

Multiculturalism, Identity and Quest for Belonging in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and *On Beauty*

Dr. Sujitha. S

Associate Professor,
Department of English,
Stella Maris College (Autonomous), Chennai.
dr.sujitha@gmail.com

Ms. Prathipa. N

Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Stella Maris College (Autonomous), Chennai.

Abstract:

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), is a blend of historical fiction and cultural commentary that explores postcolonial concepts such as ambiguity, diaspora, displacement, migration, fragmented identity etc. in post-war Britain. *White Teeth* is pivotal in understanding the experiences of the immigrants and their quest for a sense of belonging. Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) is set in Wellington where the migrant community, Haitians reside. Both these novels provide a powerful lens to examine cultural identity and multiculturalism in the immigrant society. Smith's writing is a commentary on the life of the immigrant characters and their philosophical strategies that they employ to navigate their identities. She examines how the intellectual culture that is rampant in the universities plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of Black women.

Zadie Smith is often seen as a beacon of multicultural hope and optimism. She portrays characters who wade through conflicting social and cultural contexts that particularly affect the women of colour who are confronted with conflicting opportunities and challenges in a multicultural society.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, diaspora, fragmented identity, collective unconscious, ambiguity, tokenization.

In the aftermath of World War II, Britain witnessed a remarkable number of immigrants across the globe and contemporary writers concentrated on representing the lives of these immigrants through their works. Zadie Smith is one such writer whose debut novel *White Teeth* (2000) is a blend of historical fiction and cultural commentary that explores postcolonial concepts such as multiculturalism, fragmented identity, ambiguity, diaspora, displacement, migration, etc. in post-war Britain. *White Teeth* is pivotal in understanding the experiences of the immigrants and their quest for a sense of identity and belonging. Smith's artistic exuberance of narration and characterization replicates these experiences in her plot. Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) is set in Wellington where the migrant community, Haitians reside. Both the novels provide a powerful lens to examine cultural identity and multiculturalism in the immigrant society.

In Richard T Ashcroft and Mark Bevir's words, "The term multiculturalism refers to the political, legal and philosophical strategies that emerged after World War II to accommodate" (1) the life of the immigrants against the backdrop of social diversity. In Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, multiculturalism plays a key role in not only defining the region occupied by the immigrants but also analysing it in terms of political strategy. Zadie Smith offers snippets of the immigrant Alsana's understanding of people hailing from various cultural backgrounds. In a conversation with the Jones family after her fight with Samad Iqbal, Alsana thinks:

Black people are often friendly, thought Alsana, smiling at Clara, and adding this fact subconsciously to the short 'pro' side of the pro and con list she had on the black girl. From every minority she disliked, Alsana liked to single out one specimen for spiritual forgiveness. From Whitechapel, there had been many such redeemed characters. Mr. Van, the Chinese chiropodist, Mr Segal, a Jewish carpenter, Rosie, a Dominican woman who continuously popped round, much to Alsana's grievance and delight, in an attempt to convert her into a

Seventh-Day Adventist – all these lucky individuals were given Alsana’s golden reprieve and magically extrapolated from their skins like Indian tigers. (50)

Alsana, as an immigrant, seemingly appears to have a transient, yet prejudiced perspective about other immigrants, despite being culturally associated with them. Residing in Whitechapel, it is inevitable for Alsana to ignore the minority communities that exist around her. Nevertheless, she attempts to look for redeeming qualities in them and overcome her biases, even though she dislikes them. This further reveals the political condition of post-war Britain where immigrants were expected to take up menial jobs. As stated in *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*, “The post-war migration to Britain was a direct response to the demand for labor in certain sectors of the economy. Migrants were employed mainly in the manufacturing industries in the West Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire. They accepted jobs which were considered undesirable by the White population.” (Sam et al. 386). This is an actual representation found in *White Teeth* where most of the immigrant characters hold a job profile that is not desired by the Whites. For example, Samad Iqbal works as a waiter in an Indian Restaurant in the UK, a Chinese national works as a Chiropodist, treating one’s foot-related ailments, and a Jewish as a carpenter. Through these job profiles, these immigrants are portrayed as merely serving the Whites.

Zadie Smith's writing is a commentary on the immigrant characters and the philosophical strategies that they employ to navigate their identities. In the early days of their marriage, Clara in *White Teeth* attempts to change her language, subtly revealing self-awareness, adaptability, and insecurities about her identity. During a casual conversation with her husband, ““Now, isn’t that strange, Archie?” said Clara, filling in all her consonants. She was already some way to losing her accent and she liked to work on it at every opportunity.” (50). Clara’s eagerness to modify her accent is invariably her attempt to integrate herself with the dominant British culture, and in the process, she sheds aspects of her own identity as a

Black woman. She desperately seeks her husband's approval and acceptance in order to fit into his culture. Smith takes this stance when she refers to Clara speaking in her own vernacular language in an excited tone. "“You're pregnant?” said Clara surprised. ‘Pickney, you so small me kyant even see it.’ Clara blushed the moment after she had spoken; she always dropped into the vernacular when she was excited or pleased about something. Alsana just smiled pleasantly, unsure what she had said” (50). This figures as a commentary on how linguistic abilities are altered according to the emotions of the individuals. Although Clara attempts to mask her true self by using a British accent, yet she fails, particularly when she is happy and wants to be herself. It shows the tension between assimilation and authenticity - the two vital concepts that revolve around the lives of immigrants who oscillate between their native culture and foreign society.

There are two significant examples in *White Teeth* that talk about the legal strategies used to accommodate immigrants. Firstly, Archie Jones and Clara Bowden's marriage lacks emotions and seems only a legal procedure that commences at the registrar's office instead of a church because a church wedding is meant to be meaningful and is thus called 'Holy Matrimony.' The bureaucracy and impersonality of the registrar is evident when he asks, "Shall we get on? We've got a lot of you to get through today.' This and little more had constituted the ceremony" (39) which suggests that the wedding is only seen as a task and people are queued up in order to get the task done. After her wedding to Archie Jones, Clara's experience is far from pleasant. Instead of a joyful celebration, she finds herself listening to a futile argument between her husband and a traffic inspector. Smith declares, "So it was that Clara spent the first three hours of married life in Cheapside Police Station, her shoes in her hands, watching her saviour argue relentlessly with a traffic inspector who failed to understand Archie's subtle interpretation of the Sunday parking laws" (40). Clara refers to Archie Jones as her 'saviour' because he rescued her from Ryan Topps and her mother, Hortense Bowden.

In both these instances, instead of accommodating the immigrants to have a peaceful life, the legal strategies only bring in unpleasant memories and humiliation. Zadie Smith here uses witty humour to suggest the challenges faced in a mixed marriage.

Samad Iqbal, content with his new house remarks, “‘It is a nice area, we have friends here.’” (48) Alsana’s response to Samad is a powerful commentary on the aftermath of migration. She rebukes her husband, “‘Who are they?’ ... ‘I don’t know them! You fight in an old, forgotten war with some Englishman... married to a black! Whose friends are they? These are the people my child will grow up around? Their children – half blacky-white? But tell me,’ ... ‘where is our food?’ ... ‘Can we eat China?’” (48). Alsana’s words convey great intensity, as she repeatedly questions Samad about their social circle. While Archie Jones is a dear friend to Samad, Alsana devalues this connection, referring to the war as “old” and “forgotten” (48). This highlights her perspective on war as an irrelevant part of their past. She is concerned about her children's cultural continuity and belonging, and her neighbours’ influence on them. The scene underscores Alsana’s prioritization of basic needs over social status, as she expresses frustration about the dearth of food in their house. Her rhetorical question, “‘Can we eat China?’” (48) denotes the disparity between material comfort and fundamental necessities.

Stuart Hall’s assertion that “‘Identities are never unified and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, other intersections and antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions” (4) underscores the notion that identity is inextricably linked to the societal context in which it exists. This perspective highlights the dynamic and multifaceted nature of identity, which is constantly evolving in response to the complex interplay of discourses, practices, and positions within society.

In *White Teeth*, this concept is poignantly illustrated through the character of Ambrosia Bowden, whose pregnancy serves as a catalyst for exploring the intricate web of influences

that shape her identity. Ambrosia's impregnation by a British officer without her consent underscores her fragility. Ambrosia is asked to be educated according to Captain Durham's will and her education is mediated by the societal forces that surround her, as evident in the passage where Ambrosia's religious education is dictated by the whims of her guardians:

Durham had left instructions that Ambrosia be introduced to the English Anglican Church, and Glenard had suggested the Jamaican Methodist Church, but Mrs. Brenton, a fiery Scottish spinster who specialized in lost souls, had her own ideas. 'We are going to the Truth,' she said decisively when Sunday came, because she did not care for the word 'church'. (265)

This passage starkly illustrates the ways in which societal expectations and power dynamics can fracture an individual's identity, particularly that of a Jamaican woman in a colonial context. Ambrosia's choices and desires are constantly negotiated and renegotiated in response to the external forces that shape her world, highlighting the complex and often fraught nature of identity formation in the face of societal pressures.

Carl Jung's definition of the collective unconscious underscores the notion that certain universal symbols called archetypes are inherited from our ancestors, transcending personal experiences. As he notes,

a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition... the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity. (56)

Zadie Smith's portrayal of the collective unconscious in her *White Teeth* offers a compelling illustration of this concept,

The Truth entered the Bowdens that winter of 1906 and flowed through the bloodstream, directly from Ambrosia to Hortense. It was Hortense's belief that at the moment her mother

recognized Jehovah, Hortense herself became conscious, though still inside the womb. In later years, she would swear on any Bible you put in front of her that even in her mother's stomach, each word of Mr. Russell's *Millennial Dawn*, as it was read to Ambrosia night after night, passed as if by osmosis into Hortense's soul. Only this would explain why it felt like a 'remembrance' to read the six volumes years later in adult life; why she could cover pages with her hand and quote them from memory, though she had never read them before. (265)

'Remembrance' strikingly suggests that Hortense's knowledge is not acquired through personal experience, but rather inherited from her lineage. This narrative echoes Jung's theory, that collective unconscious profoundly shapes identities and experiences. Furthermore, this concept has implications on one's understanding of transgenerational trauma, where experiences of ancestors are passed down through generations, influencing thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in subtle yet powerful manner. By exploring the complexities of the collective unconscious, Smith's novel offers a nuanced and thought-provoking examination of human experiences.

The narrative of *On Beauty* revolves around the Belsey family entwined in a conflict with the Kipps family, largely because of the conflicting academic interests between Howard Belsey and Monty Kipps, both holding professorial jobs at the university. This in fact stirs a culture war on campus. The interracial couple, married for thirty years, live with their children Jerome, Zora and Levi. Howards cheats on his wife twice and is so apathetic to the sentiments of the family. Zora Belsey's academic upbringing thwarts her social interactions and impedes her capacity to develop her identity. Her academia discolours her perception of beauty. Various factors such as race, gender and class, govern attitudinal differences towards beauty. According to Charles Taylor, "we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us" (33). Gripped with anger, Zora drags Carl by the hood of his clothing, "physically dragg[ing] him out down the hallway

and out of the party” (411). This act demonstrates her might and her capability. “Everyone had always told her she was ‘big girl’—was this why she was big? So she might drag grown men by their hoods and throw them to the floor?” (412). Finding herself on war footing with Carl, realizing that she “had never been spoken to like this in her life,” (416) Zora’s emotions fluctuate between disappointment, anger and disbelief. She weaponises her language just to taunt Carl, reminding him that he will never be “a *Wellingtonian*” because he lacks “what it takes to belong” (417). She strives to hurt his ego when she openly declares:

People like me are just toys to people like you...I'm just some experiment for you to play with. You people aren't even black any more, man—I don't know *what* you are. You think you're too good for your own people. You got your college degrees, but you don't even live right. You people are all the same...I need to be with *my people*, man—I can't do this no more. (418)

Zora further retorts contemptuously - “you people don't behave like human beings, man—I ain't never *seen* people behave like you people” (417). Identity and morality are entwined intrinsically for Carl. Though Zora argues that Carl does not possess the intellectuality to comprehend the gravity of his actions or the depth of his ingratitude, it is precisely her focus on carving an identifiable identity rather than seeking authenticity which leads to her vilification. Claire notices that Howard loses his humanity because of his obsession with the intellectual and Carl sees something similar occurring to Zora's identity as well. The racial solidarity of Carl when they first began to interact is eclipsed by her behavior, attributing her lack of ethics to her inclination towards ‘whiteness.’

Smith examines how the intellectual culture that is rampant in the universities plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of Black women. The Bowden black women experience transgenerational trauma where the educational institutions harbour the legacy of colonialism. Although Smith portrays these institutions as being ostentatiously tolerant and accomodative, yet she exposes the hegemonic cultural power structure that either silences or belittles the

subaltern women of colour. Zora Belsey in *On Beauty*, needed to leave her comfort zone, academia, in order to achieve the type of fulfillment that she seeks. The novel asserts that the only way to achieve authenticity is to take part in the events and activities of everyday life. Zora Belsey in *On Beauty* and Irie Jones in *White Teeth*, struggle to establish their distinct identity wading through several social pressures. Closely examining the life of Zadie Smith as a writer, her writing style, her personal experiences in education as a student and professional, positions her as a subaltern hailing from a subjugated class and race, indicating that colonial trauma perpetuated academic cultures. Traumatic experiences as Zadie Smith depicts “repeats and repeats;” they are “not individual” but collective (*White Teeth* 161).

Susan Moller Okin’s “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women” examines the political policies that treat cultural groups as monoliths” who see themselves as “gendered with substantial differences in power and advantage between men and women”(12). Against the backdrop of state multiculturalism in the 1990s, Irie Jones in *White Teeth* constructs her black female identity as a response to the limited black representation in her classroom. *White Teeth* has fetched much critical acclaim as it depicts a multicultural Britain. Zadie Smith is often seen as a beacon of multicultural hope and optimism. In one of her interviews, she recounted, “I was expected to be some expert on multicultural affairs as if multiculturalism is a genre of fiction ... whereas it is just a fact of life.... I don’t intend to be a spokesperson for anything or anybody” (qtd.in Hattenstone 9-14). She thematically deals with identity, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity and so on.

Her delineation of characters are socially diverse with an aesthetic experience which they decipher through personal contemplation and social interactions. With hybrid parentage, her father an English and her mother, a Jamaican, Zadie Smith has apparently delineated the character of Irie Jones in *White Teeth* to examine the identity crisis that she too experienced in her life. She portrays characters who wade through conflicting social and cultural contexts that

particularly affect the women of colour who are confronted with conflicting opportunities and challenges in a multicultural society.

Through the character of Archie Jones, a British who fights in World War II and later married to a Jamaican woman, Clara Bowden, much younger to his age, is an exemplification of displacement that Smith explores in the novel. Archie Jones attempting to commit suicide holding his army ID card on one hand and his marriage licence on the other, exemplifies his ambiguous nature and hybrid thoughts. His habit of flipping a coin shows that he is unable to make decisions on his own and apparently reveals his mid-life crisis at the fag end of his forties.

In *White Teeth*, Samad Iqbal, Magid and Millat's father, objects to a pagan harvest festival at a PTA meeting in Manor School. Mrs. Owens, the school's headmistress, rejects his suggestion to add more Muslim holidays to the calendar because the Harvest Festival has already been added as "part of the school's ongoing commitment to religious diversity" (108). When Samad relentlessly enlists the impact of Christianity on celebrations at school, Mrs. Owen sarcastically retorts that "removing Christian festivals from the face of the earth is a little beyond [her] jurisdiction" (109). Her father further heightens the situational tension by proposing a unanimous suggestion to retain the Harvest Festival. Such deliberations on representation and cultural power hegemony in educational institutions reveal that majority of people exert dominance over the subaltern community.

The commitment of the administration to uphold multiculturalism has a ripple effect in the classroom, which in turn affects the students. Ms. Poppy Burt-Jones, the music instructor in Manor School, attempts to broaden her curriculum by "experimenting with some Indian music" (128). She chooses Indian music because it is familiar to her. To her dismay, when the students mock Indian music stereotypes, she reprimands them that it is not "very nice to make fun of somebody else's culture" (129), oblivious of her own cultural insensitivity in trying to engage the vast Indian culture into a standard monolith, just for her convenience sake. The

students, not aware of deriding another culture, merely look down at their feet, but “aware that this was the most heinous crime in the Manor School rule book” (129).

Poppy Burt-Jones involves Millat to bolster her argument, but quite unexpectedly “Millat thought for a moment, swung his saxophone to his side and began fingering it like a guitar. “Bo-orn to run! Da da da da daa! Bruce Springsteen, miss! Da da da da daa! Baby, we were bo-orn—” (129). He deliberately chose to be westernized, upholding his British identity rather than his Indian heritage. Furthermore, his “face fell” (129) realizing that he has disappointed his instructor by his response to her question on the kind of music that he prefers in his leisure; he stands “troubled that his answer did not seem to be the right one” (129). It is evident from the reaction of the class that multiculturalism is superficially imposed on the classroom culture. His trepidation testifies how harmful state multiculturalism is to the students of color.

When the children move from Manor School to Glenard Oak Comprehensive, although they are warmly welcomed and multiculturalism is celebrated, yet the educator seemingly appears incapable of tending to the diverse needs of the student community. The school is described as a “workhouse” subjected to “rules, beliefs, [and] laws of engagement” (241) under the banner of one educational institution. However, it results in a “complex geography” of students “of every conceivable class and color” (243). Ironically, these students are united through smoking. They are described as “Babelians of every conceivable class and color speaking in tongues,” (243) demonstrating the diversity of the school. However, the dissension between them is palpable by the manner in which they function as sub-groups occupying “their own industrious corner” (243). References to school data such as the “Brent Schools Report 1990: 67 different faiths, 123 different languages)” (241) and the effort of the administrators to unite the student body, alludes to the institution's core interest in facilitating multiculturalism.

The inability of Glenard Oak institution to “unite a thousand children under one Latin tag” (241) is seen as a dismal failure. The usage of diction such as “suppress,” “splinter,” and “factionalize” (241) imply the resistance of the students to assimilate themselves to the values of the school which is perpetually a serious point of concern. While Glenard Oak advertises itself as a diverse institution, its execution of multiculturalism as a policy undermines its success. Individuals from diverse historical past, ancestry and generational trauma feel alienated when they consciously try to abide by the standard notions about British identity.

In “The Multicultural Wars,” Carby views multiculturalism through the lens of intersecting race and gender “because the politics of difference, work with concepts of individual identity rather than structure of inequality and exploitation, processes of racialization are marginalized and only given symbolic and political meaning when the subjects are black” (12). Irie Jones’ inner conflict owing to her unhappiness with her appearance, revolves around her feelings of ‘the other.’ Such an identity crisis in a cultural context, contributes to her sense of thriving “without reflection” (222). Her mother, Clara, struggles silently in the pretext of not wanting to affect her daughter's identity. Irie Jones dreams of a thinner physique posted at “a lamppost equidistant from the Jones residence and Glenard Oak Comprehensive” (221). Her family and school, play a crucial role in defining her identity. She laments that the “European proportions of Clara's figure” (221) does not conform to the Westernized standards of beauty. Millat Iqbal who is “always with the white girls,” (238) shows his affinity to European standards of beauty. He reminds her “you're different. We go way back. We've got history. You're a real friend. They don't really mean anything to me” (225). This augments Irie's low self-esteem.

As Homi. K. Bhabha notes, “the experience of migration is often characterized by a sense of dislocation, a sense of being out of place” (09). He is constantly portrayed as being uncertain of his stance in the society and finds solace in the attic of his house that is filled with

discardable items and a collection of all broken things from Archie Jones and Clara Bowden's life. This is an actual representation of the life that they have lived together. As Zadie Smith notes in *White Teeth*, "the attic was a repository for all the things that were broken, or no longer wanted" (101). The attic is an ambiguous space denoting the things in Archie Jones' life that are temporary, just like any immigrant's life in a foreign country. This sense of displacement is further heightened in Archie's life with his marriage to Clara hailing from a different cultural background.

As Stuart Hall notes, "cultural identity is not a fixed and stable essence, but a constantly shifting and changing process" (226). Archie's identity is shaped by his environment and the people with whom he survives. The character of Smad Miah Iqbal, a Bengali Muslim who fights in the war alongside Archie, provides another perspective of the experiences of immigrants and the challenges of cultural identity. Samad's relationship with his twin sons, Magid and Millat, highlights their challenges of transmitting cultural identity to the next generation, carrying forward the baton of transgenerational trauma. The roots of the immigrants are eroded, immediately after their generation and their own descendants are unable to embrace two different identities - their original identity on one hand and the identity of the place where they live on the other. This novel suggests that identity is shaped by one's personal experiences and his habitat. The characters in *White Teeth* are constantly negotiating and redefining their identities, reflecting the dynamic and fluid nature of identity.

Appropriation is a literary technique used by most of the diaspora writers and immigrants to assert their power over the dominant culture. Zadie Smith by appropriating the language of the dominant culture that is shaped according to the needs of the characters works as a powerful example in *White Teeth*. The incidents that Clara Bowden experienced as a teenager with her boyfriend Ryan Topps, exemplifies appropriation. Clara's mother, Hortense Bowden, exerts a strong influence over her, forcing her to conform to strict religious beliefs.

Ryan Topps, swayed by Hortense's prophetic views, attempts to restrict Clara's freedom and autonomy, imposing his own rigid interpretations on her. This highlights the tension between Clara's desire for self-expression and the suffocating nature of her mother's and Ryan's opinionated views. Clara reaching her saturation point in the conversation with Ryan Topps, slams at him, "Lemme tell you someting," said Clara, walking back over to the scooter and taking the back seat, 'I'm a goat. I like bein' a goat. I wanna be a goat. An' I'd rather be sizzling in de rains of sulphur wid my friends than sittin' in heaven, bored to tears, wid Darcus, my mudder and you" (34). This stance of Clara showcases her strong personality and her defiance of traditional expectations. By declaring herself a 'goat,' Clara is accentuating her individuality, rejecting societal norms. The use of colloquial language and dialect "Lemme tell you someting," 'wid' instead of 'with' adds to the character's authenticity, emphasising her cultural background. The reference to "sizzling in de rains of sulphur"(34) is a vivid and powerful metaphor for hell, and Clara's preferences to dwell in heaven along with her family members suggests that she values her independence and autonomy more than everything else. It is a feminist declaration, wherein Clara is asserting her agency, refusing to conform to the traditional societal expectations. The mention of "Darcus, my mudder and you" (34) suggests that Clara is rejecting not just traditional notions of heaven, but also the people who are trying to restrain her. The use of 'you' at the end of the sentence implies a sense of direct address, confronting Clara's strong will. This moment is a celebration of individuality and autonomy, and Clara's declaration of being a 'goat' is a powerful symbol of self-empowerment.

Hazel Carby in her essay, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood" emphasizes the dire need to provide a platform to women of colour to express their experiences revolving around their race, gender, and class. In order to address the paucity of representation of women of colour in multicultural societies, Zadie Smith felt the need to include more such representations in academia and media for visibility factor. Including black

women into feminist arguments thus assumes a “tokenistic” form, in which the experiences of a black woman is often generalized as “the total experience of all black women” (Carby 19). Smith challenges this tokenization approach in her novels by examining the intersection of race, gender, and education in the United Kingdom in *White Teeth* (2000) and in the United States in *On Beauty* (2005).

Using the framework of education, Smith dramatizes the detrimental repercussions of dearth of representation of young black women. *White Teeth* examines identity and the concept of Britishness through the life and family history of half-British, half-Jamaican Irie Jones. In this novel, Smith's depiction of state multiculturalism throws light on the threat of educational institutions rooted in colonialism on the identity formation of young black women. *On Beauty* focusses on the experiences of mixed-race Zora Belsey as she uses her academic upbringing to establish her power within Smith's imagined community of Wellington University but struggles to cultivate an authentic voice outside of the realm of her academic milieu. By way of verbalising her own experiences at Cambridge University, Smith caricatures her characters namely Irie Jones in *White Teeth* and Zora Belsey in *On Beauty* as ‘underrepresented’ while they strive to establish an identity for themselves.

Works Cited:

Ashcroft, Richard T., and Mark Bevir. “What Is Postwar Multiculturalism in Theory and Practice?” *Multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth: Comparative Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, edited by Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir, 1st ed., University of California Press, 2019, pp. 1–22. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvr7fcvv.4>. Accessed 17 Nov. 2025.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.

Carby, Hazel V. "The Multicultural Wars." *Radical History Review*, vol. 54, 1992, pp. 7- 18.

- Du Gay, Paul, and Stuart Hall. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Sage, 2013.
- Hall, S. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), "Identity: Community, Culture, Difference", 1990, pp. 222-237). Lawrence & Wishart.
- Jung, Carl G., et al. *Collected Works of C.G. Jung. Volume 9*. Princeton University Press, 2014.
- O'Grady, Kathleen. "White Teeth: A Conversation with Author Zadie Smith." *Atlantis*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2002, p. 105.
- Sam, David L., and John W. Berry. *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Smith, Zadie. *On Beauty: A Novel*. Penguin, 2005.
- "Speaking in Tongues." *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 26, no. 8, 2009.
- . *White Teeth*. Vintage, 2000.
- Susan Moller Okin's "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women"
- Taylor, Charles. "The Politics of Recognition." *Campus Wars*. Routledge, 2021, pp. 249- 263.
- "The Rivers of Blood Speech: Full Text." *The Telegraph*, 20 April 2008, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html>