

The Theme of Conflict Between the East and the West in Zadie Smith's Novel *White Teeth* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

Suzan Hadad^{1*}.

¹The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 Nov 2022

Accepted 22 Jan 2023

Published 01 Jan 2025

*Corresponding author:

The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

Email: suz.ka.h@hotmail.com.

Abstract

The argument of this study revolves around the crisis of reconstructing identity as a manifestation of cultural resistance in *White Teeth* by British writer Zadie Smith and in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. This study will focus on how Zadie Smith and Kiran Desai attempt to build a culture of resistance in their respective nations' consciousness through their works. As colonialism has proven its influence on the histories of colonized nations, the colonized have infiltrated the colonialists' claimed justifications for imperialism. One of the controversial issues of post-colonialism is the question of identity, which has become very prominent in the modern age. This has led most writers, especially those with cultural diversity, to emphasize the idea of identity. The study will also examine how and why writers of resistance emphasize the need to free colonized societies from the cultural and political domination of imperial powers. It will demonstrate how both Smith and Desai strive to build a culture of awareness by interrogating the past, as illustrated in their novels. In these two novels, East meets West as a form of 'cultural resistance' within the context of imperialism. At the end of this study, the importance of conducting such research and the mutual resistance employed by these writers in constructing a culture of resistance will be highlighted. In each of these novels, the central tension revolves around the encounter and opposition between deeply rooted cultural factors, codes, and values in the East.

Keywords: Identity, East, West, Hybridity, Multiculturalism, Cultural Resistance.

1. Introduction

The main goal of this study is to examine the dramatization of the theme of conflict between the East and the West in Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth* (2000) and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). In each of these two novels, the basic tension revolves around the encounter and opposition between deeply rooted cultural factors, codes and values in the East and the West. My argument places special emphasis on politics, colonial discourse and post-colonial precepts as the main factors which shape the nature and the structure of the encounter between the two cultures. To support my central argument, several theorists, such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin and Aime C'saire will be applied to the literary texts.

Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, examines several novels. Said's main argument is that the colonizer considers the colonized people as 'subjects' or 'others' (Said, 1993). The argument Said makes in his book *Orientalism*, especially about English novelists, is that the Western writer will always establish for Western culture a "positional superiority" over Eastern culture (Said, 2001). This is applicable to Zadie Smith's characters as well as Kiran Desai's. In fact, the very structure of the novels underscores the superiority of the West and the inferiority of the East in character, architecture, religion, culture, and geography.

The relationship between the East and the West with reference to past events flashed in the historical relations such as trade, religious missionary and colonialism appeared as an unequal/unbalanced relation. As Frantz Fanon discerns in his "On National Culture" that colonialism imposes rules on the colonized people by degrading them – hard labor and the idea of inferiority they have planted in the colonized nations. For him, colonialism tries to empty the colonized individual's mind from all contents: "Colonialism is not satisfied merely with hiding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content." (37). Fanon has helped in broaden our spectrum of culture and race. The East -West confrontation is seen in several novels through decades.

1.1.1 Review of related Literature

"The Crisis of Identity in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*" (2016) by Manmeet Kour, discusses the alienation of Desai's characters and the struggle they face when living in a modern country. In this article, the elements of alienation and displacement are discussed to show the comparable struggles that the immigrants face. Kour calls attention to the importance of the title by describing it as two opposing realities of "inheritance" and "loss." Kour sheds light on Kiran as an Indian writer who narrates her novel through an Indian perspective. My concern in this article is to reveal the fragmentation that imperialism leaves in the mentalities of the colonized and how the disorder in one's own identity leads to a loss of self.

In "Identity Crisis in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*" (2019), B. Saranya contends that living in a modern city such as London could affect the individual's identity formation. He asserts the fact of "in-betweenness" that Smith portrays in her novel. Furthermore, Saranya argues that Smith focuses on the second-generation immigrants. Smith depicts the conflict of forming identity through Samad. However, living in multicultural city makes it difficult to form one's own identity. This article is associated with this study as it develops the sense of displacement. My study focuses on liminal places as well as hybridity questions, which makes this article beneficial for this study.

2. Discussion

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

The novel *White Teeth* is not about asking these questions about immigration and multiculturalism, but it is just as important. The novel describes modern London society as seen by young writer Zadie Smith.

White Teeth is set in multicultural London with a rich cast of characters. The text uses a realistic and logical approach. The realistic approach can be seen in the way the settings are

depicted and reproduced: like the camera footage, the text reveals what might be happening in these suburbs. The idiosyncratic point of view can be seen in the way the author takes the plot a step further and exaggerates it slightly, so it is easier for the reader to see and understand the intricacies. Today's society is multifaceted and multicultural.

Zadie Smith, like Irie Jones, the hero of this novel, is part of this society. Her mother is Jamaican, and her father is British. But the story is not nostalgic, as were earlier writers on the same subject (Boehmer 123). The discussion is more about cultural and generational issues: It is "cultural self-presentation" (Spivak, according to Landry, McLean, 261). The title of this article is "Reconciliation or Grumpy." It is easy to see a picture of anger in the novel. One of the characters in the novel is Samad, who has spent his entire adult life in the UK with the original ambition of changing his standard of living. But he realizes that life contains much more than that, he wants to be part of society, he wants to be included, but in fact he feels "only to be tolerated" (407). Other characters in the novel have different, but equally remarkable experiences.

Hybridity "refers to the combination of one culture with another to create a new cultural form." (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 1998). There is no doubt that countries like the UK and the US are people of color, e.g., cities like New York and London are a mixture of many races and cultures. Interbreeding just means a mixture of cultures, of course it does, but according to Kraidy, the answer is a little harder because interbreeding is postcolonial, and it is one of the most talked about topics in the debate. Some interpret this mixture as a resistance to former empires, while others seek an answer in transnational capitalism, but Kraidy believes that hybridization should be understood as an exercise in cross-cultural communication. (Kraidy, 2002)

According to Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin bi-racial is often misinterpreted as denying their heritage. When the empire forced the inhabitants of the colonized countries to "assimilate" the Western way of life, this mixture was the result of cultural repression (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2006). In Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth*, we clearly recognize that there is a mix between the child characters, particularly Irie Jones and the twins Magid and Milat Iqbals. In fact, their parents have always raised them in their own culture (Irie's mother is Jamaican, Magid and Milat's parents are Muslim). The children grew up in a London environment, and the English education system is their character.

White Teeth is an excellent novel about postmodern London, in which a mixture of different nations is gradually added to a very different multiple of the traditional East and the unconventional West. In addition, Smith interpreted London in the second half of the twentieth century as a second-generation Jamaican immigrant.

Every culture is seen as a collection of authentic norms, such as customary beliefs, language, and distinct attitudes that are worth preserving. Multicultural societies create an environment in which societies are powerful compared to each other.

Beneficially, multicultural societies can positively impact many areas of life, primarily in literature, art, music, clothing, and it can bring about new waves of ideas and dynamics. On the other hand, cultural diversity can have negative effects, leading to conflict and tension. In both cases, however, identity is subject to change and difficult to maintain. Additionally, identity can change depending on the circumstances and attitudes of each individual to view their identity

differently. Smith's *White Teeth* describes a combination of multicultural, religious, and racial groups in the UK. In addition, following British colonization in the twentieth century, London is described as a multicultural city.

Currently, the society is considered a multiethnic household because it is formed by more than two different languages, values, cultures, and religions that can be identified in *White Teeth*. Smith connects two different families in her novels, the Iqbal immigrants, and the Joneses. Despite their different national identities, they also have different views on religious and cultural values. Although these figures settled, fused, and assimilated in London, some sought to preserve their beliefs, religious cultural values, and rituals to preserve their racial identity and roots from outside influences. However, first-generation immigrants are difficult to integrate and assimilate, and the values and norms of British society have an impact on second-generation immigrants. Strangers or immigrants and locals need enough time to get to know each other to live together peacefully. Occasionally, Muslims find multiracial societies interesting. Most Muslims in London believe that multiculturalism celebrates diversity in food, music, or clothing, but it deviates from human equality and human rights as Samad points out in this paragraph outlined:

“This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow, and white, this has been the century of the great immigrant experiment... and Irie Jones humming a tune. It is only this late in the day, and possibly only in Willesden, that you can find best friends, Sita and Sharon, constantly mistaken for each other because Sita is white ... and Sharon is Pakistani ... all the mixing up, ... we have finally slipped into each other's lives with reasonable comfort ... it is still hard to admit that ... no one more English than the Indian and no one more Indian than the English”. (*White Teeth*, pp. 326-327)

The above paragraph illustrates the promise of multiculturalism in London on the one hand, it is often inspired by the unknown country of the UK, with British ladies having comedy names. On the other hand, the concept of multiculturalism, which involves fighting alongside many societies but still many people disagree with the idea of multiculturalism, and they also refuse to live with immigrants in their land. Therefore, many immigrant parents try to give their children English names to avoid discrimination. This confirms Baudrillard's theory that parents prefer to choose English names, they emulate and live in an imaginary world (Kelner, 1989, p. 61).

Irie is undoubtedly dissatisfied with her past as a second-generation immigrant. Because her mother, Clara, refused to divulge any information about her family's roots, they banned Irie from participating in some of their social customs to prevent compliance. Instead, Irie is trying to figure out what her origins are and who she is. So, she plans to find her grandmother and her roots. On the other hand, the Chalfen family plays a key role in Irie's life. Furthermore, Irie sits between the present and future worlds, as the companions of Chalfens, Joyce, and Marcus focus more on these two separate worlds. Finally, although she is bound by her family's customs, she is equally obsessed with her past and confused by her current social norms. She also complained that Iqbal and Jones were so closely connected to their past that they collected things and kept them in the attic and repeated similar ancient tales on Pandey.

Furthermore, Irie compares the way Asian families are raised to British families, as Smith describes "They [British families] no in raising their children." It is not a problem if it is reasonable.

life." ... healthy. Pleasant... ... Not every day is the site of this huge battle of what they are and what they should be... ... I told you. No mosque. A chapel. Hardly a sin. Forgive me." (White Teeth, p. 515). Irie protests of parents who encourage their children to live according to their own desires and urge them to follow their religious beliefs and social traditions.

She admits that she does not try to be another person and lives according to another person's ideas. She suggested there should be more tolerance and respect between children and their parents. Smith focuses on the importance of identity in a multicultural social system and the history of immigrants failing to escape the influence of their predecessors. With this, Smith demonstrates that the instability of space and time between the first and second generations can be seen as the central theme of the novel Furthermore, the characters in White Teeth epitomize the cultural diversity and hybridity of London, the central city of the novel.

History cannot be ignored in the construction of identity. In White Teeth, Smith depicts the struggle between individuals in a society like first- and second-generation immigrants in a multiracial Britain. In addition, these immigrants seek to associate with societies that do not share their normative values and regional beliefs because they feel alienated and separated. Although immigrant parents have faced many hardships in a multicultural society, their children face two hardships in her novel, Smith addresses this conundrum by touching on the roots and cultural issues of the lives of immigrant families settling in multiracial London. She pays careful attention to the importance of history in her novel White Teeth, beginning with her sculpture of "The Past is a Prologue" (White Teeth: iv) to the Washington Museum statue. In addition, Smith turns the question of roots and history into a personal and racial history.

Although these two histories are interconnected in the novel. Its racial history is reflected in first-generation immigrants whereas personal histories and historical records are reflected in second-generation immigrants who form individual identities and histories. The accounts that follow focus on the personal histories of second-generation immigrants and how this helps them form personal identities. Second-generation immigrants who grew up abroad are not familiar with their past, ancestral culture, and homeland.

Smith confirms that second-generation children Magid, Milat and Irie were discontented because they had no knowledge of their past to relate their racial roots. So, Clara's half-caste daughter Irie thinks her mother is a hypocrite because she hides a lot of information about her past while her parents are preoccupied with facts that Still unknown, as Smith says, "it is sacred to hear." (White Teeth, pp. 498- 499)

Milat and Irie are traumatized by the massive breakdown of historical memory, which also causes them to struggle with their internal identity and family. Usually, when Irie asks her mother to learn about their past, she gets annoyed. Now, Irie realizes that most of the problems are caused by subjective experiences of which she is unaware "Irie Jones, half Jamaican, half Anglo, looking for something 'real' ended up taking an interest in her Jamaican grandmother and her roots" (Nicholas, p. 64). So Irie chose to settle in Jamaica, where Hortense is located, and expected to spend some time with her. This effort was the beginning for Irie to learn about her family history. She enters a remarkable process by unearthing her knowledge of her roots and family past. according to Irie.

“She laid claim to the past –her version of the past aggressively as if retrieving misdirected mail. So, this was where she came from. This all belonged to her, her birthright, like a pair of pearl earrings or a post office bond. X marks the spot, and Irie put an X on everything she found, collecting bits and bobs (birth certificates, maps, army reports, news articles).” (White Teeth, pp 526- 527)

This shows that Irie laid claim to the past, moves in solving her conflict by understanding about her origins and history. With her mother, consequently, she agrees to stay in Jamaica, her homeland describes Jamaica like a new world to Irie and there is “No fictions, no myths, no lies, no tangled webs, this is how Irie imagined her homeland. Because homeland is one of the magical fantasy words like unicorn, soul, and infinity that have now passed into the language.” (White Teeth, p. 529)

According to Paproth, the characters frequently try to overcome their interface with history in White Teeth, but they cannot achieve this interaction because of its difficulty (qtd. In Walters, 2008, p15). Millat, for instance, does not have any knowledge about his past; therefore, he is anxious and unsure about what his origin is and where he belongs. Millat, like Irie, lives in a society which is deprived of any information related to history and his roots. Therefore, because of his unawareness about his historical memory and historical consciousness in Bangladesh, Millat faces some conflicts. History has a significant role in a multicultural society, and Walters believes that it is incredible to make a new beginning without knowing the past. (Walters, 2008).

Moreover, Millat does not find a link between him and his familial history; as a result, he finds out another link of belonging and joins a major Islamic group named KEVIN. Walters believes that the more children, of the second generation, get information about their familial or ethnic history, the less they face the difficulties of identity catastrophes and in the construction of their identity. Though most of the characters cannot achieve their familial or cultural history in the novel because of the lack of information about their past and thus they degenerate their original culture in migrant or multicultural families. In a multi-ethnic society, it is difficult to live because of one’s original belief or culture and being deprived of other standard values. Especially, for the second-generation offspring of the families of Iqbal and Jones, a separated way of life that is completely identified with the original culture cannot be permitted so easily, (Walters, 2008, pp. 13, 16). Certainly, the multiplicity of beliefs adds productivity to a person’s personal identity; nonetheless, if someone behaves contrary to his/her cultural standards, dilemmas and struggles are possible to happen.

Additionally, those second-generation immigrants who intend to practice the process of identity construction face the degeneration of their ethnic culture because of living in a hybrid society. In White Teeth, Smith demonstrates the notion of “degeneration” which is represented by a metaphor of “white teeth.” (Walters, 2008).

Therefore, White Teeth can be regarded as one of the best features of black people; however, the cigarette habit of the second-generation immigrants turns white teeth into yellow. Metaphorically, although the white color represents purity and innocence, here it represents the degeneration of that wisdom because of its turning yellow. The idea of degeneration among migrant society is highlighted in Iqbals’ family. Although reflect generation of Iqbal’s values

reflects itself in the lives of Samad's twins at the beginning of their youth, still Samad as a conventional Muslim Bangladeshi wants to perceive his children as real Bangladeshi and Muslim as well. Furthermore, he believes that he is in a great trouble because both his sons have no sense of belonging to their culture and tradition when he utters: "... Millat aged thirteen, who farted in a mosque, chased blondes and smelt of tobacco, and not just Millat but all the children. Mujib (fourteen, criminal record for joyriding)" (White Teeth, pp. 286-287).

Samad believes that these children have grown up, not with Muslim morals and customs. As Samad points out, each of these behaviors is completely contrary to their realities and stereotypes; however, second-generation immigrants take this wrong path. Other parents, like Samad, are aware of the disruption of their ethnocultural routines to places that are increasingly unsafe for their children. The parents also fail to understand "what went wrong with the first offspring of these great transoceanic experiments" (White Teeth, p. 287). Samad Iqbal, who represents parents who are genuinely stressed by the breakup, stresses that the second generation has no sense of belonging to their roots, history, and/or culture. Milat's coach asked what kind of music she likes to listen to at home, she wanted her to reference some traditional tunes or artists from Bangladesh, but Milat responded appropriately from Michael Jackson and Bruce Springsteen; nothing.

Smith deals with issues relating to survival in a multiracial society; she also deals with the space between first- and second-generation immigrants. Additionally, White Teeth is analyzed for the multicultural society of the city of London today. Notably, the history and roots of first-generation immigrants create identity issues for their children in the novel. The central focus of the novel is on Iqbal, a Bangladeshi family who face many difficulties in finding their identity. Living in a secular environment, where East meets the West, Samad Iqbal tried to assimilate to a certain extent of the mainstream milieu while maintaining his identity as a faithful Muslim. However, Western culture constantly tested his faith, and his guilt and relationship with God were disturbed by violations of Islamic law.

Cross-cultural differences force Samad to negotiate by changing their lives and religions. Samad broke away from their traditions and religion, paving the way for them to create their own rules to justify western eating habits and vices, such as adultery, in their religion. After committing adultery with Bobby Burt Jones, Samad realized that he had lost his morals and had failed to lead a moral life as the head of a Muslim family. Thus, he sees it as his duty to pass on his cultural heritage and protect his son from the corruption of the West but his efforts to decide his son's future also failed. Furthermore, displacement issues play a key role in the identity construction of first-generation immigrants. A complete sense of place and belonging is deeply rooted in our traditions, language, and history.

Many Commonwealth immigrants felt alienated and displaced as they moved from the former colonies to the "motherland" of Britain. In addition, they have attempted to reconstruct their identities to integrate into mainstream society, and in many cases the racial migrants they were incarcerated in became their new homes. As a result, their former homeland was distorted. With the possibility of returning to their homeland, they feel that the homeland has become

unfamiliar to them. In addition, Samad, disillusioned with London, had an adverse effect on his sons Milat and Majid, expressed his disappointment to Irie:

“The one I send home (Magid) comes out an Englishman, white-suited, silly wig lawyer. The one I keep here (Millat) is ... paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist. I sometimes wonder why I bother ... I really do ... In a place where you are never welcomed only tolerated and just tolerated ... it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognizable, and you belong nowhere.” (White Teeth, p. 407).

The fear that one's children will become complete strangers with different beliefs and values is shared by the novel's other immigrant characters. Realizing that her daughter had grown up in a predominantly white environment, Clara Jones feared Ellie would become estranged from her Jamaican black ancestry and be a stranger to her own mother, as Clara sees patches of pink skin around her daughter and worries the tide will take her away (White Teeth, p. 328).

What can be noticed are three second-generation immigrant children; Millat, Magid, and Irie are eschewing their roots and developing distinct identities in diverse ways on the Western ground. Despite being identical twins, Milat and Majid showed their individuality from an early age. While Magid is a quiet boy with an interest in chess and science, his brother Milt is a talkative, compelling character with a passion for football and rap music. As a student, Majeed had begun to distance himself from his own heritage by constructing his own identity as Mark Smith.

Although Samad's job was to raise and educate his son in his native Bangladesh, Majeed rejected his cultural background and developed a Western life and secular identity. On the other hand, Milat's identity conflict is like that of her father as she struggles to balance the two cultures of faith and secularism. As a young man, he rose to the top of the aristocracy with his rude, quiet appearance, and ability to adapt to different situations and switch between different social roles.

Smith emphasizes: "It was here that we met and really got to know our father. Godfather, brother, Pacino DeNiro, the man in black, he looked good, talked fast, never waited for a table." (White Teeth, p. 285) Also, when he grew up, he joined an Islamic fundamentalist group, the Guardians of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic State. According to Kevin's rules of life, let Milat purify his soul tried to "purge the taint of the West" (White Teeth, p. 587) and became a strict Muslim.

Furthermore, Milat decided to give up cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, and women. He compared his radical Muslim training to the gangster education of Hollywood mafia heroes from: "As far as I know, I always wanted to be a Muslim" (White Teeth, p. 558). The inherent contradictions of simultaneously assimilating and rejecting Western pop culture meet to create a precarious character who still constructs her own identity is in the process of. His ethno-religious activism is a rebellion against his father Samad who has left him as a constant troublemaker. Adhering to the rules of the Quran and taking pride in his religion from his father and brothers also wants to prove more loyal Muslims.

In White Teeth, Smith intends to show her readers how religious or political affiliation connects people from different racial and social backgrounds. He also warns his readers about the dangers of bigotry. Smith's novel intended to be classified. I argued and proved that the novel has

several scenes that show the East – West encounter. Smith is clearly a postcolonial writer because she is descended from immigrants, and her novel brings up the theme of immigrant identity crisis and the encounter between the East and West, that is typical of postcolonial writers, but her style also there are aspects of postmodern literature: the use of realism, the notion of time, the aspect of the "other" and the theme of gender equality . The words biracial and racial are closely related to the identity crisis of the novel's theme, the characters, who are often shocked by the diversity of their native culture and pre-imperial culture.

Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss

The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai focuses not on the story of the individual, but on how several people understand themselves, view the world around them, and face the difficulties they have in conflict. Desai's novels do not highly focus on the term "American Dream", on the contrary, they tend to be dominated by other themes such as post-structuralism and hybrid theory. Desai uses the term sparingly in the novel because she thinks the reader can better understand the identity conflict the characters face. In fact, many of Desai's characters are particularly good at handling the "Great American Dream" and are reluctant to shy away from challenges to what they believe.

This is true because of globalization, economic differences between countries and consumer-driven multiculturalism. Desai's lost legacy depicts a cross-section of Indian society with figures like Jemubhai Popatlal Patel, Panna Lal, Gyan, Biju, Saeed-Saeed, Sai Mistry, Haresh-Harry and two sisters Lolita and Nonita. The simultaneous experience of colonial is even depicted, creating "dialectics" in global and local individuals' perceptions of their identity and transmitting behavior in local institutions in Kalimpong.

East and West in the legacy of the loss of Kiran Desai set in the foothills of Kanchenjunga Mountain in northeastern India after independence. The lost legacy looks at people and events in American and British territories. The novelist laments the many losses of the novel's central characters, conveyed through explicit and implicit detail. Regarding the novel's aspects and its dense thematic structure, Ragini Ramachandra writes in Kieran Desai's lost legacy: Some First Impression: "Made up of various strands the novel presents not mere a kaleidoscopic picture encompassing different countries, continents, climes, cultures, peoples, their struggle and their conflicts, their dreams and their frustrations but also a mature understanding of life itself at various levels." (Ragini Ramachandra, p. 19)

The author argues that while Indians are loved and respected in the British way of life, their language and skin color, Indians cannot hide their original appearance and assimilate into British culture. The biggest problem with Asians is that they cannot get rid of their skin color and speak Western languages like Englishmen. Judge Jemobhai Patel, the main character of the novel, is an Anglophile from India who deeply hates India and everything he owns.

He even cut off contact with his relatives to pretend to be English. At every turn of his life, Jemubhai absorbed, appreciated the western culture, and took pride in it, but the truth is that every human being inherits certain inherent qualities that cannot be eliminated, and individuals must live with these things and associate their identity with them. The ability to adapt and assimilate to

different social settings is a positive trait in a person, but overall, attempts to give up one's genetic talents prove troublesome and disturbing.

The novelist expresses the inner impulses of her characters and uses figurative descriptions to convey their irreparable loss in a foreign land because of her own experience of being rootless, alienated, multicultural, and at odds with a world that is alien inside and out, her portrayal is both strange and endearing. Desai does not narrate the plot in a straightforward logic linear way. She uses innovative techniques like flashbacks and introspection to portray the character's past concerns. By doing so, Jemubhai compares the present lives of Patel and Sai's parents, with their past experiences. Such a process makes her narration striking and reminds us of T. S. Eliot's poetic shorthand, in which he juxtaposes the present with the past in poetry to make his complex concepts clearer and broader.

The *Inheritance of Loss* all depicts a group of characters suffering from psychological apathy and social isolation an academic critic, Mudhari Deshmukh, asserts that "every character in the novel is a foreigner. In a world ravaged by a colonial past, drawn by the deception of a global future, true love, connection, lasting bonds, roots and sense of truth, people feel the poignant emptiness of the moment" (New Works, p. 76). In all the roles played by Jemubhai Patel and his cook's son, Biju was tormented by inferiority as an Indian to the British and Americans.

Jemubhai is described as a "self-loathing miscreant" who not only dislikes his Indian relatives and friends, but also degrades himself when his native heritage prevents him from interacting with foreigners it shows. He was a British-trained civil servant who served in the colonial and post-emancipation Indian governments. Though she is a Gujarati, she prefers to sit on the hillsides of Kalimpong and live a peaceful and tranquil life as a stranger to others. He is accompanied only by his teenage granddaughter, Sai, his cook, and his beloved dog, Mutt, in a crumbling, run-down manor known as *Cho Oyo*.

The house was initially considered a symbol of British architecture, but now it is just a sign of loss and relocation. A devotee and lover of the western way of life, Judge Jemubhai suffers from 'megalomania' and considers himself more British than Hindustani. He madly and madly hated his heritage and legacy. This indifference to his ancestral traditions and cultural heritage is a result of him first studying abroad as a thin dynasty at Cambridge University, and then becoming an administrator.

Their stay in the UK was characterized by difficulties such as embarrassment, irritation, shame, marginalization, and depression. It is because of his extreme enthusiasm for the Anglo race that he constantly goes to great lengths to present himself as a born Englishman. But whenever he did, he left behind a regrettable image in foreign surroundings. His innate personal characteristics, such as skin color, the Indian intonation of English, and his own innate traits, prove that he is eccentric. Slowly he began to feel like a worthless and corrupt fellow. He developed into a terrifying man who eventually became silent and reclusive. His self-loathing increased when his English colleagues insulted him and laughed at his Indian upbringing and lifestyle. The narrator articulates this paradoxical situation for Jambay in an analogous manner: "His timidity and loneliness found fertile ground. He retreated into increasingly overwhelming loneliness.

Loneliness became a habit, a habit became man and threw him into the shadows" (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 39).

Jemubhai's plight is even worse. In college, he was mostly shunned by his classmates, and it was not easy for him to strike up conversations with them. They behaved like puppets and beggars. These have made the existence of his "life and death" and the loss of his peace and tranquility, anxiety and depression were deeply rooted in his heart. His pain and painful experience can be clearly seen from the following passage:

"For entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words unuttered, his heart and mind turned into blunt aching things, and elderly ladies, even the hapless blue haired, spotted faces like collapsing pumpkins... The young and beautiful were no kinder, girls held their noses and giggled, "Phew, he stinks of curry." (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 139)

Although Jemubhai was eligible for the ICS exam, he still failed to impress the English examiners as his language was full of Indian tones and rhythms. Unable to make himself British in appearance and manners, and unable to shed the color and shape of his Indian skin, his self-loathing quickly intensified. Throughout his stay in the UK, he endured the painful experiences of his life. His Asian consciousness in appearance and in speech consume him within. The portrayal of his character makes it clear that Jemubhai Patel: "Without socks and shoes, he will never be seen, he is more shadow than light, more faded day than sun, for he doubts that the sun by exposing him." ' can, so obviously in its ugliness." (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 40).

Even after his return from the UK, his attitude towards his native culture and community did not make up for it but worsened. His treatment of the gentle wife Nimmi was derision and disgust. He imbued her with English character and manners, tried his best to do, but in vain. As he was unable to overcome his contempt for tribal heritage, his treatment of his wife became ruthless and intolerable. Using sex as a shield, he harassed her; with anger and hatred, he brutally raped her, but his inner fire was not extinguished. "He disliked his wife's face, sought his hatred, sought beauty, and rejected it." did the job... Indian girls can never be as beautiful as English girls." (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 168).

This stiff and bossy attitude caused his wife to commit suicide, leaving him behind like a stray dog. His misanthropy increased, and he did not like the presence of anything but his dog, Pea. This is the thorn in his side that has been with him for many years. Jemubhai Patel was very distressed when a beggar stole the dog. Her interrogation of this was very funny and humorous, saying: "Please come home, my dear, my lovely girl, naughty girl, princess duchess, sweetheart!" (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 293).

As an expatriate, Kiran Desai credibly paints a picture of how the unemployed and poor, hoping to make their fortunes in America and Britain, face racism, exploitation, disillusionment, and cultural rootlessness. Jammubai's cook's son Biju described such a dilemma. Cook had the sweet thought in his mind that his son had made a fortune while enjoying life in America.

He always dreamed of going to America and living there with his son. Cook's misunderstanding and over-enthusiasm is better captured in this quote: "My son works in New York. He is the manager of a restaurant business... New York, a very big city. The cars and

buildings are completely different." soon one." the day my son will take me" (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 84). In addition, the novelist presents the painful experience of illegal immigrants in the United States through Biju's portrayal. His visa was based on forged documents and false evidence. This forged passport became his means of self-exploitation.

He has worked in various hotels and restaurants such as Le Colonial, Freddy's Walk, and others. Stars and Stripes Diner, Gandhi Café, and more. Although he worked overtime, he was paid very little. Also, like Jemubhai, Biju was reprimanded and abused by his master. If the former is insulted by white Britons, the latter are also insulted and discriminated against because of cultural differences, ethnicity, Indian accent English, and especially their colored skin. When Pinocchio's Italian restaurant host has a grudge against her husband for the smell of Biju, this disgusting behavior goes over the edge. She unabashedly said that European servants were better than Asians or Indians: "She had hoped for men from poorer parts of Europe - perhaps Bulgarians, or Czechoslovaks. At least they might have something in common, like religion or complexion ..." (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 48).

Such abuse and humiliation by the innkeeper forced Biju to move from one place to another but was despised and condemned everywhere. He believed that workers in pre-colonial countries were given only a few jobs and low wages. He has also suffered the alienation, trauma, and marginalization that even legal aliens in the United States have had to deal with.

Hotel staff in Biju have been provided with sleeping accommodation based on their cultural background and ethnic origin. In the baby bistro, the Indians and Mexicans were asked to sleep under the kitchen, while the French were asked to sleep above the dining room. They made their stay in the United States a disgusting and nasty experience, but she expected to receive a green card, a sign of the right and protection of an individual to live in the United States continuously and legally. But the dream of having a green card did not come true for Biju. His father, Cook, who knew nothing of Biju's real situation in America, urged him: "Stay there as long as you can. Stay here. Make money. Do not come back" (The Inheritance of Loss, p. 191).

But Biju gradually realized the absurdity of his existence, and he felt that living in his loving family, even poverty, was heaven, and hell without dignity and identity in an unfamiliar environment. He began to recall his past life in India, full of peace and joy. The pain of distance reminded him of a visit his father once made to him in Kampong to tell him how homesick he was: "How peaceful our village is. The kebabs are delicious there! It's because the meat is not machine-ground, but hand-ground." Goes " ... Freshly roasted, fresh butter, fresh milk, and still hot buffalo ... "(The Inheritance of Loss, p. 102).

Finally, sweet memories of home and bitter experiences abroad allow Biju to see the way to his beloved homeland, "Home is where the heart is". He felt immense joy when he reached Kolkata and felt relieved. He found himself free from all cares and worries about being abroad. In this regard, the narrator says: The sweet monotony of home - he felt everything changing around him, with a click, feeling himself shrink, the great anxiety of being a foreigner would be removed – the intolerably arrogant and embarrassing immigrant.

Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* abounds with themes that make it an interesting social reading. As Desai is an eminent immigrant writer, her themes are of human deprivation, trauma,

identity, and indifference. In her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, she tried to dive deep into the sea of human psychology and immortalize the literary work. She minutely discusses the issues without suggesting and stressing any issue. Though she has not given priority to any specific issue, yet we find in her novels the issues of globalism and American dreams most prominently. Desai presents the paradox of cosmopolitanism as follows: "Each of them (Father Booty and Uncle Potty, for instance) individually recalls the countless nights they spent this way. It is unimaginable that it will end soon." Here, Sai discovers how music, wine, and friendship contribute to the foundation of a great civilization. Carmen Wickramagamez has recently argued that "most people see relocation as a painful choice between assimilation (betrayal) and nativism (loyalty)" (194). Desai explores both sides of the problem and challenges the desirability of assimilation and the wisdom of maintaining difference, living on the edge, and avoiding "full and unapologetic participation in the new world" (195).

The Inheritance of the Loss is determined partly in India and partly in the United States. Judging from a cultural point of view, the geographical context in the novel is very relevant. Desai describes it as a book that tries to "capture what it means to live between East and West and what it means to be an immigrant," and goes on to say that this too deeper levels Pa explores "when a Western element is introduced." into a country that does not belong to the West" - this happened in India during the British colonial period and is happening again "with India's new relationship with the United States". *The Lost Inheritance* is set in the 1980s in post- is carried out in the eastern Indian state of Kalimpong, a hotbed of public politics within a national space transformed by "The Inheritance of Loss".

The narrative captures the political environment in which identities are negotiated as their "grievances" through the ongoing struggle between institutionalized racial narratives and minority narratives. Desai's novel shows that global calls for melting down borders became the political narrative of the Indian nation in the last quarter of the 20th century. It also created reactionary forces in local spaces of the land and the competing forces created narratives that did not challenge the phenomenon globally, but the politics of exclusion has always hampered the vision of melting down the country's borders.

It was no accident that Jemubhai Popatlal Patel was an Anglicized Gujarati judge who could neither assimilate into his native culture nor fully express his prestigious western identity due to his desire to emulate the British colonial identity. He studied in a monastery granddaughter. His life comprises two sides of one coin (East and West).

His chef Panna Lal reluctantly worked for the judge, awaiting the release of his son Biju, whom he believed would succeed in the United States. However, Biju failed to become a successful American restaurant immigrant worker and returned to Kalimpong again in despair. Their lives are intertwined with those of Nepalese governor Gyan, whose love of modernity draws him to Sai, but is limited by caste realities, which repeatedly remind him that his life is a missed opportunity. (136)

Homi K. Bhabha's article "Communication: Time, Narrative, and Stream in the Modern Condition" explores this issue in detail. Bhabha highlights how the contradiction between pedagogy and the representation of national narratives can problematize the formation of social

authority among people with contested, unequal interests and identities” (297). Desai contributing to the debate in the face of post colonialism shows the real face of postcolonial and immigrants and emphasizes how cultural certainty leads to disaster.

3. Conclusion

White Teeth explores and explains the concept of identity construction in the colonialist ground. It deals with the problems and difficulties facing Britain after World War II. Problems and concerns about identity construction were highlighted with the arrival of Jamaican and Bangladeshi immigrants arriving in London after colonizing their countries. Magid tried to be like an English boy even when he changed his name because he was a Bangladeshi son, but in the end, he found that acknowledging his roots assisted him in building a healthy and strong identity in multicultural London. Smith confirmed that second-generation immigrants are not allowed to participate in British society. She also shows how British society faces difficulties in accepting others or immigrants as their own. They (Western society) are not familiar with others and do not know how to accept strangers. Finally, Smith shows through her character that healthy identities can only exist if they embrace their cultural history.

East and West encounter, and multicultural identity are seen as large and ambiguous concepts. Desai’s conception of a new society rather than a world is a chaotic arena for mad politics. People must compromise their fate to adapt to this strange world. So, for them, freedom is a luxury, but at the same time certainty is lost. Desai uses the air of India instead of the soil of the land of India for her landscapes. She tries to paint the essence of a nation, obscuring its descendants. What she has is the heritage given by India. Thus, themes that are rooted or lack roots are intertwined in the novel. And the concept of East –West is obvious among the interactions of the characters with diverse cultures.

Conflicts of interest statements

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

References

- Adam Augustyn et al. (Ed.). (2018, October 23). *Zadie Smith*. Retrieved May 20, 2019, from Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Zadie-Smith>
- Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. UK: Polity Press.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Boyle, K. (2005). Dimensions of racism. In K. Boyle (Ed.), *Proceedings of a Workshop to Commemorate the End of the United Nations Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination* (p. 199). New York & Geneva: United Nations.
- Culler, J. (2011). *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Desai, K. (2006). *The Inheritance of Loss*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Deshmukh, M. (2007). Review of *The Inheritance of Loss*. *New Quest*, Apr-Jun.

- Elliott, A. (2010). *The Routledge Companion to Social Theory*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Fernández, I. P. (2009). Representing third spaces, fluid identities, and contested spaces in contemporary British literature. *Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies*, December, 143–160.
- Head, D. (2002). *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction 1950-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Joseph, S., & Peter, J. (2016). The novelist as a social chronicler: A critical analysis of Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Literary Studies*. Retrieved February 24, 2016.
- Kehe, M. (2006). Hearts in search of home; Questions of identity weave throughout this rich, tragicomic second novel by Kiran Desai. Rev. of *The Inheritance of Loss*, by Kiran Desai. *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 24.
- Mishra, P. (2006). Wounded by the West. Rev. of *The Inheritance of Loss*, by Kiran Desai. *The New York Times Book Review*.
- Nichols, S. (2001). Biting off more than you can chew: Review of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. *New Labor Forum*, 64.
- Ramachandra, R. (2008). Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*: Some first impressions. *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*, 36(1), January.
- Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage Book.
- Said, E. W. (2001). *Orientalism*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Sarup, M. (1993). *An Introductory Guide to Poststructuralism and Postmodernism* (2nd ed.). New York & London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Solanki, S. (2007). Past, present and future in *The Inheritance of Loss*. *The Atlantic Literary Review*, 8(2), Apr-Jun.
- Spielman, D. W. (2010). "Solid knowledge" and contradictions in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. *Critique*, 51, 74–89.
- Stearns, P. N. (2006). *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Walters, L. T. (Ed.). (2008). *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Wickramagamage, C. (1992). Relocation as positive act: The immigrant experience in Bharati Mukherjee's novels. *Diaspora*, 2(2), 171–200.