CHANGING PLACES, SHIFTING IDENTITIES: THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY IN THE NOVELS OF V. S. NAIPAUL AND ZADIE SMITH

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ABSTRACT

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Studies related to identity are mostly about the growing multiculturalism that has come to define the world since the latter half of the twentieth century. In this context, certain theories about identity introduce concepts related to hybridity, whereby individuals can have more fluid and flexible identities shifting in line with their environments. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which the characters in *The Mimic Men* and *Half a Life* by V.S. Naipaul and *White Teeth* and *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith tend to have shifts in identities which may be affected by changes in the places they find themselves in. Using mainly the notion of hybridity as related to postcolonial studies, the dissertation investigates in what ways the characters in these novels succeed or fail to adapt to their multicultural environments through developing hybridized identities. This is done through a textual analytical method, where characters' responses to the way they are perceived and how they react towards their religious or social bodies are examined as pointers towards identity formation. The study argues that the hybrid identities characters may adopt are in fact suggestive of an unstable position and subject to continuous changes. The study also suggests that, compared to Naipaul, Smith's characters appear more at ease in adapting to their multicultural environments although their ordeal is also tough and filled with crises. The general findings of the study suggest that in all the novels analyzed, characters' identities are in a constant shift, turning the question of the search for identity into a constant challenge and a never-ending debate.

Keywords: V.S. Naipaul, Zadie Smith, identity, space, hybridity, multiculturalism

ÖZ

DEĞİŞEN MEKANLAR, DÖNÜŞEN KİMLİKLER: V. S. NAIPAUL VE ZADIE SMITH ROMANLARINDA KİMLİK SORUNU

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Kimlikle ilgili çalışmalar çoğunlukla, yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren dünyayı tanımlamaya başlayan, büyüyen çok kültürlülük hakkındadır. Bu bağlamda, kimlikle ilgili bazı teoriler, bireylerin çevrelerine göre değişen daha akışkan ve esnek kimliklere sahip olabilmeleri için melezliğe ilişkin kavramlar ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma, V.S.Naipaul nin The Mimic Men ve Half a Life ve Zadie Smith in White Teeth ve On Beauty adlı romanlarında, karakterlerin kimliklerinde kendilerini buldukları yerdeki değişikliklerden etkilenebilecek sapmalara sahip olma eğiliminde olduklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Postkolonyal araştırmalarla ilgili olarak başlıca melezlik kavramını kullanarak, bu çalışma romandaki karakterlerin melezleşmiş kimlikler geliştirerek çok kültürlü çevrelere uyum sağlayıp sağlayamama konusunda başarılı olup olamadıklarını araştırmaktadır. Bu, karakterlerin algılanma biçimlerine tepkilerinin ve dini veya sosyal topluluklarına nasıl tepki verdiklerinin kimlik oluşumuna yönelik işaretler olarak incelendiği bir metinsel analitik yöntemle yapılır. Çalışma, karakterlerin benimseyebileceği melez kimliklerin aslında istikrarsız bir durumu düşündürdüğünü ve sürekli değişime tabi olduğunu savunuyor. Çalışma, aynı zamanda Naipaul a kıyasla, Smith in karakterlerinin çok kültürlü ortamlarına uyum sağlamada daha rahat göründüklerini, ancak yaşadıkları sürecin zorlu ve krizlerle dolu olduğunu gösteriyor. Çalışmanın genel bulguları, incelenen tüm romanlarda karakterlerin kimliklerinin sürekli bir değişim içinde olduğunu, kimlik arayışı sorununu sürekli bir meydan okumaya ve bitmeyen bir tartışmaya dönüştürdüğünü göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: VS. Naipaul, Zadie Smith, Kimlik oluşumu, melezlik, çok kültürlülük

To my family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is chiefly concerned with the shifting identities of characters in the novels *Mimic Men* and *Half a Life* by V.S. Naipaul and *White Teeth* and *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith. By analysing the effect on the characters of changing places from both a geographical and an ideological perspective, the study will show how characters struggle with forging and forming identities. Different definitions of identity will be delved into in order to show what stance this study considers pertinent with the analysis of identity formation as connected with place. Whereas Naipaul's writing career spans decades across varying colonial and postcolonial epochs compared to Zadie Smith's, he still shares the themes of identity crisis with Zadie Smith, and he does not only chronicle this in many of his novels but it is also a phenomenon he himself has encountered in his lifetime. Much of V. S. Naipaul's and Zadie Smith's novels, especially those that have been mentioned, use plots that involve historical settings impinged upon a colonial and neo-colonial history, and the resultant postcolonial epoch on home and homelessness, which are notions directly linked to identity.

In this study, postcolonial theory will be used as a guide for shaping the discussion that rotates around the understanding of identity- a topic that has become more prevalent because of the history of colonialism. The inferiority ideology instigated by the colonial powers towards the peoples of colonized nations during the period that is subsequent to colonialism has since sparked off endless migrations toward the western world, as shall be discussed later. The effect of these migrations cannot be overstated. A notable outcome in relation to the identity crisis that ensues from migration is Bhabha's conception of an ideological and more abstract "third space," where a "hybrid" can live

independently of the new culture, but with the awareness of his difference from it. The "third space" and "the hybrid" have become one of the most widely studied and examined theories in postcolonial studies and are important in shaping this study by bringing into perspective how individuals subscribe to or reject this space. This study argues that while Zadie Smith's characters attempt to problematize the multicultural places they occupy, Naipaul's characters seem to be falling short of the attempt and end up repositioning themselves time and again in different identities across different places and sometimes resorting to mimicking.

The importance of studying identity issues cannot be overstated in an era when its discussion has drawn a lot of attention and become contentious around the globe. As the citizens of Hong Kong are trying to ascertain whether they are more British than Chinese, some in North America are fighting to be recognized as befitting of the American brand. Others in the meantime are fighting to contest the actual blackness of some African Americans or British Africans for that matter. A more recent example can be drawn from the Windrush scandal that began in 2018. This started in the early 2010s, when the UK home office adopted a "Hostile Environment" policy where undocumented immigrants would be denied all forms of services from housing to health. Former Windrush migrants were denied legal status and leave to stay which had been previously granted, healthcare was only granted with the presentation of proper documentation, pension was stripped away, and many sacked from work, jailed, separated from kith and kin, deported, humiliated. The aim was to curb immigration and scare away those intending to live in the country illegally.[1] As a result, people who had come to the UK

[1] What starts as an attempt to prevent migration turns into government policy and in the words of the then-home secretary Teresa May in an interview by *The Guardian* "The aim is to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration" (Bozic et al, 2018). The requirement was for everyone to conduct immigration checks right from landlords, health practitioners, and school boards. No one could receive services if their documents were found lacking. In short, one could be faced with an immigration officer during a hospital checkup or at a counter in the bank. Then an immigration campaign titled Operation Vaken started and it featured Billboard vans with the markings "go home or face arrest." In

as far back as 1948 were negatively affected by the policy through wrongful arrests and deportation (Bozic et al, 2018). As a matter of fact, the Inspector of Constabulary[2] showed that officials had disregarded *Windrush* generation migrants who had "leave to stay" in the country. It is that small group of migrants and their descendants that sparked off an almost decade-long scandal that peaked in 2018. It aroused nationwide interest in the country's policy on immigration, and for the most part questions of identity for those who had for long only known Britain as their motherland or homeland. These battles and scandals are what turn into material for novelists, who create fictional characters to replicate the global mental and physical identity shifts that are real albeit fictional in the world of the novel.

The reality embedded in the above brief introduction is what draws writers to comment on these societal changes and in the end, it becomes material for many novelists. In fact, many critics have gone to great lengths to prove that Naipaul employs biographical elements in his novels although he himself often repudiated this idea (Dooley, 2006). The choice of these two prolific writers, one spanning close to five decades of literary production and the other a comparably more recent writer on the literary scene has been well thought out. The study uses Naipaul and Smith's novels as case studies because the settings in their novels traverse different periods of time yet their thematic concerns seem to converge into similar identity concerns. It is these spatial and historical differences (sometimes also similarities) that inspires the main objectives of this study, that is how identities tend to shift as the settings in which they are constructed change.

V.S. Naipaul is important in this discussion because of his ever-changing attitude

addition, adverts were placed in leaflets to announce immigration surgeries that would be carried out.

[2] This is a body that independently carries out assessments related to the police force and investigates any irregularities in policing.

towards not only India, his land of origin, but also Britain, his land of dreams, in that it affects his shifting ideology, which is also reflected in his writing. Born to Hindu parents in 1932, Naipaul grew up in the Islands of the Caribbean where his father had migrated in search of work (Ray, 2002). He won a scholarship to study English at Oxford at the age of eighteen and moved to England where he decided to stay even after his studies. Throughout his writing career, he endlessly tried to come to terms with the "many-sided background" (Dooley, 2011) which characterized his entire life and had a tremendous effect on his writing as well as influenced and thus determined the characterization and plotting of events in his novels.

As a first-generation *Windrush*, Naipaul assumed himself a British National because at the time anyone coming from a former British colony was automatically granted non-verbal or non-written and thus legitimate "leave to stay" according to the *Commonwealth Arbitration Reports 1974*. This was until laws were being revised one by one, which seemed to side-line him and other "colonials" at every moment as documented by Spencer (2002) in *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain*. The England that he had for some time seen as his own homeland and one that he had praised and raised over and above the Indian and the Caribbean lands where he grew up, came to disown him. But he had long been aware of this alienation, which existed for both Britain and his motherland Trinidad. As Ray notes, "V. S. Naipaul never cared for the land of his own birth and his people […] Trinidad was for him a destitute society without history, without achievement […] Apparently, Naipaul quests for an identity" (Ray, 224). Whereas he defined himself as a "Citizen of the World," the problematic nature of this description is foregrounded in later years when he finds himself physically without a nation and an identity. In some of his semi-autobiographical works like *An Area of Darkness,* (1964, 2002) Naipaul feels that he has been reduced to just his flat, desk, and name. "All mythical lands faded and

in the big city, I was confined to a smaller world than I had ever known. I became my flat, my desk, my name" (19). This shift in sentiment should be read against the grain as Naipaul writes this at a time when he has seen enough of Britain, travelled to and from India and Trinidad, and visited other places in Africa. However, this could also have been a warning for him that his Western dream was indeed just a dream. So, when reality dawned on him and the immigration protection laws became fluid (Karatani 2004), he was engulfed in yet a new dilemma of having to find himself anew.

Although in many of his interviews, Naipaul seemed to make no connection between himself and his work (Dooley, 2006), there was still an implicit portrayal of his actual life in his novels. As a young enthusiastic immigrant writer, his first insight was to compare India to "the land of opportunities", which to him was England. He viewed India as a "static and decaying society, lost in the double fantasy of the imitation of the west and oriental resignation" (84). His earlier writings like *A House for Mr. Biswas* (196) which too is partly autobiographical, illustrate the abhorrent life in the Caribbean (at least according to him), which indicates the disillusionment not only of Biswas the character but also that of the writer Naipaul. But the book that mostly shocked critics, who thought Naipaul ought to have been more nationalistic, is *The Middle Passage* for its negative portrayal of India, and mostly for the ironically acclaimed success it received from the Western critics as one that is written with objectivity and a sense of detachment (Walder, 83-100).

Naipaul's works have thus drawn both positive and negative criticism as well as an assumed tendency to lean towards an acclamation for western civilization and an inclination to suggest that perhaps India and all the other colonies needed to be colonized and "civilized". In *The Pleasures of Exile* (1992), Lamming commented on Naipaul's satire towards his own people as a form of escape from his own soul (Lamming, 225). Thus, in his summation of Naipaul's characteristic writing, Walder argues that he seems

to be caught up in what according to Fanon is "the first stage of interaction between the metropolitan and the colonial cultures: successfully assimilating European modes of expression, but not going on to assert an identity" (Walder, 83-100). On the other hand, Brent Staples argues in Naipaul's defence as follows:

> Few writers of V.S. Naipaul's stature have been so consistently and aggressively misread on account of ethnic and racial literary politics. Much of the criticism stems not from what Mr. Naipaul writes but from expectations about what he (ought) to write, given that he is a brown man (of Indian descent) born into the brown and black society that is Trinidad. Alas, after a 40-year voyage as a writer, Mr. Naipaul has arrived at a time when his work is too often viewed through the filter of race. This would seem an impoverished way of seeing in any case. In V.S. Naipaul's case, a strictly racial reading amounts to no reading at all (Staples, 1).

Indeed, this underscores the fact that much of Naipaul's later works illustrate an inner struggle by many of the characters to find an identity after years of living in denial and disillusionment. One of these novels, *Half A Life,* which has been considered for this study, is a mid-sequel of three novels following the character of Willie Chandran who spends much of his life searching for an identity but without being able to conform to any. Much of Willie's life in the novel parallels that of Naipaul. This study does not intend to investigate the writer's life and to claim explicitly that the works are less fictional, albeit it acknowledges that with Naipaul, his life and background are depicted in his novels and as Landeg White, a close friend, and critic of his works contends, "all his books have their feet firmly in his experience" (White, 24). The study will take an unbiased stand in examining the texts as depicting mainly fictional characters for the purposes of this analysis and what Naipaul does perhaps too well is to depict the reality at the time even to the disdain of the more nationalistic postcolonial critics of the time like Franz Fanon and Edward Said. This study has particularly chosen Naipaul's *Mimic Men* and *Half a Life*, in which the details of his background do not undercut the rest of the narrative as fiction. Moreover, Naipaul's major themes and conflicts, which rotate

around the "colonial subject" of the post-independence era in India and around the world, make his works appropriate for a discussion on identity.

The "colonial" as Michael Angrosino terms it, becomes central throughout his novels and autobiographies. In his article, "V.S Naipaul and the Colonial Image", he attempts to define Naipaul's colonial figure arguing that, "For Naipaul, the 'colonial' is not just any oppressed or exploited member of what is frequently called the 'The World.'" Rather to be a "colonial implies that the psychological loss of identity which is the result of oppression has occurred within a context of spatial displacement" (Angrosino, 1-11). In essence, the "colonial" is a continuous condition because even though the imperialists departed from the colonies, they left their roots implanted in the previous colonies. Thus, the colonial exists on both sides of the aisle, the immigrant colonial and the non-immigrant colonial, who both battle with the same challenges of identity formation. As a result, the latter grapple with settling in these places that have become unrecognizable to the locals whereas the former grapple with engaging with new cultures and norms, and for both, the result is the same: a struggle to find an identity. Thus, as Timothy F. Weiss cautions, Naipaul should be looked at as one that speaks for many today in a changing world where migration upon migration and forced exile have become the order of the day due to unending cross-border or civil disputes. Weiss further contends that "for Naipaul, exile has been both an outsiderness and a state in-between different cultures and worlds" (qtd in Zhou, 21).

On the other hand, Zadie Smith's background as a writer and critic in postcolonial literature makes her work profoundly important to this study too. Smith was born to a Jamaican mother and an English father in 1975. She became a successful and acclaimed novelist following her first debut, *White Teeth*. As a twenty-first-century British novelist, Zadie Smith catches the reader's attention by chronicling societal ills and exposing her characters' troubles springing from ideologically construed beliefs in

multiculturalism. Seemingly comic, Zadie Smith's novels may be a gruesome ironic portrayal of a cultural as well as an identity crisis (Tew, 13), experienced by characters coming from diverse backgrounds such as India, Pakistan, Jamaica, and Britain itself. The continuously changing places impede what according to Khademi-Vidra are "recognizable performative repertoires that are expressive and embodied," which would be the basis for identity (Khademi-Vidra, 109-120).

Tew in "Re-reading Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*" elaborates on the many misconceptions Smith received right after her first novel is published. He explains how one critic Lassner, in an interview with Smith about her work, asserts that Smith's novel's aim is to pay homage to the long and quiet silence after WW II and celebrating the outcomes of multicultural communities:

> Britain's most celebrated postcolonial prodigy. [. . .] White Teeth proclaims a declaration of independence not only from haunting and constraining memory of the war's catastrophes and racist oppression but from the very idea of belonging. After centuries of colonial oppression and decades of postcolonial depression and anger, White Teeth imagines the grand finale of Empire as the construction of a multicultural, multiclass British bazaar (294-309).

That and so many other issues are what shape the concerns of *White Teeth*. Where originally it was considered to be more of a celebration of multiculturalism and Britishness seen from the abundance of character portrayal, later studies have suggested otherwise. Tancke's "*White Teeth* Reconsidered: Narrative Deception and Uncomfortable Truths" revisits earlier studies about Smith revealing how some of the criticism regarding her style had been reductive to the point of diluting the novel's serious message. As Tancke argues in his commentary on Smith's misconceived style of writing, "it functions as a mechanism of narrative deception, in that it misleads the readers about the narrative's underlying rationale" (30). The rationale here refers to these characters' living together assumedly happy to be in this environment presented comically to the reader, yet, as he asserts it is actually an invitation for the reader to

question their ways of interpreting the text(s). Tancke later alludes to Smith's coinage of the word "original trauma," (*White Teeth*, 161) as a direct insight by the narrator into the troubling experience of migration and settlement, which become a new space for identity formation. (Tancke, 30). In addition, Bentley (2007) comments about her "operating mainly through a form of Horatian satire, picking out unavoidable foibles, hypocrisies and moral expediencies […] which all "serve to avoid the didacticism of political correctness" and still manage to portray the seriousness of immigrant experiences (497).

Further, Nick Bentley's combined analysis of Julian Barnes's *England, England,* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* about their portrayal of Englishness reveals the ongoing debate on the effect of place changes on identity formation. He uses Benedict Anderson's (2008) model of nation as imagined communities to show that the plurality that results from multiculturalism (which characterizes both texts) can be "identified as an amalgamation of different social and cultural communities, each of which is engaged in negating the larger grouping that constitutes the nation" (485). If the nation here is taken to mean the physical place where characters reside, the model would work to show that this place continuously changes and its compositions of the different ethnic groupings are in a constant battle to assert superiority. Although Anderson's argument is that this amalgam of different communities co-exists in "comradeship," this study attempts to show that at times this may not be the case as many individuals are tied down by their beliefs and notions about selfhood, which are usually influenced by their cultures and histories.

Smith seems to problematize the ideas of multiculturalism and hybridity as have been propounded by postcolonial critics such as Homi Bhabha. In "Affirming Complexity: White Teeth and the Cosmopolitan," Katina Rogers argues that what Smith does in her debut novel is to create a complex London that is dynamic and diverse, which

in turn fosters a dynamic culture. She writes that "...the novel sets both up as objects of irony and satire, implying the need for a more nuanced understanding of such characters and settings" (46). It is this problematization of the multicultural setting that Rogers points out and the way it pledges allegiance to humanity but in essence, exposes the challenges faced by individuals living in mixed communities. In fact, Rogers makes reference to Timothy Brennan's critique of hegemonic essentialist communities and he suggests that they serve to hurt that which they supposedly defend, because of continuously looking at matters through the western lens, which in turn promotes that cultural hegemony (qtd in Rogers, 47). Rogers further supports this thesis by arguing as follows:

> Smith populates White Teeth with characters brimming with hybridity, mixed backgrounds, a variety of religions, and subsequent generations of blended cultures. This would seem to be an ideal backdrop for a cosmopolitan viewpoint…. She, however, does not present such an idyllic conclusion. The ideas are put in the mouths of the most satirical characters and are shown to be untenable-indeed ludicrous (49).

The above passage is in line with what Tancke and Bentley propose about Smith's novels. Naturally, her style of writing is of light-hearted nature, but the message behind the so-called caricatured characters should not escape the reader's eye. This study will reveal in later sections that the portrayal of multiculturalism is not a straightforward phenomenon or an easy fit for many of the characters she portrays. Thus, Rogers' description of Smith's novel shows that what we see as a celebration of hybrid identities may rather be a critique of the same and a sheer problematization of it, for the characters that are portrayed as hybrid are also shown to be uncomfortable in those positions that they have taken. In that sense, Smith's standpoint is rather ambivalent and this is what is brought to the fore in this analysis.

Additionally, Smith is often seen defending herself against the reductive thinking that because she is a biologically hybrid person herself, her characters should be deduced

as supporting and perhaps replicating her identity. Tew notes that the many criticisms that a novel such as *White Teeth* receives allow it to be misunderstood. He points out that Smith insists that her work desists from being about one essentialist ideological reasoning of postcolonial literature and should not be elided in favour of the dominant cultural reading practice. He argues that it is "through this distorting prism that the book is still misunderstood, with its actual mood, its nuanced perspective and its range of contents and characters being either neglected or completely ignored" (295). Smith, like Naipaul, is not without her personal identity struggles. In "Speaking in Tongues"[3] she insists that voices are meant to be "unchanging and singular," because they are a major signifier of our identity. Yet whenever one changes their voice or accent, it is as a result of wanting to sound like this person or that person and in a way shifting their identities in a matter of seconds. She sees this as a way of having different ways of interacting with people. Tew further notes that Smith seems to be irritated by the idea that her first novel *White Teeth* in a way celebrates hybridity and is comparable to Salman Rushdie's novels. Thus, Smith evokes the coordinates of being in-between which to her is still a representation of changing places where one must be able to move away from and back in, as the situation requires. She notes again in "Speaking in Tongues" that:

> In Dream City everything is doubled, everything is various. You have no choice but to cross borders and speak in tongues. That's how you get from your mother to your father, from talking to one set of folks who think you're not black enough to another who figure you are insufficiently white (Smith, 2008).

The choice to consider a study on V.S. Naipaul alongside Zadie Smith is that both novelists have been controversially received and there doesn't seem to be a unanimous consensus about the stances their works take on issues related to identity,

[3] This was part of a public lecture given at the Department of English at the University of New York. The Dream City is referred to as those places that people often migrate to, which influence not only their accents but also their identities.

hybridity, multiculturalism, and other issues in postcolonial literature. Some critics have argued that Naipaul detests his ethnic background, preferring the culture of the white man (Lamming, 1960) and that Smith celebrates the multicultural nature of British society. Both of these criticisms, although not entirely false, still warrant a closer look at the works to arrive at an ideologically balanced understanding of the works of both novelists in relation to their views on identity. It is this discrepant argument and character portrayal by these two novelists that make them an important comparison for this study. On the one hand, Naipaul, as this study shall portray, shows characters that are disillusioned and portrays their dilemma as they try to settle in their immigrant communities. Naipaul's writing career can be seen as "an identity-seeking journey navigating between worlds" (Zhou, 12). His novels explicitly represent characters that are in a quest for identity. On the other hand, Smith's characterization problematizes the idea of multiculturalism by creating a humorous and comic plot, which casts doubt on notions of hybridity and celebrated multiculturalism (Tew, "Rereading Zadie Smith" 294-309).

It can be argued that whereas Naipaul is considered a product of multiculturalism, Zadie Smith is its by-product. The two writers present characters whose identity problems, though not utterly different, are still contingent on one another. The challenges arising from the identity crisis in Naipaul's novels are extended in Zadie Smith's works. Naipaul is a "man of no single nation, and a writer in exile… an exile from the Hindu tradition, an exile from the Caribbean cultural heritage, and an exile in Britain" (Zhou, 13), and his novels depict these movements as he follows the characters' constant movements in the narrative. In Smith's novels, the characters are not ingrained in their identities but seem more willing to bear with the circumstances that they find themselves.

The novels discussed in this study question whether Naipaul's and Smith's works

wholesomely celebrate multiculturalism and applaud the resulting hybrid as well as celebrating "the third space" as a comfortable one. Questions of how Naipaul and Smith show their characters' willingness to navigate or settle in the third space will be investigated. The study will also explore whether the third space is a more theoretically meaningful phenomenon rather than a practically applicable one. Moreover, there are very few studies that compare Naipaul and Smith who, despite their different styles of writing, exhibit significant similarities in terms of themes and characterization. Among the limited literature that compares these two writers is Berna Köseoğlu's book chapter, "The Immigrant Experience in V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* and Z. Smith's White Teeth: An Exploration of Homi Bhabha's Postcolonial Theory" in which she portrays challenges faced by migrant characters when they journey to the west. Köşeoğlu's chapter analyzes the conflicts that still exist when former colonials migrate to former colonial masters' countries such as England, portraying how the "cultural trauma" that results from earlier colonial practices continues to affect individual characters (15-32). Rebecca Walkowitz's (2009) book chapter about "The Postcolonial Consensus" summarizes some of the latest divisions and subgenres of British novels that have come on the scene in the early twenty first century. One of them the novel of multiculturalism is important to this analysis and she suggests that it celebrates the existence of many cultures in one setting. Among the writers she compares is Brookner and Naipaul who she argues tough upon the theme of "difficult arrival" throughout their novels and as well deal with "antiracist policies in the post-consensus era (231). Her discussions are devoid of in-depth analysis which is different from what this study does. To draw another comparison between this study and other studies, a look at some of the recent thesis work that has been done in the field is warranted. For instance, Kahramanoğlu (2021) makes an interesting comparison between two past world orders, that is colonialism and apartheid by comparing V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* and J.

M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*. The study traces the protagonists' inherent quest for identity post the two eras of segregation and shows how the main characters Ralph Singh and David Lurie end up alienated because of the environment they find themselves in. Added to this is Taniyan (2015), who follows the ambivalent nature of Naipaul's writing, grouping it into phases that explicitly reveal his changing attitude as his writing career progresses. This is of interest because Naipaul as mentioned earlier has been arguably one of the most controversially read and critiqued writers. However, as Taniyan shows (something that will be emphasized in this study too), it is this ambivalent stance which if not contextualized can lead to different criticisms of Naipaul's works. On the other hand, among the many studies related to Smith's works are Hassan Al Attabi (2022) thesis in which he draws a comparison between *White Teeth* and *On Beauty*. He explores how the ideological underpinnings of particular places might affect real-life circumstances because of the disparity between the two. His conclusion is that the characters in both novels are mostly suffering from identity crises because of these disparities. This study extends Hassan Al Atabbi's and other studies discussed by showing how identity problems in Smith's novels are a somewhat unresolved issue and that characters in the end are not so dismal about this status compared to those in Naipaul. The present study is unique in such a way that it will open up discussions of first, second, and third-generation migrant experiences in terms of identity formation, as well as analyse the challenges that they face in a supposedly inclusive multicultural society.

By analysing the textual rubric of the novels chosen, the study's main aim will be to assess the influence of place in both physical and ideological terms on the identities of characters, causing them to shift across varying spatial facets. The study sets out to analyse the different identities portrayed by characters in particular but not limited to, social identity, religious identity, and body identity, to identify how spatial and temporal

facets affect the formation of individual identities, and to examine the shifting identities in the same characters and analyse how their understanding of themselves in terms of religious and societal norms and bodily identity affects perceptions about themselves. By examining the social behaviour of characters in the novels, their reactions towards their perceived body difference and/or body satisfaction, the way in which they react towards their religious affiliations or spiritual beliefs coupled with the changing places and time frames in the novels, the study attempts to show the effects that these have on the way people perceive themselves or the way they form their identities.

This study will make use of textual analysis as its main method. While doing textual analysis, sometimes the text will be taken as an independent entity on its own but sometimes the biographical approach will also be employed. The study assumes that changing places result in shifting identities, and the changes do not only mark a shift in time but also in space. This to some extent has necessitated a look into the biography of the authors whose spaces (especially Naipaul) were continuously changing during their entire writing career. The texts chosen span different historical time frames, thus rendering the setting of paramount importance to the study both historically and ideologically. Although Naipaul comes from an earlier generation of postcolonial novelists, his and Smith's backgrounds of being connected to the Windrush generation, a fact that has become pertinent to identity studies, is an important paradigm. Identity shifts have always been a fiery topic in many areas of study and the changes that are reflected in the works are presumed to be sparked partly by the experience of the authors.

The results of this study are significant to the body of literature, in particular studies in postcolonial literature, which are related to notions of hybridity, diaspora, home, and unhomely attitudes, with the hope of exposing the challenges in identity conceptualization and formation. The study will also enhance one's understanding of

identities as opposed to just one identity, which, as shall be shown, can be formed as individuals change their places.

In the first part of the study, a background will be provided by scrutinizing the notions of place vis a vis identity shifts, while paying homage to existing research that has been heavily invested in postcolonial migration and its resulting apogees of homelessness, double consciousness, homelessness, alienation and hybridity. All of these notions have become the foundational starting points for many scholars in the field of postcolonial studies and identity. Whereas in essence hybridity and multiculturalism are seen as welcome solutions to the identity struggles that many find themselves in, this study argues that it is problematized because identities are always in shifting as the characters' places change. The study will discuss how place, in both a physical and an ideological sense, has been crucial in continuously causing identity shifts in the novels of V.S. Naipaul and Zadie Smith. Therefore, the following sections are going to focus on the background that has shaped identity studies in postcolonial literature. The study will then delve into Naipaul and Smith's selected novels respectively engaging with firstly the issues of identity crisis in shifting places as portrayed in V.S. Naipaul's novels, and then the problematics of third space and hybrid identities in Zadie Smith's novels. The last chapter will conclude the study and make recommendations for future research related to identity studies and the contributions of this research to the general knowledge and body of postcolonial literature and research.

CHAPTER 2

IDENTITY IN CHANGING PLACES: A THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter reviews some of the most significant scholarly literature that has come to define identity studies in the field of postcolonial studies. For a long time, questions of identity have been at the forefront but the first works to have spearheaded the discussion were Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, 2005) and *Black Skin White Masks*, (1967, 2008), and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979). These were ground-breaking in the sense that they opened an avenue for talking about the challenges of identification in a foreign community and how the West played a part in creating binaries that encouraged subjugation and caused inferiority-thinking among many migrant communities. This chapter further explores how the aftermath of colonial encounters such as the resulting stream of migrants from third-world nations towards the West has also laid the ground for alienation and feelings of homelessness, which too have resulted in problems with identity formation.

2.1 Margins of Identity

Whereas the issue of identity formation and identity shifts has spanned decades of study and research, it is still a burning debate in fields that include not only postcolonialism but also economics, psychology, and other fields in the social sciences. Carr et al (2021) articulate the concept of identity shifts, noting that it involves a self-transformation resulting from the "intra-personal effect of self-presentation in a mediated context" (202-214). The above research goes further to elaborate a theory, the Identity Shift Theory (IST), specifying the "processes, conditions, constraints and effects of identity shift based on personal, psychological and communicative

characteristics" (Carr, 202-214). Earlier works on postcolonial studies and the novels that were produced during that time were more akin to speaking back to the occident (as seen in the work of Aime Cesaire and Joan Pinkham [2000], and Franz Fanon [1967, 2008], on negritude and colonial discourse) and correcting the distortions created of the orient as an uncivilized and uncultured set of nations whose destiny lay in the hands of the white colonialists. This section will delve into the literature related to the definition of identity in postcolonial literature vis a vis the ideological and physical spaces within which it has been conceptualized. This will be done by looking closely at some of the critical studies that have been carried out in the field.

Identity, to a larger extent, is an abstract notion and as Frosh (2018) contends, it involves "having a private internal arena that others do not necessarily know" (Frosh, 8). In "Identity and difference," Jackson and Moshin underscore the importance of identity in recent debates by stating that "there is nothing more daily, sustained and socio-politically charged than our identities (348-363). Anthony Elliott in *The Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies* reviews Zygmunt Bauman's understanding of identity as one that is continuously fluid. Bauman argues that "it is increasingly difficult to settle one's self-identity because the accelerating pace and widening scope of cultural, economic, political, and social change forces individuals continuously to dispose of existing identities and replace them with fresh biographical narratives" (qtd in Elliott, 117). Thus, the idea that identity(s) is a continuously evolving and pluralistic notion is fundamental to this study. It is a "fundamental organizing principle which develops constantly throughout the lifespan," but also "something that is assigned to persons by other persons", in which case the question of "who am I in the eyes of others becomes crucial" (De Levita, 7). This last emphasis by De Levita brings the notion of place in relation to identity into perspective as shall be discussed in later chapters. According to her argument, individuals tend to construct their identities based on the people around

them as well as their surroundings. Drawing from Elliott and De Levita's analyses, two kinds of place facets are brought into perspective: firstly, place as a physical, tangible and substantial location, and secondly, place as an ideological conception. Both of these notions of place as a location have proved very contentious areas in postcolonial studies. Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), relates the empire to geography as shown by his argument about the effects of imposing a seemingly dominant culture on the orient by the occident, which in turn imposes a different ideological conception of particular places. Said's work is crucial because it demonstrates the power that lies in texts. He underscores how literature has the power to mould and also delude individuals who are bound to approach it in different ways. Literature and literary works are an exposition of an undeniable reality in that what is theorized outside of this material is either upheld or dismantled in the process of the analysis of literary works. Said's emphasis is on the power of cultural production, particularly novels, music, or film, which are sometimes constructed with bias about a particular community or region. These artistic creations open up new spaces, or *imagined* spaces for that matter, that create biases in the way individuals think and act. This argument has its seeds in Said's *Orientalism* (1979), where he argues that these spaces are not just geographical but also cultural, political, linguistic, and ethnic (Said, 50), and in these spaces the orient as both a physical place and an ideological space is many times negatively depicted, causing individuals to try and escape by attempting to adopt more favourable western styles which can also be a portrayal of a move towards identity change.

As the major thrust of the study, it is warranted that identity is defined from the very onset. But firstly, it should be noted that there have been contestations on the clear-cut definitions of this concept; therefore, what is stated here shall serve as the framework within which to view identity in the context of this study. Eisenberg's argument is that identity is the attachment that people have to particular communities, ways of life, and

sets of beliefs or practices that play a central role in their self-conception or self-understanding (Eisenberg, 18). Rather than think of identity as "already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices represent," we should instead think of "identity as a 'production' which is never complete but always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall and Du Gay, 145, 167). It is these constant productions from which behaviour springs, which later comes to determine identity. Therefore, at the core of Hall and Du Gay's definition, the outstanding idea is that if production is endless, the same principle applies to identities. And as Woodward (1997) further notes in *Identity and Difference*, whereas identity poses similarity and affinity to society and culture, it may well signify the differences that constitute "what we really are or what we have become" (Woodward, 52). This argument is further augmented by Hall in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," who notes that individuals or the "I" speaks from a particular context, in which case the "I" is already "enunciated" and speaks from a "particular place and time," and also from "a history and a culture which is specific (145). Although the previous argument is specific for a more encompassing cultural identity, it is this shared culture (that he discusses) that resonates inside the individual and determines their "true" selves as they move from one context to the other. In his second analysis of cultural identity, Hall makes a strong observation about identity:

> [I]t is something - not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories - and histories have their real, material, and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual "past", since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already "after the break". It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental law of origin (223).

The above passage points out two key ideas that relate to this study. Firstly, that identities

are constructed through a remembrance of our cultures, norms and histories and secondly that all these may be affected by the places in which we find ourselves what Hall terms as "the positioning." Hall further assert that "the unity, the internal homogeneity, which the term identity treats as foundational, is not natural, but a constructed form of closure, every identity naming has its necessary, even if silenced and unspoken other, -that which it lacks" (223). This definition is central to this study because Hall points out critically that identity is indeed both presence and absence, which represents an ambivalent state. It would also suffice to argue that identities exist in binary oppositions as noted earlier by Woodward (1997). One can define what they are by considering that which they are not, which also poses a challenge for these definitions. Hall further poses a question for this challenge:

> If identity can only be read against the grain- that is to say, specifically not as that which fixes the play of difference in a point of origin and stability, but as that which is constructed in or through différance and is constantly destabilized by what it leaves out, then how can we understand its meaning and how can we theorize its emergence? (Hall and Du Gay, 5)

This study falls back on Hall's definition and questions regarding identity because it shows that identities are not fixed but are rather in a constant shift, which results from the outer space that prevails to create a constant imbalance for any newly formed identity. In his more assertive definition, Hall states,

> I use "identity" to refer to the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to "interpellate," speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be "spoken" (Hall and Du Gay, 5- 6).

Hall's use of Louis Althusser's (1970) concept of "interpellation" could not be more apt, for it signals the extent to which individuals are constituted by already existing ideological structures, which in turn influence and shape their identities, thus making them subjects to these already existing social and cultural constructs. Many people are

concerned (even when they are least aware of it) about what others think of them, so it would suffice to say that some identities are preferred over others because of the representation they hold in a given community. Therefore, as individuals move from one place to the other, the values and ideologies of that place are imprinted on their personalities, which in turn affects how they identify themselves. Hall summarizes thus:

> Identities are, as it were, the positions that the subject is obliged to take up while "knowing" that they are representations, that representation is always constructed across a "lack", across a division, from the place of the other, and thus can never be adequate- identical – to the subject processes which are invested in them (6).

Thus, it is worthwhile to explain the disparity that the term causes and the ways that it can be understood which will be beneficial to shaping this analysis.

The literature that springs from the postcolonial rhetoric subversively questions the imperialistic ideas that partly define it, and the subjects defined continuously tend to resist colonialist and imperialistic ideas of subjugation and domination, upon which the imperial master hegemonically defines the subject's identity. Postcolonial critics have criticized the colonial ideology for its resultant hegemonic ideas about identity and its all-encompassing notions embedded in the imperial ideology of civilization, whose aftermath resulted in questions of identity as well as attempts at decolonization (Nederveen, 2001). Postcolonial studies pivot towards studies on identity later in the twentieth century when the rhetoric shifts from a struggle to regain control by the colonized states to questions of national identity. Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), George Lamming's *The Pleasure of Exile* (1992), Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1995), Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), and Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back* (2003) are very significant in laying a foundational ground for postcolonial rhetoric on identity that has spanned decades of the dispute by departing from essentialist ideas related to migrant and immigrant communities. Ryan

(2012), in his analysis of postcolonial theory, summarizes Fanon's view of postcolonial identity as "the experience of wearing 'white masks' to cope with the West, or turning from one's own particular identity to appear to the colonizer in an image that prevents all debased attributes that show the colonized as 'primitive'" (qtd in Dizay, 79-86). Dizay further contends that "theoretically, identity is argued primarily in the connection between self and other, where instability resides inside of the confinement of the space between identities" (79-86). These changing places and spaces are propagated through movement and a tendency to create a mass culture to which not everyone can ascribe and conform to.

Whereas critics such as Bhabha (1990) and Ayar (2021) have argued that these resulting multicultural spaces serve as a secure zone within which individuals integrate into new cultures, other studies have shown that these spaces might lead to more identity shifts. The challenges that stem from identity crises seem to have a direct link to migration and immigration, which sprang from the propagation of ideas about the west as a grandiose place/space. Mayblin and Turner (2020) emphasize that the history of migration is much entangled with colonialism. And as Spivak (1999) argues, removing and decentering colonialism away from migration is tantamount to "sanctioned ignorance" (164). Studies in identity may be dated as far back as the pre-colonial period and have continued to dominate research related to social and cultural studies throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods. The colonial period is important for this research because it set in motion a tangential form of imperialism and imperialistic forms of domination that directly or indirectly created inferiority mindsets for past colonial states. This in turn resulted in many "natives" migrating from their lands of origin toward their "mother" countries. Not all migrant communities have encountered the same fate, though, as those from previously colonized countries.

The Roman Empire saw the migration of many to different parts of the world but

they experienced little or no sense of unhomeliness partly due to the fact that they belonged to the ruling class and to some, the act was voluntary (Tacoma, 2). Although many of them were merely accompanying their masters, it is still worth noting that their identities were not as disrupted as what we see much later during the postcolonial period. Thus, the time scope for this research is crucial in creating a frame within which the discussion on migration vis a vis identity shifts will be carried out.

Peter van Dommelen (2012) tackles the issue of migration in early ancient colonialism in his article, "Colonialism and Migration in the Ancient Mediterranean" and states that "Greeks and Phoenicians were the first to engage in long distance, overseas migration and to establish settlements on a substantial scale" (Dommelen, 395). He points out that the major difference between the two colonial periods – the ancient and the modern - is racism. Another defining characteristic is that the colonial period was Eurocentric and that western imperial domination was at the helm. Dommelen however, questions why postcolonial ideas of ambivalence and ambiguity should not be explored in ancient Mediterranean colonialism. In answer to his own query and to justify this study further with something he later expounds upon, he asserts that latter colonial eras were marred with "asymmetrical socio-economic relationships between the colonizing and colonized groups- inequality in a single word" (395). It is these inequalities that set into motion a myriad of problems for the colonialist machine, forcing people who felt that they might change their status if they travelled abroad towards the west, to the "promised lands" with hopes to acquiring well-paying jobs which would raise not only their income but also their social statuses.

The modern form of migration in the mid-twentieth century saw a rush of migrants from the African and Asian continents and from the Caribbean, many of whom came from countries that had been under imperial domination by the English and the French. Although colonialism played a crucial role in the influx of migration, Modood

(2016) notes that there was an "economic imperative" that created a push for employers to provide low-paying vacancies for workers from abroad. In the wake of the Second World War, when Britain experienced a shortage of laborers, an invitation was issued to interested young people from the Caribbean British Colony to come and work as well as enjoy the benefits of British Citizenship, something which was backed by the British Nationality act of 1948. In the 1950s, the *Empire Windrush* travelled thousands of miles across the Atlantic, transporting young men and women to Britain that had heeded this call (Mead, 2012). This set into motion the start of the most widely spread immigration ideologies that many governments are battling with today, and a host of *Windrush* literature emerged.

On the other side of the terrain was a stream of migrants from other nations, particularly from India, Pakistan, and West Africa (Walker, 2003). Although there was no particular agreement between the sending and receiving nations, individual migrants went out of their own accord with a clear assumption that the United Kingdom and France in particular, as well as many other European countries, were their "mother" countries to which they felt an affinity. As Stalker (2003) notes, previous colonial links, job availability and ease of entry into a receiving country were among the main factors fostering immigration (151-179). The underlying misconception is of course the disappointment at the state of affairs after arrival in the foreign states. The fact that such an ideology as had been cultivated and propagated by the British and French imperialists could have been a hoax was a shock for many new arrivals. Many migrants were struck by the utter illusion upon which they had based their hopes when they arrived at these [lands of dreams]. A good example is of the migrants that travelled on the *Empire Windrush* from the Caribbean to England, whose experiences have been documented by different novels such as Caryl Phillips' *The Final Passage* (1996), among others.

The inflow of migrants toward the West and in particular towards the UK

mainland continued unchecked for decades and their numbers grew rapidly overtime. As these migrants tried to settle and identify themselves as Britons, it sent shock waves to different governments, which led to the adjustment of laws related to the protection of migrants from the colonies. Those migrants (the *Windrush* generation), regarded themselves as UK citizens and were protected by law, although they were never issued any form of documentation to ascertain their legality and "permanent leave to stay" in the country. As a result, later years saw under-handed changes to these protective laws, which left many on the brink of losing their supposed citizenships. The UK nationality act later stipulated that it only protected citizens who came to the country before 1973.[4] The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act was later introduced to protect all long-standing residents from commonwealth countries which, according to Pater Catterall's preface to Reiko Karatani[5] (2003), shows that the latter had indeed set themselves a trap by trying to do what legislators had avoided for the past fifty years - create room for formal British Citizenship. In Karatani's assertion, the British case was a special one because of having connected itself to so many colonies. He notes that

> The Statute Book did not contain the term "British Citizenship" until 1981. Before then, there were citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC), British subjects without citizenship (BSWC), and citizens of commonwealth countries but there were no British citizens (Karatani, 1).

To try and come to terms with what Karatani defines in the above quotation, the 1999 legislation, although protecting long-standing citizens (at least in the beginning), made it harder for those attempting to come to the United Kingdom, thus creating more ideological controversies. Another yet controversial immigration legislation was introduced in 2014, and it did not protect longstanding residents (reversing the 1999

[4] See https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/77 for a detailed view of the changes that have been made over time to the immigration act in a bid to curb the influx and unending stream of immigrants to the UK.

[5] The book is based on Karatani's thesis where he explores in depth the challenges and shortcomings of trying to create and even define a legitimate British citizen.

legislation) and only took into consideration the up-to-1973 *Windrush* generation immigrants. This legislation resulted in the hostile environment policy which took effect in 2012.[6] The act was supposedly designed to make it practically impossible for all residents who did not bear "leave to remain" status to continue residing in the UK and make it even harder to reside in the UK for those trying to enter if found not entirely loyal and prejudicial to the Crown.

Whereas migrants are not entirely welcome in foreign nations, the practice has been aptly encouraged by the available labour opportunities that many seek when they choose to go abroad, which is also coupled with Eurocentric and imperialistic ideas about the North or the West being better. As Steven Castle argues, "all highly developed economies find themselves reliant on immigrant labour - at all skill levels" (Castle, 102). Therefore, what started as a colonialist project of civilizing later backfired. The bid to support the failing labour system after the Second World War that resulted in these strings of migrations is now considered vile in contemporary twenty-first-century society (especially Europe and North America) and has heavily impacted people's identities, as will be discussed in the proceeding chapters. Moreover, the reasons for migrating as earlier mentioned may be out of goodwill and intention. For instance, one may win a green card (another ideologically embedded phenomenon) legitimating one's stay in the United States of America or win an express entry Visa to Canada, but this does not eliminate the some of the sentiments towards immigrants as "harmful and dysfunctional" (emphasis mine). And because the causes of migration are seen as poverty and violence and very recently terrorism (Smith, *Common Wealth Migration*, 1981), it is generally believed that the migrants will most certainly carry most, if not all

[6]Colin (2022) among others discusses the effects of this act and how it affected many immigrants including those of the *Windrush* generation who had not been documented despite earlier acts having exonerated them for any crimes related to illegal immigration.

the vices of their countries of origin. As a result, they tend to be isolated and segregated and made to feel unwelcome in the country which they have gone to, even after they become legitimate citizens.

The issue of immigration, although taking centre stage in setting the background for identity shifts, may not be the sole reason to explain why a person may feel a sense of unbelonging in a place he or she has migrated to and assumes to be home, but it suffices to say that it is a great contributor to the identity crises and innuendoes that have become the topic not only for this study but also other significant postcolonial studies. The effect of migration is that it distorts the spaces in which individuals find themselves, which in turn affects identity formation. As Aminah (2018) states in "Construction of Space Identity: Socio-historical and Political Dialectics in the Globalization Era," "[N]o space identity constructs itself, as space and identity themselves are all constructed through a series of political and historical syntheses about and within a certain region, space, and place" (140-154). This statement affirms this study's thesis that other existing factors, whether religious or political, always come into play in demarcating particular spaces, which in turn affect identity formation. This study bases its understanding upon the idea that identity is not a homogeneous commodified entity (Brubaker and Fredrick, 2000) but rather a shifting notion without a stable centre and can only exist in what Michel Foucault terms as "heterotopia". In "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" (1997), Foucault suggests a series of binaries within which space can be defined, such as "the contrast between public and private space, family and social space, cultural and utilitarian space, the space of pleasure and the space of work," which all operate together to produce meaningful existence. He proposes several functions for heterotopias and in one of them he states:

> on the one hand, they perform the task of creating a space of illusion that

> reveals how all of real space is more illusory, all the locations within which life is fragmented. On the other, they have the function of forming another space, other real space, as perfect, meticulous, and well-arranged as ours is disordered, ill-conceived, and in a sketchy state. This heterotopia is not one of illusion but of compensation, and I wonder if it is not somewhat in this manner that certain colonies have functioned (Foucault, 1997).

Foucault's conception of space as a series of heterotopias is important for this study as it plays a crucial role in mapping and breaking down the categories of spaces and places, which, as they change, foster identity shifts. Foucault makes reference to the illusionary spaces/places and for this study the West, shows the breakdown that migrants face when they first arrive. According to David Morley, history shows that cultures [and identities] were thought to be "rooted in space, in stable patterns of interaction of people doing the same things in the same places" (Morley, 148). The influx of movement by different individuals which Morley phrases as "the obverse of all this hyper-mobility" (Morley, 148), around the globe have fostered these changing contexts and in turn distorted the basic understanding of home and belonging as well as affected the notions of identity. The continuous interaction of cultures and the transient nature or in Burke's terms "'transient impressions' or 'transient feelings'" (Burke 56) of these cultures, have given rise to many cultural phenomena resulting in the production of other notions such as hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, and in-betweenness, among others. Thus, much of the discussion on spatial changes and changes in place in this particular study focuses on the historical settings, which is the backdrop of physical locations, and how these settings affect narrative events and their sequences in the novels that will be studied.

Therefore, immigration is paramount to this study because it serves to explain the changing places and spaces within which the immigrant operates, which in turn signal identity shifts in those characters who try to navigate through the new cultures and norms that they encounter in the new territories. The characters in most of V.S.

Naipaul's and Zadie Smith's chosen texts have faced some form of migration either as first or second generation *Windrush* migrants, and many still have roots back in their countries of origin and are often seen to be moving back and forth either through their actions or through actual relocation between their countries of birth and the UK mainland. It is such movements, whether ideological or physical, that set the premise for the discussion of identity shifts in relation to changing places, in the texts chosen for analysis.

2.2 Hybrid Identities

Postcolonial literature has predominantly concerned itself with not only post-coloniality as a state of being but also with issues such as difference, haunting, memory, hybridity and globalization, language, orality, rewriting violence, and gender (Edwards, 1). The onset of postcolonial studies features struggles against certain kinds of representation, hinged upon a homogeneous way of identifying all colonial subjects. The criticism is embedded in contesting this homogeneity, proposing a portrayal of variance across the orient in terms of identity, which is sparked by the dynamics in cultures, ethnicities, and languages. As Neil Lazarus notes in the Introduction to *A Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literature* (2004), this academic discipline, although dating from around the early 1970s, can be dated back, especially in countries where independence had been gained much earlier and the struggle of the rhetoric of anticolonial nationalism had already been set in motion. But that earlier conception of postcolonial studies is also fraught - as mentioned earlier - with a more ahistorical identification and categorization than the current one which is more ideologically bent. The contestation of a clear-cut colonial period permeates through Homi Bhabha's argument in his essay "The Question of Power" in *The Location of Culture*. He argues that positioning one writer or an ideology as postcolonial and another as not, is simply a continuation of the power struggle that the colonial machine has set in motion earlier on.

He posits that the perspective on postcolonialism

> […] departs from the tradition of the sociology of underdevelopment or "dependency" theory. As a mode of analysis, it attempts to revise those nationalist or "nativist" pedagogies that set up the relation between the third world and the first world in a binary structure of opposition. The postcolonial perspective resists the attempt at holistic forms of social explanation. It forces a recognition of the more complex cultural and political boundaries that exist on the cast of these often-opposed political spheres (178).

The holistic explanations that Bhabha contests in his argument echo the difficulties people find themselves in while trying to navigate their identities that are strewn with varying cultural dynamics. In one of Bhabha's other works, *Life at the* Border, in which he examines diasporic relations among the hosts and immigrant communities Bhabha shows how these two groups are intertwined by that which seemingly separates them. He argues that the gaze that is cast towards them as they arrive "…unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that run the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (Bhabha, 30-31). There is a continued struggle for assertion on the side of the immigrants but also a struggle on the side of the host to penetrate this realm, if not physically, then at least ideologically or scientifically. This kind of struggle will also be observed in the coming analytical chapters on the selected novels.

Said's *Orientalism* (1979) discusses one of the outstanding repercussions of colonial ideology. He shows that the result is the discourse he terms Orientalism, designating a way of thinking about the orient in the European experience (Said, 12). This biased mindset may continue to produce feelings of superiority amongst the people of the West directly or indirectly, whereas those from other parts continue to court feelings of inferiority. Much of the postcolonial criticism that follows from Said's analysis does not attempt to turn the wheel of history but rather to come to terms with the results and how to incorporate these into present societies. Underscoring this fact

thus is the work of Bhabha on hybridity that attempts to bridge this gap by drawing on the ambivalence that can be exploited by characters and in the end subvert the colonial ideology by creating anxiety in the minds of the colonialists. Theoretically, Bhabha strikes a code with this proposition, but practically, the problematics of the theory and the challenges of living as a hybrid are apparent, and this study also aims to explore this condition further though the analysis of the characters in Naipaul's and Smith's selected novels.

In *Diaspora and Hybridity* Karla et al give a detailed analysis and evolution of the term, and its usage is well defined. Whereas there are several connotations of hybridity especially in a biological sense, in postcolonial literature, hybridity is primarily linked with the developments in postcolonial discourse and its critique of cultural imperialism. Emphasis is thus placed on the effects of mixing different communities and cultures and the resulting identity disruptions that may occur. The effects of migrations discussed in previous sections are a direct recipe for this cultural mix and the awareness of these multicultural communities are what raise concern for the survival or otherwise of hybridity as a theory and a practical phenomenon. Chambers (1996) suggests that "hybridity is the process of mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform, and reconfigure this production of a new hybrid culture or hybrid identities" (qtd in Karla, 71). What Chambers suggests as other have done too, is that hybrid identities result from a microcosm of cultures that work together to unsettle the original identities of individual regardless of whether they are aware of the process or not. Individuals may then start to act and behave as required by the new environment sometimes going as far as mimicking certain behaviour.

The concept of Mimicry in postcolonial studies as discussed by Bhabha and other scholars who draw upon his analysis is very crucial to this study. In fact, it is an

underlying factor in identity formation. Earlier scholars approach mimicry as an attempt by the colonized to copy the mannerisms of the colonizer so as to be and perhaps appear more assimilated. Fanon (1967) shows that there is an underlying concept in personal identity that is exhibited both in the "Myself" as opposed to the other "itself," both of whose identities are determined by the existence of an individual. As Bhabha writes in his Foreword to *Black Skin White Mask* (1986), "As a principle of identification, the other bestows a degree of objectivity but its representation - be it the social process of the Law or the psychic process of the Oedipus – is always ambivalent, disclosing a lack" (Bhabha, Foreword *Black Skin White Mask*, xxix). The process of mimicry whose basis is underscored by the desire to respond a "lack" is explained here. The individual who undertakes to mimic attempts to fill an existing desire that has been created by cultural or societal demands, or simply a psychological and pathological desire. This ultimately speaks to the script of one who engages in mimicry. But as Bhabha later argues, Fanon has always been important, especially in Britain where there have sprung up so many groups that seek autonomy amidst so many different minority groups whose intention is specifically to gain recognition. Bhabha suggest that it is in Britain today where a "range of culturally and racially marginalized groups readily assume the mask of the Black not to deny their diversity but to audaciously announce the important artifice of cultural identity and its difference…" (Bhabha, Foreword *Black Skin White Mask*, xxix).

As Huddart (2006) argues in his study of Bhabha's work and the latter's reliance on Fanon's earlier criticism, that Fanon sets the concept of mimicry in motion by articulating that "[b]lack men [or brown men and women] want to prove to white men at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal of their intellect" (Huddart, 2). This would at the surface produce a mimic of that particular identity that such individuals are vying for. Although Fanon does not explicitly state that this is a form of mimicry, Bhabha does so in his writing. As Huddart further explains, Bhabha understands

mimicry to be "an exaggerated copying of language, cultures, manners and ideas" (Huddart 39). Bhabha's emphasis is on the sort of exaggeration that yields a comic effect to the point that the person mimicking may not be taken seriously, and if they are, they are only considered at the literal level. He also emphasizes the effect of literal representation, which has the capacity to mirror and reflect back a non-desirable picture of what is being mimicked. This discussion is compatible with the identity mirroring that takes place especially in Naipaul's novels and in particular *The Mimic Men*. In his definition, Bhabha posits that "…mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86). The slippages and excesses are what produce an almost contemptuous comic effect. It is this kind of mimicry that Naipaul attempts to portray in the novel *The Mimic Men*, where the main character resorts to mimicking behaviour that ridicules the object of his copying. In essence it speaks to the ambivalence of the character and his behaviour. But Naipaul's analysis extends further into a discussion of colonial or postcolonial discourse as explained by Huddart. It is such a discourse that is presented in an ambivalent manner, and this ambivalence is necessary for one to reach a meaningful analysis. As shall be discussed later, both Naipaul and Smith use these parameters in their novels. Their presentations of character and behaviour or the thematic concerns in the novels are not too straightforward. Always the object of desire is shown to have the same capacity to repel whom it sets out to attract.

These mimicked identities are later theorised as presenting more hybrid positions, which do not only question existing structures but also aim to create an imbalance between the new and the old, thus creating anxiety. In *The Location of Culture*

(1994), Bhabha suggests that the liminality of hybridity is the result of colonial anxiety. Bhabha attempts to reveal how "iteration and translation" which are crucial in identity formation, are processes that can only be achieved through the eyes of the "Other." He reiterates the purity of cultures, emphasizing that hybridity opens up space within which a new colonial subject emerges who is neither the colonizer nor the colonized "Other." This in essence attempts to dissolve the rhetoric of imperialism and also repositions the emerging other as the one casting the gaze.

Bhabha's notion of *hybridity* questions the authenticity of colonial discourse, and this study further elaborates on these "authentic" identities as might be portrayed by characters in the novels that will be examined as opposed to "non-authentic" ones. The hypothesis is that whereas characters in the novels might be portrayed as hybrid, there are underlying tones and different points of view in these novels that contest this position and problematize it. In *Nation and Narration* (1990), Bhabha argues that the hybrid position signifies a destabilization of the fixity and rigidity that is attributed to the colonial subject. Similarly, Jenni Ramone conforms to this notion by emphasizing the latter's point of view that "this idea of the shifting or ambivalent boundary and of a sustained sense of ambivalence, in general, is fundamental to Bhabha's concept of hybridity as a mechanism by which the alienated subject is enabled to challenge oppressive authority" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 165). Bhabha further asserts that "the hybrid is finally uncontainable because it breaks from the symmetry and duality of the self/other, inside/outside" (165). But it is this very idea that the hybrid stands as a split self that this study seeks to problematize. Bhabha in *Life at the Border* argues that

> Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacements of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that run the gaze of

> the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory (Bhabha, *Life at The Border* 30-31).

As Bhabha points out, the ambivalent space in identity formation takes precedence as opposed to a seemingly authentic and homogeneous identity. Bhabha's arguments against a shared identity in colonial states and against a homogeneous block of colonial status, which thus support an ambivalent hybrid, becomes a starting point for this research but goes further so as to question its effectiveness by closely studying characters whose hybrid position only serves to entangle them in a myriad of cultural oppositions.

Hybridity is a movement, a process that is continuous. This means that hybrids also spring from previous hybrids. Karla further suggests that there are no uncontaminated purities (72) and perhaps this is where the debate problematizing hybridity emerges. One of this study's focuses is to identify the challenges that hybridity as a phenomenon poses in communities. The study sets out to problematize the often-lauded idea of hybridized communities and expose the challenges that are encountered in assuming that the concept can gain a utopian view and can be adapted by many striving to attain a liminal space in their identity. One of the strongest critics of the concept of hybridity, Patrick Colm Hogan, argues that the preference of the "middle" as opposed to the two alternatives of say, African and British, may still pose the same problems as those found in the alternatives. He goes further to suggest that hybridity may be seen as "another hegemonic identity category, with all the paraphernalia of a regulatory ideal, defining an elite group that establishes what genuine hybridity is, and so on" (Hogan, 12). This study rests on this strand of thought and goes further to exemplify this fact by showing the constant shift in which characters find themselves as

far as their identities are concerned, even in the assumed hybrid ones.

Therefore, although the concept of hybridity became very popular at the time (and still is), and was acclaimed as a break from the Eurocentric attempt to canonize the colonial migrant, there also arose critics who saw it as more theoretical than practical. Nederveen (2001) argues that hybridity is "inauthentic, without roots, (and is) for the elite only, does not reflect social realities on the ground. It is multiculturalism for the elite that highlights superficial confetti culture and glosses over deep cleavages that exist on the ground (3). This echoes earlier arguments by critics of the theory that it circumvents issues related to culture and diversity whereas it is these very problems that should be the point of contestation in a discussion on identity in the global arena. In *Postcolonial Literatures: A Materialist Critic*, Benita Parry discusses Manthia Diawara's works which assert that "the question of hybridity "as *the* correct way of being Black in the West has enabling elements as well as uncanny moments" […] "one must be aware of the fact that in fusing Whiteness with the seductiveness of hybridization, one is sacrificing not only a part of Blackness but certain Black people" (qtd. in Parry, 70).

As a matter of fact, Karla further warns against the conservative notion of hybridity. The research shows that as a national or cultural identity phenomenon, it is used as a response to the earlier problems of acculturation and diffusionism (Karla, 86). Thus, whereas the term offers material used to elaborate on and even encourage cultural mixing, at the same time it further complicates the notions of cultures and the politics of diaspora. He points out that whereas hybridity as a category "at the edge" is important in the emerging politics of migrant identities, it is usually a "slippery category, purposefully contested and deployed to claim change" (70). This relates back to Hall's argument about the "hybrid" who is slightly different, for he suggests that there is a need

to examine the nuances that come into play and emerge during the convergence of cultures so as to form a hybrid subject. In his discussion about diaspora, in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990) Hall contends that

> [t]he diaspora experience is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of the necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity that leaves with and through not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference (70).

One confers from Hall's assertion that identities are always in a constant shift, even those that seem to take on a hybrid form. Similarly, in *Postcolonial Literature: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism,* Justine D. Edwards asserts that the notion of "difference" is something crucial to postcolonial literature. He argues that postcolonial literature "exposes categories of difference…", and that "the discourse that constructed the colonizing distinctions 'between,' 'among,' 'others,' 'us and them' and 'subject and object' act as starting points for the formation of identities." He adds that this ideology creates a series of structures that are hierarchical and are impinged upon religion, race and ethnicity (17).

This resonates with Jacques Derrida's poststructuralist thought of "différance," which is also Bhabha's guiding principle in his analysis of postcolonial discourse and criticism. Derrida uses the term to refer to both the spatial and temporal connotations of the verb. "Differer" which means both to differ, to make a difference, and to defer - to put off something for future action. This notion is important to the study because initially, identities can only be formed through what they are not- in a sort of binary opposition. One can be said to be "this," because he or she is not "that." It can be argued that although the critique of othering has become old fashioned in postcolonial literature, when it comes to processes of identity formation it is still apparently an important tool

in relation to the way people perceive themselves.

From this critique, it can be understood that coloured or immigrant communities undermine the sense of pure cultural contact (Huddart, 2005). Whereas this history of cultural contact cannot be overturned, the attempt to deny its existence and its influence becomes the basis of an identity crisis. In Bhabha's view, a refusal to be rigid and fixed within a certain boundary which "prevents identities from either end of it from settling into primordial polarities" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 5), resulting in an ambivalence, is applauded, yet at the same time it is bound to dislocate the individual from within and from without. The emphasis in this study is the connection between cultural identity and history and how these factors act as bondage in identity formation. In addition, the dynamic nature of society provides the ground for continued cultural interaction, which in turn fosters changes in identity. If one fails to be assimilated into a new culture and cannot turn back to the old one, then their position is unstable, their identities are continuously shifting, and the hybrid identity which they might supposedly have acquired is thrown into imbalance.

The notion of a hybrid identity has thus been challenged on several fronts due to the limitations it poses in its understanding of the operational structure within which it claims to be based. If it is that society and culture are determined partly through human behaviour and that human behaviour, or rather how we think and act, will correspond with who we think we are, this circle renders the hybrid identity inadequate. The reverse may also be true in that as we change our perspectives about ourselves, then our behaviour (or hybrid identity) might also change. Thus, the hybrid identity perhaps is always a destabilized notion and in constant shift and it becomes questionable due to its instability. In Du Bois' *Double Consciousness and the Veil,* the writer shows how the African American community was faced with the challenges of being black as well as

trying to settle in an all-white community (Bruce, 299-309). He showed that many tried to settle into a double consciousness. To this effect, Paul Gilroy emphasizes that by developing the notion of "cultural insiderism", one can help to foster within themselves "…an absolute sense of ethnic difference which would allow an individual to merge two different cultures into one hybrid one so as to create a sense of belonging (Gilroy, 3). However, in this very submission lies the crux of this study. The idea that a constituted hybrid identity can suffice and be sustained by an individual living in a dynamic and continuously changing environment becomes to a large extent arguable.

Shifting identities in relation to spatial changes according to Alexander (2020) "(re)generate anxieties about the presence of strangers" or the feeling of estrangement "and the perils of cultural difference both in places marked by a history of colonial entanglements, settlement and '"multicultural drift"' (Alexander, Introduction 1). It is this constant shift that creates unstable identities, dismantling even the double consciousness that some characters may seemingly adopt. This study will show how hybridity as a strand of postcolonial criticism that stems from the bid to delegitimatize the holistic Eurocentric view of the Asian or African colonial subject, plays a role in identity formation, but it will also question in what ways these hybrid characters assume or negate their ambivalent in-between identities. Individuals found in the novels, as shall be exemplified, are in the shackles of these dominant hegemonic identities, and they find themselves cornered due to these ideological underpinnings and are constantly trying to disentangle themselves from these frames of identification.

2.3 Identity and Place in Postcolonial Literature

Designating the concept of place is crucial for this analysis as it is the basis for identity formation at least as far as this study is concerned. Places and spaces have become a burning topic in many areas of study and for this research, it acts as a variable

for identity formation. Since all places conform to certain forms of identifications, it is the elements found in these places that later characterize them. For instance, identifications such as the cosmopolitan city, the romantic city, and the countryside have specific structures known to the community and the general public and will create no confusion as to the identity of that particular place designated if the residents understand and agree on the tenets that define these places. Space and place identity has become a contentious issue in recent times due to the globalized mass migrations and movements for work and settlement. Harvey (1989) and Castelle (2010) both tackle the concept of space as a determinant for identity formation. The identity of a place or a space can be an impediment to identity formation or a determinant for identity changes.

Studies in postcolonial literature have shown, as earlier discussed (Hall 1996), that spaces and places have the ability to interpellate individuals and cause them to conform to existing social structures that in turn shape their identities. Earlier studies that touch upon issues of space are Edward Said's *Orientalism* in which he juxtaposes the spaces between the Orient and the Occident showing how this binary has been created by the patronizing rhetoric of the West versus East and South. Like Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, Said's argument about how spaces are branded and later perceived resonates with the idea that it is these perceived spaces that later influence identity. Thus, space and place should be considered at several levels, such as geographical, anthropological, sociological as well as political. (Aminah, 140-154) Proponents of space identity theory such as, Boisen *et al* (2011), Kalandides (2011) and Fairbanks (2003), have proposed the importance of studying a particular place in order to understand the unique elements that define and identify it as different from other places. And in so doing, the outcome is what he terms as space branding. Boisen *et al* note that place or space branding is a marketing strategy and just like in economics, brands are portrayed as better than others as a means to attract and make them more

competitive.

In postcolonial literature, the regions covered as settings for novels have either been branded positively (the West) or negatively (East and South). Naipaul, for instance, has been accused of this negative branding in his novel, *The Middle Passage* where he takes the main character through former British, French and Dutch Colonies such as Martinique, Trinidad and Guiana. He is accused of a patronizing rhetoric (Doley 2006), one that tended to negatively brand these regions and give essence and importance to colonial regimes that they had to go through for many years. On the other side of the terrain are the imperial countries, whose sole colonizing mission was to civilize, whose tenet was branding the mother country as better and thus requiring the colonial country to behave more like them. As a result, Britain, France, and America created and retained the positive brands which resulted in the mass demand to associate with these superior brands. The mass migration (such as the famous Empire *Windrush* that brought loads of immigrants from the Caribbean islands), which has been touched upon in an earlier section, is a direct result of this positive branding, a sort that promised better standards of living, better jobs, and better quality of life.

Places that have been branded may realistically hold what the brands profess them to have, but due to different tastes and preferences, the positivity may not reflect the same attitude for everyone to be exactly the same. As Boisen et al quote from Jeremy Bullmore, "[t]he image of a brand is a subjective thing. No two people, however similar, hold precisely the same view of the same brand" (135-147). Boisen further postulates that spaces "are not distinct entities but are part of a scalar hierarchy, through which identities at different scales are selectively layered" (135-147). This concept is seen at play in many postcolonial novels where individuals are pushed into these hierarchical spaces which later change or distort their identities as they try to fit in.

Concerning this study, space or place branding stands as the precursor to identity

struggle, identity shifts, and even alienation, in the sense that characters do not often live up to their expectations when they travel to different environments. For instance, the recurrent theme in Naipaul's novels is the disillusioned protagonist who often struggles to settle in the host country as he feels less at home than he expected earlier. This is why many of the characters are seen to be moving back and forth and drawing comparisons between places that they go to. Smith, on the other hand, portrays an inner struggle for characters who essentially admire and appreciate their spaces but are still challenged by their demands and expectations, which also sometimes creates an impediment to fitting into those places. Thus, successful space branding can have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, it can have the capacity to attract, for instance, the way North America has successfully been branded as the place for "The American Dream," but it can also have negative effects when this very American dream starts to become limited and can only be suited to a certain category of people (see Modood, 2011). Thus, the way a particular place is perceived may attract, only to later repel an individual when they witness it by themselves.

But space branding does not only occur physically where some places might be more physically attractive than others but also ideologically whereby the internal structures such as norms and beliefs may have a better appeal than others. Behind every social construct lies an ideology and it is this ideology or ideologies that come to define a particular space. Although some critics have tried to dismiss colonialism as an ideologically backed concept, others like Sarkowsky and Stein's (2021) volume on *Ideology in Postcolonial Texts and Contexts* have shown a direct link between place/space branding and postcolonial ideology. The writers emphasize that ideology should not be taken to mean a false consciousness but rather a starting point for which structures in a given society are formed and within which they start to function and even shape or interpellate individuals in an Althusserian sense. In fact, it is the heterogenous

nature of postcolonialism as a field of study that continuously allows room for discussions of different concepts in cultural studies and literature, and that gives liberty for this study to shape as one that debates spatial influence on identity formation. As posited by Sarkowsky and Stein, societies are ideologically bound whether the attempt to critique it argues for it or against it. In their analysis, they point out Freeden's argument about the discrepant lines of thought that a discussion on ideology may entail, that is

> ideology as a distortion of a generally perceivable reality vs. ideology as an indispensable framework for interpreting a reality that cannot be accessed from a "neutral" position; and ideology as a tool of oppression wielded by the powerful vs. ideology as a ubiquitous form of political thinking also underlying resistant thought and action by marginalized subjects and groups (Sarkawsky and Stein, 3-4).

The above text speaks to the ideology that may occupy a certain place but either in Althusserian sense interpellates or fails to configure a desirable effect for those in that place. This is what seems to be the outstanding characteristic in many of the places that individuals occupy in the novels discussed. Thus, as Said emphasizes, history is made by men from ideas that govern their thinking at a particular time, which ideas later shape the spaces or the Orient in his exact terms (Said, 4-5).

Therefore, what results from the migration earlier discussed is a changed and continuously changing place because if anything, migrations and immigrations seem to have gained a heightened pace since the start of the century and have further complicated matters for both the host culture and the diasporic arrive. As Karla et al signify, diasporic spaces become the most important facet in identity formation among migrant communities:

> [w]e note how diaspora more often than not evokes two social spheres of interaction – the place of residence and the place from which migration has occurred. Agency, in these multiple locations, is in the diasporic group which exhibits some form of collective mobilization around the tensions

> between home(s) and abroad(s). It is the ongoing political, economic, social and cultural ties between multiple institutionalized spaces that characterize diaspora (Kalra, 3).

Moreover, the fact that immigrant communities are tied together with concepts diasporic in nature might be "constituted as a threat when it interrupts the black/white divide, something that has recently occurred with the racialization of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in the USA" (Karla, 15). Thus, diasporas as branded places also work in conjunction with other factors as shall be discussed to influence identity formation.

Additionally, as Karla further demonstrates, whereas ethnicity is tightly linked to diaspora, it also comes into play when it comes to identity formation. However, some critics argue that a continuation of ethnic, or intentional or unintentional boundaries based on ethnic grounds poses a political challenge for many host countries whose main aim would be to create continuity between nationalities. Karla et al further argue that ethnic minorities that exist in host countries may well maintain static boundaries and are not open for outsiders to penetrate. Karla et al cites Anthias, who argues that

> Diaspora entails a notion of an essential parent – a father, whose seed is scattered [….] The original father(land) is a point of reference for the diaspora notion: it is this constant reference point that slides into primordiality, however much it is refined and reconstructed…" (qtd in Karla et al 16).

These innovations and the creation of a new language cannot be taken as simple replicas of already existing cultures but should rather be taken as the creation of new material for minority groups. This is illustrated in the proceeding chapters where different minority groups create new languages from the existing one, which ultimately come to signify a different cultural group.

2.4 Identity and Language

Identity and language are fundamentally connected, and as Fanon ascertains in *Black Skins White Masks*, the Antillean migrant is desperate to learn and keep the

language not of his origin but of his colonial master. He further argues that this places individuals, especially migrants, in a precarious situation of having to negotiate their different spaces, thus causing identity shifts. The counter-argument for this phenomenon is Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* in which he touches upon the destiny of Africa in relation to its language, culture, and civilizations which was "always decided around conference tables in the Metropolis of the Western world" (Ngugi, 4). The book was published at a time when many African writers both at home and abroad were plagued by the idea of using English as a medium for their artistic creations, which Ngugi terms as preying on the African languages as well enriching the foreign ones (English and French). However, his final argument seems to be that this can be done, as he himself avows to carry on, by making the expressions of his characters in the novels he writes carry the African norms and cultures that in the end cease to sound English, at the very least a sort of hybrid language. He further argues that this would not be a desecration of English but rather showing the dynamics and thus growth that may occur when a language meets a new culture. A very good example is seen in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and *On Beauty* in which the characters try to appropriate different language structures depending on the person they are speaking to.

Identity as portrayed in this study spans across different facets of our social existence. Looking at Ngugi's study, it can be surmised that the writers were faced with an identity crisis, questioning whether they are writing for the white or the French man, or the African, Asian or Caribbean, whom their works were supposed to be about. The result of such works as Ngugi's has led to one important development in postcolonial novels, one where every character is accorded their own way of speaking, where the writer does not seem to be at pains in creating traditional English novels – a phenomenon which shall be observed in the novels of V. S. Naipaul and Zadie Smith. In these novels,

if a character is given a pure English tongue, it is often to ridicule and mock that Eurocentric mannerism that he is seemingly adopting or even mimicking. This language becomes a defining factor for identity and for many of the characters might act as a tool to aid in identity formation.

Jerrica Linn Watts' article on Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* touches upon the way language is used to create new spaces. As Watts posits, "Smith draws upon an impressive linguistic repertoire – which combines Cockney and Creole, Bengali, and the King's English, into a melting pot of linguistic diversity…" which, as she explains, does not only explain a multiplicity of London ethnic cultures but also ultimately presents a challenge for identification (Watts, 851-874). Watts' discussion relies on Ben Rampton's sociolinguistic research into what he calls *language crossing*. Language crossing as identified here occurs in cases where minority groups seek to identify themselves as different from the larger community in particular moments of speech acts. It can also be a means for being more assertive in the community. These issues about how language is used as a tool to demarcate places are tackled in the coming sections that discuss how language is used in particular places and context to signal how that particular place has fostered a change in language and then a change in identity.

Individuals are social beings that are capable of a multiplicity of different belongings as a way of manifesting different identities. This study takes into consideration the plot and setting of the novels of V.S. Naipaul and Zadie Smith as well as the manner in which these characters relate to each other across varying contexts. In addition, a comparison is drawn between characters in the different novels by studying the changes in their identities, which brings into perspective the challenges faced in relation to identity formation. The study seeks to find out whether there is an identity shift in the characters portrayed in the selected novels, showing how the understanding of identity has changed in consideration of the spatial and temporal underpinnings. By

examining the social behaviour of characters in the novels, their reactions towards their perceived body difference and/or body satisfaction, the way in which they react towards their religious affiliations or spiritual beliefs coupled with the changing places and time frames in the novels, the study will attempt to show the effects that these have on how people perceive themselves. Many postcolonial novels exhibit differing and perhaps disconcerting identity issues that arise and are expressed by characters that have migrated from different places with a permanent scar of colonial history – from the orient (Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean) to the occident (Europe or America) - carrying with them different languages and cultures that later on come to clash with those that they find in their areas of settlement. The result is often an ambiguous and liminal space that they come to harbour, which as Bhabha proposes, maybe a "third space," but which I seek to contest and problematize in this study, pointing out that such a character who stays and opts for a hybrid identity tends to crumble under the very nature of this identity, as it offers no centre and seems to remain at an uncomfortable threshold.

CHAPTER 3

PLACE AND IDENTITY IN V.S. NAIPAUL'S *THE MIMIC MEN* AND *HALF A LIFE*

This chapter explores the effects of spatial changes on the characters' identities in V.S. Naipaul's novels, *The Mimic Men* and *Half a Life*. The chapter analyzes how spatial aspects merge with characters' dispositions to distort or encourage identity formation. *The Mimic Men* explicitly exposes the "double colonial" state in which many of the characters find themselves due to the fact that they have originally migrated from India as plantation workers but also encounter the residues of the colonial machine after the seeming departure of the colonial masters. In the same light, the analysis of *Half a Life* extends the discussion and examines how different places strewn with different cultures affect and determine identity formation. Both of the novels' plots move between different cultures and continents, for instance, from Asia to Europe and then to Africa. It is these different places that interfere with identity formation because as the characters move about, they encounter new cultures, new norms, and beliefs which they either have to conform to or struggle against and in both cases, the challenges are immense, as shall be discussed in proceeding sections.

3.1 Mimicked Identities in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*

Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967) explores the challenges colonial subjects encountered in a changing place such as the Island of Isabella. One of Naipaul's best-known novels, *The Mimic Men* is indeed a portrayal of a man who struggles for a sense of belonging in a world where the very notion of identity is questioned by the history of the place and thus often ends up mimicking behaviour that is less suited to him. *The Mimic Men* is an autobiographical memoir set in a previously colonial city in the Caribbean Islands, which is also the birthplace of the author. The novel features the

protagonist Ralph Singh as one whose space has been marred by both physical and mental distortions and is at the moment exiled in a hotel room in London, where he can write his memoir that reviews his entire life. In the memoir, Singh explores his tumultuous social and political life as he navigates through his East and West Indian origins. At the age of forty, Ralph Singh sees his life as a half-life, to borrow the phrase from another title by Naipaul and it is with this view that he transports the reader through a series of flashbacks exploring his life struggles at balancing both his personal and political life. Through his internal and external self-criticism, Ralph Singh undergoes a self-examination of his identity struggles and exposes to the reader how the effects of colonial encounters that linger in previous colonial states might affect the process of self-identification. His pursuit of a political career, as Greenberg (2000) explains, and his being ousted by his party during a second election are what form "the rhetorical momentum of the retrospective narration" (220-221). It is this retrospection that reveals the inner struggles, hopes and dreams, and ultimately his identity.

Originally, Ranjit Kripal Singh, Ralph contemplates the tumultuous environment of Isabella, an Island that for decades was under British colonial governance and is inhabited by immigrants who were previously indentured sugar plantation laborers. Ralph Singh is born to an Indian Brahmin father and a rich mother who at the time resided in Isabella, which was a former British colony. He is British by this fact. The memoir follows his childhood memories, then his college life in London as a youth where he spends most of his time immersing himself in British culture. He then narrates his life regarding his marriage to Sandra, a British woman, and his return with her to the Island of Isabella where he endeavours to pursue a political career as a minister whilst running a real estate enterprise that he starts up. All of these pursuits fail and are arguably the leading cause of his self-exile.

In this novel, Naipaul explores the extent to which doubly displaced communities

are affected in terms of identity formation. As a former British colony, and later an independent nation, Isabella's culture has been utterly diluted. The citizens can hardly trace their origins and this makes it hard for their identities to form. Many of the people on the Island have been displaced twice, first as those who came to a foreign Island, and then as those who were exposed to foreign colonial cultures in a foreign land. It is this double alienation that Ralph Singh faces and the consequent lack of identity that epitomizes the "mimic" nature of not only his personality and other characters in the novel but also the town of Isabella itself.

As a colonial island, Isabella is an amalgam of cultural impurities made up of previously indentured labourers from India, Asia, and some African countries; all have come to the Island to forge new beginnings as they traverse the harshness of plantation life amid colonial existence. Many of the buildings in Isabella are an imitation of British architecture and as such, at the time of Independence, the Island is strewn with remains of colonial authority in every sense; the leaders are puppets of colonial masters, and the houses and streets retain their colonial appearance. Isabella as the centre of the narrative thus is a microcosm of not only the colonial power that was yielded in the past but also the positions of leadership that different people, both colonials and locals held in the past. These political positions play out a lot in the novel and also determine how far Ralph can attempt to embark on the idea of rooting himself in Isabella. In addition, this space being a previous colonial space represents a transition, which also affects the people that reside in it. As Chandoke notes in *The Post-Colonial City*, "[i]n the postcolonial world, the city is a historical subject because it is a manifestation of the articulation, the symbiosis of the non-capitalist modes of production, and the dominant capitalist mode" (Chandoke, 2868-73). It is this riding principle of capitalism, the apparent success story for every successful man in Isabella, that later influences Ralph Singh's notion of real estate development and later political ambitions. He views them

as avenues he must take as one of the upper-class successful colonials and more so as a deserving citizen of the land.

Additionally, Isabella has land and regions that have been marked as belonging to the upper-class colonials, a system of segregation designed to replicate the former colonial masters' regime. But as Fanon warns in *Black Skin, White Masks*, viewing colonial spaces as wholesome is tantamount to reducing the understanding of the dynamics of colonial spaces. He warns against stereotypes but also points out that the markings of say, schools for blacks as opposed to those for whites, houses for blacks also as opposed to those belonging to whites, determine the future understanding of how these spaces will be organized in urbanized settings. He notes as follows:

> It is probably unnecessary to recall the existence of native quarters and European quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans; in the same way, we need not recall apartheid in South Africa. Yet if we examine closely this system of compartments, we will at least be able to reveal the lines of force it implies (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 37).

Fanon's caution is evidenced in the description of the narrator's feelings when he is writing his memoir. Singh's wish to dissolve the current sight of Isabella into one he dreams it to have been, showing his longing for the unknown past, a past that perhaps can link him to his history and help to determine his identity and might reveal a "collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed selves," (Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 5) that might lie within the walls of the deeply historical city. In his thoughts, he contemplates this:

> […] when I go out to the center of this city, this dying mechanized city, […] I see a picture of the city of other times […] I long to be transported into that scene and at the same time I am overwhelmed by the absurdity of the wish and all the loss that it implies (*The Mimic Men,* 97).

This whole place has been marked out by past colonial dominance and it can hardly be recognized by the dwellers. The pain he feels for the loss of the city is also seen in the

one-page chapter he uses, to express it, as though to show that it is beyond his capacity to define and explain it in more words. However, Ralph Singh's view of these facts is one-sided, for he too applies the same domineering authority and power over those around him just like in colonial times. Thus, when he inherits land from his family that has been in disuse for some time, he does not put into consideration the terrain and distance from other amenities, but merely resorts to ill-advised plans of building a modern residence. This action is symbolic of past times when colonialists set up buildings that were not to the standard of the natives or did not fit into their living lifestyles. But because Singh has partly adopted the "master" attitude, he too disregards these bare facts and builds a modern residence that ends in shambles. Thus, the project, like many other things he attempts to do, fails, which signifies a failure in attempting to empower oneself when power is stripped away at the start of the colonizing mission.

Colonial cities and people, as Çulhaoğlu notes, suffer from sentiments of "othering", and looking at the other as the better option simply implies a hegemonic and domineering ideology earlier instigated by imperial leadership. Ralph's disappointment arises from the disenfranchised perspective of Isabella as a worse place than London or other European countries. As Çulhaoğlu notes, it

> […] is the case in many once-colonized countries, and, in the whole world, it is still under the hegemony and domination of Western neo-colonialist imperialism. And again, as is the case in all the colonized countries, the colonized are made to feel that only the colonizing metropolis has the truth; whatever comes from there is real, valuable, and important; it is the place where there is order, wholeness, beauty, art, and common sense; history is made there; knowledge, philosophy, wisdom, science, technology, and novelties are there; it is the home of creators, masters, rulers, patrons, and authorities; it is the centre of the world, in brief (Çulhaoğlu, 88-103).

This understanding that the "other" is better is a riding principle and at times governs mimicked behaviour and identity in the novel. It is this othering that ultimately strips Ralph of his identity, for he thinks little of himself and can only afford to live behind the

shadows of those whose identities he thinks are appropriate. Ralph Singh adopts a stance that is neither British nor Indian. He is neither here nor there. He says in his memoir: "I could not pretend even to myself to be part of a community or to be putting down roots" (*The Mimic Men*, 13) However, he makes several attempts before his own self-reflection and criticism to at least fit a certain category, although without much success.

Yet despite all of this, Isabella is a mirror of London. It is a reflection of the expected majesty and dazzle that he anticipates before his arrival in London. The difference though is that whereas he does not expect a lot from Isabella, he hopes to gain a lot from both his study and cultural empowerment as a result of living in London, but in the end, he is utterly disappointed:

> Here was the city, the world. I waited for the flowering to come to me. The trams on the Embankment sparked blue. The river was edged and pierced with reflections of light, blue and red and yellow. Excitement! Its heart must have lain somewhere. […] But the magic of names soon faded. Here was the river, here the bridge, there that famous building. […] In the great city, so solid in its light, which gave colour even to unrendered concrete to me as colourless as rotting wooden fences and new corrugated-iron roofs- in this solid city life was two-dimensional (*The Mimic Men*, 23).

Ralph Singh's confusion about the city stems from his consideration of the Isabella he wishes to have lived in and the one he actually lives in. He is engulfed by a past but this past as Hall asserts can "no longer address us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth." (Hall *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 223). He continuously fantasises about his dream city which is the end creates two places for him and which places cannot allow him to create a stable identity.

The hope that Singh has for living in London too is soon lost, after he realizes that there are two dimensions to living there and he has to choose one. As an upper-class

colonial, he chooses the dandy, a style which he thinks will be much appreciated in the streets of London. As he writes, he contemplates that

> [t]here was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship (*The Mimic Men,* 24).

But as mentioned, these feelings are short-lived and only an illusion of his real self. Later his disappointment about London as a looming city when contrasted with Isabella is striking. He is disappointed by the non-eventfulness of his arrival. He notes that the city wasn't waiting for him and that he wanted to feel "whole" to feel that as a British by birth, his identity would be complete by finding this missing space. Instead, he feels distraught and describes his panic as

> […] not the panic of being lost or lonely; [but] the panic of ceasing to feel myself as a whole person. The threat of other people's lives, the remembered private landscape, the relationships, the order which was not mine [….] (*The Mimic Men*, 33).

Ralph acknowledges that he had looked for "largeness," and perhaps recognition, but instead he feels smaller and becomes almost invisible. He experiences a more fragmented self than when he first arrives and becomes more alienated and estranged. The more his space changes the more his identity moves further from his core. And thus, his arrival in London exposes his desire for self-discovery but ends in a feeling of emptiness because his expectations are not met. London, like Isabella, causes more alienation for him as his hope and dream of fulfilling that empty space that would otherwise signify his identity is shattered.

As earlier noted in the introductory chapters, Naipaul has come under attack for his commentary on colonial countries and Islands like Trinidad or Isabella for that matter. Many critics have accused him of thinking the worst of colonial spaces. But his criticism of the colonised countries ought to be read with a grain of salt. Isabella is a

very symbolic place. But a close look at Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* may yield a contradictory perspective. Singh's failure to gain fulfilment in both of the spaces he considers home can be viewed as a portrayal of the disillusionment that many migrants face when they travel to the West. In essence, Isabella as a city is the greatest symbol and embodiment of mimicry in the novel *The Mimic Men*. Thus, Ralph Singh's attempt at creating a middle-class village that cannot be accessed is one example of a failed economic and success plan not only for Ralph Singh but also for other like-minded middle-class men and women in Isabella. Crippleville (Ralph Singh's estate) is symbolic of a culture that is only beautiful on the outside but cannot be wholly comprehended and appreciated by those who live in it because either it is locked from the inside or the other way around. This means that those on the outside cannot exit the entanglement they are in and the other way round. Singh is depicted to be belonging to both, the outsider and insider, which is a position even more difficult for identity formation.

Isabella is represented with an ambivalence (Bhabha, 1997, Young, 2005), that capacity to both "attract and repulse" its dwellers, and high expectations are soon followed by deep disappointment. Singh's description of the city as three dimensional explains the feeling of alienation he gets when he goes there:

> I see that all the activity of these years existing as I have said in my own mind in parenthesis represented a type of withdrawal, and was part of the injury inflicted on me by the too solid three-dimensional cities in which I could never feel myself as anything but spectral, disintegrating, pointless, fluid. The city made by man but passed out of control: breakdown the negative reaction, activity the positive but equal aspects of an accommodation to a sense of place which like memory, when grown acute, becomes a source of pain (*The Mimic Men*, 61).

In essence, the feelings that Ralph gets when he is in Isabella, are of illusion, disenfranchisement, and alienation. Yet at times, he feels at home being in Isabella like that time he comes home with Sandra having spent years at college in London. Whether it is the feeling of homecoming or the change of environment, at that time Isabella seems

grand to him: “We were coming to the Island expecting the meanness and constriction of Island life; we were dazzled, as by the sunlight itself, by the freedom which everyone who welcomed us proclaimed” (*The Mimic Men*, 66). This happiness is short-lived, and like the port lights that shine at night and disappear during the day, the realities of Isabella come to haunt him once he settles back in. As Dizay points out that Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* is a portrayal of a society “that can never attain a complete and utter degree of cultural purity” but that Naipaul shows that within the psyche of his characters lies this constant struggle. He posits that Naipaul is aware that “characters can never attain their original identities and original values” (Dizay, “Postcolonial identity crisis” 920-26).

As a parody of men, *The Mimic Men* is also a portrayal of how human identity can be reduced to mere copying. In his Nobel Prize Lecture, Naipaul posited that the novel is “about colonial men mimicking the conditions of manhood, men who had grown to distrust everything about themselves” (Naipaul, *Two Worlds*). By this, he means that the protagonist Ralph is a caricature and representative of so many in colonial states. Ashcroft et al summarise mimicry as the concealed imitation of behaviour that is not in line with individual identity (Ashcroft, 19). Mimicry is symbolic of self-hatred and a distrust of the self. In the novel, the first instance of mimicry is seen through the relationship Singh has with his Jewish landlord, Mr Shylock. Singh writes that “[h]e had the habit of stroking his ear and inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it” (*The Mimic Men*, 1). With that as a beginning to his endless copying, he copies the clothing, way of talking, and detachment from other people. In short, Singh’s only desire is to fulfil a life that has been designed for him by the British colonial masters or by his Aryan ancestors. And as Dizay further asserts in his discussion about mimicry in *The Mimic Men*, “mimicry is a strong desire and urge for attaining recognizable and reformed identity rather than rather than reflecting the other” (Dizay,

920-26). Thus, what is seen in relation to Ralph Singh's behaviour is this attempt at copying behaviour he thinks is more suited to the Western world -London. This mimicry is extended in his attempt at building a modernized Westernized estate- Crippleville whose name had been "…speedily corrupted…" from Kripalville. Like all mimicked habits, the happiness they bring is short. He feels empty because the achievement is not his, but perhaps of his Aryan ancestors, as he observes.

Furthermore, Ralph Singh is seen to prefer the fair-skinned Europeans to his fellow colonials as better candidates for his sexual exploits. He abhors Lieni, his neighbour and acquaintance, who seriously loves him, but her Maltese background assumedly makes her unfit for him. His marriage to Sandra might be a reflection of the need "to be white" similar to that which Fanon touches upon in *Black Skins White Masks*. Fanon's criticism analyses a near-psychotic tendency for the blacks and non-white men to not only conquer the white female body but "grasp white civilization and dignity and make them [his]" (Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, 45). It is a feeling that might bring back some form of power and autonomy to the colonized. However, even the relationships he gets into with the white women come to no fruition because he gets into them for the wrong reasons. To Singh, women are compartmentalized objects and he is only able to appropriate parts of the body in place of full identities. He thus attaches no emotion to his affairs, which usually end in shouting and slamming doors. The word intimacy is horrendous to him. He writes:

> Intimacy: the word holds the horror. I could have stayed forever at a woman's breasts if they were full and had a hint of a weight that required support. But there was the skin, there was the smell of skin. There were bumps and scratches, there were a dozen little things that could positively enrage me… These scenes in the book-shaped room didn't always end well; they could end in tears, sometimes in anger, a breast grown useless being buttoned up, a door closed on a room that seemed to require instant purification (*The Mimic Men,* 206).

Singh's identity, then, can be thought of as one that spurs in the moment. He loves and

loathes the very objects he holds, such as the women's breasts. To him, beauty is taken away by the freckles on the women's skins. This shows his immaturity and lack of self-awareness or lack of identity. This passage is a reminder of what Bhabha, in *Of Mimicry and Man,* terms as the "ambivalent", the ability of an item or concept, or idea to entice and revolt at the same time (125-133). It also reveals the discussion that has for long been at the core of postcolonial rhetoric for both the colonial and the master. Whereas colonial places were mostly viewed as those that lacked and needed civilizing, as per Joseph Conrad's analogy of the "dark continent," it is this same dark continent that attracted and still attracts many to it. What Ralph Singh and the novel *The Mimic Men* do is to change the direction of the "gaze" and cast it toward the master and his country. The stern revelation is that the attitudes are mutual and that England, just like Africa or Asia, has the capacity to both attract and repulse in the same breath.

Naipaul's insight into how minority groups in communities might be encapsulated or interpellated by existing structures is also portrayed in *The Mimic Men*. Isabella, the fictitious island setting, is a place that belongs to no one in particular, thus disabling all claims of legitimacy and rootedness by individual characters. This upsets both the physical and ideological spaces and affects the order of things, especially the process of identity formation: Singh writes thus in his memoir.

> We went through purely mulatto villages where the people were a baked copper colour, much disfigured by disease. They had big light eyes and kinky red hair. My father described them as Span- iards [....]. They permitted no Negroes to settle among them... (*The Mimic Men*, 121).

This passage reveals how difficult it might be for people to form stable identities in a space that continues to change due to migration. The tone of the passage and the naming of a people as "Span- iards" might reveal that the speaker- Singh or that his father too did not have an affinity for this group of people. Moreover, the Spaniards too don't like to live among black or Negroes. Naipaul also reveals not only the racial but also the

social gap between Singh and his old school friend, which for both seems to be embarrassing as they occupy different ideological spaces. Singh's childhood friend Ethelbert Browne and later political ally exposes to Singh the corrupt nature of Isabella and together they start up a magazine. But in the past Singh has always felt himself in a much higher position than Browne, which is shown in his commentary about his visit that ends their friendship.

> We never forgive those who catch us in postures of indignity. That Saturday, with itstwo gestures, its two visits, its two failures, marked the end of the special intensity of our relationship. I cannot deny that I was relieved. I had been choked in that interior, and not by its smallness. Joe Louis and Haile Selassie on the wall, the flannel vest, the family photograph, that black jackass: it was more than an interior I had entered. I felt I had had a glimpse of the prison of the spirit in which Browne lived (*The Mimic Men* 150).

This passage reveals something crucial about Singh and the place he occupies. He sees himself as being above Browne, pitying their relationship and glad at the end when they don't get to see each other anymore. However, it also reveals in Singh a lack of self-identification which directly correlates with spatial distortions of two people who went to the same school, and lived in the same neighbourhoods, yet were so far apart in the social order. As Hall (1996) and Woodward (1997) argue, identity is created through difference. Thus, this loss of friendship might be for Singh like a loss of a reflection in the mirror; he can't see himself because Browne's presence helped him to differentiate his identity from that which he is not.

Singh's lack of self-identification is arguably most characterized by his inability to acknowledge his successes or even failures for that matter. He attributes his successes to pure chance and lack. For instance, the political movement that he and his friend Ethelbert Browne found is to him "little more than just a game" (*The Mimic Men*, 45) and his assumption is that having foreign experience from living abroad equipped him better for the ministerial position. But as Greenberg (2000) points out, "there is clearly

self-recrimination at having to return to London as a nobody near the age of 40" (214-37). And in Singh's own words, he acknowledges the surprise at the kind of work he has to do, and in the end, regrets having lost his job.

> I know that return to my political life is impossible. The pace of colonial events is quick, the turnover of leaders is rapid. I have already been forgotten; and I know that the people who supplanted me are themselves about to be supplanted. My career is by no means unusual. It falls into the pattern (10).

Singh contemplates the idea of returning to Isabella and according it is one he cannot consider seriously because he thinks he will not find a place or that things will have changed. He consoles himself by saying "[t]he career of the colonial politician is short and ends brutally (*The Mimic Men*, 10). This self-consolatory note depicts a tone and mood of regret despite his claims of disinterest in his past career. This might be due to the spatial shift that happens as he leaves Isabella for London as an exile. He does not think much of his job while in Isabella, pitying people of all conditions (*The Mimic Men*, 45), and thinking himself above everyone. But as an exile in London, both his physical and ideological spaces have shifted, which enables him to reflect back on the opportunities he had while in Isabella. All of these situations make him long for that other old self, and thus he later acknowledges that this part of his life was necessary for him to be able to find a true identity although the end of the novel shows this to be a continuing struggle.

Perhaps for Singh and for others in Isabella, the postcolonial space has not changed so much despite the years that pass to allow fellow citizens to rule over others, or even to allow a native Indian such as himself to form a meaningful relationship with a white woman Sandra. Towards the end of his quest, which he documents at the start of the memoir, Singh signals the plight of the colonial, something that parallels the life of Willie Chandran in *Half a Life*, as will be discussed in the next section He notes that after failing at almost everything in life including self-identification, the result and

perhaps ultimate end is flight:

> I know that return to my island to my political life is impossible. […] I know that the people who supplanted me are themselves about to be supplanted. My career is by no means unusual. It falls into a pattern. The career of the colonial politician is short and ends brutally. We lack order. Above all, we lack power, and we do not understand that we lack power. […] For those who lose, and nearly everyone, in the end, loses, there is only one course: flight. Flight to the greater disorder, the final emptiness: London and the home counties (*The Mimic Men*, 10-11).

In the end, although the big history book about his ancestors the Aryans doesn't come to fruition, Ralph Singh writes a history about himself. The journeys and physical spaces he inhabits throughout his entire life up to the point of writing his memoir are a life lesson about who he is and what he identifies with. Although his identity is not fully formed, Naipaul shows that this act of writing serves as his salvation for his lost identity. In the last paragraph of the memoir, he notes:

> It does not worry me now, as it worried me when I began this book, that at the age of forty, I should find myself at the end of my active life. I do not now think this is even true. I no longer yearn for ideal landscapes and no longer wish to know the god of the city. This does not strike me as a loss. I feel, instead, I have lived through attachment and freed myself from one cycle of events. It gives me joy to find that in so doing I have also fulfilled the fourfold division of life prescribed by our Aryan ancestors. I have been a student, householder, and man of affairs, recluse. My life has never been more physically limited than it has been during these last three years. Yet I feel that in this time I have cleared the decks, as it were, and prepared myself for fresh action. It will be the action of a free man. What this action will be I cannot say [….] I do not wish to re-engage in that cycle from which I have freed myself […] so writing, for all its initial distortion, clarifies, and even becomes a process of life (*The Mimic Men*, 300-301).

This last passage in the novel is perhaps the best takeaway from the novel as it offers straightforward insight into the protagonist's feelings about himself and ultimately his identity. For someone who starts his life with presumptions about beauty, foreign cultures, and the optimism leaving Isabella, he ends up with the uncertainty of everything, yet the same uncertainty comes with the freedom of the lack of knowledge,

not the anxiety of high expectations. Similarly, this passage shows that Singh's survival and struggle for the self will now be based on changing and shifting his identity as he traverses new places without predetermining the things he will do and see in that particular place prior to his arrival.

At the start of this chapter in his memoir Singh acknowledges that it was a period "between my preparation for life and the withdrawal from it" (*The Mimic Men*, 38). This signals the uprootedness in everything he does in life. Later he recalls the period of his active political life that coincided with another accident that had just ended- his marriage to Sandra. Singh seems to be unfulfilled in life, his education, marriage, and even inheritance or political life seem to result in further alienation. Thus, whereas he felt powerful as a politician, having his servants run to him as soon as he was summoned, this excitement is short-lived. As earlier mentioned, Singh attempts to adopt the attitude of the colonizer, seen in the way he redesigns his inherited land and turns it into an estate, having servants run for him and even looking down on his best friend Browne due to his impoverished state. Despite all of this, his predicament is not any better than the others like Browne. He is ousted from Isabella and ends up an exile in a London Hotel. This part of his memoir can be summed up as representing an individual trying to occupy as well as dominate the places that are not designed for him, and that is why he further alienates himself.

Although Naipaul portrays Singh to be hopeless most of the time, there are instances in the novel that reveal the protagonist's capacity to identify with what is around him despite the difficulty it entails. During one of his many journeys between London and Isabella, he picks up a "fat" prostitute during their layover, but this time round simply acknowledges her body and the self that she is instead of objectifying her in his usual manner. "Flesh, flesh, I thought: how could I disdain? How could I even judge?" (*The Mimic Men*, 282) This refusal and perhaps conscious self-discipline that

prevents him from casting judgment is the author's way of signalling the character's acceptance of the cultural differences he is faced with. Naipaul perhaps intends to show that, for Ralph Singh the time he spends and the experience he gains while in London has shown him what humanity is about, and thus this should warrant a change in his behaviour and maybe identity.

In summary, the discussion on the effects of changing places on identity formation as relates to *The Mimic Men* has revealed that because places are deeply embedded in the histories, these histories come back to haunt those who live there and will continue to interfere in their identity formation. Moreover, Naipaul reveals in the novel that multicultural ideology may not be famous for his characters as Singh fails to identify himself with either Isabella or London whose ethnic diversity was evident from the narrative. This confirms that Walkowitz argues that Naipaul's fiction is against multiculturalism "even when [it] offers some of the most compelling, moving accounts of postcolonial consciousness." She further argues that "[i]n Naipaul's fiction cross-class and cross-cultural solidarities are false, empty of real understanding, or simply embarrassing and end up in a half-life" (231), something that has been exemplified in the previous discussion and is better expounded in the next section.

3.2 The Half-identity(s) in V. S. Naipaul's *Half a Life*

The previous section analysed how spatial changes coupled with (post)colonial conditions can affect an individual's identity and cause them to suffer from alienation. In *Half a Life* (2001), this discussion is extended by looking at some of the resulting identification problems that arise for characters who struggle to live in foreign and changed places, and as the title of the novel at hand suggests, the ultimate tendency not to live as a whole being but as only half of that whole. *Half a Life* revolves around the life of Willie Chandran, who is in a continuous struggle to find a whole, not just half of his identity. Perhaps this struggle is rooted in his past because his father has previously

given up his Brahmin heritage and married a girl from a lower caste. This in a way seals Willie's fate, because his own father lives to regret his own relationship to a woman from a lower caste and does not bring himself to officially marry Willie's mother. This split identity sets in motion a quest for an identity for Willie's father and later for Willie as well. During his youthful years, an opportunity appears to him in the form of a scholarship, which is also connected to one of his names "Somerset," and one that allows him to flee India to form a new self in London. While there, he loses himself in a series of sexual encounters which are meant to ground him in British culture but instead cast him into an abysmal void leading him to flee farther from London to Africa. He hopes to be saved by his wife Ana, by seeking solace in her innocence and peaceful living in Africa, but rather he ends up living her life and not his own. Thus, the Christian in the name Willie, the British in the name Somerset and the Indian in the name Chandran are some of the religious and cultural aspects which are all entangled in Willie's identity and are in a constant struggle to enforce themselves in Willie's character. This, coupled with his constant spatial shifts between India, England, Africa, and Germany result in a split self and long-time alienation for Willie and his sense of identity.

Willie's quest starts as a question about his identity, handed down to him by his father at the time of naming him. "Why is my middle name Somerset? The boys at school have just found out, and they are mocking me" (*Half a Life*, 1). As the first identity marker, names are considered to be our first entry into a cultural setting. Names tell a lot about the people and where they come from. Finch confirms in her "Naming Names: Kingship, Individuality and Personal Names," that "[I]n societies which prize individuality, a name quite literally 'personifies' the individual by encapsulating the essence of that person for those who know them or know about them" (709-725). The boys at school who mock and laugh at an Indian boy with a foreign name, even without knowing its origin, do this with foreknowledge of his background and see no reason why

he should be named something that makes no sense to them. The mockery results from the fact that a foreign name may signal that your father did not care enough to find you an appropriate name from around the land. It signifies too, a lack of kinship or in Willie's case, a desire to attain other kin from faraway lands. Finch further emphasizes Benson's argument about naming as a social act of attaining or assigning belonging by saying that "Naming [is] a quintessentially social act […] naming acts as a critical element in processes of social incorporation and the constitution of personhood" (qtd in Finch, 706-725). What one is called has the power to make or break his personality because names, like cultures, are rooted in history, and the story that they tell can replicate personality to a greater extent. Willie Somerset Chandran has half a name that does not belong to him and was given as homage to a foreign writer who had visited his father at the temple. Incognizant about what he has done, Willie's father is seen to ponder about his son's state: "Little Willie. Little Willie, what have I done to you… Why have I forced this taint on you?" (*Half a Life*, 18) In short, what Willie's father does is to taint him not only with a caste trait (because his mother was a "backward") but also a foreign one in his name. This is the first insight the reader gets into Willie's future identity changes or crises. His sense of unbelonging is embedded too in his father's lack of faith in his own rootedness, and he keeps searching for people he thinks resemble those in the family, perhaps to console himself about his belongingness to the Chandran lineage.

Naming can be as effective as not naming. The results depend on the names given or not given at all. Naipaul's preference not to name Willie's father and mother is another way in which he places the latter's identity nowhere and everywhere. As earlier noted, names are our first identity markers, but Willie's mother is only known as "the backward" and his father is a man who has rejected the Brahmin culture preferring the Maharaja's calling, thus making him less grounded even in his own cultural base. This places his son Willie in an unstable identity space and sets in motion the difficulties he

goes through in settling for a particular identity and gaining autonomy.

Willie's uprootedness is also detected in the lack of respect for his father, and although he has a slight affinity for his mother, he abhors both of their backgrounds. He chooses to deny their existence and recreates stories about his life and upbringing using excerpts from foreign stories he reads. He imagines he is a young boy in Canada and starts to create an alternate reality about his own living space. He fills it with upstairs and downstairs spaces, calling his parents "mom" and "pop" in the stories he writes during his English class assignments (*Half a Life*, 39). This identity falsehood and mimicking are encouraged by his teachers as well as his classmates, who think he is a genius in art, which actually involves conjuring up stories about his last holiday. But his father sees through this false alternate self that Willie prefers, and the futility of this action is what Fanon's criticism is about. Fanon writes:

> Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an agility that I had thought lost, and by taking me out of the world, restoring me to it (Fanon, *BlacK Skin White Masks* 82).

Fanon explains how Black identities or Asian, in this case, can be over powered by dominant white identities. He adds that this only results in further identity splits creating more fragmented selves. Thus, Willie's resolve to be something other than what he is seems to be demonstrated by the stories he writes, and to his father, they are "…lies, lies… they are worse than Shelley and W and the rest of them" (*Half a Life*, 39). The question is whether this character trait is propelled by the knowledge of his foreign inherited name "Somerset." Whereas this might be true, it also underscores what Naipaul tries to portray in Willie's behaviour, which is a desire to live another life, instead of one that his father is ashamed of and also afraid to confront. According to Willie, his father is not "only a fraud but also a coward" (*Half a Life*, ibid). Naipaul tries to lay bare the

ambivalence in aspects of courage and cowardice, showing how both can be the same side of a coin. While Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men* attempts to mimic only resulting in failure, Willie Chandran in *Half a Life* shows that even failing or fearing to do and act towards a certain character trait is in itself a failure.

Half a Life also portrays a kind of segregation that culminates in ideological spatial changes acting as an instrument that drives identity shifts. The discrimination with which Willie's mother is treated when she first joins her school sets in motion an identity crisis not only for herself but also for Willie later in his future. As one from a lower caste (backward), she does not expect to get similar treatment as the rest of the students, but while this is the case, she gets even worse treatment:

> Willie Chandran's mother wondered in a childish way whether she would get brass or aluminium. But when she appeared before him (the cook) no choice like that was offered her. The ragged half-starved man became very angry and frightened and made the kind of noise he would have made before he beat a stray dog. Some of the children objected, and then the water man made a show of looking for something and from somewhere on the ground he picked up a rusty and dirty tin jagged at the edges from the tin-opener. It was a blue Wood, Dunn butter tin from Australia. Into that he poured the water for the girl. That was how Willie Chandran's mother learned that in the world outside aluminium was for Muslims and Christians and people of that sort, brass was for people of caste, and a rusty old tin was for her (*Half a Life*, 38).

Perhaps it is this spirit of unworthiness that is propagated during her childhood that makes Willie's mother commit blindly to a relationship and hide for months in the backroom of the image man's workshop pretending to fear for her life. As a child, she is stripped of all self-worth, as she is treated worse than a person from a lower caste. She is taught to expect so little from life, which affects her identity later in life. Willie remembers a story his uncle tells him about the "backwards," […] "that the backwards had been shut out for so long from the society that they knew nothing of India, nothing of the other religions, nothing even of the religion of the people of caste, whose serfs they were" (*Half a Life*, 55). Naipaul has written extensively about the caste system in

India and has sometimes defended it as a friendly feudal system that the people of India understood well (Bilgrami 1991, Misra 2015). This system is deeply rooted in India's social and political system and it has to date been a systemic mode of discriminating against some ethnicities in India. Whereas Willie's mother had initially gone to a caste school, "a broken-down and dusty shack in a suburb far from the maharaja's palace" (*Half a Life*, 37), she is treated worse because she belonged to the "backward," the untouchables- those who have been pushed further down the line of any sense of self-identification so that no identity is accorded them whatsoever. Worse for her still, Willie's father also segregates, as seen from the way he questions and asks for forgiveness from the high gods for having slept with a woman of a lower caste. He continuously thinks he has done no good for his son, and does nothing to salvage their (Willie's father and Mother) estranged relationship.

Naipaul seems to suggest that our identity(s) is an action of a spur in the moment just like Willie's father who takes up a role he never imagined he would and grows comfortable in it. In trying to escape his shame for having befriended a girl of a lower caste, Willie's father decides to adapt to ancestral ways of seeing no other escape route. He discovers that being a Maharaja was not just an escape from his shame, but also something that suited his personality, that it fitted him more like a clock on his back:

> There was no escaping the role now. In the beginning, I felt I had trapped myself. But very soon I found that the role fitted. I became easier and easier with it, and I understood one day that, through a series of accidents, tossed as in a dream from one unlikely situation to another, acting always on the spur of the moment, wishing only to reject the servility of our life, with no clear view of what was to follow, I had fallen into ancestral ways. I was astonished and awed. I felt that some higher power had taken a hand and I had been shown the true path (*Half a Life*, 32).

Whether it is a matter of self-entrapment or wilful behavioural disposition, this passage confirms the hypothesis that changes in places (he managed to move from his usual

home and move to the Maharaja's temple) influences his identity. Willie's father, although feeling trapped by his new identity, cannot deny that the lack of self-understanding is in fact what drives him towards this quest. The matter of his illegitimate relationship with a woman of lower caste might be another reason because the new identity offers an avenue to escape this past. As a Maharaja he is not expected to have had an illicit affair with a woman, and as a result, he skips the marital ceremonies, pretending to be already married. With a lost parent, one who perceives identity and the self as something experienced by mere chance, it is no wonder that Willie cannot escape the shackles of his father's alienation. Naipaul thus places Willie as one who suffers from a double alienation: first, the alienation he inherits from his parents, the father being a half Brahmin and mother from a backward caste, and then the one that he later faces. When he later gets married to Ana (a college friend) as an escape from his own realities, it shows how the generational identity crisis seems to be following him, fragmenting him further and making him more removed from the person he is currently. This, however, falls short of what Hall (1994) suggests in identity formation and creates a contrast between the two writers for this analysis. Hall suggests a negotiation between historical experiences if characters are to navigate between identities.[7] Hall's stance is obviously different from the one that the character's in Naipaul's works take. Their failure to look at past experiences not as those that should tie them down but as those that can help them to merge the past and present and form an identity is what creates this difference.

Just like Singh, Willie's flight to England is an example of a quest for identity but also an escape from his current one. He deserts the dirty and soiled home of the

[7] As the coming chapter will show, Zadie Smith challenges this position by showing characters who despite bemoaning their identity crises, do not completely escape present circumstances and navigate their identities remembering their past and not completely attempting to escape their present.

Maharaja and journeys north to an idealized fairyland in Britain. He is let down by what he sees, just like Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men*: "Buckingham Palace. He thought the Maharaja's palace in his own state was far grander, more like a palace…" (*Half a Life*, 52). This self-civilizing mission, in Fanon's terms, shows the disillusioned concept Willie has of England and presents an unrealistic idea about his personal aspirations. This can be contrasted with what he sees when he first sets foot in Africa. "The Town was big and splendid, far finer than anything he had imagined, not something he would have associated with Africa. Its grandeur worried him. He didn't think he would be able to cope with it" (*Half a Life*, 132). He thinks later in the novel that he cannot deal with this reality of a beautiful town in Africa because accordingly, the town speaks for itself, contrary to London which has been accorded so much in theory albeit different to the characters in the novels and the praise is unrealistic. Additionally, he can easily deal with London whose truths and realities are a distortion, just like his identity.

If England can afford to be grand in books but different in reality, so can he. He realizes that culture's rules do not have to apply. As a matter of fact, they are "make believe," and he could even write his own revolution if he wished it. This results in his disavowal of any relation to the firebrand (a kind of tribe his mother belonged to), a connection he gets from his mother's side. He sees no use for that sort of affinity which embarrasses him even though it is who he is. Fanon argues that this kind of behaviour is an escape from a preconceived identity of the "Other," that in a way prevents individuals from forming individual identities. He writes, "[he- the other] is overdetermined from without. [He is] the slave not of the idea that others have of him but of [his] own appearance" (Fanon, *Black Skins White Masks*, 87). It is this enslaving fear of what others think of him that embarrasses him about his identity and thus makes him want to escape his true identity, which leads to his alienation.

England not only presents a place for escape but also an opportunity to be what

he likes and to conjure up a new identity for himself. As a result, in the next couple of years and throughout the time he spends in England as a college student, Willie is another person. His ancestral roots are different from what they were previously. He

> […] adapted certain things he had read, and he spoke of his mother as belonging to an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as Christianity itself. He kept his father as a Brahmin. He made his father's father a "courtier." So, playing with words, he began to re-make himself. It excited him, and began to give him a feeling of power (*Half a Life*, 61).

His London identity replicates the city where he is, grand in words but different in reality. For a time, he manages to deceive himself about who he is to his friends like Pacey and June. Willie comes from an insulated world in India, and lacks knowledge about much of the outer world and the one he encounters in England. Naipaul's portrayal of his personality is perhaps to dislocate him further as one who has totally encountered a new culture that bends him. But these efforts at his self-re-making project lead him into dire limbo. In a bid to assimilate himself into British culture, he resorts to sleeping with several women and instead of satisfaction, he gets utterly disgusted by the smelly rooms and dirty ramshackled places he is taken to. The feeling of liberation and the ability to do as he pleases are very short-lived.

Willie's relationship with Roger, his future producer, is the only obvious crack in his pretentious identity. Roger rejects his stories because they lack personality or a portrayal of his culture: "What is interesting to me as a lawyer is that you don't want to write about real things. I've spent a fair amount of time listening to devious characters, and I feel about these stories that the writer has secrets. He is hiding" (*Half a Life*, 81). This calls to mind Hall's question on identity being a historical agency, something that communicates its existence in relation to what happened in the past. Whereas current identity studies attempt to be more liberal, the dynamics involved still necessitate that culture is a basis for identity formation. Thus, for Willie to be a proper writer he must

draw from his history and culture so that his writing will be more realistic and grounded. Additionally, Roger's words mortify Willie because he realizes that Roger has discovered his shame- the shame of failing to replicate his culture and his real identity in his writing. Willie's decision to change his characterization and nature of the story making it more realistic is an attempt to rediscover his identity. His book is an instant success but regardless of this fact, Willie has already fallen into an abysmal state of discontentment, and his dislocation from his Indian culture right from the time of his birth (congenital dislocation) cannot be erased by the mere success of a novel.

The chapter, "The Second Translation" signals Willie's deeper estrangement from his inner self. The section is dramatically ironic in such a way that it presents Willie's positive review of his books, but he is far removed from these reviews. According to him, the reviews seem to be about another person. Moreover, the word "translation" is used at two levels, firstly that the journey to Africa allows the reader first-hand information about Africa different from the one that has been told in the "first translation" as represented through the stereotypical lens, which according to the novel has always been the case. Secondly, Willie's identity perhaps gets a chance to reshape more in another place when he travels to Africa, so for him, this is another way of translating his identity. His choice to go to an unnamed country in Africa, a country on the brink of a revolutionary struggle for independence shows his effort and struggle for self-identification. While there, his language, his ways, and everything he knew in India wanes. He "was trying to deal with the knowledge that had come to him on the ship that his home language had almost gone, that his English was going, that he had no proper language left, no gift of expression" (*Half a Life*, 132). This further points to a more figurative translation, in the sense that it shows that when knowledge and information move from one language to another, they ultimately lead to a loss of cultural values- they are what is lost in translation. Additionally, Willie works as an agent to relocate the

reader's mind about the values and cultures in African communities as retold by a colonial or someone who has come from the third world to Europe and then back again. Willie's ability to complete this cycle might be the missing link in reinstating his identity as one that might be devoid of preconceived notions about the West and non-Western nations. His final journey to Africa and marriage to Anna are the two acts that seem to demonstrate a lack of progress although they were necessary to complete his quest. His dream of a magical destination perhaps signals a man who has exiled himself, lacks identity and any sense of direction whatsoever albeit it is these very feelings that act as a call for action regarding his quest.

The "half-life" Willie lives in India and London, as discussed earlier, totally comes to a complete standstill while in Africa. He disappears in the shadows of the big mansion and the old poster bed belonging to Anna's long line of family lineage. His attempt at self-discovery ends in shame when Anna acknowledges that she is aware of his affair with the neighbour. The freedom he hopes to attain from Anna's knowledge of his affairs is also an illusion because she also seems resigned to the lifeless relationship. In the end, Willie realizes that for the 18 years he was in Africa, he wasn't there. At one point before he arrives in Africa, he can feel another personality but is not strong enough to let this identity surface. "But all this while Willie felt that there was another personality or identity inside of him, in a silent space where all his external life was muffled (*Half a Life*, 133). His breakthrough comes from a fall from the slippery stairs in front of the house. Naipaul gives us an insight into Willie's state of mind at this time, for the latter asks Anna, "[D]o you think that it would be possible for someone to look at all my bruises and cuts and work out what had happened to me? Work out what I have done to myself?" (136). Willie's bruises are very symbolic of his mental state and the trouble he has with not being able to identify. These internal and psychological bruises show that his youthful personality has been damaged by the many years of passivity and

lack of genuine aspiration towards achieving anything valuable in life. His misdirected anger at Anna for having lived her life is yet another pointer to how alienated he feels.

Toward the end of the novel, Willie's fall, which leads him to an unconscious state of mind, becomes a significant event in his life, one that awakens the identity neuron functionality in his brain. He has the courage then to say to Anna: "I mean I've given you eighteen years. I can't give you any more. I can't live your life anymore. I want to live my own" (136). This final disavowal towards living a "half-life" is what Fanon advocates, to fight the dominant culture and sustain one's identity is foregrounded in his work. But Bhabha relegates this argument further by advocating for relocating one's identity and finding space between existing cultures. Naipaul not being a proponent and advocate of multiculturalism (Coovadia, 2009), does not attempt to show his characters surviving in a multicultural society. Thus, unlike Zadie Smith's characters, as shall be discussed later, Naipaul's characters' struggles in both *The Mimic Men* and *Half a Life* seem to continue and their quest for identity seems endless.

As the discussion in this section has suggested, Willie Sommerset Chandran's journey and quest for self-discovery may seem fruitless, which emanates from Naipaul's earlier disdain for mixed communities. However, he still shows that it is a journey that the protagonist must go through so as to fully understand his identity. The deluded mindset that Willie has of London as a place that will grant him salvation from his inner hatred of who he is, as one that will give him a sense of autonomy is merely just that, an illusion. His exit from London journeying south to Africa further signals the denial that London was a place where he as an individual was supposed to use as neutral ground to rediscover himself. It is a portrayal that individuals should hold responsibilities for themselves and not be reliant on outer forces to drive their inner beings. Unavoidable as this seems to be in the novels discussed so far, the conclusion to be drawn is that place can determine and shape characters' identities. When Willie asks Anna, his wife, if his

cuts and bruises will tell his past, it is to show that he has learnt that every place gives one something that in turn shapes who they are. In essence, these two studies recall to mind Hall's assertion about space that is important in the formation of identity.

CHAPTER 4

PLACE, IDENTITY AND MULTICULTURALISM IN ZADIE SMITH'S *WHITE TEETH* AND *ON BEAUTY*

Many of the novels discussed in this study are set in Britain and the West in general. The identity crisis that develops in the minds of the characters as shown by the novelists, springs from both this environment and the longing for home. There seems to be an inability for the immigrants to settle in this new place mostly due to the imprinted origins on their identities that cannot easily be eroded. Hall posits that "…there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental law of origin" (223). The ruptured identity that acknowledges both the effects of history and the challenges of the present place, a place which many times negatively affects the characters is what causes the identities to continuously shift according to the environments in which these characters find themselves. Even the ambivalent "third space" (Bhabha 1994) that is celebrated in postcolonial literature seizes to pose a safe haven for the characters as will be shown in the proceeding discussions. Moreover, the place of the "other" that the immigrants hold in society challenges this space further. It becomes an intangible idea for the immigrants, a place without a surface, without ground on which to stand. In the novels discussed, these aspects of identity changes are seen through the languages that different characters use in different circumstances, their religious affiliations, their physical outlook, and their perception of their bodies, versus how others perceive them. But most importantly it is also seen in the way they act towards those around them, especially if the other person is different from them.

4.1 Identity, Multiculturalism and its Challenges in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

White Teeth (2000) is a novel set in London's multicultural Britain. It is mainly about "the characters' fates as first and second-generation immigrants in Britain, and […] the painful effects of ethnic mixing and the blurring of racial and cultural boundaries" (Tancke, 28). The novel features mainly three London families with diverse origins such as Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Jewish. Clara, a Jamaican woman is married to a British white man. Samad who is originally from Pakistan and also previously Bangladeshi is married to a much younger wife Alsana of the same decent. The Chalfens on the other hand, are the self-made brains middle class family of Willesden and are of Jewish descent. This wealth in the heterogeneous characterization that Smith employs is, according to some critics, celebratory of multiethnic London, but it could also be argued that Smith uses this heterogeneity in characterization to portray the inevitability of a hybridized multicultural Britain as well as to portray the challenges that such an environment poses for the characters' identity formation.

Zadie Smith's narratives follow a pyrotechnic model also considered as the "return of the Omniscient" (Dawson, 152-55). This old-time technique allows the reader to critically analyse the characters and thus surmise specific identity changes, particularly for this study. Smith also projects stylistic devices such as fragmentation and subjectivity to illustrate ideas related to identity shifts in varying physical and ideological spaces. Many of the characters look inward and tell their stories, which in turn alerts the reader toward their status of mind and individual characterization. Fragmentation is used to show or even downplay some of the celebrated ideals such as hybridity and multiculturalism.

Zadie Smith writes from the point of view of history as a determinant factor in our identities. Although she has been represented as one praising hybridity, Tew (2010) illustrates that taking *White Teeth* at face value and as one celebratory of hybridity is reductive of the more nuanced approach the narrator has towards this state of affairs. He

shows that the characters are rather stereotypes and archetypes, such as Samad representing a disillusioned migrant and Archie representing a rather dull British man satisfied with life his simple life. Moreover, the chapters in the novels are listed as years but in reverse order as if to show that whatever happened then is very much related to what is happening now. Hall asserts to this effect that our cultures and identities are determined by history. He notes that "…there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position which has no absolute guarantee in our unproblematic transcendental law of origin" (Hall, 223). In Hall's assertion, whereas it may not be to our liking, one's origins, however problematic, will resurface in the future.

The issue of language as earlier noted has long been a hot contest in postcolonial literature. Whether language is a means of subjugation has remained at the top of the debate. Moreover, language stands as a multi-layered phenomenon, in that it should be thought of as not only the arbitrary sounds that produce meaning but the nature and character of those sounds or language. In Gayatri Spivak's canonical essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak," her famous words are echoed in the language issues that arise in the novels discussed. For Zadie Smith, the problem doesn't seem to be about whether the subaltern can speak, but more about which language the subaltern can use. Language being a disseminating tool in postcolonial literature and elsewhere poses the challenge of communicating, which in turn reflects back on its usage as an identity marker. Smith portrays characters who choose language carefully and go as far as changing their languages such as deciding to use the pidgin when speaking to a neighbour or using correct grammar when speaking to British nationals or those, they consider to be indigenous. This can be seen as the "third space" where the ambivalence is represented by not exactly disliking the colonial communication tool but adjusting it to fit the purpose of communication at the time.

In Smith's *White Teeth* one of the novel's main characters, Clara, always shifts

her language and English accent to suit the environment and the people whom she is talking to, perhaps to signal how self-conscious she is about identity issues. This language change is signalled by a change in her place, which in turn leads to an immediate shift in her identity. These shifts, as the narrator points out, mark her roots, her origin, which she is bent on keeping. This pyrotechnic narration that Dawson refers to where a narrator gives her own opinion of the narrative and the characters is what Smith employs to protect Clara in her identity struggles. However, Clara's respect for her roots is also presented with an ambivalence in the sense that she understands how it is a struggle and she has to constantly fight for her identity. As the daughter of an immigrant, her roots are embedded in her language and skin colour. Moreover, Clara thinks that she and Archie are similar. Archie, who is first introduced to the reader as one tired of life, and tries to commit suicide by inhaling exhaust fumes in his car only to be saved by a butcher Mo Hussein-Ishmeal, whose vocation is designing folded paper material for a printing firm, and spends most of his time at his favourite bar- O'Connell's, might be what Clara thinks he is in terms of character. They are both like "…islands floating…" and "…neither Irish nor Roman Catholic" (*White Teeth*, 27). This shows her awareness of the inability to ascertain any form of identity and acknowledges the constant shift.

Perhaps the biggest challenge that characters face in *White Teeth* is the shifting physical and ideological places. As the narrator posits,

> […] immigrants have always been particularly prone to repletion- it's something to do with that experience of moving from West to East or East to West or from Island to Island. Even when you arrive, you're still going back and forth, your children are going round and round. There is no proper term – original sin seems too harsh: maybe original trauma (*White Teeth*, 161).

The above excerpt shows that moving to different places is not only traumatic but also critical for an individual's identity. "West or East" is figuratively used to create the

binaries that Said (1978) discusses, which create power structures among the immigrant communities and the people they find in those areas they go to. Moreover, physically arriving at a place does not mean the end of your journey, for it remains that for the immigrant, the compass changes its pointer, whenever an ideology, a thought, or even a policy changes as was discussed about the immigration policies in Britain during the 2000s. The fight for a place especially "among the chosen" as shown in the novel starts with Clara Bowden and Ryan Topps, her boyfriend, which also clearly exemplifies this ideological movement.

Clara Bowden, (later Clara Bowden Jones after her marriage to Archibald Jones) transitions through various sets of identity markers, from a toothless Jehovah's Witness determined to save souls, to one seeking salvation from the extreme religious environment that her pious mother surrounds her with. Her relationship with Ryan Topps doesn't go well because at first, she thinks she is saving him or that because he is not too religious, he will be her saviour. However, he becomes a better Jehovah's witness.

> If Clara realized what was happening, she wouldn't allow herself to believe it. […] Later that month, when Clara persuaded a doleful Ryan to go through the motions with her in the disabled toilet, she squinted so she couldn't seewhat she didn't want to see. But it was there, underneath his jumper, there hardly visible in the dismal light- it couldn't be, but it was -the silver glint of a tiny silver cross (*White Teeth*, 41).

This signals Ryan Topps' change, which comes as a surprise not only to Clara but to the reader as well. He is first introduced as one who hangs out with a marijuana-smoking commune and rides a vesper scooter that almost knocks out all of Clara's teeth during one of their adventurous rides. However, when he starts spending more time with Hortense Bowden, Clara's mother, a self-proclaimed evangelical, the latter convinces him to change to Christianity and this swiftly changes his identity to become one who believes in Christ instead of Clara, who couldn't convert, despite her mother's influence and constant warning about the impending apocalypse that will kill all those who will

not have converted. In the ensuing exchange when Ryan asks her to ride with him, Clara's alienation becomes clear:

> There is still time for you. Who do you want to be with Claz? […] With the 144,000, in heaven ruling with Christ? Or do you want to be one of the Great Crowd, living in earthly paradise […] Eh? I'm just separating the sheep from the goats, Claz, the sheep from the goats. That's Mathews. And I think you yourself are a sheep, innit? (*White Teeth*, 43)

Clara's response, however, is short of being comic because she becomes very assertive even with the threat of death. As an outsider in the evangelical community, her identity gains new meaning for her and she realizes that she is a young girl who still wants to enjoy her life. She asserts, "I'm a goat. I like being a goat. I wanna be a goat. An I'd rather be sizzling in the rains of sulphur wid my friends than sitting in heaven, bored to tears wid Darcus, my madder and you! (*White Teeth*, 43). Clara's choice to take on the identity of an atheist despite her constant desire for a saviour justifies her future character alienation. Whereas she can still come to her mother's house, that place has been taken and she becomes an outsider. She has to migrate not just to the colonial master's country but also to the colonial master's home- that of Archibald Jones, the would-be saviour. When she finally gets married to Archibald, "The Union of Dog and Cat" as the narrator calls it (*White Teeth*, 61) is sealed in a kind of identity disarray that follows their marriage home and later their child, a later pathologically distraught youth Irie Jones. All these instances affirm Hall's assertion that "characters develop as a sort of a troubled space or an indecisive inquiry in that space between various meeting talks" (Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 8). What Hall asserts is that the process of identification occurs in a space where the character questions their identity in relation to others. Similarly, Clara does the same as has been explained above, by identifying as a "goat" (meaning a nonbeliever) as opposed to Ryan who has converted because she has identified that being faithful requires her to sacrifice her happiness.

On the other hand, Alsana's character reveals a lot about others in the novel. Alsana Begum Igbal is the wife to Samad Miah Iqbal. She is a very opinionated woman and is always embroiled in both verbal and physical fights with her much older husband, whom she has married through an arranged marriage. Samad, a world war veteran and best friend to Archie, shares the fiery-tempered that his wife possesses and that is why their fights last many years. He is a father to two twin boys, Majid and Millat, and devotes his life to controlling them and influencing their identities. He is, however, very insecure especially about his religion and lives in constant fear of committing religious sins such as adultery. He is a waiter but continuously insists that his education does not make him fit for the job. As a man who continues to live in the shadows of a historical hero, Mangal Pande, his identity suffers from this delusional trust in another who had also failed in life:

> "I mean I am educated. I am trained. I should be soring with the royal Airborne Force, shelling from on high! I am an officer! Not some mullah, some sepoy, wearing out my chappals in hard service. My great- grandfather Mangal Pande"- he looked around for the recognition the name deserved but being met only with blank pancake English faces, he continued- "was the great hero of the Indian Mutiny!" (*White Teeth*, 87).

The silence in between his speeches signals that those listening to him do not believe a word he says, and it also casts doubt even on his belief in his historical hero. This defense for his failed career shows a disillusionment about his identity. He can only afford to live in a historical moment as the only kind of space that gives him a sense of worth and an identity as one who fought in the war. Beyond that, Samad feels worthless and unappreciative of his current life, and, unlike the other characters that embrace their current situation, there seems to be no end to his grievances as emphasized by his continued violence towards his wife, Alsana, who also seems to be a better match when it comes to a physical fight. As a disgruntled, failed husband father, and later failed Muslim, he, too, like his best friend Archie, spends most of his time at the bar –

O'Connell's, allowing the two wives Alsana and Clara to spend more time together.

The closeness that Alsana shares with the Joneses family, especially with Clara, allows her criticism of the biracial marriage to sip through and gives the reader an insight into her views about the projected outcome of Clara and Archibald's unborn baby, which as she predicts is bound to be a "half blacky white" (*White Teeth*, 61) and also casts doubt on the celebrated multicultural scene that, according to many critics, Smith seems to be portraying. In fact, the narrator doubles down on the issue of multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism by portraying its challenges, especially for the children that result from mixed-race marriages. These facts arise from the undertones about the nature of the child that is to be a true hybrid with "blue eyes" whose shade disappears a couple of days after birth (*White Teeth*, 68). In addition, Willesden as a multicultural community has several challenges, among which is the fact that it is an expensive area to live in and many of the residents cannot afford to put food on their tables. Alsana's smashing of the China plates could be interpreted as trying to challenge the status quo and demystifying the seemingly peaceful living conditions of the people in Willesden. In addition, Alsana's constant fights with Samad may arguably be triggered by their change in place. They have to work a lot to put food on the table and maintain the higher standards of living in Willesden which puts a lot of pressure on the couple. On the other hand, Alsana tries desperately to fit the Western woman/wife character in an effort to meet the standards of Willesden. However, instead of acting like a submissive Indian woman, she succumbs to the character of an outspoken person due to the pressure that living in Willesden has brought. As thus, the identity of this place has also been dismantled, by not only multiracial children but also the inability to meet the needs of residing in it amicably. Thus, although Willesden Green has been portrayed as a multicultural place where all children of different ethnicities can hang out and go to school together, as a place safer than Whitechapel where the Samad's previously lived, it still presents its challenges

embed in this mix-up. As a matter of fact, Samad manages to conjure up only a slight affinity to the place because he believes its British culture will corrupt him and his children, which leads him to send one of them to Bangladesh.

There are several nuances embedded in Smith's portrayal of the twins Magid and Millat. Magid who, as a young boy, is kidnapped by his father and shipped off to Bangladesh so he can become a true Bangladeshi ironically turns out differently. Firstly, this is to show that whereas Samad and his family seemed to enjoy life in Britain, they still fought to be Indians or Bangladeshi. The idea that identity is determined by historical and cultural spaces is projected through these two characters, for whom it is their father's obsession to shape their identities. In the course of the novel, they become the two opposing characters that Smith creates. Magid, who is whisked off to his homeland in Bangladesh by his father in a fruitless effort not to stain him with British culture, ends up the exact opposite of what his father's original design was becoming more British than the British whereas Milat on the other hand becomes the Muslim fundamentalist. This irony is what Smith uses to challenge and problematize the status quo- the assumed multicultural community in Willesden Green and Britain as a whole and to underscore the dynamic nature of human character and identity. Moreover, as Yuval-Davis notes, cultural traditions are linked to specific behaviour and ethnic boundaries, which may further create a detrimental effect on the characters (Yuval-Davis, 201). However, in Magid's case, the effect is on his father because the young boy does not become what his father wants him to be - a good Muslim. He imagines himself to be British and that is how he behaves and acts. The irony embedded in this character reversal of Magid and Millat serves to show how space is not only physical but also imagined. This is because even if Magid is in Bangladesh, he still had the capacity to imagine his own British space and identity. Despite the twins' physical places, they managed to live and act according to their imagined places and identities.

Millat, on the other, is a teenager who takes pride in living a careless street gang life, involving himself in a disillusioned Islamic fundamentalist group *KEVIN*. Both of these instances (Magid the British in Bangladeshi and Millat the Muslim in Britain) show the rootedness of both the British and Bengali cultures in the twin's identities. Additionally, represents the in-between, the third-space occupant, one who is unsettled by the demands of a multicultural society. He occupies a "third space" across different religious and social arenas. He goes through a series of character developments and comes to imitate both worlds., Ultimately his thinking is that he is neither one thing nor the other, and the Muslim and Christian dichotomies matter less, preferring to live between the English or Bengali, smoking a "fag" and still believe in Islamic fundamentalism. Magid on the other hand can be said to represent the old conservative generation, that is ingrained in culture and tradition and although he mirrors conservative British identity, his character is synonymous with that of Samad. Alsana points out that "…they [Millat and Magid] will always have daddy-long legs for fathers. One leg in the present, one leg in the past… their roots will always be tangled" (*White Teeth*, 80). Thus, it can be said that Magid is Samad's leg that stands in the past and Millat in that leg that stands in the present. The entanglement is further discussed in the challenges of locating cultures in Bhabha (1994) and this problem is particularly exacerbated by the fact that non-western cultures are no longer located outside of the West and cannot be totally eroded from their origins, which also explains why Magid successfully gains a British identity while far away from Britain.

Whereas *KEVIN* is a failure and serves to mock Millat's efforts at being a true Muslim, it as well sharpens the line of cultural difference between Bengali Muslims and British people (Tancke, 34). The attempt by Samad to shape Magid's identity ought to be a successful experiment of eroding the Western influence and culture, maintaining Muslim purity according to Samad's standards, and thus relieving himself of the

foreboding guilt he often feels for being a bad Muslim himself. Not surprising is that Samad's experiment backfires when he first sees the son's picture that arrives in England via post. He notices that Magid is starting to look "like a little Englishman" (*White Teeth*, 217).

In addition, Samad is bent on maintaining his Bangladeshi identity seen from the way he complains about the names he is often addressed by during the war. "Don't call me Sam…, I'm not one of your English matey-boys. My name is Samad Iqbal. Not Sam. Not Sammy. And not- God forbid Samuel. It is Samad" (*White Teeth*, 93). So Samad's act is in this same light – a struggle to maintain a Bangladeshi identity. But his verbal fight is in vain because of his already existing identity struggles and alienation as a result of the changes in the place he harbours, whether physical or ideological. His actions and words are perhaps in an attempt to salvage what little there is of Bengali in him. He is often seen to protest that he is not from India, but rather from Bangladeshi, previously Pakistan, previously- Bengal. His sexual urges that are assumedly sparked off by his current space, make him long for the East as he feels his identity as a Bengali Muslim is threatened. It is against this backdrop that Samad takes swift action aiming to protect Magid from this identity crisis. On the other hand, Millat, who stays in Britain, although wild and undomesticated, becomes the "true" Muslim going as far as to participate in religious-related protests. Millat represents the freedom of the younger *Windrush* generation that is able to navigate all spaces with challenges but yet with little or no regret. Moreover, the boys are portrayed as being telepathic, a technique that the narrator uses to link the past and the present. This is portrayed through the events that happen to both of them at the same time despite the distance between them.

> But the fact was Millat didn't need to go back home: he stood schizophrenic, one foot in Bengal and one foot in Willesden. In his mind, he was as much there as he was here. He did not require a passport to live in twoplaces at once, he needed no visa to live his brother's life and his own

(*White Teeth*, 219).

The above could be equally true for Magid. That while he lived in Bangladesh, he also lived in Britain. However, one should also remember that Magid as well as his twin brother are British by virtue of their place of birth, and no matter where he (Magid) could have been, his Britishness followed him and thus he behaved, dressed, and appeared British.

Elaine Child's view and observation about hybridity as less of "a utopia than a source of anxiety for many of *White Teeth's* characters" (Childs, 8) is best exemplified through the character of Irie Jones. Irie is the daughter of Archie, a British white man, and Clara, a Jamaican black woman. She grows up to dislike everything about herself, the kinky hair, and voluptuous body, and often tries to wear very tight clothes to diminish this appearance. Irie goes through a set of challenges springing from the way she sees herself physically and from what she perceives to be thoughts about her by others. She feels all wrong, her back teeth, the mountain curves, the blue eyes that disappeared two weeks after birth, all these heighten her desire for physical change.

From the beginning, Smith layers Irie's identity with undertones that ultimately problematize the very idea of hybridity and the hybrid. The sarcasm with which Maureen (Archie's co-worker at the paper folding company) questions Archie's prospect of a blue-eyed child is yet another challenge for hybridity. She seems to question the possibility of a child born of British white and Jamaican black to be able to possess blue eyes. "Did you say blue eyes, Archie, love?' said Maureen, speaking slowly so she might find a way to phrase it. 'I'm not being funny… but ain't your wife, well-coloured?" The connotation is that blue is a pure form and can only come from two such genes. As a fifteen-year-old Irie examines herself in the mirror and "she finds that her voluptuous figure inherited from her grand-mother does not conform to the European ideals of

beauty (*White Teeth*, 265-6), and to this Tancke (2013) asserts that Irie's roots are "irremovable beyond the scope of individual self-fashioning" (35). This points to how Irie is in a constant struggle against her roots which are ingrained in her physical appearance and the fight to fit into her idea of beauty. Whereas she might not be able to change much about her body, she thinks she can do something about her kinky hair at the very least. The whole project is a failure resulting in her having to glue Indian hair on her head. In this way, Irie becomes the centre of silent ridicule and an absurd portrayal of the hybrid. Smith does not condemn the idea but shows that whereas multiculturalism and hybridity as theoretical and biological phenomena respectively are heralded, the practicality and possibility of their survival in British society is a challenge. Even Mrs. Roody in Irie's literature class does not quell Irie's worries with her statement during the discussion about the dark lady in *Hamlet*. Irie thinks that the lady is black like her, but Mrs Roody objects, saying; "No dear, she's dark. She's not black in the modern sense. There weren't any… well Afro Carr-bee-yans in England at the time dear" (*White Teeth*, 217). Her teacher further cautions her against reading what "is old with a modern eye" (217), which further emphasizes the historicity and rootedness of the subject of colonialism. The statement robs Irie of the desire to identify with a moment in history, to find her roots and existence in history, which further alienates her. The note she is slipped after the class reads 'ODE TO LETITIA AND ALL MY KINKY HAIRED-BIG- ASS BITCHEZ' (217) is perhaps her final blow and push towards the identity shift she yearns for. For Irie, the physical pain (especially with her hair ordeal) has to be accompanied by more shame and ridicule and perhaps lifelong effects on her personality and mental stability.

In his discussion of Irie's identity struggles, Tancke adds that because Irie is "unable to transcend the corporeal constraints to which her body subjects her, [she] feels disconnected from England, her country of birth, preventing "her individuation and

thwart[ing] her sense of self…as a painful reversal of the Lacanian mirror [where] she fails to be recognized by the 'Other'" (Tancke, 35). Irie's process of othering fails because the mirror (England) is supposed to reflect an appropriate image of her character and because it does not, she is further alienated. "There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in a stranger land" (*White Teeth*, 266). This failure at self-recognition is what propels her towards a journey of self-discovery which luckily comes in the form of research about Jamaica.

In another problematization of the hybrid, Millat and Irie too, envision their possible offspring. "Imagine what our kids would look like [...]. Browny-brown. Afro, flat nose, rabbit teeth, and freckles. They'd be freaks!' (*White Teeth*, 229). This comic outburst is as well a problematization of the hybrid both biologically and ideologically. Later when Irie becomes pregnant, her unborn child represents the narrator's ambivalent take on roots and the importance of history because she sleeps with both twins who represent different ideas in the novel. The child will bear the genes of the twins which fact also shows that they would still be the same genetic composition regardless of which twin is the actual father. This impasse in Irie's action may reveal the narrator's final summation about origins and as Bentley proposes this "undecidability of the child's paternity represents a significant […] evasion of the nightmare of history, and symbolizes an escape from the ideological weight of colonial genealogy (483-504). Smith can be seen as offering freedom to future generations in multicultural communities where neither history nor ethnicity will bind individuals to places, an opportunity to experience both challenges and the freedom that being entangled in identity might bring for one might not be expected to answer to any particular one, as she portrays in her younger characters. In a way she ambivalently responds to Bhabha's idea of the lack of boundaries which "prevents identities from either end of it from settling into primordial polarities" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 5). Irie's baby,

even before its birth will be a child whose boundaries might be so entangled by the many cultures, ethnicities, and origins of its totality that they may cease to matter to him or her.

On the other hand, Irie's perception of Jamaica as an ideal space for identification offers insight into her idealistic view of this space, both as a false conception of it and also as a safe haven for the unknown as what gives comfort to her. For her this space "that she has never known offers an imaginary space that appears unsullied by the coordinates of current relationships. It can be, and therefore is, idealized by her" (Tew, 309). The brand of Jamaica we see is through the eyes of those in Britain and she chooses to ignore it or she cannot trust that view. Her preference to trust her own idealistic view of her far away unknown homeland shows that she can work within her own brand of Jamaica and not others, confirming what Jeremy Bullmore says about spaces as those that can never be seen with the same perception because of our differences as human beings (See Boisen, 2011). Irie's newly discovered place allows her to reconstruct her own history of that place by becoming a master herself and reversing the colonial perspective related to power and dominance. "Jamaica appeared to Irie as if it were newly made. Like Columbus himself, just by discovering it she had brought it into existence" (*White Teeth*, 402). Thus, this discovery allows her to dominate her new space and helps her to assert her newfound identity in this space. In total contrast to earlier characters discussed, she is exhilarated by the discovery of Jamaica because unlike Ralph Singh or Willie Chandran, for whom London's beauty is constantly drummed into their heads through the books they have read or the news they watch, Irie's discovery is made by herself: "and the particular magic of *homeland*, its particular spell was that it sounded like a beginning. The beginning nest of beginnings. Like the first morning of Eden and the day after the apocalypse. A blank page" (*White Teeth*, 402). This portrayal is different from Naipaul's protagonists who are haunted by the brand from the books

and media that they have consumed about The West. Irie is hand instead faced with a blank page upon which she can rewrite her history, and reconstruct her identity in this newly found place. It can be argued that Irie and Millat who spend most of their lives in Willesden Green similarly adapt to their new places, form their own perceptions and try to navigate new identities for themselves however challenging.

So, for the characters in *White Teeth*, changing identities comes as an ultimatum, a systemic need that has been propagated by both the inward and outward gaze propagated by the place they are in. Millat's choice to live as a gang member is partly a result of his feeling alienated in the society where he is because the idealized concept of a neatly cut multicultural space has slipped through, and its hostility glares back at him, showing that he does not share the same sentiments of homeliness and a shared identity.

> […] no one who looked like Millat or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered, in short, he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every newspaper and they were angry and Millat recognized the anger, thought it recognised him and grabbed it with both hands. (*White Teeth*, 233-34).

This lack of voice on Millat's side further triggers his alienation; he can only copy others and join radical Islamist groups to help him find stable ground on which to stand. The society he lives in has ostracised him and branded him as a curry-smelling Paki and therefore it is difficult to try and autonomously claim his identity amidst this haze.

Perhaps the most outstanding problematization is shown through Smith's portrayal of the pretences in a multicultural community, of characters trying too hard to fit in as society expects them to. This calls to question Bhabha's proposition about hybridity which tends to support new transcultural forms that come up in contact zones such as Britain. In White Teeth Smith presents a different challenge, which is very common with teenagers who are struggling to fit into this myriad of cultures. The question of interpellation in the Althusserian sense becomes more apparent when many

of the characters try to imitate societal norms, good or bad. This is, for example, extended in the self-destructive actions of Joshua Chalfen. Joshua is the son of Joyce and Marcus Chalfen (the clever scientists) and is considered a "nerd" by his peers such as Millat and Irie. In the mind of Joshua Chalfen, masquerading as a drug addict would make him recalcitrant and thus acceptable to the community of the "bad boys." After he became a supplier, he "… gained more respect, (was) patted more on the back by more people, and generally loaded it around more than he ever had in his life" (*White Teeth*, 301). At the time he is found smoking "fag" joint with his friends (which was actually true) and he claims to be an addict saying to the principal, "… yes… umm, it started small, but now I believe I have a real problem. I don't want to deal drugs, obviously, I don't, but it's like a compulsion…" (*White Teeth*, 302). Jushua has learnt that if he is not a part of the gang, cannot do what the gang does, then he is lost in the community. He wants to take the fall for his friends not out of the joy of saving his friends but for the joy of the principal and perhaps the whole school thinking that he is a drug addict something which is maybe less associated with him. Obviously, the place- Willesden Green has encouraged him to change towards a more acceptable member of the gang.

Furthermore, the narrator takes a clear stance on the issue of diverse communities and cultures in the portrayal of the Chalfens family. The Chalfens are a middle-class successful family seemingly happy and open to diversity, something we see in the quotation about Joyce Chalfen's book, which supports the diversity of flowers through cross-pollination.

> "The fact is cross-pollination produces more varied offspring that are better able to cope with a changed environment. It is said cross-pollinating plants also tend to produce more and better-quality seeds. If my one-year-old son is anything to go by (a cross-pollination between a lapsed-Catholic horticulturalist feminist, and an intellectual Jew!), then I can certainly vouch for the truth of this (*White Teeth*, 309-310).

The excerpt is an example of how the narrator only problematizes hybridity but still

shows that it is perhaps an advantageous and rewarding practice which according to Joyce Chalfen should be done with the presence of mind. Joyce adds to her writing in her book that "[i]f we wish to provide happy playgrounds for our children, and corners of contemplation for our husbands, we need to create gardens of diversity and interest" (310). This is also reflected in the young Jushua Chalfen who goes into a relationship with Irie knowing that she will bear a child that is not his and whose paternity will remain a complete mystery.

Reflecting back on Irie's interest in the Chalfen family, Although, she is oblivious about the characteristics of the Chalfens' home and its uniqueness- is perhaps the middle class that the family has lived in for generations. This status is different from what characterizes hers and the Iqbal family which is- they are from the working class the older generation (for example Samad and Hortense) are fixated on the past partly due to their racial and colonial history. These differences however do not prevent her from wishing to be a part of the Chalfen family. The jokes and hard truths that flow unimpeded between the adults and the young Chalfens represent a sense of freedom for Irie, who only experiences otherness in her home and school. The younger Chalfens represent the new generation and new forms of living as well as ideology. In essence, Smith presents the challenges of multiculturalism but throws a spark on the experiment as one that is necessary and unavoidable. As the narrator writes:

> This has been the century of strangers, brown yellow, and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rouke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with a first and last name on a direct collision course… (yet) despite all this mixing… it is still hard to admit that there is no one more English than the Indian, no one more Indian than the English (*White Teeth*, 326).

Through such a remark, the narrator aims to point out that whereas multiculturalism is

in some ways a positive development in current times, it drives individuals' identities to become mixed up, but this still does not lead to people accepting these new identities without any problems. Thus, whereas Alsana seems to think that Millat's spending time with the Chalfens is bad and it is a way of Englishifying him completely "… leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion…" (*White Teeth*, 345), Irie sees this as an opportunity to fit in. To her, this is something she ought to do because she "… wanted to merge with the Chalfens, to be of one flesh; separated from the chaotic random flesh of her own family and transgenically fused with another. A unique animal. A new breed" (*White Teeth*, 345). In contrast to her parents' relationship (Clara and Archibald), this union is more thought out, tested in the place and space in which it is, and thus this preference for a new breed, that goes beyond the mere categorization of ethnicity.

Marcus Chalfen's project is also representative of a modern place space, a place where scientific discoveries ought to thrive, where identities are symbolically engineered just like in one of his projects, but one which is not met with glee among the conservative community of Willesden. Marcus Chalfen is an Oxbridge graduate, a brilliant scientist who is interested in experimenting with engineering DNA and devoutly believes in the future of scientific discovery. He is symbolic of British values, which is a total contrast to his fundamentalist friend Samad, for whom religion is the guide for his actions. Early in the novel, Samad's confrontation with Marc Pierre Perret, also known as Dr Sick (another scientist whom he meets in the battleground), shows his distrust in scientific inventions which accordingly pose a challenge for the space he is in.

> Do you know who this man is, Jones? […] The Russians told me. He's a scientist, like me—but what is his science? Choosing who shall be born and who shall not—breeding people as if they were so many chickens, destroying them if the specifications are not correct. He wants to control, to dictate the

> future. He wants a race of men, a race of indestructible men that will survive the last days of this earth. But it cannot be done in a laboratory. It must be done, it can only be done, with faith! Only Allah saves! I am no religious man—I have never possessed the strength—but I am not fool enough to deny the truth! (*White Teeth*, 119).

Samad's conservative nature makes him distrust any projects for which decision-making is based on man and not God. This is perhaps why for him living in Willesden is twice as hard compared to the younger generation that view change and scientific inventions as inevitable. So, for him, this place acts as a tool for his further alienation, whereas it accords freedom to others of a younger generation. This challenge is also echoed in the plot of the mouse project that Marcus and Magid are involved in. The narrator seems to be communicating the uncertainty of all things human yet proposing that characters ought to be able to make their own decisions. The narrator emphasizes "[n]o other roads, no missed opportunities, no parallel possibilities. No second-guessing, no what-ifs, no might-have-been, just certainty. Just certainty in its purest form" (*White Teeth*, 490). The idea is that the past should be owned but it should not tie individuals down, "no what-ifs," and there should be no regrets once things do not go as desired. The escape of the mouse further exemplifies the ambivalence embedded in the process of identity formation, which is supported by many characters as the novel draws to a close with the escape of the mouse. "He [Archie] watched it dash along the table, and through the hands of those who wished to pin it down. He watched it leap off the end and disappear through an air vent" (*White Teeth*, 542). Smith thus presents generations of people whose spaces will continue to affect their identities regardless of the fight they put up to prevent this. Throughout the novel, the new, and different, or hybrid, is an ambivalent phenomenon. It is neither good nor bad. The hybrid mouse too represents this idea. It is successful as a project but the showcasing of this success is a failure. This perhaps shows that hybrid identities may exist but the challenges of the gaze cast upon them as "different" neither

here nor there remains in places such as Willesden. Symbolically, the mouse perhaps escapes in an attempt to run away from this public gaze.

In *White Teeth* issues of hybrid cultural encounters as influences on identity formation are further extended in language use. Language in postcolonial literature is very much a hybridized form, what Young refers to as linguistic hybridity, a condition where language has the capacity to be simultaneously the same and different. He uses Husserl's model of defining the composition of hybrid languages as follows:

> What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical [syntactic] and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems. We repeat, there is no formal—compositional and syntactic—boundary between these utterances, styles, languages, belief systems; the division of voices and languages takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole, often within the limits of a single sentence. It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction—and consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, and two accents (qtd in Young, 19).

The above passage reveals the extent to which language evolves when it is made to interact with different cultures and belief systems. In *White Teeth* language crossing is popular although it is limited to immigrant communities. Watts argues that this presents a certain level of marginalization as it is only these characters that are accorded this negative attribute. As a matter of fact. "…for Smith's characters, modern London is a world wherein very real restrictions and significant limitations are placed upon immigrant populations – even within a linguistic realm" (Watts, 849). As Watts further demonstrates, based on Rampton's field research about social linguistics on which the latter bases his analysis of Smith's *White Teeth,* "moments of linguistic crossing are indeed limited to a prescribed set of conditions and choreographed social interactions. For starters, such a style sets the narrator apart from the individual characters and secondly, even this linguistic distinction that is given to different characters helps to

differentiate them apart and also signify their context of language use in particular settings.

Hortense Bowden Clara's mother changes her language according to the space she is in. For instance, she speaks with a Jamaican accent to her daughter but has another for church and the white ladies. When Clara hears a "voice Hortense put on when she had company- an over-compensation of all the consonants – the voice she used for pastors and white women" (49), she understands that her mother is hosting a different sort of guest. The language shifts Hortense engages in while speaking to Ryann Topps can be taken as a sort of identity shift for the benefit of Ryan, as if to show that she (Hortense) can speak his language. But it can also be a move to exclude him from this cultural realm and keep him as a permanent outsider from the small inner circle of the Jamaican or African minority.

Another instance is seen with Millat's *Raggastani,* a minority immigrant group, mostly second-generation, or even third. The name itself signals two language and ethnic bases, African and Asian as *Ragga* is commonly known to be for Jamaicans or Africans in general and *Stani* for Asians. But most important is the fact that Raggastani as a group is a microcosm of all sorts of minority migrant youth communities, whose speech variations are represented in different ways and with different types of language borrowing, which Smith refers to as a "cultural mongrel.":

> Raggastanis spoke a strange mix of Jamaican patois, Bengali, Gujarati, and English. Their ethos, their manifesto, if it could be called that, was equally a hybrid thing: Allah featured, but more as a collective of big brother than a supreme being, a hard-as-fuck geezer who would fight in their corner if necessary; Kung Fu and the works of Bruce Lee were also central to the philosophy; added to this was a of Black Power (as embodied by the album Fear of a Black Planet, Public Enemy); but mainly their mission was to put the invincible back in Indian, the Bad-aaaass back in Bengali, the P-Funk back in Pakistani (*White Teeth*, 231-32).

The above passage shows the continuous formation of spaces for the purposes of identity

formation. All the youths in this group are "different," they are a very small minority, and if they are to survive being swallowed by the larger groups, they need a coalition. Language change is the most physical way of expressing not only their coalition but also their fearlessness toward the outside world. For instance, in the dialogue below when Millat is purchasing a train ticket, there is an extreme level of language crossing in which the ticket man cannot be sure whether he is saying something or asking a question. His manner of speech and posture all exude a certain degree of masculine bravado:

> Millat spread his legs like Elvis and slapped his wallet down on the counter. "One for Bradford, yeah?"
> The ticket man put his tired face close up to the glass. "Are you asking me, young man, or telling me?"
> I just say, yeah? One for Bradford, yeah? You got some problem, yeah? Speaka da English? This is King's Cross, yeah? One for Bradford, innit? [. . .]
> That'll be seventy-five pounds, then, please.
> This was met with displeasure by Millat and Millat's Crew.
> You what? Takin' liberties! Seventy – chaaa, man. That's moody. I aint payin' no seventy-five pounds! (*White Teeth*, 230).

As Huddart argues, there "is nothing definitively proper about British English: English is in fact not owned by anyone, and so its transformations in other places create their own versions of propriety" (Huddart, 43). This passage is revealed to serve exactly this objective. The main purpose of this type of conversation is to scare away the ticket salesman from asking any dubious questions or just to appear fearless because the whole crew always "looked like trouble" (*White Teeth* 231). Additionally, it is not that the ticket man does not understand what they are saying, but trying to force them to use what according to him is the proper English language further serves to mark the different spaces and identities they each ascribe themselves to. Millat's crew, however, has created a non-hegemonic understanding of *Raggastani* that outsiders cannot easily penetrate, cannot be allowed to even if they wanted, and one whose functionality is very specific to the context of usage. The space in which it is designed to be used is very

explicit in terms of its location and the ideology that binds the people in it, which outrightly presents opposition to existing social structures. To Watt "[t]he scene described in detail above speaks precisely to [the] notion of creating a new ethnic identity by drawing from other languages and popular cultures (Watts, 855-6).

To conclude this discussion, Tancke aptly argues, "[b]eyond its commentary on contemporary multiculturalism, what *White Teeth* promotes is a set of unsettling truths: the inescapability of roots and the history in human lives, the impact of biology and the body on our sense of the self *and our identity* (emphasis mine) and the violence intrinsic to human nature" (Tancke, 36). Smith represents how multicultural places not only promote a diverse way of living but also create anxiety in the process of self-identification because people's roots, histories, and cultures cannot be easily eroded from them and will somehow always come up to nudge at their identities in different spatial settings. The novel thus engages in a complexity of ideas, one of which is the attempt at shaping identities in multicultural settings and on the other to suggest some skepticism about the idealized notion of hybridity that is characteristic of multicultural communities (Bentley, 500).

4.2 Identity and the Body in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*

On Beauty is a scathing portrayal of a failure at identity formation through a dramatically changing environment in which two families live. The events that unfold in the novel depict an inward struggle by many of the characters to attain some sense of understanding of their true selves and the places that they inhabit. Set in an imaginary college in Wellington, New England, and partly in London, *On Beauty* features the life of the Belseys: Howard, a college professor who is married to an African American wife Kiki, and their three children Jerome, Zora, and Levi. On the opposite side of the aisle are the Kippses, a Haitian immigrant family turned British, inclusive of Monty Kipps, a self-made conservative, and his wife Carlene with two children Victoria and Michael.

The two families meet on a collision course when the Kippses move to Wellington and the feud that ensues between the couples and their children threatens not only their identities but their place in society. Moreover, the Belsey children are highly bent on taking separate directions in their lives in search of their identity.

On Beauty deeply explores the challenges of identity formation in a community that is almost exclusively white. Once again, Smith prepares for the reader one of the world's greatest experiments, a marriage between a white and a black person based on true love and beauty. In the past, interracial marriages were forbidden in the United States, in Nazi Germany, and in South Africa during the Apartheid regime. Such marriages were viewed as unlawful and the practice as miscegenation. Miscegenation laws were reversed in the United States in 1967 and many other countries adopted the same practice. This has substantially reduced the stigma towards interracial couples and their children compared to what they faced in the past. However, even with these reduced tendencies, and laws against the practice, the truths behind the challenges in these families glare back when one reads novels like *On Beauty*, which reflect these problems in society. This marriage is different from the one we see in *White Teeth* between Archibald and Clara. This is because the latter is more of an archetype- that is an elderly man who tires of his wife and finds a dissolute young black female to rescue him from his misery. In *On Beauty*, on the other hand, Kiki and Howard meet while they are still young and at the start of the novel, they have been married for thirty years.

In the novel Smith playfully presents the concept of beauty as an identity on many fronts. She does this firstly through the character of Kiki, an African American originally from Jamaica, whom Carlen equates to a queen. Howard's obsession with Rembrandt as an artist and intention to deconstruct the latter's concepts of beauty, coupled with his fascination with the history of art as a course unit he teaches at Wellington is the representation of the aspects of beauty in the novel. In addition, Zora

often feels a lack of appeal towards the opposite sex as a way of questioning her beauty, whereas Victoria Kipps represents the sensual stereotype of African beauty. But this portrayal of beauty or the lack thereof brings to the fore a quest for it or otherwise and in the end, foregrounds some aspects of the quest for identity for many characters. In essence, beauty is what stands as the vehicle for identification. Additionally, beauty is embedded in bodies, and this connection is crucial in postcolonial literature and shall be discussed in detail in this section.

4.2.1 Beauty, Bodies, and Identity

In *The Politics of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers,* Katrak theorizes about how during the process of decolonization women's bodies might become a site of both oppression and resistance. She further demonstrates that on several fronts, female identity and the fight for an independent self are often controlled by "different patriarchal structures" (Katrak, "Introduction" xvi). In this study, patriarchal structures can be used to connote the spaces that many of the women protagonist(s) find themselves in, especially their marriage homes. Thus, there is a double struggle for the black female characters like Kiki Belsey and Carlene Kipps, which stems from their direct or indirect colonial encounter and the fact of their being married to men who seemingly possess more power. Moreover, the place outside of their home, that is the college, and the suburb of Wellington may seem to be welcoming because of its middle-class outlook, yet in the actual sense it exudes a certain level of oppression. But the suppression of these women's identity is embedded in the silence about their existence in this hybridized space, making the situation seem normal when it is not.

In his analysis of African folktales as representative modes of the power relation between the colonized and colonizing power, Ndi (2016) asserts that the "postcolonial subject is made to face the harshness of the environment even when the State, represented as a supposedly all-inclusive house, has been won from the colonial master

amidst hope of change and transformation" (Ndi, 144). Relating this to *On Beauty*, Kiki lives in the States, a country and nation that did not directly participate in colonialism but certainly practiced imperial domination in third-world nations, lived through periods of slave ownership, and condemned interracial marriages as well. At the moment, that space has supposedly been transformed into an all-inclusive environment and the tell-tale signs an African woman married to a white living in an almost all-white neighbourhood. But the changes were only physical and not really ideological as these past actions are still seen to affect characters in the novels discussed.

To revert to the gist of this section's discussion, the above facts such as the shape and size of the body, are what limit or propel identity shifts and struggles among the characters in Zadie Smith's novel, *On Beauty*. Bodily identity is a concept that has been explored to a great extent in postcolonial literature. The body has long been a metaphor that not only serves to marginalize but also to allocate power between the colonized and colonizing forces. Kiki and Howard as well as Carlen and Monty aptly represent these two forces in their marital homes. In his Preface to Maria Isabel Romero's *Women's Identities and Bodies in Colonial and Postcolonial History and Literature*, David Walton cites that the collection of essays reflects the body as a site of discrimination, violence, and abuse, and how a challenge to the traditional representation of women yields new possibilities for identities and contestation (Walton, Preface viii). Smith exemplifies this challenge of representation by contrasting the polarized characters of Kiki Belsey and Carlene Kipps. The former at the time of her marriage to Howard was once a thin attractive woman and is now fat, and she herself acknowledges that "ain't nothing small on me…got bosoms, got back…" (*On Beauty*, 90). Kiki is mindless about the undertones of the rhetoric of miscegenation. It is Kiki's abrupt need to invite her new neighbour to her wedding anniversary dinner that prompts her to pay a surprise visit, and it is this visit that gives an insight into the contradictory physical nature of the two

women. Carlene "with her thinning hair fanned out across her cheek, her mouth open and half flattering, unseeing eyeball revealed to the world," (*On Beauty*, 91) is a total contrast to Kiki's appearance. Smith portrays Kiki as a carefree woman who pays no heed to the size of her body because it represents her true identity. She has always been defined as a "strong black woman" (*On Beauty*, 166) since she was a child. Strength ultimately comes with body size and muscle strength and perhaps this is why she does not try to lose weight throughout the narrative. Contrary to this character portrayal is Carlene Kipps, frail to the bone although acknowledging the necessity of a meaty body. Despite her fatal illness, Smith seems to mock Carlene's body and character in favour of Kiki's from the onset when she is first introduced in the novel. Although Carlene represents a kind of hybrid, a British Jamaican, who owns a little white cottage house in Iden and has earned the title of Ladyship, her body says the opposite of this seeming praise. As a matter of fact, her body might be seen as representative of one in exile. As Katrak (2006) explains, "the female body is in a state of exile including self-exile and self-censorship, outsiderness and un-belonging to itself…" (Katrak, 2). If the latter argument suffices, then it is not surprising that she is not comfortable being referred to as "Lady Kipps," which title she says makes her "feel dead" (*On Beauty*, 96). Carlene's identity thus can be what Hall affirms, that every identity is necessary as it is the perception of the self, even if silenced and unspoken or that which it lacks (Hall, *New Ethnicities* 223). In essence, Smith is ambivalent about the representation of both women in the novel. Indeed, the problematization of their physical bodies becomes an outstanding issue, because for Kiki, although she doesn't mind her body size, her husband seems to silently loathe the fact that she has grown out of shape.

The reasons why Kiki takes comfort in her body are both ambiguous and ambivalent in a sense. Firstly, as a black woman married to a white man, and living in an almost all-white neighbourhood, she does not feel a sense of foreboding as she sees

no competition around her. She seems to think that the only way Howard can betray her will be with another black woman because his interest seems to be "only" in black women. When Kiki first learns of Howard's infidelity, she takes comfort in not knowing the exact identity of the person; in essence, she is not aware of which body she is competing with. Her knowledge of the facts, later on, changes the dynamics of her position as a married woman contented to be married to her flawed husband. The idea that Howard has an affair with another white woman throws her into a sense of imbalance because at that moment she realizes she could be competing with the whole of Wellington, filled with slim white women. She feels that Howard did not only cheat on her but also dishonoured her body and her identity as a black woman. Kiki's questioning her husband's choice and object of infidelity that he "'…[married] a big black bitch…" and is now "…running off with a leprechaun" (206), sets in motion the identity crisis she is facing. This is because she seems not to realize as Howard protests that he "… married a slim black woman actually" (206). This exchange demonstrates how both Howard's and Kiki's spaces have changed and become unrecognizable for them both physically and ideologically. Their expectation of marriage as a space where people come together as one regardless of any changes is thrown into imbalance once there are some noticeable physical changes. Kiki is oblivious about the change her size adds to or takes from her identity and Howard seems to be ignorant of the fact that inside Kiki's body exists the woman he married thirty years ago.

Kiki's marriage to Howard, which is based on nothing more than love, can be seen as a decolonizing force, a force that stamps against the oppressive dominant white male stereotype, and one that helps to bridge the gap between the two binaries od White and Black. Further, her gaining so much weight later could also be viewed as a form of resistance towards the slender woman stereotype as opposed to Carlene, who succumbs to it. But because both women live in hybridized spaces, one married to a white British

man, and another to a Black British (with the name Montague to ground him more in the culture), these spaces influence their identity changes. This is perhaps why Carlene, Monty's wife, maintains her slender body and is bemused at Kiki's when she first sets eyes on her. She understands the advantages of having "meat" on one's body but is also torn between staying slim for the benefit of her husband rather than gaining it for her own advantage. Her acknowledgment of the advantage of a meaty body can be seen in her affirmation to Kiki that "women feel and think with their bodies… [e]ven in my soul I feel there is raw meat…" (96). In a way, her choice of having meat only where it cannot be physically seen strips her of her identity and contrasts her with her friend who chooses to have it where everyone can see it. But Carlen's attitude (Kiki's friend) might be read as a form of resistance, a silent way of attesting to her identity without allowing outsiders to take advantage of her true identity. Both women are shown to be powerful rather than passive, which is represented through their equal appreciation of the symbolic Vodou goddess Erzulie. Thus, both Kiki and Carlene silently refuse to submit to the interpellating discourse (Hall 1996, Althusser, 1971) that dominates every space in which they find themselves, and this helps them to partly claim autonomy on their identities. In her article about creolisation in Smith's On beauty, Nicole King shows how the Vudou image is used to foreground the message about women and their places in society. She points out that [l]ike Erzulie[8], these women are multi-dimensional and powerful whether or not, […], that power is used or recognized" (262-276) She further notes that this image "complicates matters further, [because] *Erzulie* has a predilection for the subversion of the roles attributed to her particularly Western ideals of femininity" (262-276), perhaps because among other things her promiscuity with other goddesses is celebrated rather than castigated. This shows how this symbolism is used to show that

[8] See King (2009) for a detailed analysis of the myths and legends surrounding the Vodou and the goddess *Erzulie*.

both Kiki and Carlene subvert the female, often stereotypical roles attributed to them (as shall be shown in the proceeding sections), and are less submissive.

4.2.2 Marital Homes as Subversive Spaces in Identity Formation

Kiki and Carlene are both married to domineering characters, and their dominance is partly due to their physical attributes, one white and the other massively tall - aspects that represent power - but also partly due to the nature of the work they do as college professors. But for both women, their domestic space is like exile (Katrak, 2006), an unfamiliar and unfriendly place that dictates differently for their bodies and identities, and thus whatever their choice, the challenges cannot be avoided. Carlene is seen by her husband and children as one who has sacrificed everything for them, and they take her sacrifice without questioning her zeal for it. As a result, her bequeathing her favourite art piece to her best friend Kiki upon her death is seen as an act of insanity, the kind that grips a dying woman who has suffered long from an illness. In her husband's words, "[a]ll we can assume,' […] 'is that your mother's illness had already affected her mind" (*On Beauty*, 277). The only decision she has had to make without her husband or children's influence is dismissed as mere insanity. This takes us back to the oppressive nature of the place in which she resides, as she is reduced to stacking books in alphabetical order upon her husband's bidding. But the resistance she puts up as condemnation for this behaviour towards her is the choice to keep her fatal illness a secret from her authoritarian and totalitarian family. This confirms what Katrak proposes that "in resisting exile, they [women] often use their bodies via speech silence, starvation or illness" (Katrak 2). Carlene seems to settle for silence and illness. She chooses to be silent about her needs and becomes submissive to her husband, resorting to quietly stacking books on his bookshelf. Although her illness is not a choice, she learns to use it is a weapon; she employs it to deny her subversive family a chance to rule over her health and in a way gains autonomy in dying. The dramatic turn of events regarding the

painting which the family does not intend to give to the bequeathed (Kiki), but ultimately ends up in Kiki's house, shows that she wins the battle albeit as a dead woman.

On the other hand, Kiki's identity is crushed by the weight of both her British husband and her interracial children but her reaction is not to be subservient; instead, she stands her ground especially when it comes to her openly questioning her husband's infidelity and finally choosing to divorce him. These aspects are brought out in the contrast that Smith draws for the reader between Kiki and Claire Malcom, Howard's object of desire. Kiki's description of the latter as a "little white woman," (*On Beauty*, 206) not only mocks Howard's choice but also signals the corporeal difference that plays out in the separation of powers, as though to emphasize that power does not lie in the big massive black bodies, but rather in small white ones. Burney confirms this phenomenon in her analysis of Said's work that "the subaltern subject's mind [is made] distraught by taking away his/[her] voice and right to speak, thus creating an identity crisis by disjuncturing and fragmenting him or herself" (Burney 49). The African body is thus contrasted with the white body as a dynamic that later strips or assigns power, and in view of this study can potentially shift the identity of a particular character as a result of this change. Thus, bodies, as linked to identity, are what Isabel (2012) identifies as a "potentially subversive site of memory and resistance…" (3); that is why Kiki is bent on changing not her body but part of her identity. Smith further portrays Kiki as one who has struggled in an exclusively white space:

> "You think it's normal. Everywhere we go, I'm alone in this… this sea of white. I don't see any black folk anymore, Howie. My whole life is white. I don't see any black folk unless they be cleaning under my feet in the lunching café in your fucking college" (*On Beauty*, 206).

What is portrayed by this outburst is the ongoing problematization of multicultural places that Smith engages in both of the novels analysed for this research. Whereas Kiki has lived in this all-white place for more than half her entire life, it is still a huge weight

to bear and thus it is not surprising that the dichotomy of me/you, black/white, us /them is at the end brought to bear. Moreover, Kiki's dilemma extends to other liberties that have been robbed away from her. She is incapable and has no place in referring to another black person as "sister" or "brother," because her identity as a black woman of Jamaican descent has been diluted by her marriage and interracial children.

Like many of Smith's novels, *On Beauty* is aptly strewn with youthful characters that always present a different side of the argument. It would suffice to say that the challenges that adults face in identity formation equally affect the younger generation. The Belsey children all seem to be struggling for a lasting identity either in their societal setting, in their home that is situated in a Boston suburb, at their separate universities, or in their choice of religious affiliations. The fact that the Belsey children are of a mixed race seems to exacerbate their dilemma as they represent a liminal space (Bhabha 1994), from which springs both the biological and ideological hybrid. The challenge for this is that according to Isabel (2012), "[t]he mullata character [has] the physical attributes of the white race with her light skin and her straight hair, but she also represents[s] a threat to the white society, embodied in the fear of miscegenation" (pg. 3). This problematization is exemplified in the difficult and estranged relationship between Zora and Carl, as well as the one that Levi tries to propagate with his friends. The struggle to circumvent Zora and Levi's interracial identities by their friends is not only marred by their light skins but also by the community in which they live, which leads Carl to jokingly say to Zora, "we are allowed to come to Wellington you know" (*On Beauty* 140). But for Levi, the challenge of identification is far greater. Like Millat in *White Teeth*, he tries to join several gangs partly for work and for finding peers, but to no avail. When one of his bosses accuses him of masquerading as a true "brother," (a pure African boy), though he is not one, it shows how difficult it will be for him to get accepted into any group or how challenging it will be for him to identify with anyone. He seems to be

adopting different personalities at every chance he gets, from a musician to a con man selling fake goods, to a charitable person when it comes to Choochoo, his friend. His act of stealing grammar ("no, no, but that don't make no difference") serves to portray how desperate he is to at least act the part (African or Jamaican) despite his British nationality. Jerome, on the other hand, is portrayed as one who seemingly ignores matters related to his identity although his fate is concluded from the very beginning by Michael's commentary about the supposed marriage between Jerome Belsey and Victoria Kipps (son and daughter to Howard and Monty respectively). Micheal seems to think that Jerome who basically doesn't belong anywhere is not fit to be in a relationship with his purely Haitian sister- Victorian, which further shows the divide between the two families in terms of ideological spaces. "I mean I like Jerome, he's fine, yeah? But I think my family wouldn't really … feel safe thinking of Victoria getting involved with somebody who was so far outside of …" (*On Beauty*, 37). Therefore, Jerome and his siblings are ideally outside in an incomprehensible realm to Michael and to the reader. Victoria's being portrayed as the stereotypical sensual black female, always pretending to enjoy sex before even the act begins, shows her weak identity and failure to understand her inner being. Her artificial desire for no one in particular, be it Jerome, Howard or Carl, are all simply episodes of one spiralling out of control due to an eminent identity failure. It is thus no wonder that Victoria Kipps, the only character who seems to connect the white, black and coloured through her sexual exploits is the one who leads to the ultimate end of the Howard-Kiki marriage. This is because she destabilizes this space and place that Kiki had known for a long time. Like earlier mentioned she does not seem threatened by Clair perhaps because she is an older woman like herself. Victoria as a young beautiful African girl also accorded the "promiscuous" character of *Erzulie* (King, 262-276), is the ultimate threat to Kiki and the cause of the disruption of her marriage space. Kiki's identity in fact becomes more prominent seen

from her choice she makes to leave her marriage home instead of moaning her loss. Like Carlene, she goes into an exile where only her identity can survive and she which only her, has got access.

But despite this portrayal, Smith is unambiguous about showing the other side where these communities can merge and attempt to mitigate the challenges of identity formation that is brought on by living in racially mixed environments. The "Bus Stop", a famous restaurant in Boston is symbolic; it is where everyone waits and meets and where conversations and relations start and grow:

> The Bus Stop was a Wellington institution […] It was a favourite stop-off for British guitar bands, hoping to rid themselves of nerves before their American tours. Morocco… was an inclusive place. The Black kids from Boston were down with Morocco, down with its essential Arab nature and African soul, the massive hash pipes, the chili in the food, the infectious rhythm of the music. The White kids from the college were down with Morocco too, they liked its shabby glamour, its cinematic history of non-politicized Orientalism. (*On Beauty*, 212-213).

The Bus Stop as indicated in the above quote then becomes that neutral place which, when inhabited, can shift someone's identity even in a matter of seconds. It allows individuals to act freely without any inhibitions from the onlookers. Carl's abrupt kiss to Zora after his performance and Claire's signing up the former for her poetry class signals the spontaneity in character and identity that this space helps to propagate. Moreover, such a place signifies the importance of community as it enables characters to act out of their own free will. It is in this place that Carl is singled out and is drawn to the intellectual circle by being assigned to a poetry class at Wellington. The Bus Stop can also be taken in direct opposition to the university, where in the former (The Bus Stop) Carl thrived as a poet and in the latter (The University) he was turned into an archivist, something that thwarted his talent. In addition, while the Bus Stop seems a welcoming place for everyone, academicians, poets, lovers of music, the old and young,

the University is a very selective place to the point that later Monty Kipps advocates for the removal of programs where students like Carl are not fully enrolled.

Furthermore, just like in White Teeth, the issue of a hybridized form of language as one that is used in different spatial settings as an identity marker is well brought out in *On Beauty*. An argument between Bailey Levi's boss, and Levi himself reveals how the latter desperately tries to justify his intention of behaving like a "brother" but to Bailey, this is an offense. The manner in which Levi dresses, the language he uses, coupled with the kind of people he associates with would in a way qualify him to be a "brother," but his boss Bailey can't be fooled by this act. This is because being of mixed race (Jamaican mom, British dad), and a resident of the Wellington suburb, automatically disqualifies him from attaining this privilege. Bailey attacks Levi in this way:

> "I know where you are from. Those kids don't know shit, but I know. They nice suburban kids. They think anyone in a pair of baggy jeans is a gangster. But you can't fool me. I know where you pretend to be from," he said, his anger newly virulent, still holding the door but learning in towards Levi. "Because that's Where I'm from -but you don't see acting like a nigger. You better watch yourself, boy" (*On Beauty*, 191).

But acting and speaking "like a nigger" is Levi's preference of identity especially when he is with his friends. Levi's mother Kiki forbids her son from using "such language" as she calls it, but this is exactly Levi's intention, to whom belonging to any group despite the outlook it gives about him is better than not belonging anywhere. *On Beauty's* Levi is in the same identity struggle and alienated character bracket as Millat's group in *White Teeth*. Levi's choice of language in particular instances is in fact a portrayal of a constant search for this minority ethnic group that can separate him from the large community of Wellington and give him a semblance of identity that neither his family nor Wellington can provide for him. In an earlier exchange between Zora and Howard, the latter attempts to take part in the ethnic pride of being *street*, meaning being black or of a mixed-race

character. Although it is funny for his wife, it is very embarrassing for the daughter who occupies a different identity space in relation to her mother. As a black woman, Kiki is shielded from the hybrid gaze whereas Zora, who is of mixed race, is not. Moreover, being *Street* as Howard terms it, is an identity more suited to youths than to adults:

> "Dad," said Zora, "please don't say spunk. Ever."
> "Can't I be Street?"
> "No. Why you always got to make everything be a joke?"
> "I just want to be street."
> "Mom. Tell him to stop, man."
> "I can be a brother. Check it out," said Howards, and proceeded to make a series of excruciating hand gestures and poses…." (*On Beauty*, 63).

Howard's effort at wanting to behave and speak like a *brother*, although embarrassing for her daughter, might mean two things. That he at times feels left out in his already mixed-race marginalized family and also that he doesn't have the capacity or even the qualifications to join in. Being a 'brother' or sister is very symbolic to the Wellington black community, but the members are supposed to be pure, and not even the mixed-race children have access to this thinly marginalized space.

On Beauty thus becomes as expose of characters whose subvert stereotypical identity markers. This is seen through the black women who are represented through the symbolism of a goddess. It is a representation of how bodies can act a place of exile- a subversive form of exile because to the outsider it shows a lack of accessibility to certain attributes of identity but to the possessor of these bodies, it is such an exile that shuts out the outsider from entering this private arena. On Beauty thus portrays characters who are more protective of their spaces and places such as Kiki Carlene, and those who are willing to find more comfortable places within which their changing identities can thrive.

Both of Smith's novels covered in this study challenge and problematize the idea of a comfortable multicultural community and a hybrid environment. Both novels

suggest that liminality as propounded by Bhabha, though valid in some ways, is a notion that makes more sense theoretically and would seem unachievable in the practical sense. Both novels ambivalently portray the challenges of hybrid communities and they also suggest there is room for collaboration and growth. In *On Beauty*, the restaurant "The Bus Stop" serves as that space for the amalgamation of colour, cultures, and ideas, where both the elite and lay people can converge. In *White Teeth*, the community of Willesden is what is shown to be the propagating factor for identity shifts and identity crises in general, but it is also the mitigating factor due to its plurality and microcosm of cultures ranging from Indian to African to British. Thus, the idea that Zadie Smith throws the concepts of a peaceful multicultural and hybrid community into imbalance is well brought out through the portrayal of characters who constantly struggle for identity. Because the process of identity formation seems to be a continuous one, even assumed hybrid positions and identities automatically become antecedents of those that will replace them. This as mentioned earlier in Pieterse (2001) and Isabel (2012), whereas hybridity is at times celebratory and can be seen as something that might secure an environment free of xenophobia, it also presents a lack in its own right because of the absence of purity. It is this absence of purity that causes characters like Irie Jones in *White Teeth* and Levi Belsey in *On Beauty* to continuously search for their roots and identity as their places change, which might even be beyond their own youthful ability and lack of experience to comprehend these complexities.

Smith's settings that are in Britain for *White Teeth* and the US and Britain for *On Beauty* give an insight into the different nationalistic attitudes towards migrants. While the US is originally a migrant community taking pride in diversity, Britain's stance is more implicit as the system did not acknowledge immigrants as fully fledged citizens, even those who deserved of the category. Thus, through the different settings created in both *White Teeth* and *On Beauty*, the identity shifts are seen through the character's use

of language, their behaviour towards others of different ethnicities and through their constant search for an ideological space in the past that can help them forge their identities.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Multiculturalism as the intermediary solution between assimilation and integration requires the understanding of both the migrant and host community to have a meeting ground where the former can behave individually and culturally and the latter has to be accommodating toward these new cultures. The challenge for this is that for a country like the UK, the microcosm of cultures and other societal underpinnings might sometimes not only destabilize the new immigrant but also the already existing citizens. As Modood further notes, immigrants might be challenged "by the fact of negative 'difference': with alienness, inferiorisation, stigmatization, stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination, racism and so on" (Modood "Difference Multi- and Equality" (152-171), which as he earlier states in the essay may result from the history of colonial and imperial domination and colonial subordination. Naipaul and Smith both tackle different forms of the "Multi," for it certainly does not refer to a single divide across cultures. They may be socio-economic, where some divisions are related to economic factors, or they may be racial in terms of discrimination based on colour and ethnic identity, or even religious, taking the turn of multiple religious affiliations.

This study touched upon the issue of migration as the founding principle for identity struggle, which also emanates from immigrants finding themselves in minority spaces in the communities where they live. Research has shown that migration to the UK has mostly been composed of non-white people from commonwealth countries and asylum seekers under the guise of departing from geographically destabilized nations (Modood, "Global Migration" 248-268). When individuals migrate, it means they have opened up new spaces within which their identities are to be navigated. Moreover, this

opens up diasporic spaces and the challenges that accompany that: the unhomely and loneliness as well as social-cultural dislocations in specific regions. Paul Gilroy's *Against Race* argues for the importance of diaspora because, for a long time, it has been viewed positively by the people in former colonial states. In addition, he shows that diaspora is equated with a disavowal of any nationalistic belongings, and as such, those in the diaspora can easily disregard any essentialist notions of absolute identities as well as any affinity to place or land. However, Gilroy's argument was countered by other scholars that have shown that diasporas present a short-lived experience of neither belonging at home nor abroad (Gilroy, 125-135). Hardt and Negri's work suggested that arguments for fluidity and hybrid identities were merely fruitless; their review of *Empire 20 Years on* (2019) shows how the tables have again turned and the fight for sovereignty, nation states and stalking racist sentiments have become a renewed battleground in cultural, social and economic spheres of life. And as Clifford argues, as diasporas keep emerging, new postcolonialisms are formed and the efforts to define and reimagine postcolonial theory continue. This is why the multicultural debate that seemed to have subsided in the latter part of the twentieth century is experiencing renewed discussion.

Modood's (2011) discussion of the concept and challenges of multiculturalism are employed in this discussion because of the unravelling of the challenges behind this phenomenon. Modood's discussion shows that some legislations aiming at assimilation and integration have not been so successful, because each migrant has a unique experience that cannot be encapsulated into one common phenomenon. For instance, migrants from the Caribbean, although they had imperial ties to Britain, mostly came for work after the second world war labour boom. Others from Africa and Asia came to the UK for reasons ranging from work to school due to the internationalization of both work and school programs. Interestingly though, many migrants have been tied to low-paying jobs, and manual labour (Modood 2011, Tocoma 2016) regardless of their qualifications.

This has resulted in serious class and social-economic differences. Moreover, whereas integration presents some positive aspects as both the migrant and host having to meet in the middle, one trying to adopt and another welcoming the complexity of the ensuing cultural exchange cannot be ignored. The result of these notions would be a multicultural community that is seemingly accepting and agrees to work with all cultures. But at the same time, the fact that cultural diversity and marginalization may still be problematic remains apparent. This has proven to be an underlying factor in the representation of characters from V.S. Naipaul and Zadie Smith's novels. Because much of the setting of the novels discussed that is, Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* and *Half a Life* and Smith's *White Teeth* and *On Beauty*, is affected by migration which alters the place and space and as well causes identity shifts.

Studies about identity formation are very dynamic and complex. This study has added a voice to the innuendos related to alienation, the unhomely, third space, and hybridity among others, which are all factors that affect the formation and shifts in identities across different spatial spectrums and place settings. The novels that have been discussed reflect how the elements of identity struggles are influenced by both physical and ideological spatial changes. This has been done by discussing the characters' behavioural changes across varying places whose elements include ethnic physical and ideological boundaries, individual or group perception or affinity to minority groups, language as an identity marker as well as the body as a site for identification. This analysis in this study has been conducted along the views of critics such as Fanon, Hall, Bhabha, Said, and Hogan, and many others who have all in one way or another presented the challenges of identification, and almost all are in a consensus that it is an ongoing difficulty that will continue for ages to come. The study set off by analyzing the changing discourse on identity in postcolonial literature by drawing on arguments such as Bhabha's criticism of binarism which may not portray the real essence and relationships

between colonizer and colonized, then a discussion on the often-heralded hybrid identity as well as the challenges characters who adopt this type of identity may face as places change. The main focus of the study has been to analyze in the selected novels the success of such a phenomenon in relation to identity formation for individuals who find themselves in changed spaces. The main argument of this study is that as characters change their places, such as their physical or ideological surroundings, their identity changes too. The aim has been to show how quickly and easily characters' identities can change due to their surroundings and how this can be a challenge for their stability as individuals, which in turn might lead to being alienated or feeling less at home in a place they have known as home for long.

The study began by showing how colonialist and imperialist practices have had far-reaching effects, one of which is migration. It is these migrant communities that have suffered far-reaching consequences when it comes to identity issues. In addition, the novelists discussed are both first and second-generation *Windrush* migrants with Naipaul having immigrated to Britain in the 1950s and Smith a second-generation immigrant whose mother immigrated from Jamaica. These facts have to a large extent set a viable background for this study although the study cannot lay claim on the novelists' works being autobiographical. This discussion centred less on the novelists and more on the content and character portrayal in their selected novels to come to certain conclusions.

So, whereas Naipaul experiments with taking characters back and forth between homelands and other places in search of an identity, Smith makes her characters traverse their identities within the same spatial confines. It is this ambivalent portrayal of characters' sense of belonging, their desire for home and their loathing of it, the illusion embedded in these sentiments that throws light on the challenges of multiculturalism and hybridity despite the positive aspects embedded in the two phenomena.

The fact that the identities of the characters in the novels discussed shift together with a change in their places has been amply exemplified. But the nature of these shifts in terms of behaviour and actions is what draws a difference between the characters and the general content and ultimately the thematic concerns of the particular novels. Naipaul's earlier novels have been accused of being an appraisal of the colonial machine. Whereas Naipaul has been largely criticised for his illusive stance on colonialism by scholars such as Said (1979) who claimed that he was consciously being used to portray a positive side of the colonising rhetoric, Naipaul was seen to defend himself against such accusations. As shown in the study, Naipaul's earlier novels denigrated the character of former colonial nations. However, there is a slight shift in the tone and characterization in Naipaul's later works such as *The Mimic Men* and *Half a Life*. The tone is less celebratory of "Englishness" and as Zhou contends, "identity for Naipaul becomes a natural dilemma" (Zhou, 16). Naipaul's observatory stance of all sides shows the dynamics involved in identity formation and shows how it is not an easy fit as the onlooker would assume. Whereas Naipaul sounded a harsh criticism for mimicking in *The Mimic Men*, portraying the main character Ralph Singh as a dissociated character, who thinks that Isabella can be like a foreign country, he does not seem to propose any solution for him. Ralph suffers the consequences of his disillusionment, such as a broken marriage between himself and his British wife, and an estate that is inaccessible because of the nature of the land where it is built, which all lead to his being exiled to a place he had formally left. This same pattern of a near abysmal feeling toward identity is expressed in *Half a Life* in which the main character, Willie Chandran, moves between places, in a search for a true identity. Willie goes far away from his father's Maharaja, to London, Africa, and then to Germany. The issue is not his movement but rather his sentiments about his identity and how these different places affect and even alienate him further. In both novels, the issues regarding identity seem to be unresolved, confirming

what Hall claims in "Cultural Identities and Diasporas" that "the boundaries of difference are continuously repositioned in relation to different points of reference…" (Hall, 392-403). So, Naipaul amply represents these aspects of human behaviour in relation to identity as a whole with characters whose identities seem rooted in history, but if their place changes and their identity will be viewed negatively, then they too change these identities. Thus, the struggle for identity becomes a struggle for self-understanding as well as a struggle to be accepted in society, as Naipaul portrays.

What Naipaul depicts is a sort of mirror of the society in the East or West. The stories that Willie Chandran concocts are not his real stories, but he writes them to depict an imaginary world, to an even comic extent, because his characters are Indian but living a "western" sort of life. Moreover, the comparison that his father draws between him and writers like Yeats is tantamount to insinuating that they have both done the same thing - misrepresent their realities, and that the difference is that Willie is worse than them. Thus, like Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men*, Willie's tendencies at mimicking behaviour are explicitly portrayed to the extent that he attempts to live another person's life. Willie views his action of following Anna to Africa as him living her life. Thus, both of Naipaul's characters spend half of their lives mimicking and living lives that are not there because of the failure of identification that is rooted in their changing places.

Whereas the discussion has centred on the changes that happen in people's identities once they find themselves in different contexts, it is also worthwhile noting the double-edged nature of such a study. As Bhabha suggests, colonial discourse is not only about the colonized but about the colonizer as well. It is interesting to note thus that whereas much of the mimicked identities that have been discussed in both Naipaul's and Smith's novels not only attempt to express a desire to be like that which is different from an individual whom they admire, for instance long straight black hair in the case of Irie in Smith's *White Teeth* or become "dandy" in the case of the character of Ralph Singh

in Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, it is also a tendency to destabilize and create a "partial presence of the colonizer:"

> [T]hey are also […] the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as "inappropriate" colonial subjects. A desire that, through the repetition of partial presence, which is the basis of mimicry, articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical differ-ence that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority. It is a desire that reverses "in part" the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence. (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 88).

The sort of appropriation that is referred to here has been shown in previous chapters in terms of language changes and new language formation, manner of dress, or even behaviour. Thus, whereas this partial version of the colonizer's presence strips individuals of their identities causing them to shift under varying circumstances, it also undercuts the status quo regarding British culture, where individuals are forced to look back at the appropriated version of themselves, which as Bhabha shows, creates anxiety.

Seen from this perspective, a parallel can be conceived between Naipaul's writing and that of Zadie Smith. Smith's novels, as has been shown, are more ambivalent than meets the eye. *White Teeth* for example, as earlier noted, would seem to celebrate a multicultural Britain but only if the reader chooses to see that side. In an actual sense, it is much more problematized: the difference is that at the time Smith is writing, many acclaimed postcolonial writers have come to the realization that these are all unstable notions that are to be approached with careful criticism. In her chapter about multicultural communities in the West, Yuval Davis writes that

> [i]n all these states there is a continuous debate about the limits of multiculturalism between those who want a continued construction of the national collectivity as homogeneous and assimilatory, and those who have been calling for the institutionalization of ethnic pluralism and the preservation of the ethnic minorities' cultures of origin as legitimate parts of the national project (Yuval-Davis, 195).

This statement presents the ongoing challenge of a homogenous concept regarding multiculturalism, which perhaps Smith problematizes. In *White Teeth* Smith seems to be suggesting that our cultures and identities are deeply rooted like our teeth in their canals. The novel is constructed around the types of teeth, canals, root canals, and the like. Whereas the roots and teeth can be removed, the gap left behind represents not an absence but rather an attestation and proof of the prior existence of something, a religion, a norm or culture, a belief system. Teeth become a very symbolic aspect in this respect, and that is why when Clara is approached by her daughter in the middle of the night speaking with a half lisp as a result of missing teeth, she feels a sense of foreboding, a loss and even betrayal for not having known her mother all this while. Clara's missing teeth represent an uprooted past or even present. The full set of teeth during the day and the non-existent denture at night portray her as one living in two different worlds, with a changed identity for the day and one for the night.

The characters in the books discussed have serious challenges in multicultural communities not because they do not desire to live in these communities, but because concepts of difference and othering come as impediments to this desire. Smith's portrayal of the hybrid mouse project that fails and leads to a breakup in the family unity of the Chalfens is symbolic of this challenge. However, what Smith does that sets her apart from Naipaul is to show the inevitability of multicultural communities. Unlike Naipaul who "often expressed dismay at the mixing of things" (Gourevitch, 27-31), Smith shows that there is no escape from this state. In both *White Teeth* and *On Beauty* Smith has portrayed biologically hybrid characters, facing everyday challenges of alienation from society's gaze and expectations but who are not running from these challenges. Irie's attempt at getting her hair straightened in a bid to get rid of her stubborn afro doesn't go well, but she confronts this fear by choosing to have no hair in the end. Similarly, Kiki the protagonist in *On Beauty* is shown to maintain her power by

divorcing her adulterous husband and continuing to live in the same community. Thus, for Kiki, whether it is her big black strong body or her kinky-haired brown children, is shown as unwilling to comprise this part of her identity. It is these portrayals that show that whereas Naipaul was quite pessimistic about hybridity and multiculturalism, Smith shows that it is challenging but individuals can live through it.

Thus, the intention of the study has not been to disparage the theorization of terms such as hybridity or multiculturalism but to broaden the discussion that includes the challenges that any theory or notion poses, especially one that is well-meaning and does not intend to be hegemonic. The research has thus shown that the phenomena of migration and diaspora that in the end result in multiculturalism create a disjuncture that also results in the subversion of seemingly natural forms of identity, whether they are hybrid or ethnic. The continued change in identities as has been amply highlighted signifies a close relationship with place, which is also influenced by the ever-changing ideology and cultural settings.

Moreover, the study has illustrated that places are like a never-ending series of doors that keep leading you to others. Every place opens up a new one, a new agenda, an opportunity, or a challenge. And for every opportunity or challenge, the characters' identities are affected. A clear example from the analysis is one where Howard in *White Teeth* perceives his marriage as a new space for him to try and attempt to be 'black' or at the very least behave like one. His actions demonstrate his desire to fit in with his family and his failure at this attempt illustrates his outsiderness. This aspect also helps to highlight Bhabha's identification of the colonial encounter as one that is two-sided. More often than not, many critics take a one-sided view on the colonial and postcolonial encounter. However, Bhabha has demonstrated that there is an active *agency* of the colonized during this struggle by showing that despite long periods of colonial rule, the colonized was not that different from the colonizer, and perhaps similar power can be

exhibited from both sides while exhibiting a sense of interdependence for both the colonizer and colonized (Huddart, 1-2). The fact that hybridity and diaspora, two terms that are interrelated, are unavoidably imbued with racist connotations also complicated matters for the very people who found themselves in those positions or tended to take the hybrid stance. Perhaps this is why the challenge of hybridity and multiculturalism, instead of becoming more positive social, cultural and identity markers, are further complicated and problematized.

This study has made a significant but minimal contribution to the body of postcolonial analysis, and there is still a lot to be discovered about identities in our current times. Identities are turning out to be burning debates in the social or political spectrum. As this study has compared two writers from the first and second Windrush generations, it would be interesting to do further studies related to these generations and to see how postcolonial literature reflects real challenges and experiences many people lived through. Literature and art are not created in a vacuum, thus extending this research to incorporate other methods of analysis that would strengthen not only this work but a lot of future research related to identity in literature and in the realm of academia.

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APPENDICES

A. VITA

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph. D	MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL	2023
MA	MAKERERE UNIVERSITY	2011
BA(ED)	MAKERERE UNIVERSITY	2005

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Institution	Position held
2020-	Karadeniz Technical University	Lecturer
2017- 2019	Akıllı Inglizce Centre Ankara	Teacher/Tutor
2016-2017	Uğur Koleji Ankara	Teacher/ Tutor
2013-2014	Islamic University Uganda	Lecturer

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Fluent Turkish

PUBLICATIONS

1. 'Oral Folklore Performance in Buganda' Dipio.D., Jahannesen. L., Sillars.S. eds. Performing *Community*: *Essays on Ugandan Oral Culture* (Oslo: Novus press), 2008, 113-127.

2. 'Representation of masculinity in Ganda Myth', in Dipio. D. Johannesen.L., Sillars.S., eds. *Performing Change: Identifying ownership and tradition in Uganda oral culture*. (Oslo; Novus Press), 2009, 106-120.

HOBBIES

- Reading informative journals, books and novels, fictitious and non-fictitious texts,
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TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma, V.S. Naipaul'un *The Mimic Men ve Half a Life* ve Zadie Smith'ın *White Teeth* ve *On Beauty* adlı romanlarındaki karakterlerin mekan değişiklikleri sonucu ortaya çıkan kimlik oluşumu sorununu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma için en önemli soru, karakterlerin kimliklerinin, bulundukları yerlerdeki değişikliklerden etkilendiklerinde nasıl değiştiğidir. Araştırma, mekanı hem fiziksel hem de fiziksel olmayan yerleri kapsayacak şekilde değerlendirir; fiziksel olmayan mekanlar, farklı yerlerin ideolojileri tarafından temsil edilir şekilde düşünülmüştür. Çalışmanın araştırma sorusu, postkolonyal edebiyatta kimlik oluşumu hakkındaki en önemli teori ve anlayışların bazılarından kaynaklanmıştır; bunlar, genellikle üçüncü alanlarda veya alanlar arasında oluşan melez kimliklerin çağrışımlarını içerir, ancak bunlarla sınırlı değildir. Bu çalışmanın sorduğu araştırma sorusunu cevaplamak önemliydi, çünkü tartışılan romanlardaki karakterlerin çoğu, çevreleri değiştikçe melez konumlarına meydan okumakta ve böylece kimliklerin nasıl sürekli değişime uğradığını göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın temel amacı, daha önce bahsedilen romanlardaki karakterlerin kimlikleri -sosyal, dinsel ya da bedensel kimlikleri- üzerindeki farklı mekân unsurlarının etkisini değerlendirmek ve daha da önemlisi, incelenen romanlarda nasıl sorunsallaştırıldıklarını göstererek, genellikle beğenilen melez ve çok kültürlü kimliklerin aslında içlerinde çok da önemli zorluklar barındırdığını göstermektir. Çalışma, metinlerin yakından analiz edilmesi, karakterlerin dikkatli bir şekilde incelenmesiyle yapılırken, davranış ve karakterlerin kendilerini beden farklılıkları ve/veya beden tatmini, dini bağlılıkları ve farklı ortamlardaki dil kullanımları açısından nasıl algıladıklarını incelemiştir.

Naipaul ve Smith'in birinci ve ikinci nesil Windrush göçmenleri olarak geçmişi, bu çalışma için önemli bir husus olmuştur. Çalışma, kompozisyonlarının kurgusallığını çürütmese de, bu gerçeği, incelenen romanlardaki karakter, tarihsel olay örgüsü ve ortamları tasvir etmelerinin altında yatan bir faktör olarak da dikkate almıştır. Hem Naipaul hem de Smith'in romanlarında, postkolonyal edebiyatla ilgili olarak göçün tarihi, karakter tasvirleriyle iyi bir şekilde açıklanmaktadır. Eserlerde ele alınan karakterler ya göçmendir ya da değildir veya her ikisi de olabilir. Sömürgeci Göç, tartışılan romanlarda kimlik sorununun habercisi olmuştur. Yirminci yüzyılın ortalarındaki göç, özellikle II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra Batı'daki işgücü kıtlığından kaynaklandı ve İmparatorluk Windrush aracılığıyla İngiltere'ye göçün en önemli tarihini tetikledi. 2018 *Windrush* skandalı gibi son zamanlardaki göçmen sorunları, romancılar için malzemeye dönüştü ve farklı sosyal alanlarda kimlik tartışmalarını şiddetlendirdi. Bu tartışma, edebiyat alanına, özellikle de postkolonyal edebiyata yansımıştır ve argümanlar, yabancı bir toplulukta yaşamanın bir sonucu olarak sıklıkla bir kimlik krizinden muzdarip olan bireylerin kendilerini üçüncü bir alanda barındırırken ve melez bir kimlik benimserken bulabilecekleri yönündedir. Birçok insan İngiltere'ye göç ettikçe, göçmen oranını azaltmak için yeni kurallar tasarlandı. Bazı mevzuatlar, 2012 yılında yürürlüğe giren düşmanca çevre politikasına neden olmuştur. Yasanın, "kalma izni" statüsüne sahip olmayan tüm sakinlerin Birleşik Krallık'ta ikamet etmeye devam etmesini pratik olarak imkansız hale getirmek ve Kraliyet'e tamamen sadık ve önyargılı bulunmadığı takdirde girmeye çalışanlar için İngiltere'de ikamet etmeyi daha da zorlaştırmak için tasarlandığı iddia edildi.

Göç konusu bu tartışmanın merkezindedir ve kimlik değişimlerinin arka planını oluşturmaktadır; bir kişinin tartışılan romanlara göre göç ettiği bir yerde neden ait olma duygusu hissettiğini açıklamanın tek nedeni değildi. Göç tartışması esas olarak,

bireylerin kendilerini buldukları alanları nasıl çarpıttığını ve bunun da kimlik oluşumunu nasıl etkilediğini göstermektedir.

Postkolonyal edebiyat ağırlıklı olarak sadece bir varlık hali olarak post-kolonyalite ile değil, aynı zamanda farklılık, musallat olma, hafıza, melezlik ve küreselleşme, dil, sözlülük, şiddeti yeniden yazma ve toplumsal cinsiyet gibi konularla da ilgilenmiştir. Postkolonyal çalışmaların başlangıcı, tüm sömürge öznelerini tanımlamanın homojen bir yoluna dayanan belirli temsil türlerine karşı mücadeleler içerir. Eleştiri, bu homojenliğe karşı çıkmak, kültürlerdeki, etnik kökenlerdeki ve dillerdeki dinamikler tarafından tetiklenen kimlik açısından Doğu'daki farklılıkların bir tasvirini önermek üzerine odaklanmıştır. Buna bağlı olarak, çalışma, kimlik değişimi konusunun, uygun bağlamda meydana gelen kendini temsilin benliğe etkisini gösteren geçerli bir olgu olduğunu gösteren kimlik tartışmasına girmiştir. Çalışma aynı zamanda kimliklerin nasıl değişken olduğunu göstermeye çalışmış ve sürekli değişen sosyal, kültürel, politik ve ekonomik ortamlar nedeniyle, bireylerin mevcut kimliklerinden kurtulmalarını ve onları içinde bulundukları bağlamda yaygın olanlarla değiştirmelerinin uygun olduğunu kanıtlamaya çalışmıştır. Kimlik değişimlerinin ve değişimlerinin sonuçları, Bhabha gibi bazı eleştirmenlerin önerdiği gibi melez kimliklerle sonuçlandı. Melezliğin, içinde ne sömürgeleştirici ne de sömürgeleştirilmiş öteki olan yeni bir sömürgeci öznenin ortaya çıktığı alanı açtığı söylenir. Uzun zamandır müjdelenen bu teori, bu çalışma için de endişe kaynağı olan bazı problemler ortaya koymuştur. Nedreveen, Diawara ve Karla gibi eleştirmenler teorinin diaspora siyasetini daha da karmaşık hale getirecek kültür ve çeşitlilikle ilgili sorunları atlattığını savundular. Çalışma ayrıca, karakterlerin çok kültürlü bir toplulukta melez olarak yaşamayı zor bulduğu eleştirisini savunmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, kimliklerin kültürlerimizi, normlarımızı ve tarihlerimizi hatırlayarak inşa edildiğini ve tüm bunların bulunduğumuz yerlerden etkilenebileceğini göstermiştir. Hall gibi eleştirmenlerin savunduğu gibi, kimlik içsel homojenlik tarafından belirlenir ve belirli bir toplumdaki bireylerin kendilerini tanımladıkları temeldir. Bu araştırma aynı zamanda kimliği, bireylerin ne olmadıklarını göz önünde bulundurarak ne olduklarını belirledikleri ikili karşıtlıklarda var olan bir kimlik olarak ele almıştır. Bu anlayış, postkolonyal edebiyatın en eskilerinden biri olmasına ve bazı eleştirmenler tarafından daha liminal bir yaşam tarzı lehine atılmasına rağmen, kimlik oluşumu söz konusu olduğunda da hala yaygındır. Dahası, bireylerin yerler arasında hareket ederken kimliklerini şekillendirmek ve yeniden şekillendirmek için çalışan mevcut sosyal yapılar tarafından motive edildiği iddia edilmiştir.

Görüldüğü gibi, Edward Said gibi eleştirmenler, Oryantalizm söyleminin sömürgeci ideolojinin göze çarpan yankılarından biri olduğunu savunmuşlardır. Bu söylemin etkisi, Avrupayı deneyimlemede Doğu hakkında bir düşünme tarzının belirlenmesi olarak gösterilmektedir. Bu önyargılı zihniyet, Batı halkları arasında doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak üstünlük duyguları üretmeye devam edebilirken, diğer bölgelerden gelenler aşağılık duygularını yargılamaya devam etmektedir. Bu gerçeğin altını çizen, Bhabha'nın melezlik üzerine yaptığı çalışma, karakterler tarafından manipüle edilebilecek kararsızlıktan yararlanarak bu boşluğu kapatmaya çalışan ve sonunda sömürgecilerin zihinlerinde endişe yaratarak sömürgeci ideolojiyi altüst eden bir çalışmadır. Teorik olarak, Bhabha bu önermeyle bir kod koyar, ancak pratik olarak, teorinin sorunsalları ve bir melez olarak yaşamanın zorlukları belirgindir ve bu çalışma aynı etkiyi incelenen romanlarda da göstermiştir. Tezde tartışıldığı gibi, melez kimlikler, sürecin farkında olup olmadıklarına bakılmaksızın, bireylerin asıl kimliklerini çözmek için birlikte hareket kültürlerin bir mikrokozmosundan kaynaklanmaktadır. Bireyler

daha sonra yeni çevrenin gerektirdiği gibi davranmaya ve hareket etmeye başlayabilir, ve bu davranış bazen belirli şeyleri taklit etmeye kadar gidebilirler.

Postkolonyal çalışmalarda Bhabha'nın ve onun analizinden yararlanan diğer akademisyenlerin tartıştığı gibi, "taklit" kavramı da tartışma için çok önemli olmuştur. Aslında, kimlik oluşumunda altta yatan bir faktördür. Daha önceki bilim adamları, taklitçiliğe, sömürgeleştirilenlerin sömürgecinin davranışlarını kopyalama girişimi olarak yaklaşırlar, böylece daha fazla asimile olmuş görünürler. Bhabha'nın işaret ettiği gibi, kimlik oluşumundaki kararsız alan, görünüşte otantik ve homojen bir kimliğin aksine önceliklidir. Bhabha'nın sömürgeci devletlerde paylaşılan bir kimliğe ve böylece kararsız bir melezi destekleyen homojen bir sömürge statüsü bloğuna karşı argümanları, bu araştırma için bir başlangıç noktasıdır, ancak melez konumları yalnızca onları sayısız kültürel muhalefete dolaştırmaya hizmet eden karakterleri yakından inceleyerek etkinliğini sorgulamak için daha da ileri gider. Bu eleştiriden şu da anlaşılmaktadır ki, renkli veya göçmen topluluklar saf kültürel temas duygusunu zayıflatır. Bu kültürel temas tarihi altüst edilemezken, varlığını ve etkisini inkar etme girişimi bir kimlik krizinin temeli haline gelir. Bu çalışmanın vurgusu, kültürel kimlik ve tarih arasındaki bağlantı ve bu faktörlerin kimlik oluşumunda nasıl bir esaret görevi gördüğü olmuştur.

Mekan kavramının belirlenmesi de bu analiz için çok önemli olmuştur, çünkü en azından bu çalışma söz konusu olduğunda kimlik kaymalarının temelini oluşturmaktadır. Yerler ve mekanlar birçok çalışma alanında yakıcı bir konu haline gelmiştir ve bu araştırmadaki kimlik oluşumu için bir değişken görevi görmektedir. Tüm yerler belirli tanımlama biçimlerine uyduğundan, daha sonra onları karakterize eden bu yerlerde bulunan unsurlardır. Örneğin, kozmopolit şehir, romantik şehir ve kırsal alan gibi tanımlamalar, toplum ve genel halk tarafından bilinen belirli yapılara sahiptir ve sakinlerin bu yerleri tanımlayan ilkeleri anlaması ve kabul etmesi durumunda, belirlenen

belirli yerin kimliği konusunda hiçbir karışıklık yaratmayacaktır. Mekan ve mekân kimliği, küreselleşen kitlesel göçler ve iş hareketleri nedeniyle son zamanlarda tartışmalı bir konu haline gelmiştir. Postkolonyal edebiyatta, romanlar için ortam olarak ele alınan bölgeler ya olumlu (Batı) ya da olumsuz (Doğu ve Güney) olarak damgalanmıştır. Örneğin Naipaul, ana karakteri Martinik, Trinidad ve Guyanası gibi eski İngiliz, Fransız ve Hollanda kolonileri aracılığıyla ele aldığı romanında bu olumsuz markalaşmayla suçlanmıştır. Bu bölgeleri olumsuz bir şekilde markalaştırma eğiliminde olan ve uzun yıllar boyunca yaşamak zorunda kaldıkları sömürge rejimlerine özünü ve önemini veren patronize edici bir söylemle hala da zaman zaman suçlanmaktadır.

Bu çalışmayla ilgili olarak, yer veya mekan markalaşması, karakterlerin farklı ortamlara seyahat ettiklerinde genellikle beklentilerini karşılamadıkları anlamında, kimlik mücadelesinin, kimlik kaymalarının ve hatta yabancılaşmanın öncüsü olarak durmaktadır. Örneğin, Naipaul'un romanlarında tekrarlanan tema, daha önce beklediğinden daha az evde hissettiği için ev sahibi ülkeye yerleşmek için sık sık mücadele eden hayal kırıklığına uğramış kahramandır. Bu yüzden karakterlerin çoğunun ileri geri hareket ettiği ve gittikleri yerler arasında karşılaştırmalar yaptığı görülmüştür. Öte yandan Smith, mekanlarına hayran olan ve onları takdir eden, ancak yine de talep ve beklentileri tarafından zorlanan karakterler için içsel bir mücadeleyi tasvir etmektedir, bu da bazen bu yerlere uyum sağlamanın önünde bir engel yaratmaktadır. Böylece, başarılı alan markalaşmasının hem olumlu hem de olumsuz etkileri olabilir. Ancak mekanların markalaşması sadece bazı yerlerin diğerlerinden sadece fiziksel olarak daha çekici olabileceği değil, aynı zamanda normlar ve inançlar gibi iç yapıların diğerlerinden daha iyi bir çekiciliğe sahip olabileceği ideolojik bir konu olarak da ortaya çıkar. Her toplumsal yapının arkasında bir ideoloji yatar ve belirli bir alanı tanımlayan, bu ideoloji veya ideolojilerdir. Bazı eleştirmenler sömürgeciliği ideolojik olarak desteklenen bir

kavram olarak reddetmeye çalışsa da, Sarkowsky ve Stein gibi diğerleri yer / mekan markalaşması ile postkolonyal ideoloji arasında doğrudan bir bağlantı olduğunu göstermiştir. Yazarlar, ideolojinin yanlış bir bilinç olarak değil, belirli bir toplumdaki yapıların oluştuğu bir başlangıç noktası olarak algılanması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır ki bu durum bireylerin Althusserci bir anlamda şekillendirilmeye başladıkları yer olarak algılanır.

Kimlik ve dil, bu çalışmada gösterildiği gibi, göçmenin kökenini değil, sömürgeci efendisini öğrenmek ve korunmak için çaresiz olduğu temel ile bağlantılıdır. Ayrıca, bunun bireyleri, özellikle de göçmenleri, farklı alanlarını müzakere etmek zorunda kaldıkları güvencesiz bir duruma soktuğunu ve böylece kimlik değişimlerine neden olduğunu savunmaktadır. Jerrica Linn Watts, dilin yeni alanlar yaratmak için nasıl kullanıldığına da değinir. Watts'ın iddia ettiği gibi, Smith, ortamının, kimliğinin ve karakterlerinin kökeninin farklı doğasını tasvir eden farklı dil yönlerini birleştirir ve romanda dil geçişine dair sosyodilbilimsel fikirlerin nasıl bir rol oynadığını gösterir. Burada tanımlandığı gibi dil geçişi, azınlık gruplarının belirli konuşma eylemlerinde kendilerini daha büyük topluluktan farklı olarak tanımlamaya çalıştıkları durumlarda ortaya çıkar. Aynı zamanda toplumda daha iddialı bir pozisyon sergilemenin bir yolu da olabilir.

Zadie Smith ile birlikte V.S. Naipaul üzerine olan bu çalışma, her iki romancının da tartışmalı bir şekilde okunduğu ve eserlerinin kimlik, melezlik, çok kültürlülük ve postkolonyal edebiyattaki diğer konularla ilgili konularda aldığı tutumlar hakkında bir fikir birliği olmadığı fikrine dayanmaktadır. Bazı eleştirmenler, Naipaul'un etnik kökeninden nefret ettiğini, beyaz adamın kültürünü tercih ettiğini ve Smith'in İngiliz toplumunun çok kültürlü doğasını kabullendiğini savunur. Bu eleştirilerin her ikisi de, tamamen yanlış olmasa da, her iki romancının eserlerinin kimlik hakkındaki görüşleriyle

ilişkili olarak ideolojik olarak dengeli bir anlayışa ulaşmak için eserlere daha yakından bakmayı gerektirir. Bu iki romancının bu tutarsız görünen duruşu ve karakter tasviri, onları bu çalışma için önemli bir karşılaştırma unsuru haline getirmiştir. Bir yandan, Naipaul, bu çalışmanın tasvir ettiği gibi, hayal kırıklığına uğramış karakterleri göstermekte ve göçmen topluluklarına yerleşmeye çalışırken ikilemlerini ortaya koymaktadır. Dahası, Naipaul'un yazarlık kariyeri, her iki kahramanı hakkında da canlandırdığı bir konu olan, farklı dünyalar arasında gezinen, kimlik arayışı içeren bir yolculuk olarak görülebilir. Romanları açıkça kimlik arayışında olan karakterleri temsil eder. Öte yandan, Phillip Tew'in iddia ettiği gibi, Smith'in karakterizasyonu, melezlik ve ünlü çokkültürlülük kavramlarına şüphe düşüren mizahi ve komik bir komplo yaratarak çokkültürlülük fikrini sorunsallaştırır.

Naipaul'un karakterleri çokkültürlülüğün bir ürünü olarak kabul edilirken, Zadie Smith'inkiler onun yan ürünü olarak görülebilir. İki yazar, kimlik sorunları tamamen farklı olmasa da, hala birbirlerine bağlı olan karakterler sunmaktadır. Naipaul'un romanlarındaki kimlik krizinden kaynaklanan zorluklar Zadie Smith'in eserlerinde genişletilir ve daha da sorunsallaştırılır. Naipaul hiçbir yere ait olmayan bir adam olarak kabul edilmiştir ve kendisi de bunu itiraf etmiştir. Kahramanları için benzer bir özelliği canlandırmak için de büyük çaba harcamıştır. Smith'in romanlarında, karakterler kimliklerine kök salmış değillerdir, ancak kendilerini buldukları koşullara katlanmaya daha istekli görünürler. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada tartışılan romanlar, Naipaul'un ve Smith'in eserlerinin çok kültürlülüğü sağlıklı bir şekilde kabullenip kabullenmediğini ve ortaya çıkan melezi alkışlayıp alkışlamadığını ve "üçüncü alanı" rahat bir alan olarak görüp görmediklerini sorgulamaktadır. Naipaul ve Smith'in karakterlerinin üçüncü alanda gezinmeye veya yerleşmeye istekli olduklarını nasıl gösterdikleri soruları araştırılmıştır. Çalışma ayrıca, üçüncü bir alan fikrinin pratik olarak uygulanabilir bir fenomenden ziyade teorik olarak daha anlamlı bir fenomen olup olmadığını da

araştırmıştır. İki yazarın eserlerinin karşılaştırılmasıyla ilgili bir diğer önemli konu da, farklı yazı tarzlarına rağmen, temalar ve karakterizasyon açısından önemli benzerlikler sergileyen Naipaul ve Smith'in romanlarını karşılaştıran az sayıda eser olmasıdır.

Naipaul'un romanlarının analizi, kimlik oluşumunu etkileyen mekanlara odaklanmıştır. Bu bölüm, V.S. Naipaul'un *The Mimic Men* ve *Half a Life* romanlarındaki mekansal değişimlerin karakterlerin kimlikleri üzerindeki etkilerini araştırır.. Bölüm, mekansal yönelimlerin kimlik oluşumunu çarpıtmak veya teşvik etmek için karakterlerin eğilimleriyle nasıl birleştiğini analiz eder. *The Mimic Men* karakterlerinin çoğunun başlangıçta Hindistan'dan çiftlik işçileri olarak göç ettikleri gerçeğinden dolayı kendilerini buldukları "çifte sömürge" durumunu açıkça ortaya koymakta, ancak aynı zamanda sömürge efendilerinin görünüşte ayrılmasından sonra sömürge dönemi kalıntılarıyla da karşılaştıklarını savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, *Half a Life*'ın analizi tartışmayı genişletir ve farklı kültürlerle dolu farklı yerlerin kimlik oluşumunu nasıl etkilediğini ve belirlediğini inceler.

The Mimic Men, aynı zamanda yazarın doğum yeri olan Karayip Adaları'ndaki daha önce sömürge edilmiş bir şehirde geçen otobiyografik bir anı kitabıdır. Romanda kahraman Ralph Singh, mekânı hem fiziksel hem de zihinsel çarpıklıklarla gölgelenmiş ve şu anda Londra'da bir otel odasına sürgün edilmiş biri olarak, tüm hayatını gözden geçiren anılarını yazan bir karakterdir. Başlangıçta, Ranjit Kripal Singh, sonrasında Ralph, onlarca yıldır İngiliz sömürge yönetimi altında olan ve daha önce sözleşmeli şeker tarımı işçileri olan göçmenlerin yaşadığı bir ada olan Isabella'nın çalkantılı ortamını düşünür. Bu romanda Naipaul, iki kere yerinden edilmiş toplulukların kimlik oluşumu açısından ne ölçüde etkilendiğini inceler. Eski bir İngiliz kolonisi ve daha sonra bağımsız bir ulus olarak, Isabella'nın kültürü tamamen seyreltilmiştir. Bir sömürge adası olarak Isabella, Hindistan, Asya ve bazı Afrika ülkelerinden daha önce sözleşmeli

işçilerden oluşan ve hepsi de sömürge varlığının ortasında tarım yaşamının zorluklarını yaşarken yeni başlangıçlar oluşturmak için Ada'ya gelen kültürlerin bir karışımıdır. Birçok karakterin karşılaştığı zorluklar bu tür bir yaşamdan kaynaklanmaktadır. "Öteki"nin daha iyi olmadığı anlayışı bir ilkedir ve zaman zaman romanda taklit edilen davranış ve kimliği yönetir. Nihayetinde Ralph'ı kimliğinden sıyıran bu ötekileştirmedir, çünkü kendisi hakkında çok az şey düşünür ve yalnızca kimliklerinin uygun olduğunu düşündüğü kişilerin gölgelerinin arkasında yaşamayı göze alabilir. Ralph Singh, ne İngiliz ne de Hintli bir duruş benimser. İlk geldiği zamandan daha parçalanmış bir benlik yaşar ve daha da yabancılaşmıştır. Alanı ne kadar çok değişirse, kimliği özünden o kadar uzaklaşır. Ve böylece, Londra'ya gelişi, kendini keşfetme arzusunu açığa vurur, ancak beklentileri karşılanmadığı için boşluk hissiyle sonuçlanır. Londra, Isabella gibi, onun için daha fazla yabancılaşmaya neden olur, çünkü aksi takdirde kimliğini ifade edecek olan bu boş alanı yerine getirme umudu ve hayali paramparça olur. Bir kimlik parodisi olarak *The Mimic Men* aynı zamanda insan kimliğinin nasıl sadece kopyalamaya indirgenebileceğinin bir tasviridir. Naipaul'un topluluklardaki azınlık gruplarının mevcut yapılar tarafından nasıl kapsüllenebileceği veya araya girebileceği konusundaki anlayışına da değinilmiştir. Hayali ada ortamı olan Isabella, özellikle kimseye ait olmayan bir yerdir, böylece bireysel karakterlerin tüm meşruiyet ve köklülük iddialarını devre dışı bırakır. Sonuç olarak, Singh gibi karakterler kendilerini bu yabancı şehirde tanımlayamama eğilimindeydi. Özetle, yer değiştirmenin kimlik oluşumu üzerindeki etkileri üzerine yapılan bu tartışmada, *The Mimic Men* romanında mekânların tarihin derinliklerine gömülmesi sebebiyle, bu tarihlerin orada yaşayanlara musallat olmak için geri döndüğünü ve kimlik oluşumlarına müdahale etmeye devam ettiğini ortaya konulmaktadır. Dahası, Naipaul romanda çok kültürlü ideolojinin karakterlere her zaman rahatlık vermeyebileceğini ortaya koyar, çünkü Singh, etnik çeşitliliği anlatıdan açıkça belli olan Isabella ya da Londra ile kendini hiçbir zaman özdeşleştirememektedir.

Half a Life ile ilgili tartışma, yabancı ve farklı yerlerde yaşamak için mücadele eden karakterler için ortaya çıkan bazı özdeşleşme sorunlarına ve eldeki romanın adından da anlaşılacağı gibi, bir bütün olarak değil, bu bütünün sadece yarısı olarak yaşama yönündeki nihai eğilime bakılarak yürütülmüştür. *Half a Life*, kimliğinin sadece yarısını değil, bir bütünü bulmak için sürekli bir mücadele içinde olan Willie Chandran'ın hayatı etrafında döner. Willie'nin arayışı, kimliği hakkında bir soru olarak başlar ve ta ilk ismini alırkenki zamana kadar gider. Babasına Somerset adını sorar ve arkadaşlarının genellikle ona güldüğünü söyler. İlk kimlik belirteci olarak isimler, kültürel bir ortama ilk girişimiz olarak kabul edilir. İsimler, insanlar ve nereden geldikleri hakkında çok şey söyler. Bu, okuyucunun Willie'nin gelecekteki kimlik değişikliklerine veya krizlerine dair edindiği ilk içgörüdür. Çalışma ayrıca, ait olmama duygusunun, babasının kendi köklülüğüne olan inanç eksikliğine de nasıl gömüldüğünü göstermektedir, çünkü o da açık bir aidiyet duygusundan yoksundur. *Half a Life* ayrıca, kimlik değişimlerini yönlendiren bir araç olarak hareket eden ideolojik mekan değişiklikleriyle sonuçlanan bir tür ayrımcılığı tasvir eder. Willie'nin annesinin okuluna ilk katıldığında maruz kaldığı ayrımcılık, sadece kendisi için değil, Willie için de gelecekte bir kimlik krizini harekete geçirir. Böylece Naipaul, Willie'yi çifte yabancılaşmadan muzdarip biri olarak konumlandırır: Birincisi, ebeveynlerinden miras aldığı yabancılaşma, babanın yarı Brahmin ve annenin geri bir kasttan olması, sonra da İngiltere gibi farklı yerlerde ve Afrika'daki isimsiz bir ülkede yaşayan biri olarak karşılaştığı yabancılaşma. Tıpkı Singh gibi, Willie'nin İngiltere'ye kaçışı da bir kimlik arayışı örneği olarak gösterilir, aynı zamanda şu anki görevinden bir kaçıştır. Maharaja'nın kirli evini terk eder ve kuzeye, Britanya'da idealize edilmiş bir peri diyarına gider, ancak gördükleri karşısında hayal kırıklığına uğrar. Naipaul'un Willie'nin kişiliğini betimlemesi, belki de onu büken yeni bir kültürle tamamen karşılaşmış biri olarak onu daha da yerinden etmek içindir. Ayrıca, bölüm başlıklarında kullanılan

"çeviri" kelimesinin çeşitli çağrışımları vardır. Örneğin, Afrika'ya seyahat ettiği "İkinci Çeviri"de, okuyucuya, yazarların ve hikaye anlatıcılarının basmakalıp merceğinden temsil edildiği gibi, "ilk çeviri"de anlatılandan farklı olarak Afrika hakkında ilk elden bilgi edinme izni verilir. Willie'nin kimliği belki de Afrika'ya seyahat ettiğinde başka bir yerde daha fazla yeniden şekillenme şansı bulur, bu yüzden onun için bu, kimliğini tercüme etmenin başka bir yoludur. Ek olarak, Willie, okuyucunun Afrika topluluklarındaki değerler ve kültürler hakkındaki düşüncesini, bir sömürgeci veya üçüncü dünyadan Avrupa'ya gelen ve sonra tekrar geri gelen biri tarafından yeniden anlatıldığı gibi yeniden yerleştirmek için bir ajan olarak çalışır. Willie'nin bu döngüyü tamamlama yeteneği, Batılı ve Batılı olmayan uluslar hakkında önyargılı kavramlardan yoksun olabilecek kimliğini eski haline getirmede eksik halka olabilir. Willie'nin Hindistan ve Londra'da yaşadığı "yarılanma ömrü", tezde gösterildiği gibi, Afrika'dayken tamamen durma noktasına gelir. Büyük konağın ve Anna'nın uzun aile soyuna ait eski poster yatağın gölgesinde kaybolur. Kendini keşfetme çabası, Anna, komşusuyla olan ilişkisinin farkında olduğunu kabul ettiğinde utançla sonuçlanır. Bu bölümdeki tartışmanın önerdiği gibi, Willie Somerset Chandran'ın yolculuğu ve kendini keşfetme arayışı, Naipaul'un karışık topluluklar için daha önceki küçümsemesinden kaynaklanan sonuçsuz bir durum olarak görünebilir. Bununla birlikte, yine de, kahramanın kimliğini tam olarak anlamak için geçmesi gereken bir yolculuk olduğunu gösterir. Willie'nin Londra'yı, kim olduğuna dair içsel nefretinden kurtuluş sağlayacak bir yer olarak, ona özerklik duygusu verecek bir yer olarak gördüğü yanıltıcı zihniyet bir yanılsamadır. Londra'dan güneye Afrika'ya doğru yola çıkması, Londra'nın bir birey olarak kendini yeniden keşfetmek için tarafsız bir zemin olarak kullanması gereken bir yer olduğunu inkar ettiğini göstermektedir.

Bu çalışma, Smith'in *White Teeth* ve *On Beauty* romanlarından yola çıkarak çokkültürlülükle ilgili olarak kimlik tartışmasını daha da detaylı bir şekilde ele almıştır.. Romanların kurgusunun çoğu İngiltere ve genel olarak Batı'yı tartışır. Romancıların gösterdiği gibi karakterlerin zihinlerinde gelişen kimlik krizi, hem bu ortamdan hem de çok kültürlü mekanlarda yaşamanın yansıttığı vatan özleminden kaynaklanmaktadır. *White Teeth* Londra'nın çok kültürlü İngiltere'sinde geçen bir romandır. Esas olarak karakterlerin İngiltere'deki birinci ve ikinci nesil göçmenler olarak kaderi ve etnik kargaşa nedeniyle yaşadığı sorunlar hakkındadır. Romanda esas olarak Karayipler, Bangladeşli ve Yahudi gibi farklı kökenlere sahip üç Londra ailesi yer alır. Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, dil meselesi uzun zamandır postkolonyal edebiyatta sıcaklığını koruyan bir konu olmuştur. Dilin bir boyun eğdirme aracı olup olmadığı romanda tartışılan konular arasındadır. Dahası, dil çok katmanlı bir fenomen olarak durur, çünkü sadece anlam üreten keyfi sesler olarak değil, aynı zamanda bu seslerin veya dilin doğası ve karakteri olarak düşünülmelidir.

Gösterildiği gibi, *White Teeth*'te karakterlerin karşılaştığı en büyük zorluk, değişen fiziksel ve ideolojik mekanlardır. Farklı yerlere taşınma süreci sadece travmatik değil, aynı zamanda bireyin kimliği için de kritiktir. "Batı veya Doğu", Said'in tartıştığı gibi, göçmen topluluklar ve gittikleri bölgelerde buldukları insanlar arasında güç yapıları yaratan ikilik oluşturmak için mecazi olarak kullanılır. Örneğin Clara Bowden, ruhları kurtarmaya kararlı dişsiz bir Yehova'nın Şahidinden, dindar annesinin onu çevrelediği aşırı dini ortamdan kurtuluş arayan birine kadar çeşitli kimlik belirteçleri arasında geçiş yapar. Ryan Topps ile olan ilişkisi iyi gitmez çünkü ilk başta onu kurtardığını ya da çok dindar olmadığı için kurtarıcısı olacağını düşünür. Garson olan ama eğitiminin onu bu işe uygun hale getirmediği konusunda sürekli ısrar eden Samad, Clara'ya benzer bir konumdadır. Tarihi bir kahraman olan Mangal Pande'nin gölgesinde yaşamaya devam

eden bir adam olarak, kimliği, hayatta da başarısız olmuş bir başkasına olan bu sanrısal güvenden muzdariptir. Buna ek olarak, çok kültürlü bir topluluk olarak Willesden'in çeşitli zorlukları vardır; bunların arasında yaşamak için pahalı bir alan olması ve sakinlerin çoğunun masalarına yiyecek koymayı göze alamaması vardır. Alsana'nın karşılaştığı zorlukları protesto etmek için Çin plakalarını parçalaması, statükoya meydan okumaya çalışmak ve Willesden'deki insanların görünüşte barışçıl yaşam koşullarının gizemini çözmek olarak yorumlanabilir. Böylece, bu yerin kimliği de sadece Irie gibi çok ırklı çocuklar tarafından değil, aynı zamanda içinde dostça ikamet etmenin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamama nedeniyle de parçalanır. Öte yandan Millat, dikkatsiz bir sokak çetesi hayatı yaşamaktan gurur duyan ve hayal kırıklığına uğramış İslami köktendinci bir grup olan KEVIN'e dahil olan bir gençtir. Bu örneklerin her ikisi de (Bangladeş'te İngilizler Magid ve İngiltere'de Müslüman Millat), ikisinin de kimliklerinde hem İngiliz hem de Bengal kültürlerinin köklülüğünü göstermektedir. Ek olarak, aradaki üçüncü alan sakinini, çok kültürlü bir toplumun talepleriyle huzursuz olan birini temsil eder. Öte yandan, İngiltere'de kalan Millat, dini protestolara katılacak kadar ileri giden "gerçek" Müslüman haline gelir. Millat, tüm alanlarda zorluklarla gezinebilen, ancak yine de çok az pişmanlık duyan veya hiç pişmanlık duymayan genç Windrush neslinin özgürlüğünü temsil eder. Doğal melez Irie (doğduğu duruma göre), ötekileştirme sürecinde başarısız olur, çünkü karakterinin uygun bir görüntüsünü yansıtması gereken ayna (İngiltere) bunu yapamaz ve bu da daha fazla yabancılaşmaya neden olur. Irie'nin Jamaika'yı özdeşleşme için ideal bir alan olarak algılaması, hem yanlış bir kavram hem de bilinmeyenin güvenli bir sığınağı olan idealist bir mekan görüşüne dair içgörü sunar, bu da ona rahatlık verir, çünkü o alandaki varlığının hatırasıyla lekelenmemiş gibi görünür.

Ayrıca, Chalfen'ler, yeni nesli ve yeni yaşam biçimlerini temsil etmenin yanı sıra, bilimsel keşiflerin peşinde koşarak melez yaşamı destekleyen bir ideolojiyi de ortaya koyar. Hibrit fare projesi, bu fikri tasvir etmek için kullanılan en iyi örnektir. Bu keşifler aynı zamanda karakterlerin kendilerini içinde buldukları yeri değiştiren unsurlar olarak da işlev görür ve romanda hem Millat gibi bazıları tarafından desteklendiği hem de Samad gibi diğerleri tarafından itiraz edildiği görülür.

White Teeth'te kimlik oluşumu üzerindeki etkiler olarak melez kültürel karşılaşmaların konuları dil kullanımında daha da genişlemektedir. Postkolonyal edebiyatta dil, Young'ın dilsel melezlik olarak adlandırdığı, dilin aynı anda aynı ve farklı olma kapasitesine sahip olduğu bir koşul olan melezleşmiş bir biçimdir. Smith, çok kültürlü yerlerin sadece farklı bir yaşam tarzını teşvik etmekle kalmayıp, aynı zamanda kendilerini tanımlama sürecinde endişe yarattığını da temsil eder, çünkü insanların kökleri, tarihleri ve kültürleri onlardan kolayca aşındırılamaz ve bir şekilde her zaman farklı mekansal ortamlarda kimliklerini teşvik etmeye başlar. Magid gibi birçok karakterin, Raggastani'yi, kendi kimlik kategorilerine ait olmayanları kovan, aynı zamanda grubuna ait olmaları gerektiğini düşünen başkalarını da davet eden bir iletişim biçimi olarak kullandığını gösterilmiştir. Hortense Bowden gibi diğerleri, farklı insanlarla konuşurken konuşma tarzlarını değiştirerek dille oynarlar. Bunlar mekandaki değişikliklerin insanların kimliklerini nasıl etkileyebileceğini örneklemek için kullanılan unsurlardır.

On Beauty ise, neredeyse tamamen beyaz olan bir toplulukta kimlik oluşumunun zorluklarını derinlemesine araştırır. Romanda Smith, güzellik kavramını birçok cephede, kahraman Kiki karakteri ve en iyi arkadaşı Carlene aracılığıyla bir kimlik olarak alaycı bir şekilde sunar ve her ikisi de Erzulie tanrıçası tarafından temsil edilir. On Beauty'deki yerler, kadın kahramanların kendilerini içinde buldukları ataerkil yapılar aracılığıyla

ayrılır. Bu nedenle, Kiki Belsey ve Carlene Kipps gibi siyah kadın karakterler için, doğrudan veya dolaylı sömürgeci karşılaşmalarından ve görünüşte daha fazla güce sahip erkeklerle evli olmalarından kaynaklanan çifte bir mücadele sergilenir. Bedensel kimlik, postkolonyal edebiyatta büyük ölçüde araştırılan ve bu romana da yansıyan bir kavramdır. Beden uzun zamandır sadece marjinalleştirmeye değil, aynı zamanda sömürgeleştirilmiş ve sömürgeleştirilen güçler arasında güç paylaştırmaya da hizmet eden bir metafor olmuştur. Bu nedenle, gösterildiği gibi, bedenlerinin şekli ve büyüklüğü nedeniyle toplumsal beklentilere uyan veya onlardan uzaklaşan karakterler için bir tanımlama yeridir. Smith, bu kimlik belirtecini, Kiki Belsey ve Carlene Kipps'in kutuplaşmış bedenlerini karşılaştırarak örneklendirir; birincisi, üzerinde küçük bir şey olmayan şişman siyah bir kadın, ikincisi ise neredeyse kemiklerine kadar zayıf olan ince siyah bir kadındır. İki beden arasındaki tartışma, bu kadınların bedenlerini nasıl algıladıklarına odaklanır. Kiki, vücudunu gururla algılar ve evliliği pahasına bile zayıflamaya niyeti yoktur ve Carlene için vücudu, algılanan fiziksel kırılganlığın arkasına gücünü saklayabileceği bir tür sürgündür.

Çalışmada Kiki ve Carlene'nin evlerinin kimlik yıkım yerleri olduğu gösterilmiştir. Bu karakterler, ideal itaatkar kadın figürüne boyun eğmeyi reddederler. Howard Kiki'nin kocası, evlilik dışı ilişkilerinde tasvir edildiği gibi içten içe evlendiği daha ince karısını ister, ancak Kiki bu dile getirilmemiş taleplere boyun eğmez. Kocasının kitaplarını kişisel kütüphanesinde itaatkar bir şekilde organize ediyor gibi görünen Carlene, ölümünden sonra gerçek kimliği hakkında bir savaş bırakır, çünkü en iyi resmini aile üyelerinden birine değil, arkadaşına miras bırakmıştır. Bu nedenle, çalışmanın gösterdiği gibi, bedenler kimlik oluşumunda çok önemli olan hem hafıza hem de direnç alanlarıdır.

Anlatıcı, çok kültürlü bir toplulukta yaşamanın karmaşasını tasvir ederken, bu toplulukların birleşebileceği ve ırksal olarak karışık ortamlarda yaşamanın getirdiği kimlik oluşumunun zorluklarını hafifletmeye çalışabileceği diğer tarafı gösterme konusunda açıktır. "Otobüs Durağı" *On Beauty* romanında özellikle böyle bir bölümdür. Boston'da ünlü bir restorandır ve romanın çok sembolik bir ortamıdır. Herkesin beklediği ve buluştuğu ve konuşmaların ve ilişkilerin başladığı ve büyüdüğü yerdir. Otobüs Durağı, birincisinde (Otobüs Durağı) Carl'ın bir şair olarak geliştiği ve ikincisinde (Üniversite) yeteneğini engelleyen bir arşivciye dönüştürüldüğü üniversiteye doğrudan karşıt gibi de alınabilir. Buna ek olarak, Otobüs Durağı, akademisyenler, şairler, müzik severler, yaşlılar ve gençler için hoş bir yer gibi görünse de, Üniversite daha sonra Monty Kipps'in Carl gibi öğrencilerin tam olarak kayıtlı olmadığı programların kaldırılmasını savunduğu noktaya kadar çok seçici bir yerdir. Yine, *White Teeth*'teki gibi, *On Beauty* de kimlik belirteci olarak melezleştirilmiş dil biçimlerini kullanır. Smith'in bu çalışmada ele alınan romanlarının her ikisi de rahat bir çok kültürlü topluluk fikrine ve melez kimliğin başarısına meydan okur ve bunları sorunsallaştırır. Her iki roman da, Bhabha tarafından öne sürülen liminalitenin, bazı yönlerden geçerli olsa da, teorik olarak daha anlamlı olan, ancak pratik anlamda zorlayıcı görünecek bir kavram olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Böylece, Smith'in İngiltere'de bulunan yerleri *White Teeth* ve ABD ve İngiltere için *On Beauty'*de göçmenlere yönelik farklı milliyetçi tutumlar hakkında bir fikir vermektedir. Bu dinamikler, melezleşmeyi çok karmaşık ve zor bir fenomen haline getiren şeylerdir ve yukarıda tartışılan romanlarda, karakterlerin yerleri değiştiğinde kimliklerini her zaman nasıl değiştirdiklerini gösteren unsurlar sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Bu nedenle, Naipaul bir kimlik arayışı içinde karakterleri memleketleri ve diğer yerler arasında ileri geri götürmeyi denerken, Smith karakterlerinin kimliklerini aynı mekansal sınırlar içinde oluşturmalarını sağlar. Karakterlerin aidiyet duygusunun, ev arzusunun ve ondan nefret etmelerinin bu kararsız

tasviri, bu duygulara gömülü yanılsama, iki fenomenin içine gömülü olumlu yönlere rağmen, çok kültürlülük ve melezliğin zorluklarına ışık tutar. Tartışılan tüm romanlarda, kimlikle ilgili meseleler çözülmemiş ve sürekli değişiyor gibi görünür, bu da Hall'un referans noktalarımızla ilgili olarak sınırların her zaman değiştiğini iddia ettiği savını doğrular. Bu nedenle, Naipaul ve Smith, insan davranışının ve kimliğinin bu yönlerini, kimlikleri tarihe kök salmış gibi görünen karakterlerle bir bütün olarak temsil eder, ancak yerleri değişirse, o zaman onlar da bu kimlikleri değiştirirler.

Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın amacı, melezlik veya çokkültürlülük gibi terimlerin kuramsallaştırılmasını küçümsemek değil, herhangi bir teori veya kavramın ortaya koyduğu zorlukları, özellikle de iyi niyetli ve hegemonik olma niyetinde olmayan zorlukları içeren tartışmayı genişletmek olmuştur. Böylece araştırma, sonunda çok kültürlülükle sonuçlanan göç ve diaspora fenomeninin, ister melez ister etnik olsun, görünüşte doğal kimlik biçimlerinin yıkılmasıyla sonuçlanan bir ayrışma yarattığını göstermiştir. Kimliklerde devam eden değişim, bolca vurgulandığı gibi, sürekli değişen ideoloji ve kültürel ortamlardan da etkilenen mekanla yakın bir ilişki anlamına gelir.

Dahası, çalışma şunu göstermiştir: Mekanlar, sizi başkalarına götürmeye devam eden hiç bitmeyen bir dizi kapı gibidir. Her yer yeni bir gündem, bir fırsat veya bir meydan okumaya neden olur. Ve her fırsat veya zorluk için, karakterlerin kimlikleri etkilenir. Analizden açık bir örnek, *White Teeth* romanında Howard'ın evliliğini, 'siyah' olmaya çalışması ya da en azından bir kişi gibi davranması için yeni bir alan olarak algılamasıdır. Eylemleri, ailesine uyum sağlama arzusunu gösterir ve bu girişimdeki başarısızlığı onun yabancılığını gösterir. Bu yön aynı zamanda Bhabha'nın sömürgeci karşılaşmayı iki taraflı bir karşılaşma olarak tanımlamasını vurgulamaya yardımcı olur. Çoğu zaman, birçok eleştirmen sömürgeci ve postkolonyal karşılaşma hakkında tek taraflı bir görüş benimser. Bununla birlikte, Bhabha aktif bir ajan gibi bu mücadele

sırasında sömürgeleştirilenlerin, uzun süren sömürgeci yönetime rağmen, sömürgeleştirenden o kadar da farklı olmadığını ve belki de her iki taraftan da benzer bir gücün sergilenebileceğini göstererek, hem sömürgeleştiren hem de sömürgeleştirilen için karşılıklı bağımlılık duygusu sergileyen melezlik ve diasporanın, birbiriyle ilişkili iki terim olduğu gerçeği, ki bu durum kaçınılmaz olarak ırkçı çağrışımlarla doludur, aynı zamanda kendilerini bu pozisyonlarda bulan veya melez duruş sergileme eğiliminde olan insanlar için karmaşık meselelerdir. Belki de bu yüzden melezlik ve çokkültürlülüğün zorlukları, daha olumlu sosyal, kültürel ve kimlik belirteçleri olmak yerine, daha karmaşıktır ve sorunsallaştırılmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, postkolonyal çalışmalara küçük ama önemli bir katkı sağlamıştır ve günümüzde kimlikler hakkında keşfedilecek çok şey olduğu gerçektir. Kimlikler, sosyal veya politik spektrumda yakıcı tartışmalar haline gelmektedir. Bu çalışma, birinci ve ikinci Windrush kuşaklarından iki yazarı karşılaştırdığından, bu kuşaklarla ilgili daha başka çalışmalar yapmak ve sömürgecilik sonrası edebiyatın birçok insanın yaşadığı gerçek zorlukları ve deneyimleri nasıl yansıttığını görmek ilginç olabilir. Edebiyat ve sanat bir boşlukta yaratılmamıştır; bu nedenle bu araştırma sadece bu çalışmayı değil, edebiyat alanında başka yerlerde yürütülen kimlikle ilgili gelecekteki birçok araştırmayı da yönlendirebilecek niteliktedir.

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