as the native inhabitants of the insular mother country of the last 50 years of the past century. Pivotal to their literary outputs might seem to be their own immigrant experience or of those around them concluding that they have known London, the metropolis of the former Empire, only as a multicultural place leading them to be thematically concerned with migration, diaspora, identity and racism.

Both authors indulge in placing the first immigrant generation as focal in their narratives having not one protagonist but an array of characters who are in narrative focus. Hortense and Gilbert are subjected to colonial education implementing the sense of identification with Britain within them. Samad, Alsana and Hortense, however, struggle to be assimilated into the British society and relinquish their cultural roots. While Levy seems to have unified her characters as passing the same immigrant trauma accompanied by a harsh disillusionment from the myth of mother country, Smith does not succumb to a generalization and proposes different approaches to her characters coming to terms with being immigrants choosing individual paths to their reconciliation. What's more, she invokes religion as a comforting element of an otherwise puzzled first generation.

While Levy's immigrant characters are outwardly struggling with various issues, their inner selves have already adopted a British national identity, considering themselves British citizens. On the other hand, Smith places her characters either as embracing their ancestral culture and identity or as cultural hybrids rather in between their ancestral legacy and Britain as being the country of necessary adjustment.

Turning now to the various time settings, Levy focuses on the outset of Caribbean immigration to Britain and the country's transition to cultural richness, while Smith positions her story already within the established multicultural society. Despite that, the inhabitants of London, new, settled or native, are challenged in terms of their national identity as stated above, but also when it comes to the racial stereotyping, as white inhabitants, regardless of the narrative period, still perceive immigrants as intruders, despite the second generation having been born and brought up in England.

Attempting to portray immigrant lives, it is inevitable to omit racial interactions as immigrants are marginalized in terms of it. Levy includes racism vastly in *Small Island*. Unlike Levy, Smith is not as devoted to racism. Nevertheless, it appears almost covertly within her novel as well. The presence of racism indicates post-war Britain was not prepared for an encounter with people of varied skin colour, as they were not accepting of them. Moreover, the following decades till 1990s had not seen the transformation and white people were not yet accustomed to immigrants and their children. It is worth mentioning that while in *Small Island* and its black characters are insulted solely in regard to their colour complexion, in *White Teeth*, its characters are humiliated also on the basis of their cultural differences.

Towards the ends of the novels, a new generation is ushered to the world but its existence is perceived differently, as influenced by the different eras. Queenie gives birth to a mixed raced baby early after the outset of Caribbean immigration in 1948. Thus she abandons her son and proclaims Britain to not yet be ready for racial blending, which is viewed as disruption to white supremacy, further acknowledging the child being torn in the case of its upbringing by a white couple. Hence *Small Island* proposes a negative view on the multicultural future of Britain. Contrarily, Irie has a baby not knowing whether its father is Millat or Magid and eventually raises it with the Chalfens' son Joshua. This child exemplifies the positive viewpoint of Smith to the future of England as being a multiracial nation with the struggle for identity put aside and with various nations being able to live next to each other.

CONCLUSION

The master thesis in hand dealt with the themes recurring in migrant literature of the postcolonial era and was set out to objectively depict the minorities' struggle for national identity and their coping with racism. The two authors in focus are Andrea Levy and Zadie Smith, and their novels *Small Island* and *White Teeth*.

As stated in the introduction, the thesis has been notionally divided into two parts. The first part was aimed at the clarification of the different concepts being principal within this thesis. Firstly, the historical presence of Caribbean and Bengali diaspora in Great Britain as well as the term diaspora itself were examined. Furthermore, the thesis surveyed closely the question of multicultural citizenship with its processes of assimilation and integration evolving later into multiculturalism. The concepts primarily contested with immigration, namely national identity and racism, were also exhaustively illuminated on the basis of diverse sociological, psychological and historical sources.

The second part, concentrated on the analysis of the above stated novels, shed light first on the lives of Andrea Levy and Zadie Smith as being daughters of Jamaican immigrants. What follows are the analyses of the two novels.

First to be analysed was *Small Island*. In the novel, Levy depicts the outset of Caribbean diaspora in Britain, commencing with the Empire Windrush docking of 1948. It is the narration of four characters; Jamaicans Hortense and Gilbert, and British Queenie and Bernard; set in London but retrospectively also in Jamaica and India. The first subchapter of the analysis surveyed the book title as being more than just geographic entities. It refers to the islands of Jamaica and Great Britain, which are perceived as suffocating small islands by its inhabitants, particularly after their arrival from war.

Subsequently, the myth of Britain as a mother country is brought to the fore, and in the lives of immigrants it is continually deconstructed. Gilbert and Hortense entered Britain filled with hopes and high expectations as a result of their colonial education. Nevertheless, immediately after their arrival they faced disillusionment stemming from housing difficulties and looking for jobs. Gilbert wants to become a lawyer. However, he is turned down and is offered only the lowest paid job. Similarly Hortense is refused the pursuit of her teaching career despite her having achieved a qualification in Jamaica. Furthermore, they realise that they are black and immigrants in the hostile environment of the mother country which is not nurturing them as they had expected, rather they are

meaningless to her ‘mother’ and had been brought only to cover the labour shortages of the war.

As far as national identity is concerned, the recurring theme of the book is education. Caribbeans are taught to admire British values and habits. Therefore, in Jamaica Hortense is eager to be recognized as British distinguishing herself from fellow citizens by her honey-coloured complexion ensuring her the position above others and on the same level with white people. Gilbert, similarly to Hortense, expresses his will to uproot from Jamaica. Moreover, he wishes never to go back and renounces totally from his past. National identity of British Queenie and Bernard is shattered, especially when the sense of superiority imprinted in them through years of colonial rule is terminated with the disintegration of the Empire and by the influx of immigrants. While Bernard is viewed as a quintessential advocate of an ‘old’ Britain, Queenie is aware of those days are over.

Turning to the racism within this book, the immigrants were generally excluded from the mainstream white society due to racial stereotypes based on physiological features. Hortense and Gilbert are constantly, and on a daily basis, insulted because of their colour complexion, when words such as wog, darkie, nigger or expressions such as people ‘of your kind’ are utilized. As Bernard exemplifies, he is still living in the past, not accepting the outcomes of war and the disintegrated Empire with the altering face of Britain into a multicultural nation. On the other hand, Queenie, having a good first encounter with black people during the British Empire Exhibition, is compassionate and supportive of people of ‘other’ races and is able to co-exist with them within the confines of Britain.

The second book analysed is *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith, which portrays the struggles of first and second generation immigrants within two decades from the 1970s to the 1990s. It is set in London but in retrospect Smith positioned her story also in Jamaica and Bangladesh. The novel evolves around the Iqbal, Jones and later the Chalfens families. Similarly as in the case of Levy’s novel, Smith employs the title *White Teeth* giving reference to the plot of the narration. Not only are ‘white teeth’ shared by all people, and therefore function as a uniting symbol, but Smith uses root canals in the titles of several chapters to emphasise the past still being apparent and rooted in the present lives of characters.

Furthermore, Bengali and Caribbean diaspora are described, as the majority of the characters come from one or the other location. Smith portrays the first generation, Bengali

Samad Iqbal and his wife Alsana, Caribbean Clara Jones and her mother Hortense and their trauma of arriving to host country. Smith further mentions the anxiety, especially of Hortense, Alsana and Clara, of racial mixing with the white race, who are seen to be leading their children away from their ancestral traditions. Smith also aims at the second immigrant generation, at the children of Samad and Alsana, Millat and Magid, and the daughter of Archie and Clara, Irie.

When it comes to national identity, the first immigrant generation strives to maintain their culture of their original home, even though they are imposed to British culture and its values. In that regard, their children embrace British culture having been born and brought up in that country and consider it their sole home, although it is a displeasure to their parents. Thus, their parents are keen to instill in them the culture of their ancestors resulting in them being cultural hybrids, occupying the position in-between without properly knowing where they belong. An important feature of this novel is also religion helping especially the first generation to establish a sense of belonging in the country they feel they do not belong to and are not welcomed in.

The analysis further contemplates the racist features of this novel and shows that not only the first generation has to face humiliation, but also that the second generation is a laughing stock based not only on phenotypes but also on apparent cultural differences, which are usually mocked. The second generation being born in England are still not considered to be inhabitants as it is concluded that mainstream society regard British citizens only as white as a result of its long and mainly racially homogeneous history.

The parallel of these two novels is apparent when they are commonly associated mainly with the transition of a homogenous nation into a multicultural one defined by co-existence of various races. Giving insight into the lives of Caribbean and Bengali diaspora, their burdens are brought to the forefront herein. Levy and Smith likewise are giving voice to those who were not heard in history and both turn their attention to diasporas repressed for many centuries outside of their homeland.

Following the individual analysis of the novels is their comparison having been at hand with the motives recurring in them. The mutual correspondences are contrasted by the result being that both authors express their viewpoints on the future of multicultural society. While Levy places Queenie into 1948 and to the position of being threatened by the acceptance of her racially blended child by the white society, Smith's novel is placed in times where she concluded that national identity was being challenged but resulted in being

no longer valid in the future, as one's sense of belonging will not be governed by the colour complexion within a still developing multicultural Britain.

RESUMÉ

Předkládaná diplomová práce Národní identita a rasismus v románech černošských imigrantských autorů ve Velké Británii se zabývá, jak už název napovídá, problematikou imigrantství ve Spojeném království a jeho důsledky v dílech dvou autorek, dcer jamajských přistěhovalců. Cílem této práce je čtenáře seznámit s aspekty, které provázejí imigraci, především s diasporami v Británii, multikulturalismem, národní identitou a rasismem, které spolu úzce souvisí. Romány, které jsou předmětem analýzy této práce, jsou čtvrtý román Andrey Levyové *Malý ostrov* a debutový román Zadie Smithové *Bílé zuby*. Dříve než bude uveden podrobný popis členění práce a její obsah, je důležité zmínit historický kontext imigrace do Británie, který uvozuje celou práci.

Éra imigrace započala celosvětově s koncem druhé světové války. Ta urychlila proces dekolonizace a následně vedla k rozpadu dříve mocných světových velmocí. Jednou z těchto mocností bylo také Spojené království, které se dožadovalo pomoci Commonwealthu z důvodu ekonomické vyčerpanosti z dob války. Zřetelný byl především nedostatek pracovních sil a právě ten byl důvodem rozsáhlého přílivu imigrantů z bývalých britských kolonií. Parlament Velké Británie se tehdy řídil liberální imigrační politikou rovných příležitostí a v roce 1948 uvedl v platnost zákon, který opravňoval obyvatele bývalého impéria, bez ohledu na jejich rasu, svobodně vstoupit na její území, usadit se tam, volit či pracovat. Z toho je patrné, že významný počet imigrantů byl motivován přestěhovat se do Spojeného království za vidinou lepší budoucnosti než té, která jim byla nabízena v jejich domovině. Markantním důsledkem imigrace byla změna rázu země z dříve většinou anglosaského národa na multikulturní zemi.

První část práce, která by mohla být označena jako teoretická, podrobně vysvětluje koncepty a teorie týkající se diaspor, multikulturalismu, národní identity a v neposlední řadě také rasismu, a to na základě různorodých historických, psychologických, sociologických či politologických zdrojů.

V dobách po druhé světové válce se značná část akademické obce začala zabývat právě otázkou imigrantství a diasporami. Z toho důvodu je úvod této práce věnován teorii diaspory a blíže se zaměřuje na její vývoj, který sahá až do klasických dob, kdy bylo toto označení užíváno ve spojitosti s traumatizujícím a nedobrovolným odchodem menšin z jejich domovské země. Později, právě s vývojem imigrace, byly diasporou označovány různé skupiny lidí, mj. uprchlíci, imigranti či rasové a etnické menšiny a právě ty jsou v popředí celé práce. Velký důraz je kladen také na seznámení čtenáře s jamajskou a

bengálskou diasporou, jelikož právě tyto dvě jsou spojené s analyzovanými knihami a karibská se samotnými autorkami novel. Tyto dvě diaspory odlišuje mýtické označení Británie jako mateřské země, které bylo rozšířené mezi obyvateli karibských ostrovů. Vnímání Británie karibskými imigranty bylo silně ovlivněno koloniálním vzděláváním, zaměřeným na britské zvyky a hodnoty, kterému byli od útlého věku vystavováni. Jejich sny a naděje byly však konfrontovány s krutou realitou jakmile dosáhli břehů Spojeného království. Bengálští přistěhovalci nevnímali Británii jako svoji ‚matku,‘ ale imigrovali do ní stejně jako karibští přistěhovalci především kvůli lepším vyhlídkám do budoucna. Obě diaspory se však potýkaly se stejnými problémy, které se týkaly ubytování či shánění práce. Tyto problémy ukazovaly na nepřátelskost většinové bílé společnosti vůči lidem odlišné barvy pleti, kteří byli mnohdy považováni za vetřelce, ztělesnění odlišnosti a nikoliv za právoplatné britské občany, kterými byli.

Jak již bylo zmíněno, výše uvedené diaspory v padesátých letech dvacátého století nahradily dřívější homogenní vzezření Británie. Práce se v druhé kapitole teoretické části věnuje multikulturalismu a multikulturnímu občanství. S teorií multikulturalismu jsou spjaty dva pojmy, a to asimilace a integrace, které jsou v podkapitolách vysvětleny. Právě z procesu integrace se ke konci sedmdesátých let vyvinul multikulturalismus, který propaguje kulturní diverzitu a požaduje rovnost obyvatel. Mnoho odborníků se shoduje na tom, že přítomnost imigrantů, i přes propagování rovnosti, vyvolává nepokoje, které pramení především z rasových odlišností. Několik jich také zmínilo, že imigranti působí na národní identitu původních obyvatel. Z toho důvodu se pojmy národní identita a rasismus dostávají do popředí v třetí a čtvrté kapitole teoretické části, které uzavírají první část práce.

Pojem národní identita je opakujícím se tématem v literatuře diaspor, z toho důvodu bylo nezbytné jej blíže definovat. Teorie národní identity, která se pojí a vychází z pojmů národ a identita, které jsou blíže rozebrány v podkapitolách, je charakterizována jako pocit sounáležitosti k určitému národu na základě sdílení společného území, jazyka, historie, tradic, symbolů a institucí. Ve spojitosti s britskou národní identitou se v práci objevují pojmy Englishness a Britishness, které jsou ve velkém množství literatury užívány ve vztahu rovnosti a často se také zaměňují.

Čtvrtá kapitola teoretické části se věnuje rasismu a přibližuje také vývoj a vnímání rasy. Rasa byla v minulosti zkoumána především z biologického hlediska a lidé byli rozdělováni do rasových skupin dle fyziologických dispozic. Tento přístup byl však

nahrazen ve dvacátém století zkoumáním rasy z kulturního hlediska, což bylo založeno na odlišnostech jednotlivých kultur. Na teoretizování o rase navazuje osvětlení pojmu rasismus jakožto předsudku či diskriminace vůči lidem jiné rasy na základě rasových stereotypů a pocitu nadřazenosti jedné rasy nad ostatní. Tou byla v minulosti bílá rasa. Naopak pocit méněcennosti byl vštípen příslušníkům jiné než bílé rasy, kteří byli často asociováni s násilím, nízkou inteligencí, chudobou a dalšími negativními aspekty.

Na první, teoretickou část navazuje část, která se ve velké míře zabývá analýzou dvou románů, jejichž autorkami jsou Andrea Levyová a Zadie Smithová. V první kapitole této části jsou představeny autorky. Pozornost je věnována především jejich spojitosti s karibskou diasporou, protože jsou obě dvě potomky jamajských přistěhovalců, kteří se usídlili v Británii. Dále je zmíněna jejich rodinná historie a literární kariéra. Autorky, které od sebe dělí dvacet let, nejsou imigranty, ale právoplatnými britskými občankami, a i přesto se v mládí musely vypořádávat s různými projevy rasismu z důvodu jejich exotického vzhledu. Co je odlišuje, je přístup k jejich kulturnímu dědictví. Zatímco Levyová se zajímá o kulturu svých předků a snaží se ve své tvorbě ukázat těžký život imigrantů, Smith vnímá svůj původ jako svou součást, ale blíže se na ni nezaměřuje. Smithová ve svém díle *Bílé zuby* čerpá především ze zkušeností imigrantů ze svého okolí.

První analyzovanou knihou je *Malý ostrov*, který je příběhem dvou párů, Jamajčanů Hortense a Gilberta a Britů Queenie a Bernarda. Děj se odehrává retrospektivně v Londýně, na Jamajce a v Indii v době, kdy dochází k založení karibské diaspory v Británii, v roce 1948. První podkapitola analýzy zkoumá název knihy, který odkazuje nejen ke geografickým entitám, ostrovům Jamajky a Británie jakožto malým ostrovům, ale poukazuje také na měnící se vnímání těchto ostrovů Gilbertem a Bernardem po jejich návratu z války, kde to není malost ostrovů, ale především malost jejich obyvatel, k čemuž název odkazuje. Dále se práce zaměřuje na Hortense a Gilberta a jejich příchod do Británie, jakožto do země, kterou si díky svému koloniálnímu vzdělávání idealizovali a to především na základě mýtu o mateřské zemi. Jejich deziluze je patrná při hledání ubytování, práce a jiných činnostech.

Hortense i Gilbert byli, jako většina obyvatel bývalých britských kolonií, vychováni k oddanosti britské kultuře i jejím hodnotám. Z toho důvodu se už ve své domovině snaží odprostit od karibské identity a označují Jamajku pouze jako zemi, odkud pocházejí, a naopak touží odejít do Británie, do země příležitostí. Levyová nezmiňuje pouze identitu imigrantů a její vývoj, ale bere v potaz i změny v anglické společnosti. Příliv

imigrantů silně ovlivnil z dávných dob přetrvávající pohled na Británii jakožto na zemi, která má ve světě výsadní postavení a zpochybnil zažitou národní identitu svých obyvatel. Levyová staví do opozice Bernarda, zarytého Brita žijícího minulostí a s tím spojeným nadřazeným postavením, a Queenie, která je spíše otevřená imigrantům, jelikož si uvědomuje, co je pro ni a její přežití v „nové“ Británii důležité.

Hořké probuzení ze snu o utopické matce Anglii do kruté reality je v životech Hortense a Gilberta ještě více umocněno rasovými předsudky, které jsou patrné v jejich každodenním životě. Obyvatelé jiné než bílé barvy pleti jsou považováni za méněcenné, a to především ze strany Bernarda, který je právem považován za rasistickou postavu knihy. Naopak Queenie nabídne imigrantům svůj dům a snaží se jim pomoci při adaptaci v nové zemi. Rasové stereotypy jsou patrné z chování dalších postav v knize. Můžeme je pozorovat například u Queenina souseda, který považuje černochoy za nebezpečná stvoření a má pocit, že před nimi musí Queenie chránit. Rasismus je v knize patrný i z užití různých hanlivých označení, kterými jsou černí imigranti častováni.

Druhým analyzovaným románem jsou *Bílé zuby*, příběh dvou multietnických rodin Iqbalových a Jonesových a jejich dětí mezi léty 1970 až 1990 v Londýně. Autorka se retrospektivně vrací na Jamajku či do Indie. V první podkapitole je rozebrán název knihy *Bílé zuby*, jako věc, kterou sdílí všichni lidé, bez ohledu na barvu kůže. Dále je ukázáno, že autorka užívá kořenových kanálků v názvu několika kapitol, aby ukázala jejich souvislost s životy imigrantů a naznačuje tak jejich spojení s minulostí.

V další podkapitole je blíže popsána bengálská a karibská diaspora, jelikož několik postav v knize jsou imigranti právě z těchto dvou oblastí. Smithová popisuje nejen životy prvních imigrantů, Samada Iqbala, jeho ženy Alsany, Clary Jonesové či její matky Hortense a jejich trauma z příjezdu do cizí země. Autorka se zaměřuje i na druhou generaci imigrantů, kterými jsou děti Samada a Alsany Magid a Millat, a dcera Archieho a Clary Irie.

Co se týče národní identity výše zmíněných imigrantů, je to především první generace, která se snaží si zachovat kulturní zvyklosti své domoviny i přesto, že jim jsou vnucovány britské hodnoty a zvyky. Naopak druhá generace je spíše spjatá s Británií, protože se v této zemi narodili a vnímají ji jako svůj jediný domov, což je trnem v oku jejich rodičů. Rodiče se jim tedy snaží vštípit kulturní tradice svých předků a tím se druhá generace stává kulturními hybridy. Důležitým prvkem u Smithové je i víra, která

především prvním imigrantům dává pocit bezpečí v zemi, kde nejsou vítáni a kam cítí, že nepatří.

Analýza této knihy se dále zabývá rasismem. Přestože Smithová nechtěla psát knihu o rasismu, jeho přítomnost v ní je patrná, ale zároveň je často provázená ironií a humorem tak typickými právě pro tvorbu Zadie Smithové. Autorka poukazuje především na to, že i lidé druhé generace imigrantů musí stále čelit rasismu. A to i přes fakt, že se narodili v Británii. To ukazuje smýšlení britského obyvatelstva, že Britové jsou spojováni s bílou barvou kůže, a všichni ostatní, kteří se vymykají, jsou cizinci.

Závěrem práce je krátké srovnání obou knih a jednotlivých přístupů autorek ke stejným problémům, kterým čelí obyvatelé multikulturní Anglie a imigranti. Srovnání se zaměřuje na diaspory, jejich příchod do Británie v různých dobách a také zkoumá první a druhou generaci imigrantů. V obou knihách se na konci objevuje nový potomek, dítě smíšeného původu, který u Levyové znázorňuje nepřipravenost obyvatel Anglie na budoucnost rasového mísení. Naopak u Smithové je dítě vnímáno pozitivně, jako naděje do budoucna, kdy lidé různého původu budou vnímáni jako právoplatní občané a jejich identita a pocit sounáležitosti nebudou tolik důležité.

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ANOTACE

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Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D.

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Klíčová slova: Karibská diaspora, bengálská diaspora, Empire Windrush, imigrace, multikulturalismus, národní identita, rasismus, Andrey Levy, Zadie Smith

Diplomová práce se zabývá problematikou národní identity a rasismu v dílech černošských imigrantských autorů ve Velké Británii. Cílem první části práce je obeznámit čitatele s historickými událostmi týkajícími se karibské a bengálské diaspory ve Velké Británii a to převážně po druhé světové válce. Dále se tato část zaměřuje na vliv multikulturní společnosti na národní identitu a rasismus a zároveň tyto pojmy podrobně definuje. Druhá část práce se zaměřuje na literární díla britských imigrantských černošských autorek Zadie Smithové a Andrey Levyové, a to *Bílé zuby* a *Malý ostrov*. Tato část také zkoumá vliv imigrantství a s ním spojené prvky národní identity a rasismu v jejich dílech.

ANNOTATION

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This master thesis deals with the issue of national identity and racism in the fiction of black immigrant writers in Great Britain. The thesis is divided into two parts. The aim of the first part is to acquaint the reader with historical events in regard to Caribbean and Bengali diaspora in Great Britain largely after the Second World War. Furthermore, this part focuses on the impact of multicultural society on national identity and racism and at the same time thoroughly illuminates those concepts. The second part of this thesis is aimed at the literary outputs of black British immigrant writers Zadie Smith and Andrea Levy, namely *White Teeth* and *Small Island*. This part examines the influence of immigration and with that connected features of national identity and racism in their fiction.