

# Zadie Smith's White Teeth: Multiculturalism and problems of Immigrant

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## Abstract

This paper is an attempt to research the major theme of Multiculturalism and also to research the problems of the immigrants that do not belong in the land they live, in Zadie Smith's magnum opus 'The White Teeth'. Zadie Smith's famous novel deals with the major issue of multiculturalism and problems of immigrants who live in the foreign land, contributing to its multiculturalism. It also includes the way British people react and respond to this ever increasing mix of culture, a sort of cultural melting pot. It tracks the life of three families namely Iqbal's and Joneses and Bowden's. All three of the families have intermingling of culture amongst them. Novel explores how they again and again feel that they are 'just tolerated' in land that is not theirs. It explores their feeling of 'not belonging' which is kept ever increasing by the way British people respond to them, sometimes deliberately or sometimes unknowingly. Besides this novel also includes the urge of people belonging to various immigrant cultures, to trace their historical roots and their beliefs relating to their ancestral homelands and forefathers. Characters depicted in this work are constantly on the tormenting pursuit of greatness in their roots in order to tell the new people that they belong to something great. Zadie Smith uses the style referred to as hysterical realism, first coined by British Critic James Wood, one of the prominent critics of Smith's work. This style has helped her rightly put on paper the confusion in the minds of immigrants. Smith has very well depicted the mixed race conditions of London. It is not that minor Muslim culture only has problem dealing with the dominant British culture but also with other cultures like Jamaican, American, Bangladeshi/ Bengali culture etc. The main character Shamad who has emigrated finds himself in the hot pot of plethora of cultures which is always boiling with some or the other issue of racial, cultural conflict. He like every other character feels an urge that his culture is in danger of suppression through domination. It is evidently shown that the minor culture is dominated in the foreign land, by behaviour or words. Alienation is felt by all the immigrant characters thus they react in the different way, some in stoic way and some in reactive or offensive way like Shamad's son Millat. Zadie Smith has always included the issues of immigrants, issues of religion, cultural identity etc. She has in the novel given the positive ending giving the message that despite the various conflicts, the things will eventually improve as people start to respect each other's culture and their identity.

Nelson Mandela once said '*My dream would be multicultural society, one that is diverse and where every man, women and child are treated equally. I dream of the world where all people of all races work together in harmony.*' Zadie Smith's novel 'White Teeth' deals with the ground reality of immigrant and the multicultural society. Her narration depicts that Mandela's dream is still not completely realised as far as the place where the novel is set- London, Britain. Zadie Smith is probably the most critically acclaimed novelist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and 'White Teeth' a work which has played a major role to this. Since its publication it is bestowed with many well known literary awards like James Tait Black Memorial Prize, Whitbread Book Award, Guardian First Book Award, Commonwealth Writers First Book Prize and Betty Trask Award. Zadie Smith was born as Sadie Adeline Smith on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1975 in Brent, London, England to a Jamaican mother and English father.

This paper intends to study the Multiculturalism and the problems of immigrants in the undertaken novel of Smith's 'The White Teeth'.

Smith's magnum opus is well acclaimed for its chief characteristic besides other i.e. Multiculturalism. But Multiculturalism itself is as complex a term, as use of its aspects in the novel. Zadie Smith's novel narrates the ground reality of the country like Britain which goes counter to the statements of the political leaders who try to appease every section of their vote bank by giving the statements which hint of acceptance of any immigrating culture. According to The Guardian survey 'It is depressing to discover that four in 10 adults in the country agreed with the statement that "having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures has undermined British culture". In the novel there exist the instances where the immigrant characters feel the existing tension between the bonds they have with the people of other ethnic groups. The government may prohibit discrimination or any such offensive statements but the immigrants do feel it even though they are said in the indirect way. Any immigrant most probably emigrates to another country [in most instances a developed country like Britain or America] in search of a better life in terms of standard of living, safety, stability and to get economically strong but not at the cost of losing his own identity, his respect and culture. Immigrant characters in the novel Iqbal's, Joneses, Bowden's and others live like the English do but are not the English. They live in the country which Zadie Smith rightly terms: A Nothing space. Smith has included a wonderful and intriguing quote in the novel to highlight the paradoxical situation of the immigrants. This quotation is in the form of a question in which Norman Tebbit asks us the question "The cricket test which side do they cheer for? ... Are you still looking back to where you came from or where you are?" Smith's novel is important also from the point of view that it gets to the readers the truth and unearths the hypocrisy of politicians who give importance to the cultural diversity and equal opportunity in their country but on the field level immigrants are still in some corner as different by culture and the race although to speak directly about it is not allowed. This is more outlined in the 1966 statement of Britain's then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins who set out in it the general framework for the inclusion and integration of new immigrant communities into the British national culture and polity:

'Integration is perhaps a rather loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrant, of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a 'melting pot', which will turn everyone out in common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman... I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of uniformity, but cultural diversity, coupled with equality of opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance... If we are to maintain any sort of world reputation for civilised living and social cohesion, we must get far nearer to its achievement than is the case today.'

Even though in the novel state statements are not included directly, the character feel the need to do something about their identity. They somehow keep feeling threatened, all through the novel about their identity, that it is in danger. Zadie Smith nevertheless keeps the subject of varied individual reaction to threat. She writes that while the elders like Shamad do not react in the offensive way, at the same time his son Millat does by joining the Islamist group KEVIN. The difference of how the young immigrant blood reacts more angrily than the older generation. But no one indicates Smith's reacts in offensive way immediately. While Magid is exposed to the Bangladeshi culture, Millat adopts the pop- culture and also dresses and talks in the way that is not his but more like, adopted to blend in England. But even after behaving like them he is still hinted at by others as the 'Paki' an outsider, one who does not belong here in Britain. In novel when Magid, Millat and Irie are travelling by the bus and Magid pulls the bell of bus too many times, one frustrated white passenger says to other 'If you ask me they should all go back to their own...'. Such statements act as the factors which increase the frustration inside Millat. Multiculturalism should not be connected with racialisation but is nevertheless is attached to it. In the novel lies this undercurrent of race which immigrant feels. And they react to this problem in the different ways, for example in the case of Shamad Miah Iqbal. Shamad is one of the central characters of the novel Shamad meets his lifelong friend Archie in the battle where he is posted to fight by the side of England. Archie is white but nevertheless supports and respects Shamad. But Shamad like his sons later, gives his all in the war for England but still faces the dilemma, a question which arises in the mind of every immigrant, 'On which side do I belong?'. In war Shamad felt more faithful to England, the country which was not his, or did never accept him, more than Archie Jones. But novelist say that even after the faithfulness, people back in England would not have acknowledged him as one of their own in the civilian street. 'A vein of Shamad forehead was fighting passionately to escape his skin. He wished to defend a country that wasn't his and revenge the killing of men who would not have acknowledged him in the civilian street.' Such words explain the dilemma. A dilemma that ever exists from the time an immigrant sets the foot in the foreign land. Zadie Smith is right in naming of the term 'Nothing Space' for England. This term only applies to an immigrant and not the major ethnicity. When Shamad comes to know that

the war he and Archie are fighting in is over he again faces the dogmatic immigrant question. He asks Archie “What am I going to do, after this war is over, this war that is already over – What am I going to do? Go back to Bengal? Or Delhi, who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?” It is the persistent question for Shamad an immigrant Muslim in British land. Even when in the war he is repeatedly called as ‘Sultan’ by his comrades. In some way or the other he is reminded of who he is. But Archie Jones, another character in the novel respects him and understands his frustration than any other person. He and Shamad develop their relationship as lifelong friends who trust each other and respect each other similarities as well as the differences. Smith although on one side raises the issue of discrimination of immigrants but on the other side she also shows the life long relationship of Shamad and Archie. She shows that their friendship surpasses any kind of discrimination. She has shown that only friendship can solve the issues that the multicultural societies like the London face. She suggests that one should not always look at the similarities to bond but also respect the differences between each other. One should celebrate the differences just as much one celebrates the similarities to create a truly civilised society where everyone is welcome, not just in the political statements but also in the real life. Humans have always had the tendency to stereotype other groups. Shamad knows that Archie is also white but he has no issues with his friend. On the contrary he loves him the most. But he thinks that England as a whole has taken his children on the wrong track often taking in his mind Millat and Magid and sometimes Irie. He says ‘I have been corrupted by England, I see that now – my children, my wife, they too have been corrupted.’ Shamad here is stereotyping whole England as a sort of person who is to be blamed. He considers that his dream of raising his children as true Muslim gentlemen has now been shattered although he in his secret life is too corrupted and is not true to himself. He now wants to correct his mistakes through his children. He stops his children from participating in the Harvest Festival and raises the question in the meeting about why there are less of the Muslim Festival and more of the pagan festivals. This he considers the oppression of his religion and culture. ‘That is precisely what I want to know. About Harvest Festival? What is it? Why is it? And why must my children celebrate it?’

It is British concept of ‘Community Cohesion’ and based on this the school of Magid, Millat and Irie has included the Harvest Festival. Mrs Owens who is the school principal has also tried to say that school gives respect to every religion and culture by including all the festivals of minor community but to this Shamad raises the question. He says that minority culture of Muslim is oppressed because only one Muslim festival is mentioned in the school list. By raising voice for more Muslim festivals he is insisting on equality that the immigrant Muslims are in his opinion denied in England. According to Merriam Webster the meaning of the term ‘Xenophobia’ is ‘fear and hatred of the strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.’ Xenophobia is derived from the two Greek terms: Xenos which means – a guest and Phobos which means – fear or flight. This fear called Xenophobia is included all through the novel through the characters. It means that an immigrant or the other culture will always be a guest or a stranger who will be feared from or stayed away from. He will always have a status of a guest and will never be accepted as a member of a family, a family called Britain. Shamad is afraid of losing his cultural identity in English land and when Alsana, his wife tells him ‘I restrain myself. I live. I let live’ he replies to her in the following way: ‘It is not a matter of letting others live. It is a matter of protecting one’s religion from abuse’ Alsana on the contrary to Shamad, has more practical way of living a life. She thinks it is futile to go in search of one’s roots. She believes the roots to their very end are untraceable. Zadie Smith thinks that it is useless to talk about who is English and who is not. She believes that the world is too mixed up and the identities have changed or lost. This thought of her is clear through the reply of Alsana to Shamad, ‘said Alsana, revealing her English tongue, ‘you go back and back and it’s still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It’s a fairy tale!’ Novel *White Teeth* nonetheless takes many aspects of London in it. But the common and recurring aspect is seeing London as a multicultural society, a mixed up society with large amount of immigrant population in it. Novel also includes indirectly the non- white immigration through African slave trade. History and present are very carefully intertwined through the characters of the ethnic group in England. After the Second World War it is told that there was significant immigration from the colonies like Caribbean and Indian subcontinent. Britain is now not just the land of whites as it was known as. So much multicultural is the British society that Smith uses a typical word for it and i.e. ‘Neutral’. But the real problem of identity remains around for an immigrant who has left his history back and come to a ‘Neutral place’ where everyone is trying to create new history but still unable to forget the past. This paradoxical question remains all the time. Smith keeps the situation of an immigrant in very simple and concise statement. She writes ‘Every single day is a huge battle between who they are and who they should be, what they were and what they will be’. Although Archie Jones despite being a white, never ever gives the emphasis on the issues of Identity Crisis and

overload of immigrants in Britain. He never thought that his opportunities were ever threatened by people of other race. He is never shown to be a racist and his marriage to Clara Bowden proves the fact that he does not believe in such issues and accepts the conditions the way they are with ease. Smith indicates that this classification of people's identities is comparatively the new phenomena and is totally unnecessary. She indicates this by the incident when Archie travels through the bus and gets the ticket and thinks 'Those tickets, the old ones, they didn't tell you where you were going, much less where you came from. It was all different now, off course. All this information. Archie wondered why that was'.

'White Teeth' characters can be chiefly divided as the first generation immigrants including the Bowden's and the Iqbal's and second generation including their offspring's namely Millat, Magid and Irie Jones. Second generation finds itself in more chaos than their parents. As Smith has coined they are born in the 'Nothing space' and they need a strong guidance from their parents to find their true identity but their elders are too busy to deal with their own issues or in other words impotent in the case of helping them find their identity in the 'Nothing Space' like Britain. Millat Iqbal needs the most help but Shamad is a failed father for him. Shamad feels too that he is a failure to his children and his first mistake was, he thinks, was to bring his family to foreign country. For him a search of better life came at the cost of loss of culture and authenticity. Millat 'All his life he wanted the godfather and all he got was Shamad. A faulty, broken, stupid, one handed waiter of a man who had spent eighteen years in a strange land and made no mark than this.' Shamad writes his name on the wooden bench in the park just to tell that he too had made his mark like Americans on Moon and like Englishmen who named the street in Kerala after their wives. But in this he fails to see that he too believes in the uselessness of putting a flag and naming the streets and by scrapping his name on the wood it seems that Shamad too has become like them. In the novel Smith denies the Zeno's Paradox about which she says 'He wanted the one but the world is many'? She says that relating Zeno's oneness to the world is appreciable but the truth is not so and that the world is not a one family but divided in unending multitudes with multitudes of conflicts and tensions. Alsana Iqbal is a Bengali Muslim who is totally opposite to the religious and submissive husband. She does not take this culture thing seriously. She is more of a practical mother who wants good life for her sons. But she too faces the problems. When Millat, now a devout and prominent member of Islamist group KEVIN, refuses to meet his brother who is more inclined towards the Chalfen family and Marcus Chalfen's Future Mouse Project, Alsana Begum refuses to meet Joyce Chalfen who wants to talk to her about her sons problems. Magid is so much changed by the Chalfen that he is totally behaves unlike before. Here Alsana too feels bad that she has lost her real Magid. She too thinks that coming to London for the better life had in-fact made it worse. Joyce is angrily told by Alsana that 'You and your husband have involved Magid in something so contrary to our culture, to our beliefs, that we barely remember him.' Alsana is a mother after all and surely feels most deeply for her children. But she has feels that if she can survive the land of natural disasters i.e. Bangladesh then she can also survive in the London. Even when she is pregnant with the twins she teaches them daily the lessons of surviving in the new land. Nevertheless she has the contempt for London for it has wrecked havoc in her family's life by the cultural point of view but also from the economic point of view. She says to Joyce Chalfen, 'I come from the land of tea to this godawful country and then I can't afford a proper cup of it'. This statement somehow gives the idea of conditions in which immigrants have to live in developed countries. They cannot even afford a proper cup of tea in London while a cup of tea is most affordable beverage in subcontinent where it is mostly grown. Thus immigrants are suppressed not only racially, culturally but also economically in developed countries like this. The opportunities are denied to them by discrimination. Immigrants have contempt in heart but settle for the low paid jobs. For example Shamad works as a low paid waiter, Alsana works as seamstress etc. But the contempt and the anger of being denied the opportunities and the voice to gain opportunities, linger in their heart. Millat feels this the most. He feels that he is denied all the things to be well known. He is tired of having the cocoon of this 'Englishness' on him and he is subconsciously in search for his real voice. Muslim protests happen against in London and also in the novel, KEVIN, an Islamist group talks about the suppressed Muslim minorities. Smith writes about Millat: 'He knew that he was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry, had no sexual identity; took other peoples job or had no job... ; that he could be dentist or the shop owner or the curry shifter, but not a footballer or film maker; that he should go back to his own country or stay here and earn his bloody keep; that he worshipped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat. In short, he knew he had no face in the country, no voice in the country. .... Until the week before... when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every news paper and they were angry and Millat recognised the anger, thought it recognised him and grabbed it with both hands'. Minorities in the multicultural society are always abused but they are subdued and behave according to the law and keep taking in the insult. Riot by Muslim minorities gives Millat a way to raise his voice and he thinks he has finally found his original voice, his

identity and thus he also rises to be a prominent member of KEVIN and opposes the Future Mouse Project of Marcus Chalfen and Magid Iqubal.

'*White Teeth*' which Salman Rushdie calls '*An astonishingly assured debut, funny and serious...*' is itself the reason for it being critically acclaimed. It deals with real and sad issues with contrast of fun and serious tones and the style which British Critic James Wood coined as 'Hysterical realism'. It has in it the vast expanse of time period including the three cultures spreading over three families, namely Iqubal, Jones and Bowden's and spanning over the three generation. All three families come in contact with the British Land and British people and the following multicultural society of it but it is interesting to see that every immigrant character reacts in the different way to the common problems that follow in the new place. It comes to light that the children of immigrants [Magid, Millat and Irie] in the start do not care and accept the global culture and think of themselves as the citizen of the world. But they are repeatedly made known of the problem and that they will never belong here even if they are born here and that they will be Jamaican, Pakis, Indian but never people of Britain. The problem of 'Not Belonging'. They are again and again told by others, even the family members that the problem exists. Novel shows the difference in Immigrant and their children for example, while Shamad Miah believes in the fate, Magid believes in Genetic and that it is not fate but science and at the same time Millat believes in revolt and that you have to revolt to get the rights and respect. This difference in belief also causes the generational gap between them and further complications. Smith also writes that the deeper source may also be there in millennial immigrant children which lead to conflict. She writes, 'This has been the century of the strangers, brown, yellow and white. This has been the century of great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into the playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O Rourke bouncing a basketball and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with first and the last names on a direct collision course. Name, the secret within them mass exodus, cramped boats and planes, cold arrivals, medical checks'. Smith also does not deny the possibility that the trauma is deep ingrained within the children of the mixed race and culture by the way of the hardships dealt by their previous generations.

England is compared by Smith as a gigantic mirror that shows the people [minorities and other ethnic group] their weaknesses and lacunas so as to correct them, may it be then the beauty which Irie Jones thought she lacked or the way of living. It is compared to the strange place which nullifies uniqueness of different cultures. Irie Jones is a right girl in the wrong place. Smith says that Irie thought she was a fat, mixed race girl and thought she was ugly but she was she did not know that she was very normal, fine and that she was genetically designed with the another country in mind i.e. Jamaica and not England. It is very clear in the following extract from the novel, 'But Irie did not know she was fine. There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in the strange land'. Irie Jones, a child of fair skinned father Archie Jones and dark skinned mother Clara Jones, faces the racism and cultural struggle in her own way. She gets this feeling when in her British literature class Mrs Broody; a fair skinned professor indirectly insults Irie by asking her to explain Shakespeare's Sonnet 127. Smith quotes the certain part of the poem to tell that he was speaking about a black or dark woman, 'In the old age black was not counted as fair... therefore my mistress eyes are raven black, her brows so suited, and the mourners seem ... My mistress eyes are nothing like the sun; Coral is far more red than her lips red; If snow be white, why then her breast are dun ... If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head...' Irie is again and again asked about the poem and thus vindicated and insulted. When Mrs Broody answers to Irie's question that a woman William Shakespeare is referring to is not black but dark like her [Mrs Broody] who was very white. After which Mrs Broody advises Irie to not read old poems and connect them to the present situation but even after this the harm is done and Irie is insulted so much that she decides to straighten her naturally curly Afro hairs. She starts taking steps to lose her identity, the prominent bodily feature which connects her to the black race i.e. her curly African hairs. She decides to straighten them. Irie changes her hair from Curly African to straight, so that Millat would like her but Nina's partner Maxine reminds her that her original Afro hair were good and more beautiful because it was hers, it was her uniqueness. Another character Paul King, the owner of the hair salon is shown reading in the newspaper that black women spend more money on straightening their hair than any other. This shows that women of other ethnicities are losing their identity and uniqueness that make them different from others. They want to be like others and be accepted by others but that is the very mistake they are doing. It is said by Rattansi in his book '*Multiculturalism*' that the people in multicultural place should bond over their differences just as they bond over the similarities. It is bonding over the uniqueness that will make the civilised multicultural society. But two mature black hairdressers know that no matter how long Irie will want to keep her hair

straight like the white women, the Jamaican roots will show up sooner or later and they will again curl up naturally. Smith writes ' Jackie and Denise knowing full well that curled African hair follicle will in the end, follow its genetic instructions'.

History plays a major role in the novel. In the start of the novel Zadie Smith has included the quotation, "What is past is prologue". Smith includes the history of the immigrants including their journey from their native land to the foreign land. Smith says that the moment an immigrant sets foot on the host land, the new history starts. They are literally like a *tabula rasa*, a Latin term for 'clean slate' on which the new history will be written. Shamad Iqbal in the novel believes that the great freedom fighter Mangal Pandey is related to his family and is in the lineage of his. He has his own way of telling his relation to great Mangal Pandey and how he was responsible for the Mutiny. While Archie Jones rejects and tells the different version of the past freedom history on the basis of the history books about it. Shamad is in the constant struggle to find his relation to his forefather i.e. Pandey according to him. He too keeps searching the history and in this way his identity and to be able to tell that he has the rich heritage of such great people. When Archie tells that the history books cannot lie, Shamad tells following to him, 'Archibald just because the words exist, it does not follow that it is a correct representation of the character of Mangal Pandey'. Shamad wants to suggest Archie that just because an immigrant has no written history does not mean that his oral version of the history is not true. And one should not trust the words about the immigrant if it is especially not written by an immigrant himself. Smith suggests that history has many versions. It is deep engrained in the immigrants and will also express itself in the actions of their children who will take birth in the foreign land. She believes that history and heritage lie in the genetic level and will from time to time come to surface. Shamad loves his son Magid more that he loves his son Millat and thus reluctantly kidnaps his own son and sends him to Bangladesh to become devoted to Bangla people. Shamad thinks that he himself is corrupted by London but at least he can save his one son and get him raised as a true Muslim. But it does not happen so and he leans toward the genetics, a branch which creates new history. He goes to work with Marcus Chalfen and Joyce Chalfen and starts getting away from his own family. Thus the problem of the drift between the two generations is also seen. Shamad thinks that both of his sons have failed him just as he has failed himself in every aspect.

The idea of Eugenics is also included in the novel to make readers understand the problem of suppression of cultural minorities better. Eugenics is a set of belief and practices that aim to improve the genetic quality of human population historically by excluding people and groups judged to be *inferior* or promoting those judged to be superior. This concept is used by Smith to depict the white supremacy by the scientific method. The mouse on which the dangerous genetic experiments are conducted by Marcus Chalfen is a symbol used by author to depict a minority [collectively]. Chalfen and his mentor Dr Peret are the characters are looked at as the white supremacist wanting to destroy the identity of the mouse [minority groups] in the name of science. Marcus Chalfen is shown as the controversial who most people hate as it is not ethical to conduct such cruel experiments on an innocent creature. He is shown saying the controversial sentence: "You eliminate the random, you rule the world". By the word 'random', Smith means the unwanted multicultural minority of Britain. Genetics is used as a tool by Smith in regards with her concerns for cruel experiments on the animals. Genetics is also used by Smith to give the idea that suppression of other minorities is also going on in various ways in the society. Magid, because of his differences to Iqbal family, joins Marcus in his aim of Future Mouse Project. He says to Marcus that such experiments can save the world. Magid does not see any other racial angle in this like Smith suggests and only believes that this experiment is necessary, 'to make sense of the world, to eliminate the random'. While Magid is attracted towards the British Chalfen family because of interest in Future Mouse project, Irie on the other hand is attracted to their English lifestyle for reasons of her own. Irie is young and like all the young troubled characters falls apart from her parents. She goes to her grandmother Hortense Bowden who never accepts her daughter Clara's marriage to white man Archie. She tells Irie that her reason of being troubled is because her mother [Clara] married a white man. She says, 'Black and White never come to no good. Lord Jesus never meant us to mix it up. Nothing good can come. It wasn't intended'. Hortense is of the view that Black people should never marry White people. She believes that such parents give birth to children like Irie who have both the roots of white and black. These roots clash in children like Irie and create problems. Another problem of immigrants is that the English people are very polite in their relations to minorities but it lacks the necessary intimacy. In the start young immigrants like Irie feel an attraction to become like English people and they do not understand of why their parents oppose them in becoming and behaving like English. Thus Irie feels good when she goes to live with Chalfen family. She is in awe of the 'Purity' of Chalfen family, that they were totally pure and calm, of one race, contrary to confusing lineage of Irie herself. Irie's mother Clara does not worry that much about her daughter Irie like Alsana does for her sons

but nevertheless she does worry that Irie in her pursuit of pure Englishness, will lose her identity of being uniquely of mixed Jamaican and English roots in the purely white people. 'Clara saw an ocean of pink skins surrounding her daughter and she feared the tide would take her away'. The problems that are faced by the immigrant are of the bigger scale as compared to the fear of the nationalists. Smith is of the view that the people are scared of infections and many other problems but she says that when immigrants hear about their problems, they laugh because they themselves deal with far dangerous problems like – dissolution, disappearance and loss of identity altogether. Another problem they deal with is availability of little to no written history. When Irie is looking at the family tree of the Chalfen family she is in awe of how far back the family goes. To which Marcus says 'We all go back as far as each other. It's just that Chalfen's have written things down'. Everyone goes back to the starting point and everyone has history but problem is that only people in the developed countries have the written account and immigrants in the haste to get to the developed country, fail to record their rich past of the country they are leaving. But Shamad believes that, 'the gulf between books and experience... is a lonely ocean'. Shamad believes that just because some history is written means it is similar to the real experience. That there is a big gap between the reality and books.

When a girl reads about Marcus Chalfen's book about the Mouse experiment she is scared and expresses her concerns of how close the science has got near to the imaginary world of dangerous science- fiction. It is said in the novel that "*No one working in the new field, doing truly visionary work, can be certain if getting through his century or the next without blood on his palm. But stop the work? Gag Einstein? Tie Heisenberg's hands? What can you hope to achieve?*" In the end different minorities with their different mottos and with different organization come together to oppose the inauguration of the Future Mouse Project. Characters also oppose the Future Mouse because they oppose the idea of total control of human's destiny and fate in the hands of other. Some consider it as the opportunity to use their power to show what the minority group can do if they unite and create havoc like group KEVIN. In this group Millat is going to kill Dr Peret. While Jamaican group of Jehovah's Witness come to oppose for religious and racial point of view. In short Future Mouse Project acts as an opportunity for the minority group to raise their voice, to claim that they exist. Millat was determined to prove something and he thought of Marcus Chalfen's science as Evil science and thus he wanted to stop it and be a hero of KEVIN. While Shamad believes that creation is the realm of God and should not be touched by scientists like Marcus. He tells Magid to stop the support of this western thing, 'if you meddle with a creature, the very nature of creature, even if it is a mouse, you walk into the arena that is God's: Creation'. These differences between the beliefs not only separate Magid from his father but also his twin Millat. Familial disintegration is a major problem that is brought to light.

At the end Irie is back in her Jamaica, where she feels at home and is happy that she has a daughter who is, 'a puppet clipped of a paternal string?' Archie Jones accidentally breaks the mouse glass and sees the mouse [also looked at as an immigrant] go away to its freedom, away from the hands of those who suppressed him. Smith ends the novel with the ray of hope. She wants to suggest that is never too late to achieve once idea of freedom and identity. And thereby she adds the line "*Go on my son!*"

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