

T. C.
FIRAT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

**Individual and Social Conflicts in Multicultural England:
Zadie Smith's White Teeth and *Monica Ali's Brick Lane***

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

DANIŞMANI

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HAZIRLAYAN

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ELAZIĞ- 2008

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**Individual and Social Conflicts in Multicultural England:
Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane***

Master Thesis

SUPERVISOR

Assist. Prof. Dr. F. Gül KOÇSOY

PREPARED BY

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ELAZIĞ-2008

To my mother and my father...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	I
ÖZET.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	V
1.0. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. The Multi-National and Multi-Cultural Structure in the Twentieth Century	
1.1.1 Britain: A Multicultural Country in the Twentieth Century	
1.1.2 The End of the British Empire	
1.1.3 British Immigration Map	
1.2 “Multiculturalism” as a concept	
2.0. MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE IN BRITAIN AND TWO MULTICULTURAL VOICES: ZADIE SMITH AND MONICA ALI	30
3.0. INDIVIDUAL CONFLICTS: IMMIGRANTS AND MINORITIES IN MULTICULTURAL ENGLAND.....	42
4.0. SOCIAL CONFLICTS ON THE BASIS OF MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY...	75
5.0. CONCLUSION.....	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	109
AUTOBIOGRAPHY.....	114

ABSTRACT

Master Thesis

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In this study, in general, the individual and social conflicts of the societies that have experienced “multicultural” structure, which is a social and cultural formation having gained a new dimension and have been effective on many geographical regions, are examined by the model of England, which is defined as a multicultural society in the twentieth century. In particular, the aim of the study is to analyze the individual and the social background of the conflicts of today which are originated from the multicultural structure of England, related to the novels: *White Teeth* (2000) and *Brick Lane* (2003), respectively by Zadie Smith (1975) and Monica Ali (1967), two contemporary women writers who have come from multicultural backgrounds.

In the introduction part of the study, firstly, it is inspected how and in which dimensions the “multi-national” and “multicultural” structure of today’s England has been formed, parallel to the process of the collapse of the British Empire and the immigration to England. Afterwards, the concept of “multiculturalism” which has appeared as a new approach in the twentieth century brought about by multicultural social structure, the point of views which are supporting or rejecting that approach, and the reflections of that approach in England are investigated.

II

In the first chapter, as the novels which will be examined in this study are the writings reflecting the multicultural formation, “multicultural literature” being the product of multicultural point of view and also being named as “post-colonial literature” is dealt within the dimension of England and English literature; and the place of Zadie Smith and Monica Ali in this literary approach is observed.

In the third and fourth parts of this study, “individual and social conflicts” which intersect with each other and result from the multicultural social structure of England are analyzed related to the certain novels. In the first dimension, “individual conflicts” originated from that kind of social structure are evaluated in relation to the immigrants and minorities, who have been exposed to the difficulties in the society on a large scale. It is argued that being considered of those groups as “the other”, being humiliated frequently, not gaining approval in the society, and because of those reasons not being adopted in the society in which s/he lives by having the dilemma of feeling torn between create significant identity problems and inner conflicts for them.

Afterwards, in the second dimension, the “social conflicts” whether resulting from the problematic individuals experiencing inner conflicts or appearing totally out of those people are analyzed within the certain novels. In our day, the prejudices, racial and religious discrimination, xenophobia, racism which are common in great deal in the multicultural societies, and polarization comprising all of these are the main social conflicts. England as a country, which includes many citizens of diverse racial and religious origins, has been exposed to that kind of polarization on the social base and has entered into a process of social conflict ranging from racist to terrorist attacks. Consequently, the multi-national and multi-cultural social structure of England has brought many conflicts within itself, and in this study, Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* are explored as being two significant novels mirroring those conflicts in multicultural English society.

Key Words: England, Multiculturalism, Individual and Social Conflicts, Immigrants, Minorities, Zadie Smith, Monica Ali

ÖZET

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

**Çokkültürlü İngiltere’de Bireysel ve Sosyal Çatışmalar:
Zadie Smith’in *White Teeth* and Monica Ali’nin *Brick Lane* Romanları**

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Bu çalışmada genel olarak, yirminci yüzyılda yeni bir boyut kazanmış ve birçok coğrafi bölgede etkili olmuş toplumsal ve kültürel bir yapılanma olan “çokkültürlülük” olgusunu yaşayan toplumların karşılaştıkları bireysel ve toplumsal çatışmalar, yirminci yüzyılda “çokkültürlü” bir toplum olarak tanımlanan İngiltere örneğiyle incelenmektedir. Özelde ise çalışmanın amacı, İngiltere’nin bu yapısından kaynaklanan günümüz çatışmalarının bireysel ve toplumsal arka planının çokkültürlü altyapıdan gelen iki çağdaş kadın yazar Zadie Smith (1975) ve Monica Ali (1967)’nin *White Teeth* (2000) ve *Brick Lane* (2003) adlı romanlardaki boyutlarıyla incelenmesidir.

Çalışmanın giriş bölümünde, ilk olarak, İngiltere’nin bugünkü “çok-uluslu” ve “çok-kültürlü” yapısının nasıl ve ne boyutlarda oluştuğu Britanya İmparatorluğu’nun dağılma süreci ve İngiltere’ye göçler çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Daha sonra, çokkültürlü toplum yapısıyla birlikte yirminci yüzyılda yeni bir yaklaşım olarak ortaya çıkan “çokkültürcülük” kavramı, bu yaklaşımı benimseyen veya reddeden bakış açıları ve bu yaklaşımın İngiltere’deki yansımaları irdelenmiştir.

İkinci bölümde, incelenecek olan romanların çokkültürlü unsurları yansıtan yapıtlar olması nedeniyle, çokkültürlü bakış açısının bir ürünü olan ve “koloni-sonrası edebiyat” olarak da adlandırılan “çokkültürlü edebiyat” İngiltere ve İngiliz Edebiyatı

boyutuyla tanımlanmış, Zadie Smith ve Monica Ali'nin bu edebi yaklaşımdaki yerleri incelenmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın üçüncü ve dördüncü bölümlerinde, İngiltere'nin çokkültürlü toplum yapısından kaynaklanan ve birbirleriyle kesişen bireysel ve toplumsal çatışmalar söz konusu romanlar çerçevesinde irdelenmiştir. Birinci aşamada, bu toplum yapısının ortaya koyduğu "bireysel çatışmalar", toplumda sorunlara en çok maruz kalan göçmen ve azınlıklar açısından incelenmiştir. Toplumda bu kesimin çeşitli nedenlerle "öteki" olarak görülmesinin, çoğu zaman aşağılanmasının, kabul görmemesinin ve bu nedenle arada kalmışlık yaşayarak içinde bulunduğu topluma uyum sağlayamamasının bu kişilerde büyük bir kimlik problemine ve içsel çatışmalara neden olduğu savunulmaktadır.

Daha sonra ikinci aşamada ise, gerek bu içsel çatışmaların ortaya çıkardığı sorunsal bireylerden kaynaklanan, gerekse tamamen onların dışında gelişen "toplumsal çatışmalar" romanlardaki yansımalarıyla incelenmiştir. Günümüzde çokkültürlü toplumlarda büyük ölçüde yaygın olan önyargılar, ırk ve/veya din ayrımcılığı, yabancı düşmanlığı, ırkçılık ve bunların bir arada toplandığı kutuplaşma en temel toplumsal çatışmalardır. İngiltere de, birçok farklı ırk ve din kökenli vatandaşı içeren bir ülke olarak, toplumdaki bu kutuplaşmaya büyük ölçüde maruz kalmış, ırkçı ve terörist saldırılara kadar uzanan toplumsal bir çatışma sürecinin yaşandığı bir sahne konumuna gelmiştir. Sonuç olarak, İngiltere'nin çokuluslu ve çokkültürlü toplum yapısı birçok bireysel ve toplumsal çatışmayı da beraberinde getirmiştir ve bu çalışmada da Zadie Smith'in *White Teeth* ve Monica Ali'nin *Brick Lane* adlı romanları çokkültürlü İngiliz toplumuna ayna tutan ve bu çatışmaları yansıtan iki önemli roman olarak irdelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngiltere, Çokkültürcülük, Bireysel ve Toplumsal Çatışma, Göçmenler, Azınlıklar, Zadie Smith, Monica Ali

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has brought a number of concepts into common use for the first time that have now a crucial importance and “multiculturalism” is one of them. The main reason of that novelty is related to the distinct changing dynamics in the world. The technological, scientific, medical, social, ideological or political innovations were dominant in that century. Besides the positive developments such as scientific discoveries, the theory of relativity or quantum physics, first footsteps on the moon and development of computer technology, better communications and faster transportation possibilities, this century is mainly marked by the First and Second World Wars which caused important changes in social, political, and economic structures such as immigrations, women’s suffrage movement, rising nationalism, Great Depression, atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of colonialism. Colonialism, as a system of political, economic and cultural dominance of a powerful country over a weaker one, had continued its power from the 16th to the 18th century. The nineteenth century is also accepted as the age of imperialism of Britain and France (Said, 1993).

However, in the last quarter of the 19th century, colonizer countries began to lose their power and especially after the two world wars, particularly by the rising nationalism, the end of colonialism came on the stage. Many countries had fought for their national independence and regained their independence from the earlier empires. As a consequence of those changes, new social movements one of which is mass immigration appeared and so the countries began to have a more multi-cultural structure in the 20th century. That multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure was formed by immigration movements and some concepts emerged holding new meanings. Among these terms, “multiculturalism” has been used as a new term especially after 1970s. Nevertheless, before the appearance of ‘multiculturalism’ as a concept, multi-national and multi-cultural structure appeared in the societies, especially in Europe and in the USA. Britain is one of those countries which gained a more multi-ethnic and multi-cultural formation, especially by the end of her colonial role after the two world wars. In the new century, Britain is

“a union of regions, which differ in traditions, lifestyles, population density, economic prosperity and accent, classes differing in inherited privilege, wealth, education attainment, district of residence and

accent, too. Britain is also a union of different cultures, religions and ethnicities”.¹

The immigration flow to Britain during and after the world wars contributed to the multi-ethnic structure of the country on a large scale. The multi-cultural structure of Britain was mostly constructed by the people from the earlier colonies of the British Empire. The picture of London in 1960s after the transformation of the society into a diverse social structure is described by Peter Bromhead as follows:

“Many districts, even near the centers, have a small-town life of their own, and some are dominated by people of particular national origin—though not necessarily for more than a generation. The son of an East-European Jewish immigrant of fifty years ago, leaving his comfortable suburb to visit his East End childhood home, found the old Yiddish notices gone, replaced by signs in Bengali.”²

The social layers are so dynamic in that period. The first immigrants, after moving into a socio-culturally better place, have left their places to the other new immigrants. The rapid changing anatomy of England begins to present different nations holding diverse races, cultures and religions. At that time, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure of England begins to be discussed in different areas such as politics or academia. So, the concept of “multiculturalism” comes on the stage in the second part of the twentieth century.

In a general sense, multiculturalism is the tendency to appreciate all kinds of multi- formations in the society. The multiculturalist point of view accepts the involvement of all kinds of diversity as fundamental in the social, cultural, political, academical and economic areas. The political approach has given a main direction to the issue. The governmental policies supporting multiculturalism have opened the way for the appreciation and contribution of diverse races and cultures. However, this politic attitude has not been approved by all the members of the society. Some opponents, who think that supporting diverse structure in the society will create fragmentations and polarizations within the country, have opposed to multiculturalist approaches. In this aspect, “multiculturalism” has been an extremely-discussed concept in the new century and has created proponents and opponents within the society:

¹ Johan Soenen, “**Imagology and Translation**” in *Multiculturalism: Identity and Otherness* Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu ed., İstanbul: Boğaziçi UP, 1997, p.146

² Peter Bromhead, *Life in Modern Britain*, London: Longman, 1979, p. 11

“To some it is an idea about diversity. If we see the world from the perspective of many cultures and histories, we are in a better position to understand the past and the world today. To others the term represents the end of European dominance, a balkanization of heritage and legacy at the expense of time-honored western traditions.”³

According to the supporters of multiculturalism, diversity gives a new and a broader perspective to understand the world better. Multiculturalist point of view adopts the idea that “diversity has to be substantiated within an effective community which disposes of majority power”⁴. To them, it offers a more democratic approach for all the communities in the society. Contrarily, the opponents of multiculturalism express their concern about its contribution to the end of European unity and identity. They are anxious that their cultural heritage will be destroyed.

Whether it is approved or not, multiculturalist points of view have entered into all areas of the society, so many new approaches have appeared. In this context, multicultural literature becomes one of the main areas which have begun to appreciate diverse ethnic, cultural and national elements by the multicultural approach. A new trend giving more importance to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural works, and to their writers has come into existence in the literary world. By this approach, the Euro-centric literary canons have been depicted and the domination of European literature has been denied. So, multiculturalist literature which appreciates the rising of ethnically or culturally diverse writers and their works has brought a new approach on the stage. The writers coming from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds have embarked on giving a picture of multi-cultural world in their writings. In this aspect, especially the writers of second and further generation immigrants and bi-cultural writers have focused on the multicultural issues in their works.

Multiculturalism and multicultural structure in England has brought about the interrogation of some issues such as nationality, race, identity, hybridity, and so on as subject matters in multicultural literature. In this context, Zadie Smith (1975) and Monica Ali (1967) are the two examples writing about the multicultural structure of England and the people who live in that formation. They have an important role in visualizing multicultural England. Both of them, being the second generation children of multi-ethnic and immigrant families, have reflected the multicultural issues in similar

³ C. James Trotman, *Multiculturalism Roots and Realities*, Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2002, p. 9

⁴ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*, Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 319

dimensions. In this study, the two debut novels of two writers, *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith and *Brick Lane* (2003) by Monica Ali will be examined related to the “conflicts” which arise as a result of multicultural and multi-ethnic structure of English society in the twentieth and twenty-first century.

It is apparent that “the entry of minorities, especially minorities from the Commonwealth, has centered on the extent to which such a society can take groups whose ways of life are different in so many aspects”⁵. It cannot be denied that although diversity of races and cultures has contributed to the cultural richness, it has, at the same time, created significant conflicts in the society. It is mainly accepted that

“migration... always creates problems. Even the best integrated groups suffer under such circumstance. But when the fundamental core of organization, the family, is already weak, the magnitude of these problems may be staggering”⁶.

In this aspect, the dimension of the conflicts has increased in great deal by the mass immigration into England by the immigrants coming from diverse national, racial and cultural societies whose background is totally different from that of English society. Especially, when the immigrant families are “ill-equipped” and when the cultural and social backgrounds of the minorities have been contradictory to the cultural attitudes and values of the country to which they moved, the conflicts rise rapidly; furthermore, the lines of conflict expand from the base to the top. In this study, the conflicts which appear as a result of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure of England will be examined in two dimensions: firstly on the basis of “individual conflicts” of the immigrants and minorities and secondly on the basis of “societal conflicts” within the multicultural England related to Smith’s *White Teeth* and Ali’s *Brick Lane*.

We know that the most fruitful distinction with which the sociological imagination works is between ‘the personal troubles of milieu’ and ‘the public issues of social structure’⁷. Neither the individual nor the milieu in which s/he participates can be separated from each other. In addition to this, the conflicts of the individual or the society cannot be thought unconnected, either. So, the conflicts which are experienced both in the inner world of the individual and in the society are like a vicious circle. In

⁵ Eric Butterworth and David Weir eds., *Social Problems of Modern Britain*, Fontana: Fontana/Collins , 1972, p.310

⁶ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1973, p.52

⁷ Eric Butterworth and David Weir eds., *ibid.* p.35

this aspect, although the conflicts experienced in multi-national and multi-cultural England are classified under two titles in this study, it should not be forgotten that the reasons and the results of those conflicts are totally related to each other.

Surely, many multicultural societies in the new century have faced diverse conflicts experienced in different dimensions. This study will examine the conflicts within the English society having the conflicts of first and further immigrant generations or hybrid identities within their individual personalities, their relations within their family and the multi-ethnic and multicultural society they are in. Thus, the individual conflicts will be depicted in terms of the formation and transformation of self and identity; in this context, being seen as “the other”, torn between two cultures, “belonging” problems, and identity crisis; and the social conflicts will be illustrated by the issues of prejudices, clash of cultures, racial and religious discriminations, racism, and polarization.

The background of the conflicts, the reasons and the results are aimed to be presented in reference to the novels. So, prior to dealing with these conflicts, to understand the dimension of the conflicts which occur as a consequence of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure in the new century, it would be proper to see how the world, and in particular Britain, turned into a new multi-national and multicultural society in the twentieth century, how multiculturalism appeared as a new concept; and how multicultural writing became visible as a new approach.

1.1 The Multi-national and Multi-cultural Structure in the Twentieth Century

It cannot be denied that throughout the history diversity in nations has subsisted. The multi-national societies such as British Empire or Ottoman Empire could be given as some examples of early multi-national and multicultural societies in history. However, as it was emphasized, some phenomena gave way to new concepts. That's why we cannot talk about multicultural structures in earlier societies as it is now, because there are strict differences between the multicultural structure of the earlier empires and the states of today.

It is true that in the earlier centuries, there were not only “mono-nations” either in European countries or in some other regions. However, most of the nations had

commonly a mono-cultural structure. When the idea of nationalism had been widespread, especially in the nineteenth century, the colonies or some other independent societies revolted. That ideology brought the contravention and national independence defences of those nations against the empires or other dominant powers. After the two world wars, the foundation of new nation-states had been completed. These nation-states were aiming to achieve a total unity; unity of nation, culture, language, and religion. Although there were regional diversities, a “culturally homogenous society” was being aimed. When cultural unity was deficient, almost all states partly took strict precautions or policies such as accepting a unique national language, ignoring the regional ones or applying to the policy of cultural assimilation.

As a consequence of two world wars and their following processes of discrimination, mass murders, such as Nazis, and exclusions, Europe attempted to obtain homogeneous nation-states in 1950's. Nevertheless the cultural homogeneity of Europe could not survive so long, as a result of political and economic reasons. In the war and post-war years, there were many refugees leaving their countries because of political or economic problems. 1950s had an economic explosion which required a demand for extra labor force and Europe had not another chance apart from opening its doors to immigrants coming from other countries. Consequently, the aims to establish pure national states resulted in more multi-national ones.

In those societies which had a new multi-national structure, the first decades passed with tranquility, as the immigrants were mainly assumed as temporary workers who worked on behalf of their patrons. The immigrants were expected to turn back their motherland by the end of their faithful works. Conversely, as soon as Europe recognized the metamorphosis of its structure that was shifting from a nation-state into multi-national one, the new but enduring minorities had already settled with an acceptance of a new life in the new lands.

While the social structure was so in Europe, the arrangement of multicultural formation in the United States was mostly different. Despite the fact that the United States had a similar intention with Europe, in accepting the mass immigration that was economic, it was also endeavoring to create a new society standing by the central metaphors of “Melting Pot” or “American Salad”. This idea is mostly related to the United States, which included variable societies, such as Red Indians and blacks. Both at the beginning of its foundation and in the later times, America experienced increasing

immigration being culturally diverse in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The main proposal of the Melting Pot or American Salad is to create an idealized process for immigration and a homogeneous society. According to that idea, the components in the pot or in the salad which are the people from different races, cultures and religions are combined to develop a new community. They are expected to integrate into the society, which is the major idea of Melting Pot, where all the immigrant cultures would be mixed without interference of the state. Both the immigrants and the American State had adopted the idea of a 'new country'. Unlike in Europe, the immigrants were not considered as temporary workers. Although the Melting Pot attitude was accepted by some as an assimilation process from time to time, it cannot be insisted that it required a comprehensive acceptance of a unique culture.

As it is apparent, the social structures of Europe and the USA were similar but their attitudes towards that new change appeared diverse in some ways in the twentieth century; however, their main common point was that both had gained a more multicultural structure by then.

1.1.1 Britain: a multicultural country in the twentieth century

“This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pound, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Names that secrete within them mass exodus, cramped boats and planes, cold arrivals, medical checks.”
(Smith, 2000: 326)

Like the other countries, Britain experienced hard times in the twentieth century. At the beginning of the century Britain, especially London, was a crowded and busy place than it had ever been before. The electric lighting, horseless carriages, giant liners traversing the oceans had been a part of the country long before some other nations of Europe. However, despite those developing processes, it was also possible to see a calamitous poverty in London. Some people had no work and they could not survive without charity. London was like a coin with two different faces. There was an extravagant wealth on one side and a disturbing poverty on the other.

However, those conflicts were not the only ones and by the outbreak of The First World War, in which the first British civilians had to face the blows of enemy directly,

Britain had to fight on European soil. The First World War resulted in the death of many people and change of social attitudes; “Britain could never be quite the same again after such an experience as the First World War”⁸. By the end of the war, Britain entered in a socially changed age and experienced economic decline and an enormous unemployment. Especially in the 1930s, Britain faced an ongoing high unemployment. There was also the problem of resignation of Edward VIII who wanted to marry Wallis Warferd Simpson, an American divorcee, in 1936. As she was considered inappropriate to become the queen, the English Church and some leading politicians were against their marriage. So Edward VIII abdicated after the objection of the Government of Baldwin. In that complicated atmosphere, Britain could not recognize the probable threat of Hitler gaining power in Germany. Germany was making strong endeavors to re-arm at a startling rate; however Britain did not have either the money or the tendency to rival against Hitler’s armaments. Consequently, the extension of Germany went too far, and by the German invasion of Poland, Britain had to declare war on Germany; so in 1939 the Second World War started. Germans conquered most of Europe quickly and attacked on Britain firstly by air force then by bombing it into submission. Although Germans failed, Britain was then on the threat from North Africa. Britain had lost the war to Japan in the Far East by the falling of Singapore and Malaya, so the Japanese were at the gates of India. Within the entry of America into the war, Britain could get reinforcements; and in a year, the Second World War ended leaving Europe in ruins.

London had been affected by the First World War very much, but the second one changed the city completely. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, Britain went through an enormous social change. Churchill, the war time Prime Minister, was voted out and a new Labour government began a long period of recovering the country from the cost of war. However, perhaps for the British Empire the cost of the two world wars was easier to restore by time; unfortunately, there was a lost that was impossible to be repaired: “the end of an empire.”

⁸ Henry Pelling, *Modern Britain: 1885-1955*, London: Cardinal Edition, 1974, p.113

1.1.2 The End of the British Empire

The twentieth century and the two world wars had affected all nations in Europe, but Britain had qualified a total change. Peter Bromhead mentions the earlier power of Britain as an empire as follows:

“In 1900 it wasn’t absurd to regard London as the centre of the world, and children learned phrases which expressed in simple terms the ‘truths’ which British regarded as paramount: The sun never sets on the British Empire; India is the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown; Britain rules the waves.”⁹

However, the British Empire was not ruling the waves after the two world wars any more. The end of the Empire had arrived. Indisputably the end of British Empire, such a big one, did not come suddenly. In fact, at the end of the eighteenth century British Empire had lost the American colonies. The fracturing of the empire was continuing with the Indian movement for independence after 1900. Ireland had taken her independence by 1922, and eventually India and Pakistan gained full self-government in 1947. Following that independence movements,

“many of the biggest of the old colonies became independent under Macmillan’s Government in 1957-1963, as Nigeria taking the independence in 1960. By 1969 Hong Kong, with 3 million people, was the only remaining colony with any substantial population.”¹⁰

As a result of the de-colonization of the British Empire, the policy in 1960s was towards hindering the total separation of the colonies. Although British government went on a rapid independence movement for the colonies, the aim was to hold those colonies under Britain’s own control. The order of co-operation in the governing of the country with the inhabitants, such as Canadian self-government, was adopted in many colonies by the government. British policy tried to keep on the dominance, but with different approaches, such as increasing the number of local people as officers of the administration or absorbing local politicians into the highest level of the administration.

Britain was no more an empire in real sense. In that process, in spite of the concept of an ‘empire’, ‘*Commonwealth of Nations*’ was utilized to illustrate the independent countries connected to the British crown, and known as Commonwealth Realms, notably the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. It is a

⁹ Peter Bromhead, *ibid*, p.209

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.210-11

voluntary organization of nations which were formerly the members of the British Empire. The members of *Commonwealth* include both republics and monarchies. Despite becoming entirely autonomous, these countries continued to have the British King or Queen as the head of the State. To perform royal functions, a Governor-General was appointed as representative of the Crown. Although some countries have chosen to keep their Governors-General, most of the countries becoming independent since 1945, beginning with India, appeared as republics with Presidents within the *Commonwealth*. Besides, some countries left the *Commonwealth*, such as South Africa in 1961 and Pakistan in 1972¹¹. However, Britain had already made these countries her cultural colonies. That's why, although they gained their independence, British traces in their culture stayed obviously. Today, *Commonwealth* aims to work as an organization which

“...helps to organize ministerial meetings and other conferences, administers assistance programmes agreed at these meetings, including those of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, which provides expertise, advisory services and training to Commonwealth developing countries.”¹²

Although there have been meetings to discuss common problems with the heads of the governments, the *Commonwealth* has had no formal institutions. It cannot be asserted that these meetings have achieved useful things either. The inability of *Commonwealth* to stop the war in Nigeria in 1967-1970 is considered as an apparent indicator of the ineffectuality of this institution. Beyond existing as a passive and informal institution, the *Commonwealth* has brought out some new problems for Britain, among which is “immigration”. Citizens of the countries related to the *Commonwealth* were free to immigrate to Britain and so the country initiated to alter into being a more “multicultural” society. Just as in many other countries, the multicultural structure has grown out of considerable immigration to Britain. That's why; to comprehend the multi-national and multicultural structure of Britain it is crucial to examine the immigration movement to the country.

¹¹ Ibid, p.212

¹² “The Commonwealth” (July 2005) , *Guide to Government*, Retrieved March 2007, from <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Gtg11/GuideToGovernment/InternationalBodies/DG_4003092>

1.1.3 British Immigration Map

Actually, Britain is an island which has faced the fact of immigration from the beginning of her history. The early story of Britain begins with the arrival of Celtic and Pict tribes forming the first communities on the island. In 250 AD, after the Celtic colonization, a group of black legionnaires drawn from the African part of the Empire was sent by Romans to stand guard on Hadrian's Wall. Winston Churchill expresses the true beginning of immigration by a famous sentence in his book *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*: "In the summer of the Roman year 699, now described as the year 55 before the birth of Christ, the Proconsul of Gaul, Gaius Julius Caesar, turned his gaze upon Britain"¹³. When the Romans finally left the country in the fifth century, it was the turn of the Germanic tribes. The waves of those immigrants were mainly from north Germany and they took the place of Romans: a tribe called the Angles, a tribe called the Saxons, and a tribe called the Jutes. After four hundred years of colonization of the Jutes, Angles and Saxons, the Vikings arrived by bringing a significant new influence to the cultural pot. However, the arrival of Normans in 1066 was the most dramatic of these immigrations because of the cultural aspects they brought with such as their early-French language, Parliamentary aspects, improvements in architecture and literature and law. The first Norman King, William the Conqueror, invited Jews to settle in England to help to develop commerce, finance and trade. All these waves of immigrants had fused to produce the English nation by about 1400¹⁴.

It is said that during the Middle Ages, there were few black faces appearing in Britain as entertainers linked to royal entourages. In 1505, African drummers were living in Edinburgh. Both Henry VII and his son Henry VIII had employed a black trumpeter. However, the changing anatomy of history modified the status of blacks in Britain. They began to be used mostly as slaves. By the invasion of the 'New World', Europeans got agricultural estates in America. As they needed cheap labor, they applied for the slave trade from North Africa. After a few years, it was probable to see black slaves in wealthy households in England. Besides the blacks, in the eighteenth century, Muslim population began to appear in Britain when Muslim sailors, known as lascars,

¹³ "Immigration: This Island's Story", *The Independent* (23 August 2006), *The Independent Online*. Retrieved November 2007, from <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/immigration-this-islands-story-413017.html>>

¹⁴ Ibid.

serving on British merchant ships began to settle in. With the settling of the Muslim merchants, the structure of Britain had begun to gain a more diverse form.

In the early eighteenth century, the British trade gained more dominance in the 'New World' and expanded its wealth. As a result of expanding trade and rising number of the rich, which would conclude with Industrial Revolution, the slave trade also increased. The number of African men, women and children living in England was approximately 14,000 by 1770¹⁵. Before that period, their legal status was vague as they were tied to their English owners and their freedom was related to whether they were Christian or not. In 1772, a new movement to close down slavery came into view. The supporters of abolishment of slavery passed a noteworthy case to the courts. The supporters gained a small success: according to the law, the slaves could not be transported from England without their will. Although it could be accepted as a success, in practice, it made little difference in the lives of slaves.

At the beginning of 1800s, the assertion of supporters had grown to be one of the largest protests of the British history. Consequently, the end of slavery was to come into the stage and in 1807, British Parliament banned the slave trade, but not slavery. In spite of the ban, the slaving ships still activated illegally; that's why, another step of prohibition had to be taken. In 1833, the Parliament consequently banned all slavery across the British Empire. However, there were still remarkable exemptions, such as Indian servants brought to Britain by wealthy families. In fact, the major change was the name of the manner which had ranged 'from slavery to service'.

By the first half of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was on the peak and Britain had a wide industrial labor both at home and abroad. Accordingly, the need for the labor force was growing extremely. That's why, Britain began to allow immigrants from almost all over the Empire to meet the extend labor or clerical force, such as Irish workers or German clerks whose efficiency and capability to speak English made them ideal employees. By the 19th century Britain had already become a multicultural nation which was formed by the immigration movements coming from other European countries or from the colonies.

Within the two world wars, Britain experienced another kind of immigration that was different from that of the Industrial Revolution. Although immigration to Britain

¹⁵ "The History of Multicultural Britain", *BritainUSA*, by IT Project Team, New York, Retrieved February 12, 2007, from <http://www.britainusa.com/sections/articles_show_>

did not stop by the wars, it changed its dimension. While the immigration during the industrial period was mainly economic, the immigration during the two world wars was also a result of social and politic difficulties besides the economic ones. In spite of the strict entry controls, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 could not prevent people from moving into Britain; usually because of political oppression, religious persecution or the need for a job or a better life. Some Russians escaping from the 1917 Revolution and Civil War, thousands of Belgians flowing in Britain in the first year of the war, thousands of children withdrawn from Spanish Civil War or Jews escaping from Nazism were in Britain during the First World War. The Jews coming to Britain in the late 19th century was a community of about 250,000 by the First World War, and then with the advent of Nazi power in the inter-war years, about 90,000 more Jewish people came from Germany- although Britain refused entry to further refugees from 1938¹⁶ .

By the end of the Second World War in 1945, it was quickly recognized that Britain had to reconstruct the economy by the help of large immigrant labor, but it did not have enough workers of her own and so the government began to look for more immigrants. Between 1946 and 1951 there were 450,000 workers from Europe in Britain¹⁷ . Despite those workers, the need for the labor force could not be closed and the government could not provide enough people from Europe. In that condition, Britain had to turn to the younger people from both current and former colonies, mostly from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan. Immigration from the West Indies was encouraged by the *British Nationality Act* of 1948, which provided free entry into Britain for all *Commonwealth* citizens. By delivering hundreds of West Indians at Tilbury Harbor in London in 22 June 1948, the symbolic starting of mass immigration to the ‘mother country’ started.

The mass immigration continued in 1950s in which, as happened a decade earlier, many immigrants continued coming to Britain from countries known as the *Commonwealth*. Although the intention of the immigrants and the governments was a temporary residual that would end by going back to the motherlands after earning money for a better life, many of them remained in Britain with families settling down.

¹⁶ “Immigration: This Island’s Story”, *The Independent* (23 August 2006), *The Independent Online*. Retrieved November 2007, from <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/immigration-this-islands-story-413017.html>>

¹⁷ “Immigration to the United Kingdom (1922-present day)”, *Wikipedia*, Retrieved April 2007, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_the_United_Kingdom>

Especially during this period, Britain's non-white immigrant population increased rapidly. Rob Pope mentions in his book *The English Studies Book* that the results of the *Commonwealth* appeared from the late 1950s and by 1990, approximately five million people from the earlier colonies had immigrated to the 'motherland' for work and better life (Pope, 1998: 135).

In 1960s, an increase in the number of the ethnic minorities in Britain was observed as a result of the following family members and a high birth-rate. The social structure of 1960s and the contribution of the minorities are expressed by Bromhead as follows: "the half million new inhabitants from the West Indies, Africa, India and Pakistan have contributed much to the new atmosphere. Many new trends have begun in London and spread through Europe"¹⁸. Here, Bromhead emphasizes the contributions of the immigrant which are thought as positive aspect. However, contrary to the contribution by new trends of the immigrants, the government felt a necessity to restrict the immigration from other parts of the *Commonwealth* into the UK and passed the *Commonwealth Immigration Act* in 1962. Until that act, all *Commonwealth* citizens carrying a British passport could enter and stay in the United Kingdom without any limitation. By that act, the citizens of both the UK and the colonies whose passports were not directly issued by the UK government were made to subject to the immigration control. In 1972, a new legislation was accepted to make immigration more limited and more difficult. It designated that a person born overseas, although s/he has a British passport, could only gain admission in Britain if s/he had either permit to work or proof demonstrating that a parent or grandparent had been born in the UK.

Although the government greatly restricted immigration by the 1970s, it could not stop it totally. The most significant immigration of the decade occurred in 1972, when the Ugandan dictator General Idi Amin expelled 80,000 African Asians from the country. As many of them held British passports, the UK admitted 28,000 of them in two months. Between 1968 and 1975, some 83,000 immigrants from the *Commonwealth* had also settled in the UK, mainly by obtaining work permits or permission to join relatives¹⁹.

¹⁸ Peter Bromhead, *ibid*, p.11

¹⁹ "Short history of immigration", *BBC News- Race*, Retrieved March 2007, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2002/race/short_history_of_immigration.stm>

By the 1980s, Britain had more immigrants than needed; that's why, some strict controls on entry appeared. In that process, the *British Nationality Act 1981*, which came into force and was enacted in 1983, distinguished between British citizen and British overseas citizen. By this act, the government gained the opportunity to hinder the automatic passage of the overseas citizens.

Despite those limitations, the UK had a large immigrant population in the twentieth century. In the last decade of the century, the main part of immigrants was from Africa, Asia and the Middle East and also from *Commonwealth* nations²⁰:

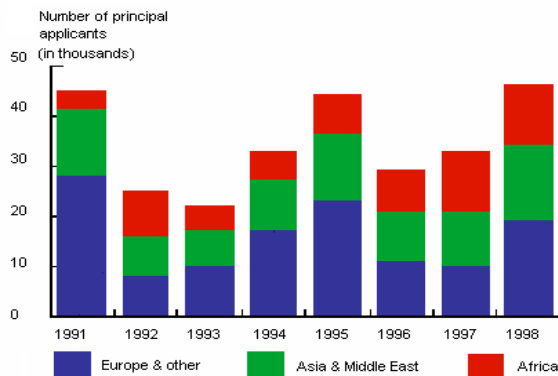


Figure 1: The immigrants in the UK between 1991 and 1998

As mentioned before, the immigration process to Britain has concluded with a unique diverse nation. It is now estimated that the minority ethnic population is more than 4.6 million, 8 % of the population. The Office for National Statistics estimates that the minority ethnic population will almost double by 2020, because of the high birth rate²¹. The population of ethnic groups, 2001-2002, UK is shown as below²²:

²⁰ "Immigration to Britain", *Immigration into English-Speaking Countries*, Retrieved January 2007, from <<http://www.ekg.gp.bw.schule.de/projekte/immigration/britain.htm>>

²¹ Ruth Lupton and Anne Power, "Minority Ethnic Groups in Britain", (November 2004), by Centre For Analysis Of Social Exclusion An ESRC Research Centre, Retrieved March 2, 2007, from <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/CBCB/census2_part1.pdf>

²² "Nationalities", *BritainUSA*, by IT Project Team, New York, Retrieved February 12, 2007, from <http://www.britainusa.com/sections/articles_show_>

	Number of people	
	%	in millions
White	92.2	53.0
Asian or Asian British		
Indian	1.7	1.0
Pakistani	1.2	0.7
Bangladeshi	0.5	0.3
Other Asian background	0.5	0.3
All Asian groups	4.0	2.3
Black or Black British		
Caribbean	1.0	0.6
African	0.9	0.5
Other Black background	0.2	0.1
All Black groups		1.2
Mixed	0.9	0.5
Chinese	0.3	0.2
Other ethnic groups	0.5	0.3

Table 1: Population by ethnic group in the UK in 2001-2002

However, as a result of the changing dynamics, the diverse ethnic structure has showed itself not only in Britain but also in some other countries. Thus, the new multi-cultural societies have started to discuss that new formation with a new concept that is “multiculturalism”. Since “multiculturalism” could not be limited within Britain, it would be vital to have a look on multiculturalism as a concept and its philosophical, political and social dimensions both in Britain and in the world.

1.2 “Multiculturalism” as a concept

It cannot be denied that throughout history diversity in nations has subsisted. The multi-national societies such as British Empire or Ottoman Empire could be given as some examples of early multi-national societies in history. However, as it was emphasized at the beginning, some concepts have acquired new and more important meanings according to the changing anatomy of the societies. Being multi-national has brought about the “multi-cultural” concept, resulting with extensive discussions and varied ideas.

In this aspect, especially in the second part of the twentieth century, the cultural studies have focused their attention on the multi-cultural studies resulting with different opinions or elucidations because the societies began having more miscellaneous

fundamentals. As a result of more sophisticated and comprehensive societies, cultural studies also shifted from the limited understanding of culture into a broader field. After the societies, mainly in Europe and in the USA, had begun gaining a more multicultural structure in the first part of the twentieth century, the concept of “multiculturalism” appeared being a new approach. As a concept, many definitions have been made on multiculturalism and it has still been being discussed on many areas.

In *Columbia Encyclopedia*, multiculturalism or cultural pluralism is defined as:

“ a term describing the coexistence of many cultures in a locality, without any one culture dominating the region. By making the broadest range of human differences acceptable to the largest number of people, multiculturalism seeks to overcome racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.”²³

Multiculturalism is defined as a uniting factor also in *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* as follows:

“The view that the various cultures in a society merit equal respect and scholarly interest. It became a significant force in American society in the 1970s and 1980s as African-Americans, Latinos, and other ethnic groups explored their own history.”²⁴

James Trotman, in his book *Multiculturalism Roots and Realities* defines the concept as follows:

“... in its simplest, most basic context, multiculturalism is the name for an approach that shows us another way of using knowledge to understand ideas and events. Most often a multicultural approach uses several disciplines to highlight neglected aspects of our social history, particularly the histories of women and minorities.”²⁵

In general, multiculturalism has been described as a new approach which aims to uncover and also appreciate all kinds of diversities almost in all areas. It represents “an attempt both to respond to and to control the dynamic process of the articulation of cultural difference, administrating a *consensus* based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity”²⁶. It is an extensive term that it generally refers to a tendency defending the cultural diversities. According to the multiculturalist idea that is mostly discussed in the

²³ “multiculturalism”, **Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia Online**, Sixth Edition, Copyright 2007, published by Columbia University Press, Retrieved May 15, 2007, from <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-multicul.html>>

²⁴ E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil Eds., **The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy** “multiculturalism” , Boston- New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002, p.438

²⁵ C. James Trotman, **Multiculturalism Roots and Realities**, Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2002, p.9

²⁶ Jonathan Rutherford Ed., **Identity: Community, Culture, Difference**. London: Lawrence& Wishart, 1990, p.208

multicultural societies, the differences in the society should not be ignored; contrarily those diversities should be firstly recognized and then the minorities in that society should be confirmed and encouraged in all aspects of life. Meanwhile, it is important to applaud the participation and contribution of ethnic minorities or diverse groups on behalf of the society. James Trotman identifies the focus of multicultural point of view as follows:

“Concepts of race, class, culture, gender, and ethnicity are the driving themes of a multicultural approach, which also promotes respect for the dignity of the lives and voices of the forgotten. By closing gaps, by raising consciousness about the past, multiculturalism tries to restore a sense of wholeness in a postmodern era that fragments human life and thought.”²⁷

The multiculturalist approach sees the contributions of all kinds of diversities as vital in the social, cultural, political, philosophical, academical and even economic areas and shows respect to that diversity. That’s why, multicultural idea that is described as the celebration of the diversities has had crucial effects on many areas and disciplines such as sociology, politics, philosophy and literature.

The foundation of the multicultural point of view can be related to the ‘critical discourse analysis’ which is “the study of cohesion and other relationships between sentences in written or spoken discourse”²⁸. Although most critical discourse analysis focus on language, some others also consider visual images, audio sources, photographs, diagrams or even body language. The main contributions of the social theorists such as Prussian philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883), Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990), German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1929), French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), and French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926) have had crucial importance in the foundation of that approach which focuses on the ways by which social and political domination is produced by some discourses. Those theorists explore the ideologies and power relations in discourse. In a way, by looking from a critical window, they establish a non-European point of view that would question the Western canon with its literary masters and discourses related to critical discourse analysis. They depict how a European perspective portrays a non-European culture according to its

²⁷ C. James Trotman, *ibid*, p. 9

²⁸ Chris Baldick, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, “discourse”, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990, p.59

own benefits. They want us to realize that all the discourses are not innocent; contrarily many of them serve for the power holders.

Marx, Engels, Althusser, and their follower Foucault accepted the individual as a being lacking of free entity whose ideology and way of thinking are shaped by the outer world. Among them, Althusser and Foucault focuses on the language-ideology relationship in which language is used as a tool to infiltrate the power ideologies into the societies. In this aspect, Foucault “has taken discourse analysis as a starting point for understanding the mechanism of the transfer of ideas and the relationship between ideology and other forms of power”²⁹. The studies of Foucault stand on the basis of ideology and language theories. Foucault tries to find the answer to the questions of “What are the borders of our system of thinking?” or “How we, contemporary Westerners, perceive the facts?”³⁰. According to him, no subject is free and that’s why there is not any “utterance” which has not been decided by an established arrangement before. Foucault claims that the dominant ideologies in the Western Societies have reproduced themselves, not apparently but stealthily (Loomba, 1998). He mentions that the power holders adapt their ideologies into the minds not in an open way; however, they do it sometimes through a publishing, a book, a slogan or an advertisement involving idealistic elements within them.

Foucault’s claim that language serves for the ideologies and Western powers is followed by Edward Said (1935-2003), Palestinian-American literary theorist, who is accepted as the founder of ‘colonial discourse’. He is best known for his book *Orientalism* (1978), which expresses that West attempts to produce some knowledge or misrepresentations about the “East” to strength the basis of colonial powers. As explained by Said,

“On the one hand there are Westerners and on the other there are Arab-Orientals: the former are rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things.”³¹

In his book, Said talks about the misrepresentations of the Eastern cultures which are reproduced in Western discipline and he emphasizes how these disciplines have been constructed in the colonial process of Europe and how they have been supported by

²⁹ Kamil Aydın, *Western Images of Turkey in the Twentieth Century* (The University of Warwick in the Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies) , Warwick: 1994, p.5

³⁰ J.G. Merguier, *Foucault* (trans. by Nurettin Elhüseyni) , İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1986, p.46

³¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, p.49

some scientific branches such as philology, history, philosophy, anthropology, archeology and literature. Said, by applying for the concept of discourse, shows the process of how some of the visions and cast of minds are shaped by literary and cultural texts about the East. To him these discourses -directly or indirectly- help to serve the dominant powers, especially the colonizers. Said defends that the East is pictured as “the other” related to the discourses of Western powers.

According to him, in this process, many negative attributions are directed to the Eastern people to oppress them in all aspects. Opposing to that oppression, he provides a new approach in which Eastern cultures, especially those which had been considered as ‘the other’, could be examined not only from the Western point of view, but also from the Eastern one. His theories have given way to understand the East and the Eastern from an objective point of view. However, a new concept has been put on the stage as a mirror image of Orientalism by Anglo-Dutch writer and academic Ian Buruma (1951) and Israeli author and scholar Avishai Margalit (1939) with their book *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* published in 2004. In their book, they use the term “Occidentalism” to depict “dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies”³². Their criticism comprise

“hostility to the City, with its image of rootless, arrogant, greedy, decadent frivolous cosmopolitanism; to the mind of the West manifested in science and reason; to the settled bourgeois, whose existence is the antithesis of the self-sacrificing hero; and to the infidel, who must be crushed to make way for a world of pure faith.”³³

The claim is that there have been hostilities against the Western attitudes, such as its cosmopolitanism, way of thinking, science and social systems. Buruma says that “Occidentalism is a revolt against rationalism (the cold, mechanical West, the machine civilization) and secularism, but also against individualism”³⁴. He claims that standing against Enlightenment, industrialization, rationalism and secularism and declaring the anti-Western concepts strengthens Occidentalism. According to Buruma and Margalit, there are stereotyped and even “dehumanizing” views of the East against the West. They depict those negative views from the earlier to the modern times by claiming that

³² Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*, New York: Penguin, 2004, p. 5

³³ Ibid, p.11

³⁴ Ian Buruma, “*The Origins of Occidentalism*”, *The Chronicle Review*, Volume 50, Issue 22, Page B10, Retrieved March 24, 2008, from <<http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i22/22b01001.htm>>

stereotyped portrayals of Westerners appear in many works of Chinese, Japanese and Indian works.

Although Occidentalism has appeared as a contra-concept against Orientalism, it has been accepted by some as “a product western hubris and paranoia serving to obfuscate rather than enlighten”³⁵. Besides, the claim of Occidentalism has not shadowed Said’s *Orientalism*. Not only the East but also the West has re-defined the East and the Eastern free from the Orientalist points of view. In this context, as a result of that ‘critical discourse analysis’, the trend to recognize the East or in other words ‘the other cultures’ and to accept the products of those cultures as worthy has appeared in academia. This attitude has been followed by the celebration of the oppressed cultures which gives a way to the multicultural approach.

This multicultural approach, in academia especially after 1970s, gave way to the social science branches of universities reflecting a more cultural diversity in their studies. Having revised their curricula, programs and texts, they focused on the diverse cultures from different geographical places, and opened new research areas such as African, Asian, Indian or some other ethnic studies. The focus on non-Western texts, different cultural perspectives, and new curricula has given a new shape to the Western academia. The founders and supporters of multiculturalism on academic field have defended that cultural diversity and representation should exist not only in the curricula but also in the academic community. To achieve that, they have aspired to increase the members of minority groups among academicians, students and staff.

In this way, the practice of humanities and social sciences and academic philosophy has created a new tendency that criticizes the limited exploration of philosophy. According to them, philosophical researches had been limited to ancient Greece, Europe or United States in the earlier studies. They advocate that the researches should be extended to the other intellectual areas worldwide. Apart from the established canon of Western academic philosophy, other philosophical perspectives in other regions such as Africa, India, and China should be given crucial importance according to the advocates of multiculturalism. In respect of that multicultural philosophical perspective, multiculturalists claim that Western philosophy can also be accepted as a local area when looked from the window of other parts of the world. That’s why, they

³⁵ Martin Jacques, “Upping the anti”, *The Guardian* (September 4, 2004), The Guardian Online, Retrieved March 25, 2008, from <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/politicsphilosophyandsociety/0,6121,1296763,00.html>>

object to the presentation of Western philosophy as universal and they tend to extend the practice of academic philosophy to the diverse philosophies in the world. By this approach, the roles change; while in the earlier studies the Western philosophy was active, and the others were passive, from now on, the other schools of philosophy are accepted at least as important as the western canon.

Except the academic field, another area that has been mostly affected by the multiculturalist approach is politics. In this aspect, multiculturalism appears as an ideology and policy supporting that society should consist of, tolerate and include diverse cultural groups, by equal status. In a way, it is against monoculturalism that was once a general norm in nation-states. Multiculturalism began as an official policy in English-speaking countries, firstly in Canada in 1971 and followed by Australia in 1973. Since the change of the societies from the monocultural into the multicultural ones, most states have felt the necessity of looking into the multicultural aspect as a state policy. Multiculturalism, as stated earlier, is an ideology and policy in the governmental aspects and so, the attitude towards it varies from nation to nation, related to their social structures or target policies. While some of them have adopted multiculturalism, some others have turned to a representative monoculturalism. In some states, multiculturalism is appreciated in social or governmental arena whereas in some other states, despite their multicultural structure, monocultural policies are adopted. To illustrate, Sweden officially undertook a multicultural policy in 1975. In the USA, although multiculturalism is not an official policy at the federal level, the governments in recent years have adopted many multicultural policies. Contrary to those, in French, the multicultural formation is aimed to be put into a more monocultural structure by the forbidden representations of religious elements.

It is undeniable that the multicultural formation of Britain differs from that of the United States or some other European countries, because what designates the present circumstances of a nation is its history, and those historical realities have also shaped the present multicultural structure of Britain. So, the British implementation of multiculturalism could be accepted as a product of a post-imperial assessment. As an Empire, which had defined itself as 'ruling the waves' or 'the empire in which the sun never sets', Britain had portrayed herself as a motherland. That's why; to aim a monocultural structure could not be as simple as in other countries. So, by the growing immigration from the colonies, the theory of multiculturalism has been discussed based

on the ethnic integration in post-imperial Britain and the contribution of multiculturalism to the UK. However, Britain has had conflicting ideas on multicultural policies. While under the management of Conservatives, in 1979-1997, multicultural policies were ignored, after the election of the Labour government in 1997, multiculturalism has influenced government policies and statements. However, the discussions about multiculturalism against monoculturalism have gone on with strict debates.

In this aspect, monoculturalism and multiculturalism are put into the scene as being two different models for that ethnic integration. While monoculturalism rejects diversity, multiculturalism appreciates it. Monoculturalism argues that the immigrants should be assimilated and adapted into the national- cultural traditions and customs. On the contrary, multiculturalism is the model approving that a society could benefit from a mosaic of differing cultures. The multiculturalist idea assumes generating a more progressive society in which cultural identities could be appreciated by equal tolerance, equal rights and equal opportunities. Like the parents who stay at the same distance to their children, the government should do it for its citizens. By this means, a society is expected to be more comfortable for the participants even though they come from different origins. However, both of the suppositions are being questioned increasingly in Britain as well as in the other countries. Accordingly, interpretations of multiculturalism in Britain are mainly on the basis of positive and negative contributions of that theory.

Hanif Kureishi (1954), as an English writer, being one of the premier names talking about multiculturalism, compares it with monoculturalism as follows:

“If the idea of multiculturalism makes some people vertiginous, monoculturalism—of whatever sort—is much worse. Political and social systems have to define themselves in terms of what they exclude...”³⁶

Like some other supporters of diversity, Kureishi discusses the necessity of recognizing ‘the diversities’ and he strongly emphasizes the crucial magnitude of celebrating the differences. He adds:

“This is what an effective multiculturalism is: not a superficial exchange of festivals and food, but a robust and committed exchange of ideas – a conflict that is worth enduring, rather than a war.”³⁷

³⁶ Hanif Kureishi, “The Carnival of Culture”, *The Guardian* (4 August 2005), The Guardian Online. Retrieved August 28, 2006, from <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/aug/04/religion.uk>>

³⁷ Ibid.

By these words, it is apparent that Kureishi is not satisfied with the limited understanding of multiculturalism that is the celebration of some festivals or exchange of some customs; to him, it cannot be described as a correct sense of multiculturalism; contrarily what is important is to be able to understand different ideas in the multicultural world.

From the multicultural point of view, the advocacy of the minorities should be apparent in both national and local policies. The “multiculturalist idea” defends their interests, representation of their ideas and their participation in the institutional circumstances. The governments defending the diversity in the society adopt some policies to appreciate and encourage the multiple and diverse aspects of the citizens coming from the minority groups. Some multicultural policies adopted by the governments can be arranged as the respect for multiple citizenship, support for the representation of minorities in policies, the work force or education, favour of the cultural aspects of minorities such as festivals, holidays, traditional or religious celebrations and so on.

Anyway, it was inevitable that the impact of multiculturalism would extend beyond philosophy, politics and academia and it would infiltrate into all areas of life with the trends in the late twentieth century from fashion to music, art to literature. The importance of the celebration of diverse cultural aspects has been emphasized in many fields. The music, art and literature that belong to the minority cultures have been given great importance by multiculturalists in this context. For instance, the literary criticism or the literary works of the minority writers or those who have a colonial background have been taken on the account by a great interest and also respect. The writers who have a multicultural background have started to be the voice of the differences. So, the celebration of the multicultural aspects in literary works has appeared as another dimension of multiculturalism. The impact of multiculturalism has been so wide in literature; that’s why, the literary dimension of multiculturalism and multicultural writing will be examined more detailed in the following chapter.

However, besides the proponents of multiculturalism, by the penetration of multiculturalism into the social, political or academic fields, a polar group has generated that is the opponents against multiculturalism. On one side, the proponents of multiculturalism, as mentioned before, believe that a multicultural structure rather than a monocultural one is beneficial for the societies in which a more sophisticated culture

could be outlined by diverse aspects such as literature, art, music, philosophy or even cuisine of different cultures. They support that “different cultures should be treated by equal respect” without assuming one superior to the other. Those proponents claim that multiculturalism is the way for gaining a tolerant and democratic policy. However, contrary to the supporters of multiculturalism, especially in 1980s and 1990s multiculturalism was criticized in many forums. On the other side, those who think that multiculturalism damages national unity and integration of different cultures, stand against multicultural approach. The discussion on multiculturalism between the proponents and opponents is named “culture wars” of the 1980s and 1990s. While the proponents defended that multiculturalism supplied cooperation, tolerance and correspondence among the cultures, opponents argued that it demoralized the Western culture and strengthened the division in the society.

Different from the proponents, the opponents see multiculturalism as a threat against the national identity. They believe that it will result in the abolishment of national unity and appearance of chaos in the society. Their major assertion is that multiculturalism would undermine national unity obstructing social integration and assimilation; and by the disintegration of societies, a new kind of “Balkanization” would appear. “Balkanization” is defined as:

“division of a place or country into several small political units, often unfriendly to one another and the term *balkanization* comes from the name of the Balkan Peninsula, which was divided into several small nations in the early twentieth century.”³⁸

Some critics have accepted multiculturalism as a new way of Balkanization like Ayn Rand (1905-1982), Russian-born American novelist and philosopher. As a critic of multiculturalism, she expressed her fear that the worldwide ethnic renewal of the late 1960s would lead to an ethnic Balkanization destructive to modern industrial societies (Peikoff, 1990). Like Rand, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (1917-2007), a social historian, a former advisor to the Kennedy and an important critic on multiculturalism in 1990s, expressed his concern about a multicultural society. He stated that to unite a nation with a cultural mosaic has many positive consequences; however, the “cult of ethnicity”, if pressed on too far, may jeopardize the unity of society (Schlesinger, 1998). Namely, the

³⁸ E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil eds., *ibid*, p. 313

multiculturalist point of view is not approved by everyone; but attacked by the opponents who emphasize that it functions as a schismatic element in the society.

In fact, the concerns about multicultural policies have been common all over the world. The opponents of ethnic diversity and supporters of nationality have subsisted also in the earlier British policies. Hanif Kureshi in his essay “The Rainbow Sign” articulates his conversation with Mohammed Ajeeb, who was a former mayor of Bradford in 1985-86, and who was Britain’s first mayor among Asians or blacks. Ajeeb talks about the opposition against multiculturalism in Britain showing *The New Right Movement* as an example. According to him, it is not only a conservative movement that developed in the early eighties, but a “prominent and noisy group of journalists, lecturers and intellectuals whose members held to the notion of white racial superiority, argued that the mixing of cultures would lead to the degeneration of British culture”³⁹. To Ajeeb, there was an attack against the multicultural structure of Britain. He argued that “they (*The New Right* movement) used the rhetoric of ‘culture’ and ‘religion’ and ‘nationhood’ as a fig-leaf; in the end they wished to defend a mythical idea of white culture”⁴⁰. According to Ajeeb, by using these concepts as acceptable ideas, they had the aim to cover up their unacceptable desires such as a pure white culture.

In 1980s, the conflicts in multicultural Britain came on the stage once more when the article of Ray Honeyford, who had gone on Bradford’s Drummond Middle School (a mixed-race school) as headmaster in January 1980, was published in the *Salisbury Review* that is known as related to the *New Right Movement*. Ray Honeyford assumed in his article entitled “Education and Race-An alternative View (1984)” that:

“the multi-racial policies endorsed by various members of the teaching establishment are damaging the English way of life, and that proper English people should resist these assaults on the ‘British traditions of understatement, civilized discourse and respect for reason’ ”.⁴¹

Honeyford here sees the multicultural policies as a threat for the English way of life. In his article, Honeyford describes a Sikh being ‘half-educated’ and ‘volatile’ and black intellectuals as ‘aggressive’. He also attacks Pakistan being anti-democratic, backward for its people, corrupted by criminals, having Islamic orthodoxy interpreted by a despot

³⁹ Hanif Kureshi, *My Beautiful Laundrette and Other Writings*, London: Faber & Faber, 1996, p.138

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 139

⁴¹ Ray Honeyford, “**Education and Race-An alternative View**” (January 1984), *Salisbury Review*, Vol.2, No.2, The Salisbury Review Online, Retrieved May 22, 2007, from <<http://www.salisburyreview.co.uk/>>

and the heroin capital of the world being the cause of drug problems of English cities with Asian populations.

When Honeyford wrote a second piece for *Salisbury Review*, a great protest and boycott appeared. As Kureishi states, the ‘Honeyford Affair’ has crucial importance as his views are related to the notion of being British and what the structure of Britain should be in the future. According to the opponents of multiculturalism, Britain should be a British nationalist country. That point of view is the main principle of *the New Right* and it is also manifested in the editorial of the first issue of the *Salisbury Review* by the sentence that ‘the consciousness of nationhood is the highest form of political consciousness’. Meanwhile, they see nationalism as the basis of political consciousness and that’s why they are against the multicultural policies that could shake the nationalistic consciousness in Britain.

Apart from 1980s, the late 1990s also brought a harsher criticism against multiculturalism as a result of the rise of political nationalism, the renewal of national identity and the concerns about Islam in Europe. In those two decades, prejudices of one nation to the other, the foundations of the reactions against immigrants (as fanatic attacks against Turkish immigrants in Germany), and polarization between nations strengthened. From a wide variety of perspective, the criticism against multiculturalism increased; however they were mainly possessed again by the conservatives who worried about the national values and the national unity. For instance, in Britain, the Conservatives have criticized the Labor Government’s approach that is defending the rights of minorities who want to preserve their culture, the process of encouraging their participation, and integration without assimilation; contrarily, the conservatives have defended, to say metaphorically, ‘the silence’ of different cultures. By July 7, 2005 bombings in England, Conservative David Davis, Shadow Home Secretary, attacks UK multiculturalism and calls on the government to scrap its “outdated” policy of multiculturalism⁴². He mentions the idea of the opponents of multiculturalism that multicultural policies are too old to solve the problems of multicultural Britain and he finds those policies as a threat against the national unity of Britain rather than a solution. In his speech given for *The Daily Telegraph*, he says that allowing people of different cultures to settle without integration causes "perverted values of suicide

⁴² “Davis Attacks UK Multiculturalism” (August, 3, 2005), *BBC News*, Retrieved March 7, 2007, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4740633.stm>

bombers" to take root. Standing against multicultural policies, he insists on ministers to build a single nation and demand "respect for the British way of life". Like the other supporters of nationality, Davis desires that the governments should promote national identity rather than diverse identities. He criticizes the governments -such as the Tory government defending "the integration while maintaining identity"- which do not follow that idea declaring in the same speech as follows:

"...often the authorities have seemed more concerned with encouraging distinctive identities than with promoting common cultural values of nationhood, pursuing a policy of multiculturalism-allowing people of different cultures to settle without expecting them to integrate into society".

The criticism of Davis shows that like many other conservatives he fears that the British values and culture could be damaged by this process and he is against the policies of multiculturalism which aim to preserve the cultural, social or religious differences of diverse groups living in England.

As revealed before, multiculturalism has been advocated in the academic fields by many intellectuals. However, like in the political process, the tendency to appreciate the multicultural aspects has been opposed in academia, too. This antagonism has mostly come from white conservative intellectuals being the dominant elements of Europe. Their main argument is that multiculturalism ignores the established canon and it disregards the 'collective knowledge' of white Christian Europe.

Apart from sociological, political or intellectual platforms, also in the religious stage multiculturalism is considered as an attack against Western world, especially by the conservatives. They perceive it as an attack on traditional Christian culture and as the expansion of Islam. However, apart from the white conservative Christians, the multicultural approach has been criticized by some who have different racial origins. For instance, in 2002, the legal scholar Afshin Ellian (b. 1966 in Iran) -a political refugee and Dutch professor of law and philosopher- advocated in his article titled "Live the Monocultural Rechtsstaat" a monocultural rule of law in the Netherlands claiming that a liberal democracy cannot be multicultural as multiculturalism is an ideology⁴³. His concern was not limited with being monoculture. He also complained that there were 800,000 Muslims in the country, with 450 mosques by which the

⁴³ "Multiculturalism", Wikipedia Online, Retrieved December 27, 2006, from <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism>>

Netherlands had legalized the “feudal system of the Islamic Empire”⁴⁴. To him, democracy could be restored only by eliminating multiculturalism.

Confidently, Ellian was not alone blaming Islam as a threat for the European community. Many writers, such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali (b.1969 in Somalia), a political writer and one of the most prominent critics of Islam in Europe, have also directed their criticism against Islam arguing that Europe is being fully Islamized. So, it is apparent that the opponents against multicultural approach are not limited with conservative whites.

Namely, the interpretations of multiculturalism were interfering and, like all over the world, that new formation brought many discussions and opposite ideas on the stage. In that process, one of the most influenced areas by those alternating dynamics would be *literature*. That is to say, the rise of multicultural writing in a society which includes many different cultures would be inevitable. After giving an outline of appearance and then maturing of multiculturalism in the twentieth century, mentioning the interpretations of multiculturalism as a social, philosophical and political concept, presenting examples from some proponents and opponents with their ideas, it would be proper to convert the subject into the place of *multiculturalism in literature* and the emergence of *multicultural writing in Britain*.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

2.0. MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE IN BRITAIN AND TWO MULTICULTURAL VOICES: ZADIE SMITH AND MONICA ALI

While multiculturalism was being analyzed in detail on the philosophical, social or political basics, the literary process began laying its foundations. As mentioned in the previous parts, the structure of England, as a society consisting of different people(s) from different nations, coming especially from the colonized countries, has been discussed since the entrance of the ‘new comers’. It has been discussed and examined in many fields, and literature, as a form of social anthropology, has been one of the main fields of analysis. Multicultural issues have directed some writers to write about those matters. By the new multicultural structure of Britain in the twentieth century, the literary studies began to give products not only by the native-born members but also by some others, who are of culturally different or ethnic backgrounds. In this way, literary studies gained a multicultural structure and this tendency resulted in a literary category named as “multicultural literature”. In general, multicultural literature portrays the folklore, history, traditions, values and language of a particular cultural group and it reflects the cultural diversity within the community. Multicultural literature pictures some characters who have culturally different origins or who come from different social classes or circumstances. In this context, as a product of a multicultural society, multicultural literature depicts all the aspects belonging to the culturally diverse social structure. That’s why; it is not surprising that the representatives of multicultural literature come mainly from diverse ethnic or cultural groups.

In this aspect, Britain embodying a multicultural society has had many multicultural writers or literary critics, especially in the twentieth century, who have had diverse ethnic/cultural backgrounds or who write about those culturally diverse groups. Besides, as the multicultural structure of Britain has been formed by the immigrants, those literary works have been composed by the writers having an immigrant background. That’s why; the literature which is the product of the writers who have an immigrant origin is also named as “migrant literature”. In this context, the concepts of “multicultural literature” and “migrant literature” are used interchangeably; however, they do not overlap totally. For instance, we cannot say that all literary works portraying the multicultural structure of a society also belong to the migrant literature, or that all of the works of migrant literature talk about multicultural aspects.

Migrant literature is a product of the emergence of ‘migrant consciousness’ appearing in the literary studies. Meanwhile, the multi-cultural societies started to produce some works which belong to the writers of different cultures. Related to the ethnic origin of the writers of those works or related to the themes being handled, those kinds of literary works are accepted as a part of ‘migrant literature’ which has gained growing interest within literary works since 1980s. Migrant literature is defined as the writings by immigrants or who have immigrant origins, or the writings about immigration and immigrants. By the mass-immigration in the twentieth century, the immigration from former colonies to Britain had reached to a high rate and those immigrants or their second generation children laid the foundation of migrant literature. That approach resulted in some alternative literature studies such as Black-British or British-Asian literature, which mainly focused on the topics of immigration, multi-ethnicity, cultural diversity, identity, displacement, racism, rootlessness and hybridity. Some of the earlier writers of migrant literature of Britain could be listed as Samuel Selvon (1923-1994), Buchi Emecheta (1944), and Timothy Mo (1950). Selvon, who is also an immigrant from Tobago, is best known for his novel *Lonely Londoners* (1956), in which he depicts the immigration of West Indians to Britain in the 1950's/60's. By reflecting the cultural differences in London, he pictures the borders of different racial classes. Emecheta, who is a Nigerian novelist coming to England at the age of seventeen, focuses on the lives and struggles of immigrants in her novels, such as her autobiographical novel *Second Class Citizen* (1975). Timothy Mo, as an Anglo-Chinese novelist moving to Britain at the age of ten, portrays a Chinese family in 1960s London in her well-known book *Sour Sweet* (1982). Surely, there are lots of names which could be listed in migrant literature of Britain. However, it is more important to mention that all of the names have influenced both each other and the further generation of writers, like the rings of a chain. For instance, the books of Samuel Selvon are accepted as leading elements for the works of later generations in this field such as Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.

However, the concept of migrant literature is also problematic to include all the works that are related to multicultural aspects. It cannot be claimed that all writers who write about the multicultural aspects of Britain have an immigrant origin; at the same time, there may be some writers who have a different cultural or ethnic origin and write about multicultural aspects of Britain but live in their own motherlands, not in Britain.

In this aspect, ‘migrant literature’ does not include all of the multicultural aspects in literature. Besides, it is also divided into two parts; one is the product of the writers of earlier colonies of the British Empire such as India and the other one is the product of immigrants who are not related to those colonies such as China, so that in the borders of migrant literature, another field appears: “*postcolonial literature*”.

Although migrant literature and postcolonial literature mainly deal with similar issues that are related to immigration or minorities, they do not totally comprise each other. What makes migrant literature and post-colonial literature different from each other is that, firstly, not all immigration has had a colonial basis in Britain, and secondly, not all post-colonial literature deals with the issues of immigration. For instance, a literary work written by a Chinese immigrant or reflecting the lives of Chinese immigrants is a part of ‘migrant literature’ but not of ‘post-colonial literature’. Therefore, it is important to focus on the postcolonial literature as an extensive area in Britain, which has a colonial background.

In Britain, the concept of ‘postcolonial literature’ is used more commonly than the concept of ‘multicultural literature’. As the multicultural structure of Britain has been mainly composed by the immigrants from the colonies, the important part of the multicultural works belongs to those people having a colonial background. Postcolonial literature is the literary dimension of postcolonial theory (also named as postcolonialism), which deals with the cultural identity of colonized countries. This theory points out the importance of “re-analyzation” of the colonized identity which was misrepresented and exposed by the colonizer. Postcolonial theory examines the ways of establishing a national and cultural identity free from the influence of the colonizer. It detects how the knowledge of the colonized was used for the use of colonizer, and how the discourses of the colonizer aimed to strengthen the process of colonialism. In this context, the studies related to the critical discourse analysis established by the contributions of Marx, Engels and Althusser and turned into a crucial area by Foucault, gave a way to postcolonial studies. As mentioned before, Foucault has opened a new area which deals with the Western-colonizer discourses which are intentionally trying to picture the Eastern-colonized characteristics as negative or inferior and helping to support colonialism. As a consequence of that Foucauldian perspective, postcolonial theory aims to analyze those kinds of Western discourses about the East. In this context, postcolonial discourses are analyzed in “western

production literary works” which examine the East and the Eastern such as some of Shakespeare’s dramas, for instance, *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Othello*; *Journey to Kars* by Philip Glazebrook; *The Asiatics* by Frederic Prokosch and *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling. Surely, those examples can be expanded; however, the common spot is the point of view towards the “Orient” within those works.

Subsequent to Foucauldian perspective, Edward Said is an important name in postcolonial studies. Said is accepted as the founder of the postcolonial theory which has obtained great importance since 1970s. He is best known for his significant book *Orientalism* published in 1978 and admitted as the beginning of postcolonial studies. As mentioned earlier, Said follows Foucauldian perspective focusing on the social discourse of the Western world which identifies the “Orient” cultures as inferior especially in the literary works. In his book, he defines the Eurocentric prejudices against the East and the Western misrepresentations about the Orient cultures. Like Foucault, Said defends that false and unrealistic images which are attributed to Asia and Middle East have been used to serve as a support for the colonizer Europe and America. By detecting Western literary works, he mentions that the writings of the West portray the East as a weak, inferior ‘Other’, contrary to strong, superior West (Said, 1979).

By this way, Said has lighted the way for the postcolonial literary theorists or the writers who want to focus on the diverse cultures and the writers of the earlier colonies. In this aspect, the influence of Said has been crucial in the contemporary postcolonial studies and further critics of postcolonial theory have appeared. Some of those critics could be listed as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, who are the authors of the book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989) after which the “postcolonial” concept has been mainly used within the academic circles. As written in the introduction part of the book, it “is concerned with writing by those peoples formerly colonized by Britain, though much of what it deals with is of interest and relevance to countries colonized by other European powers, such as France, Portugal, and Spain”⁴⁵. As understood, postcolonial theory deals with the writings and writers of the earlier colonies of Europe. Another crucial name on postcolonial theory is Homi K. Bhabha (1949). Homi Bhabha, an Indian-American postcolonial theorist going on the way of Said states that Said is the writer who has been

⁴⁵ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, London: Routledge, 1989, p.1

most influential on his thought⁴⁶, and like Said, he deals with the postcolonial issues. In his work *Nation and Narration* (1990), he defines that there is a connection of “antagonism” and “ambivalence” between the colonizer and the colonized. He defines the established binary oppositions between the colonizer and the colonized and the Western production discourses such as civilized/savage in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). He claims that those binary oppositions allow the colonizer to dominate the colonized. Gayatri Spivak (1942), Indian literary theorist, is also an important name in postcolonialism. She is mostly known for her article “Can the Subaltern Speak?” which is considered as an important text on postcolonial theory. In this article, Spivak expresses her concern about the cultural and institutional discourses which exclude the ‘subaltern’. In this aspect, her point of view is related to Said’s concept of ‘the other’. To Spivak, when the Western intellectuals mention the importance of listening to “the other”, they reinforce their “otherness”. In this context, the role of “the other” is to play the “native informant”⁴⁷. The writer of the play or the ruling figure is the Westerner and it straightens the “Easternness” of the East. Another important contemporary postcolonial theorist Robert J.C. Young (1950) has given important works on postcolonialism such as *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (1995), *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001), *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (2003). In his book *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, he analyzes the process of the concept of hybridity through nineteenth-century and twentieth-century before its transformation into a new cultural and political concept by postcolonial theorists in the 1990s.

Absolutely, by deconstructing the colonizer Western discourses and by recognizing the Western intention aiming to continue its authority by using philosophy, literature or some other fields, the postcolonial studies have drawn great attention and its influence has been broad in literature. So, postcolonial literature is accepted as the literary part of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial literature is mainly accepted as the literature of the earlier colonies of Britain. It comprises the works of writers in colonial countries or who have colonial origin living in Britain and the works which depict the colonized countries or the people from those countries. Postcolonial literature is

⁴⁶ W.J.T. Mitchell, “**Translator translated**” (interview with cultural theorist Homi Bhabha), *Artforum International Magazine*, v.33, n.7, March, 1995, p.80-84

⁴⁷ Gayatri Spivak, “**Can the Subaltern Speak?**”, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg eds, Urbana and Chicago: Illinois UP, 1988, p.292

sometimes called “New English literature”. In Britain, postcolonial writers have extended the colonized voice in British fiction.

The influence of the postcolonial writers such as Jean Rhys (1890-1979), Chinua Achebe (1930), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1938), Salman Rushdie (1947), and Hanif Kureshi (1954) has been widespread and they have opened a way for new postcolonial studies. Rhys is a Caribbean novelist and an earlier name related to postcolonial writing. Her well-known novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which deals with the themes of racial inequality, assimilation and displacement, is accepted as a postcolonial related novel. Achebe, a Nigerian novelist, poet and critic is best known for his novel *Things Fall Apart* (1959) which is one of the first African novels written in English. Achebe, as an important name in postcolonial literature, focuses on British colonialism, Christian missionaries, traditions of Igbo society, which is an ethnic group of Umuofia in Nigeria, and the changing values after the colonial times in his novels. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a leading novelist of East Africa and his popular novel *Weep Not, Child* (1964) is one of the first major novels in English by an East African. After becoming sensitive to the effects of colonialism in Africa, he left his baptized name “James Ngugi” and adopted his traditional name “Ngugi Wa Tiongo”. He renounced English and wrote in the Bantu language of Kenya's Kikuyu people. Salman Rushdie, an Indian-British novelist and essayist, is one of the most popular names in postcolonial writing. His novels *Midnight's Children* (1981), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) received great interest. His works have influenced a great deal of Indian English writers and made him an influential writer in postcolonial literature. Hanif Kureshi, like Rushdie, has gained an important place dealing with the issues of diverse ethnicity, politics, social divisions and conflicts of multicultural Britain. Kureshi, born to a Pakistani father and an English mother, reflects the multi-ethnic society of Britain. For instance, his most famous work *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1986), a screenplay, reflects the issues of racism, gang violence and the conflicts of Pakistani people in England. His first novel, the semi-autobiographical *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) describes the struggle for social and sexual identity of the protagonist and it portrays race relations in Britain during the 1970s, and his second novel, *The Black Album* (1995), explores the issues with which the Muslim community is facing in Britain in the 1980s.

Accordingly, the postcolonial theories, which have given great importance to the appreciation of cultural or ethnic differences in literary studies and to the writers of those works have opened the way of postcolonial literature and contributed to its rise in literary field in the twentieth century. In this aspect, postcolonial literature, which is related to both its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural writers and the topics which are mainly the products of multicultural societies, is significantly connected with multicultural literature. So, the postcolonial theorists and writers have lighted the way of further multicultural or postcolonial writers. Among those new generation postcolonial or multicultural writers, Bernardine Evaristo, Hari Kunzru, Andrea Levy, Meena Syal, Preethi Noir, Zadie Smith, and Monica Ali can be listed. Zadie Smith (1975) and Monica Ali (1967) are two important names who can be mentioned both in postcolonial and migrant literature. These British-born postcolonial woman writers have contributed to the explosion of the multicultural issues in English literature so much. As their books are going to be examined in this study, it is important to mention their position in multicultural literature in accordance with their debut novels; *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith and *Brick Lane* (2003) by Monica Ali.

In literature, the discourses on the multicultural structure of ‘hybrid’ England began in 1950s with postcolonial writers and it has made its way back to the literary world, especially with Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*. As well as Smith’s first novel that aroused great interest in multicultural England and triggered the talking about multicultural issues one more time, some other crucial writings about multicultural structure of England came on the stage. In this aspect Monica Ali appeared as another important woman writer with her first novel *Brick Lane*. Although Ali wishes not to be labeled as “the new Zadie Smith”, many comments overlap their standings on that field.

Both of those contemporary novelists are named in Granta’s 20 Best British Novelists 2003 and they are mostly accepted as an exciting group of young writers giving voice to the new multi-ethnic, multicultural Great Britain. They are accepted as the promising voices of post-colonial Britain who represent the minority groups and multicultural persona. Surely, the utterance of Smith’s and Ali’s names together relies on a logical basis. Because of having similar backgrounds, writing about similar issues and even being attributed similar titles; it would be inevitable to talk about one without mentioning the other. Furthermore, the similarity of their familial backgrounds; Smith, being the daughter of a Jamaican mother and an English father, and Ali, being the

daughter of an English mother and a Bangladeshi father, has an important influence on the issues they reflect in their novels. As the second generation children of multi-racial and immigrant parents living in London, those bi-cultural writers have probably observed the world from a similar point of view.

After the publication of *White Teeth* in 2000, Smith, who was awarded the Whitbread and Guardian Prizes for the first novel, attracted the attention of some important writers, one of whom is Salman Rushdie, as an important name among postcolonial voices. Rushdie commented on her novel as “an astonishingly assured debut”. Absolutely that kind of praise should have been noteworthy for her. However, when she is compared with some other writers, such as Salman Rushdie or Hanif Kureishi, who write about the multicultural world or who are accepted as important postcolonial voices, she rejects to be called as a master writer on multicultural issues. Smith finds this comparison imperfect. She thinks, although they all deal with the issues of race, history, and gender, that position cannot put them totally in the same category. She explains that situation in *The Guardian* in December 11, 2000 saying: “I think I have brown people in my book, and so does Salman, and so does Hanif Kureishi”. It is apparent that Smith wants to mention that their writings may be similar in some ways, but cannot be totally the same.

Although Smith is compared to some other postcolonial voices, she refuses to be accepted as an expert on multicultural issues and she speaks about her defects, perhaps, more than anyone else. Shortly after the publication of her first novel *White Teeth*, she denounces it, in the same dated *The Guardian*, “as the literary equivalent of a hyperactive, ginger-haired tap-dancing 10-year-old” and she compares her style to “a script editor for the *Simpsons* who had briefly joined a religious cult and then discovered Foucault”. To Smith, it is not really accurate to be attributed a crucial place for her, as a young writer, on multicultural issues. She expresses her discomfort for being accepted as “a spokesperson for race, youth, women”. She complains: “I was accepted to be some expert on multicultural affairs, as if multiculturalism is a genre of fiction or something, whereas it’s just a fact of life-like there are people of different races on the planet”. Despite the fact that Smith does not share the opinion of those who put her in a privileged place, *White Teeth* is usually described “as being a landmark novel for multicultural Britain (Whitbread judges)” and Smith is mostly accepted as an

author who writes about multiculturalism and whose personal background is multicultural.

Definitely, the root of *White Teeth*'s being accepted as a multicultural product lies on its context. Smith gives a picture of a totally multicultural structure of Britain:

“Her characters include Brits of Bengali, Jamaican, Polish, German, Saudi Arabian, Barbadian, and plain old English descent; Muslims, Hindus, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Secular Jews; closeted gay men and out lesbians; adolescents, mid-lifers, and octogenarians who may be fat or skinny, drop-dead gorgeous or genetically cheated.”⁴⁸

With those various characters, she reflects the social diversity of the British society very effectively. She also introduces “dozens of side characters who are, astonishingly, perhaps just as successful as the main players—and who, together, form a unified picture of a diversified nation”⁴⁹, so she becomes very successful giving a unique panorama of that society.

White Teeth, set in contemporary North London, detects the struggles of two men, Samad Iqbal, a Bangladeshi, and Archie Jones, an English, who met in 1945 as the soldiers of a tank crew in the final days of World War II and then became lifelong friends. It examines the conflicts of their interlinked immigrant families living in multi-ethnic and multicultural Britain. Their friendship continues on their return to England after the war and during the time period in which they marry and have children. While Archie Jones marries much younger Clara, a Jamaican girl, and has a hybrid daughter, Irie; Samad Iqbal marries Alsana, a Bangladeshi girl, who is also much younger than him, by a traditional arranged marriage and has twin boys, Magid and Millat. By the initiation of Archie’s and Samad’s children, who experience the dilemma of not belonging to an exact place and want to discover who they are, the conflict of being ‘the other’ in English society and the other conflicts of those second generation children of multi-racial or immigrant parents come on the surface. In the novel, Iqbal family thinking about solving those conflicts sends one of the twins, Millat, back to Bangladesh. They expect, at least one of the twins, to be raised up according to traditional Muslim values. The other twin brother, Magid, grows up in London. Unfortunately, the plans collapse ironically and Millat, who grows up in Bangladesh,

⁴⁸ Dohra Ahmad, “Brushing Up on Multiculturalism A Review of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*”, Samar, 14: Fall/ Winter, 2001, Samar Magazine Online, Retrieved January 3, 2007, from <<http://www.samarmagazine.org/archive/article.php?id=69>>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

turns back to London as an atheist, and their English-educated son Magid becomes a radical Islamic supporter in London. Besides Iqbals' twin sons, Archie's hybrid daughter Irie has also some similar and different conflicts in her life as the hybrid daughter of a multi-ethnic family.

When we compare Smith's *White Teeth* with Ali's *Brick Lane* on the basis of the characters, their relationships within their immigrant or multi-ethnic families and the miscegenation in England, it is not difficult to identify one novel with the other. *White Teeth* is described in *The Guardian* in December 11, 2000 as:

“...a book about modern London, a city in which %40 of children are born to at least one black parent, a city in which the terms black and white becomes less and less relevant as we gradually meld into different shades of brown.”

As it is apparent in the comment, London has become a more hybrid multi-ethnic society. Like Smith, Ali also presents the modern and hybrid London with the strong themes such as migration, miscegenation, identity crisis and religion. The picture of different voices or competing viewpoints is also drawn by Ali in *Brick Lane*. That's why she is also mentioned when the multicultural literature is being talked about. While she is attributed an important place in multicultural issues, like Smith, she has been objected to negative reactions from the people whose lives she has mirrored in her book. Her novel caused some debates in the Bangladeshi community in Britain. They claim that the book portrays them negatively. The people living in Brick Lane argue that the book shows them 'uneducated and unsophisticated'. Those debates have increased especially after the plans to film the novel there. Moreover, those residents who are opposed to the plans to film some parts of the novel in Brick Lane area have formed the '*Campaign Against Monica Ali's Film Brick Lane*'. But, Monica Ali does not accept that kind of reactions right and she says it is her duty to reflect the truth, whether it is pleasant or not:

“A writer from a minority does carry an extra expectation of being a cheerleader for that minority. That's understandable. But I feel my duty is to tell the truth as I see it, not to be a mouthpiece or write a sociological study.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Amanda Craig, “Monica Ali”, *The Sunday Times* (December 2003), The Sunday Times Online, Retrieved January 18, 2007, from <http://www.amandacraig.com/pages/journalism/monica_ali.htm>

Although Ali wants to prove her place as a writer reflecting the truths, she “is painfully aware of the demons of racism, intolerance, bigotry and spite which have leapt to attack her and her novel”⁵¹. However, according to her, the negative attitudes about her and her book should not be attributed to all Bangladeshi community:

“I have been getting so much feedback from Bangladeshis in this country and New York and all over the world when people came to my readings. I’ve had little Bengali grannies coming up and hugging me and saying they were so proud. The Newham Group of Asian Women invited me to speak at their general meeting in the East...I’ve been asked to become a patron of the Attlee Foundation’s new Youth Centre, and the Bangladeshi Associations network for young Bengalis...”⁵²

She wants to emphasize that except from the attackers against her, there are some other Bangladeshi people who understand her writing as an important process for their community and she adds: “all readers of all colours understand that *Brick Lane* is written with love and compassion, sympathy and empathy for all its characters.”

Despite all these debates, Monica Ali and her famous novel *Brick Lane* have attracted crucial interest in multicultural literature. Like *White Teeth*, *Brick Lane* describes a multicultural world within its multi-ethnic or immigrant families and their conflicts. The novel focuses “on a cross-section of the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlet’s, a community all but invisible to the rest of London”⁵³. The protagonist of the novel is Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman who moves to Tower Hamlets in London at the age of 18. By an arranged marriage, Nazneen leaves rural Bangladesh as the wife of a 40-year-old man, Chanu, who is depicted by Harriet Lane in *The Observer* as:

“...one of the novel’s foremost miracles: twice her age, with a face like a frog, a tendency to quote Hume and the boundless doomed optimism of the self-improvement junkie, he is both exasperating and, to the reader at least, enormously loveable.”

As a result of her traditional family background, Nazneen has always accepted the idea that it is meaningless to “kick against fate”. In this aspect, her younger sister Hasina, the other main woman character in the novel, is portrayed as an opposite character who fights against her faith. Unlike Nazneen, she goes against all the rules

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Harriet Lane, “Ali’s in wonderland”, *The Observer* (June 1, 2003), The Observer Online. Retrieved February 23, 2007, from <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,,967855,00.html>>

and runs away with her love. The novel makes us know about Hasina's life from her letters written to Nazneen. The two sisters live very different lives, Nazneen in London and Hasina in Dhaka.

At the beginning of her life in London, Nazneen scarcely leaves her flat. It is mostly resulted from her feeling of alienation in a society where she speaks no English, except "sorry" and "thank you". Her husband, Chanu, finds unnecessary for her to learn English as an immigrant worker who sews zippers and buttons in her own flat. After a period of being a foreigner in a foreign land, her life changes with her love for Karim, another Bangladeshi who brings the clothes she works on. Karim is a fanatic Muslim who participates in an Islamic organization. As a result of that relation, Nazneen has had a dilemma between her traditional self and her own desire. In this aspect, like Samad Iqbal in *White Teeth*, who has a relationship with his sons' music teacher and experiences a dilemma like that, Nazneen wants to hold on her traditional and religious values, but she cannot escape from her own desire and gradually she learns to fight against her faith.

Besides the conflicts of the main characters in the novel, such as Nazneen who has many conflicts in her self or with her husband as an immigrant Bangladeshi woman facing many difficulties, Chanu who comes to London holding the plans to go back to Bangladesh 'when he is a success', but fails; and Karim, who defends the doctrines of Islam as superior to the Western doctrines, but has a love affair with a married woman that is totally against the Islamic rules; Ali gives the conflicting situations of immigrants in a multicultural world by some other side characters.

When the contexts of Smith's *White Teeth* and Ali's *Brick Lane* are examined, it is apparent that they reflect the conflicts on the basis of first or second generation immigrants and/or minorities, on the basis of multi-ethnic or immigrant families or on the basis of multicultural society. In this way, both their similar backgrounds and the similar components they deal with in their first published books reflecting the multicultural issues make those two Granta's best woman novelists possible to be examined by comparison. That's why, in this study, the dimensions of those conflicts which meet on the common points in Smith's *White Teeth* and Ali's *Brick Lane* will be investigated intertwiningly.

3.0. INDIVIDUAL CONFLICTS: IMMIGRANTS AND MINORITIES IN MULTICULTURAL ENGLAND

Nobody yet knows who I am,
Not myself may;
Nor yet what I deal,
Nor yet where I lead.

Jose Garcia Villa, *Have come, Am Here* poems (1941)

It is possible to say that the concept of “identity” in a multicultural society is one of the most premier issues that affect the society from the base to the top. As a result of multi-cultural structure of the societies, the issues about multi-identities or the ambiguities about identity appear as an important problem. “Identity” is generally accepted as the answer to the question of “Who am I?” The application dimensions about “attachment” and “belonging” are the keynotes that support the “identity cohesion”⁵⁴. Here, identity attempts to attach to another thing such as a nation, a religion or a country. In this aspect “identity” has both individual and social dimensions. It is formed by the individual and social attributions and it cannot be thought apart from those dimensions. In the modern times, “identity” began to be discussed on the basis of “*identity crisis*”. Psychologist and psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson, has brought a new dimension to the issue. By defining the concept of “identity” as a part of modern world, he develops the term of “identity crisis”. He uses this term to define the crisis of ego on the basis of psychological and sociological dimensions. According to Erikson, identity crisis is mainly experienced in the process of puberty when an individual has come out of childhood but has not become an adult yet and when the social role has not developed clearly (Erikson, 1975). In the modern sociology, we cannot see a “pure identity” concept because the identities experience multiple points of view, especially in the multinational and multicultural societies. That’s why; in multicultural societies, such as in Britain, the identity issue comes on the stage mainly by the concept of “identity crisis”. In this aspect, both the first generation immigrants coming from different regions, having different backgrounds and their second generation children having similar or different problems experience that identity crisis a great deal. In this context,

⁵⁴ Kudret Emiroğlu- Suavi Aydın, *Antropoloji Sözlüğü* “kimlik”, Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 2003, p.470

it would be better to detect identity crisis issue firstly on the basis of a first generation common immigrant identity and secondly on the basis of their second generation multi-racial or multi-cultural children in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*.

As mentioned in "British Immigration Map" part before, Britain has been a post-imperial multi-racial society in the new century. In this multi-racial society, the immigrant identities have experienced difficult processes when they are adapting into their new lives. Surely in this adaptation process, there have been tides either in the society in which those immigrants participate or in their inner lives that are affected by their shifting from a different culture into a new one. In this aspect, to talk about the identity crisis of immigrants and their second generation children would be inevitable. A common immigrant who had stepped in Britain holding the expectation of a better life-whatever that expectation is- probably had not thought about big conflicts in his/her life (Britain, which had accepted those immigrants generally to respond to the labor shortages cannot have thought about different kinds of crisis, either.) Unfortunately, the immigrant who came into the country as a stranger had to face some problems and conflicts which would direct her/him to an identity crisis. Surely there are many reasons for experiencing a conflict related to one's identity.

To begin with, the reality of *being seen as "the other"* in the foreign society is really effective to cause an identity crisis and the immigrants who settle in England have been seen as the other. Salman Rushdie says: When I first went to England to study, I became 'the other'. I think I am able to understand what it means to be on the other side of the wall⁵⁵. Then, what can be the reason or reasons for "being seen as the other" in Britain and in which dimension does it affect the immigrant identity?

One of the main reasons of accepting a person as an outsider or stranger in Britain could be related to the historical process of Britain. In a broader sense, the imperial history of Britain has prepared different points of view for the new multicultural history. The post-imperial period of Britain has faced many immigrants both from the colonized and non-colonized countries. However, the main population of immigrants is from post-colonial countries such as Jamaica or India. Immigrants from the colonized countries not only accepted Britain as a new beginning to continue their lives, but also adopted it as a mother country to which they belonged by the roots.

⁵⁵ Yasemin Çongar, *Milliyet*, March 17, 2007, p.11

However, that imperial history did not mean the same thing for the British. Britain, as an earlier colonizer of some colonies, continued her dominating attitude towards the colonies and the people coming from there. Her point of view as a master stayed the same and a real equality between the earlier colonizer and the colonized was difficult to achieve on the social base. Although the British governments brought some equality by the laws for the immigrants, it was difficult to change the point of view towards them totally in the society. In fact, the concept of “the colonizer and the colonized” could be expanded to the “Western” point of view towards the “non-Western”.

According to the Westerner, a non-Westerner individual living out of that westernized culture is a person who has not completed his/her “self” yet, lacking of an identity and away from being an individual due to the western concepts; and according to the Western, “the other” has a limited, uncompleted or premature wisdom compared with the Western⁵⁶. Surely, the differences between the western and non-western wisdoms make the Western think that its own reason system is superior to “the other”. The acceptance of being superior to the other has been more complex in multicultural living conditions because, as Foucault also mentions, that point of view has been imposed either intentionally or unintentionally on “the other self” by the dominant culture. However, to consider “the other” as lower or not civilized could be seen a bit reasonable when it is looked from the English point of view in the modern times. As most of the immigrants who came to England at the beginning of the twentieth century were not really educated or civilized or as they were coming from a low socio-cultural background, it was nearly inevitable to see them as “the other” for English. Surely, it can be discussed whether that point of view is reasonable or not but it is undeniable that as a result of that attitude, the members of the minority cultures have had identity problems which have resulted from those socio-cultural value judgments, especially in the multicultural societies.

In this aspect, one of the main reasons of identity crisis that is the conflict of being seen as the other in the “mother country” shows itself clearly in Britain. As mentioned above, the impact of historical background is very apparent in considering a foreigner as “the other”. For instance, not all of the immigrants in Britain are admitted as “the others”. While a French or an Italian immigrant who comes from Christian-

⁵⁶ Nermi Uygur, *İçer Dışıyla Batı'nın Kültür Dünyası*, İstanbul: YKY, 1998, p.58- 59

European background is accepted more easily, another immigrant whose country (especially an “Eastern” one) has a colonial background has had many difficulties to make her/him approved in the society. That’s why, it is apparent that the power balance between the colonizer and the colonized has continued socially in various areas in the new century; and that old relation between the two groups has stayed the same in the new century, especially in multicultural societies.

Horace Kallen, a Jewish- American philosopher made comment about the importance of history in 1915 as follows: “Men change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent: they cannot change their grandfathers”. In this aspect, the immigrants whose grandfathers had been the colonies of England could not avoid from being considered as “new servants for England”.

This situation is reflected in Smith’s and Ali’s novels on both socio-cultural and individual basis. In this part, we will deal with the individual part and individual conflicts resulted from that phenomenon. Smith, by her fictional family *Iqbals* as a Bangladeshi family living in England, mirrors that condition in her novel. Samad Iqbal- the father of the family- is a first generation Muslim immigrant from Bangladesh and he experiences “identity crisis” with his family. Like many of the immigrant families living in England, they also feel the identity crisis resulted by being seen as the other and inferior in the society in which they are considered as the people of England’s earlier colonies. As mentioned before, the historical background of Samad’s nation as a colonized and England as a colonizer should have influenced the lives and points of view of the people in a multicultural society. Although they have gained their independence, those nations and also the people of them are still considered as the ones under the dominance of England. They are still “patronized by the British, who view them as colonials rather than as genuine Europeans”⁵⁷. Parallel to that, the problem of ‘being seen as the other’ becomes as a heritage which begins from the first generation immigrant parents and continues in their further generations. In *Brick Lane*, this issue is mostly voiced by Chanu who mentions frequently that the colonial process of England

⁵⁷ Selwyn R. Cudjoe ed., *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference*, Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990, p.90

still continues in a different way and the West always despises them and creates “the other” by their own discourses. He says:

“all these people here who look down at us as peasants know nothing of history...in the sixteenth century, Bengal was called the Paradise of Nations. These are our roots. Do they teach these things in the school here? Does Shahana know about the Paradise of Nations? All she knows about is flood and famine. Whole bloody country is just a bloody basket case to her.” (Ali, 185)

To him, the West intentionally creates an ‘inferior other’ by reflecting the history according to its own use. Chanu expresses that Britain wants to show her earlier colonies as lower and inferior compared with her and by this way it would be easier to continue her power as a colonizer and expose those nations as “the other” for England’s benefit. He adds:

“If you have a history, you see, you have a pride. The whole world was going to Bengal to do trade. Sixteenth century and seventeenth century. Dhaka was the homes of textiles. Who invented all this muslin and damask and every damn thing? It was us. All the Dutch and Portuguese and French and British queuing up to buy.” (Ali, 185)

Chanu expresses that his nation has also a history of civilization on which they can be proud of and they have not been colonies throughout the history. Although they have not been weak all the time, the powerful countries want to expose them as uncivilized or inferior and show themselves as superior. To him, the powerful wants to present “the others” according to its own use and he mentions this situation saying that “These people here simply do not show our nation in its true light” (Ali, 186). Chanu points out the established roles of the West and the East. We see that the point of view of the West shows the East as “the other” related to the historical roles pictured as superior/inferior, civilized/primitive or colonizer/colonized. So, that kind of polarization makes the East or the Eastern to be seen as “the other” from the Western point of view and that attitude prepares a tendency to have identical problems for the individual who is seen as “the other”. In *Brick Lane*, the West-East polarization which is the product of the western point of view and western discourses is best pointed out by Chanu by these sentences when he wants to tell about that situation to his daughters:

“I will tell you something. All these people who look down onto us do not know what I am going to tell you...Who was it who saved the work of Plato and Aristotle for the West during the Dark Ages? Us. It was us. Muslims. We saved the work so that your so-called St Thomas could claim it for his own discovery...Dark Ages? This is what they are calling it in these damn Christian books. Is this what they teach you

in school? It was the Golden Age of Islam, the height of civilization.”
(Ali, 215)

By making a comparison between the Western and Eastern civilizations, he declares that the East has an important historical civilization although the West disregards that situation. He explains the contributions of the East to the civilization and criticizes the West because of the misrepresentation of the East.

As mentioned, both Chanu and his expressions about the Western point of view towards “the Eastern” are important to picture these issues in *Brick Lane*. Ali, by the character of Chanu, depicts the conflicts and dilemmas of the immigrant identities related to the issue of being considered as “the other”. In the novel, Chanu is an educated man who keeps on his intellectual life in England. However, he frequently emphasizes the unfair attitudes against him both in the social and in the academic world. Although he is an educated and an intellectual person, he is still considered as lower in the society because of his nationality. He explains that attitude to Nazneen with disappointment:

“... you see, it is the white under-class, who are most afraid of people like me. To him, and people like him, we are the only thing standing in the way of them sliding totally to the bottom of the pile. As long as we are below them, then they are above something. If they see us rise then they are resentful because we have left our proper place...” (Ali, 38)

Although Chanu has a higher status than many of white under-class people both culturally and intellectually, he is still considered as lower than those because of his nationality. To him, those people want to see the people like Chanu lower since they are happy to know that they are not in the bottom of the social classification in the society. Chanu thinks that he and the people like him face oppression only because of their nationality. He mentions that they are always in the tendency to make “the others” have the inferiority complex while they feel more superior. Chanu also relates his un-coming promotion in the university to his nationality and blames the English academic authority being racist in this sense.

Of course, the only reason of being seen as the other is not related to coming from a colonized national origin. We can ask again: What is the principle of being seen as the other in a multicultural society apart from having a colonized national origin? It can be argued that in a multicultural society, there are many different cultures and nations, so what makes one culture or nation superior to the other? Surely the answer to

that question changes from place to place and time to time. However, if our study area is England, whose nation is “pure white”, Christian and “noble” English (not Irish or Scotch, as being English is nobler in England), then the people who do not have those characteristics can be easily put out of the circle. More broadly, even though s/he has lived in Britain for many years, worked for the government or adopted Britain as “mother land”, s/he may not have the opportunity to be accepted as real English. So, s/he is considered as a foreigner and it creates alienation for her/him.

In this way, the other main reason of “being seen as the other” in multicultural Britain comes on the stage as the “appearance”. In multicultural Britain, as in many other European countries, the first step for the process of being a real part of that society has been based on appearance or to say more clearly “being white”. “Whiteness nowhere features as an explicit condition of being British, but it is widely understood that Englishness, and therefore by extension Britishness, is racially coded”⁵⁸. Whiteness has been a really important concept in the multicultural world. Besides the fact that the immigrants who have mostly come to Britain from the colonies consisting of black nations have been subject of the negative attitudes, the wrong deeds towards black people goes back to earlier years. That’s why those inappropriate attitudes towards “the other” – in this aspect towards the blacks- have produced struggles and conflicts both between races and in the individual’s self who is seen as different in the white society. So, apart from the colonized history of black or Hindu people in Britain, their non-white origin or appearance has made them to be seen as different in the British society.

Since “for centuries white society had imposed notions of black inferiority-ideas that most blacks had internalized, to shake of that burden was immensely hard”⁵⁹. In this aspect, whiteness could be accepted as an ideology that is to see the white groups as superior to blacks or semi-blacks. If those “non-white” people are immigrants at the same time, the struggle becomes more complex. From the point of an immigrant identity, to be different from the others or more important to be seen as different from the rest, founds the basis of an identity crisis. Furthermore, as mentioned before, not only the first generation but also the second and further black generations have felt the

⁵⁸ Şebnem Toplu, “**Home(land) or ‘Motherland’**: Translational Identities in Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon*”, *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Spring 2005, Anthurium Online, Retrieved December 25, 2006, from <http://anthurium.miami.edu/volume_3/issue_1/toplu-homeland.htm>

⁵⁹ Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995, p. 128

conflict of being seen as the other because of the color of their skin; and both Smith's and Ali's novels have pointed to the identity crisis of "black or blackish" people in a white society.

In *White Teeth*, the question that is always asked the second generation children, like Irie being the daughter of a Jamaican mother and English father, or like Millat being the son of Bangladeshi parents but has been brought up in England, is the most striking point about appearance and "the otherness". In the novel, Irie always faces with the question: "Where *originally* are you from?" Although her father is English, her mother has been brought up in England and Irie, herself, has no connection with another country, people always ask where she is originally from. Surely this question is related to her appearance or in other words "not being white".

We see the fact that the second generation black people are not adopted as English though they are born and raised in England. Neither Irie nor Millat are accepted as 'English' in the society they live in without being pure white and so the identity crisis for them becomes inevitable. When Irie undergoes that crisis and tries to transform into a different identity, at least by the appearance, she attempts to abolish one of her black characteristics that is her curly hair. Irie, "intent upon transformation, intent upon fighting her genes", goes to make her hair "straight long black sleek flickable tossable shakeable touchable finger-through-able wind-blowable hair" (Smith, 273). Unfortunately, for the sake of changing her appearance, she loses her hair with a real pain because of the wrong operation process in the hairdresser.

Ironically, Irie tries to get rid of her Afro hair such as most black women "who spend five times as much as white women on beauty products and nine times as much on their hair" (Smith, 278), but she cannot be successful at achieving a "transformation from Jamaican hourglass heavy with the sands that gather round Dunn River Falls, to English Rose" (Smith, 266). As she feels as 'a stranger in a strange land' and she is aware of that situation she cannot adopt into the society like a white English girl does and so she feels humiliated and becomes alienated in the society. In fact, the

"black identity and British identity conflict primarily because of the society's inability or unwillingness to recognize the black girl's right to be treated like any other British-born citizen, irrespective of race and color."⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Şebnem Toplu, *ibid*

It is apparent that the society makes the “black females” feel inferiority complex because of the colour of their skin and they direct them an identity crises.

In this way, “*hybrid identities*” and their identical conflicts appear as an important fact in a multicultural world. The telescopic formation of the identities develops the hybridity of cultural identities and that hybridity shows that the identities are not pure racially and ethnically but the identities are the products of combination and fusion of the *identities*⁶¹. In fact, this hybridity may have both racial and cultural base. In other words, while the child of multi-ethnic parents is accepted as racially hybrid, a second generation child of an immigrant family living in England could be accepted as a culturally hybrid individual. In *White Teeth* the three children; Irie, Millat and Magid, who are born in a multicultural world, indeed experience the hybridity and its conflicts in different senses. They suffer more than their parents because of being second generation hybrid children in multicultural England. While Irie, who has an English father and a Jamaican mother, is the daughter of a multi-ethnic family, and Magid and Millat, who are the twin sons of a Bangladeshi family, could be accepted as the sons of a multicultural society. That phenomenon is very ironic. Alsana, the mother of Magid and Millat,

“predicts trouble for Archie and Clara’s then unborn “black-white” children, but it is her own genetically ‘pure’ twin sons who take on far more absurd hybrid identities: one a gangsta-style neo-Muslim, and the other a pukka Macauleyite rationalist”⁶².

So, hybridity is not totally related to not being pureblood. The individuals who have pureblood, such as the twin brothers, may be culturally hybrid on the other hand. In *Brick Lane*, the daughters of Bangladeshi Nazneen and Chanu, especially their elder daughter Shahana, also show a cultural hybridity like Magid and Millat. In this aspect, it is possible to say that all of those children have hybrid identities in different senses and surely as a result of this hybridity, they have been leaded towards different conflicts in their inner worlds.

We are defined with specific identities such as nationality, religion or gender and we gain a proper identity by adopting these characteristics which are attributed to us or taken by our own will. However, if there is an ambiguity between these identities, the

⁶¹ Gordon Marshall, *Sosyoloji Sözlüğü* “kimlik” (trans. by Osman Akınhay, Derya Kömürcü) , Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 1999, p.406

⁶² Dohra Ahmad, *ibid*

self cannot find a proper identity to identify him/her. Particularly in multicultural societies, the hybrid identities experience the dilemma of not being able to identify them properly. Because of the feeling of not belonging to an exact place, people feel the dilemma of “*torn between*” and generally they experience a conflict. In this context, “belonging” to a society appears as a crucial aspect:

“To ‘belong’ to any society is to know it from the inside, to be inward with its forms of social organization and its modes of personal expression, to inhabit its universe of meanings and values, habitually and instinctively, even to share its prejudices. The moment people move to a new cultural situation, they inevitably become ‘strangers’.”⁶³

It is apparent that for a person moving to a society whose cultural structure is different from her/his original culture, belonging is not as easy as it seems. So, when a person does not feel belonging to the society where s/he lives, the identity problems become inevitable. Monica Ali defines “un/ belonging” by these words: “Growing up with an English mother and Bengali father means never being an insider. Standing neither behind a closed door, nor in the tick of things, but rather in the shadow of the doorway”⁶⁴. In this aspect, especially the second generation children of multicultural or immigrant parents feel the gap in their lives and the need to fill that gap in their identity. But, what makes those people feel as trapped between two different worlds? What makes them a stranger in a multicultural society?

In this aspect, both in *White Teeth* and in *Brick Lane* the second generation children of those multi-ethnic or immigrant families are significant representatives for the ‘restricted identities’. Jones’ daughter Irie and Iqbals’ twin sons Magid and Millat and Nazneen’s and Chanu’s daughters Shahana and Bibi are born and brought up in England; however, this is not enough for being a real part of the English society like real English as they have different backgrounds and different families from an ordinary English kid. So, what makes them a stranger is the gap between their family backgrounds or subculture and the English lifestyle of which they are a part. In this process, those children experience so many conflicts both in the outer world and in their inner worlds. They want to be like an ordinary English kid in the society but their sub-identity leads them to some dilemmas. For instance, Samad Iqbal’s son Magid wants to be called Mark Smith, a real English name, although his father gave him “a glorious

⁶³ Eric Butterworth and David Weir eds., *ibid*, p. 326

⁶⁴ Monica Ali, “**Where I’m Coming From**”, *The Guardian* (June, 17, 2003), The Guardian Online, Retrieved May 25, 2006, from <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,,979007,00.html>>

name like Magid Mahfooz Murshed Mubtasim Iqbal” (Smith, p.151). Surely, Magid is not the only boy who needs to feel more English in his childhood. It is stated in the novel:

“...to name all sons Abdul to teach them the vanity of assuming higher status than any other man was a tradition, children are creative and all the many Abduls added an English name as a kind of buffer to the first.” (Smith, 186)

In fact, like many of his coevals, Magid needs to be like an English boy with an English name. Furthermore, those children want to live like any other English boys do and they get angry against the hindrances in this process. When his father does not give permission Magid to join in the Harvest Festival, which is a Christian tradition, he shows a big reaction:

“Magid really wanted to be in some other family. Because he wanted to own cats and not cockroaches, he wanted his mother to make the music of the cello, not the sound of the sewing machine...he wanted a piano in the hallway in place of the broken door off cousin Kurshed’s car; he wanted to go on biking holidays to France not day-trips to Blackpool to visit aunties...he wanted his father to be a doctor, not a one-handed waiter; and Magid had converted all these desires into a wish to join in with the Harvest Festival like Mark Smith would.”(Smith, p.151)

Magid desires an English identity. For him, like many of the second generation children immigrant children, the socio-cultural aspects are really important. He wants to live a European life like other English boys. We can observe an inferiority complex because he sees every feature of his family as degrading, even the physical deficiency of his father. It is apparent that Magid is not satisfied with his Bangladeshi identity in his childhood and wants to adopt an identity which is different from his family’s Bangladeshi background but similar to ordinary English boys. Like Magid, Irie also wants to be like “real English” in all senses. When she meets Chalfens, the family of a schoolmate, she feels the need of an English family. Although Irie is half English and half Jamaican, she is not satisfied with it and she really wants “the Englishness of Chalfen Family” (Smith, 328). In fact, Smith gives an ironic situation here; although Chalfens look like an ideal English family, their origin is Jewish-Catholic. Here, Smith implies the inevitability of multi-identities in the new age.

Like in *White Teeth*, the conflict of the second generation children about not accepting their familial identity as their real identity and tending to be English is also

reflected in *Brick Lane*. The elder daughter of Nazneen, Shahana, rejects her Bengali identity like Magid:

“Shahana did not want to listen to Bengali classical music. Her written Bengali was shocking. She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them. If she could choose between baked beans and dal it was no contest.” (Ali, 180)

As we see, Shahana does not feel like a Bangladeshi girl, she can not even bear keeping the traditional clothes in her wardrobe. In fact it is really understandable as she was born and has been brought up in England. When someone asks to the family where they are from, Chanu answers that “from Bangladesh” while Shahana says “from London”. Although she has a Bangladeshi family, she is a part of English society. As she feels belonging to England, she answers that she is from London.

Surely to ‘stay in between’ two cultures is not only related to the childhood process. Although Millat becomes an adolescent and determines his way that is to participate in a radical Islamic group, he has still that dilemma. He not only continues his relationship with his friend Joshua’s English and Christian family Chalfens, against whom Islamic organizations react because of the genetic studies carried out by Marcus Chalfen, but also takes responsibility in the activities made against Christians. His dilemma is defined as follows: “Millat was neither one thing nor the other, this or that, Muslim or Christian, Englishman or Bengali; he lived for the in between, he lived up to his middle name, *Zulfikar*, the clashing of two swords” (Smith, 351). It is undeniable that Millat can not decide to which side he belongs.

Apart from the identity crisis of the second generation that is caused by the “**dilemma of feeling torn between**”, Smith and Ali focus on the identity crisis of first generation immigrant parents who also experience the same dilemma. In their novels, they make us see some stereotypical immigrant figures that suffer such a conflict. The first generation immigrant Bangladeshi characters of both Smith and Ali are significant examples for depicting the conflicts and reflecting the dilemmas of the first generation immigrants. In this context, one of the premier conflicts felt by an immigrant self in a foreign land comes into existence as the conflict of “torn between two cultures” and related to that, the dilemmas they experience. As Salman Rusdie states, it is the feeling of “born in the world”, living “in the West” but totally or only “not belonging to the West” (Rushdie, 1991). In *White Teeth*, Samad Iqbal, the father of Iqbal family, has

crucial importance who reflects that conflict as a first generation immigrant self. When he talks about the difficulties they experience in England, he mentions the “dividedness” of their self:

“I am having difficulties myself- we are all having difficulties in this country, this country which is new to us and old to us all at the same time. We are divided people, aren’t we...We are split people.” (Smith, 179)

Although the post-colonial immigrants have a connection to England from earlier times, the country is still alien for them. So, they do not belong to either England or their homeland, as if they stand in *purgatory*. Samad Iqbal who comes to England with the hope of a better life has a Muslim and Bangladeshi background. He is keen on his identical characteristics such as his religion and race. For instance, he strictly reacts when he is called “Sam” and mentions his sensitivity about this issue saying “Don’t call me Sam... I’m not one of your English matey-boys. My name is Samad Miah Iqbal. Not Sam. Not Sammy. And not -God forbid- Samuel. It is *Samad*” (Smith, 112).

Although Samad seems determined about being connected to his origin, he is “a foreign man in a foreign land caught between borders” (Smith, 178). He was once a soldier fighting for Britain, not for his own country in the Second World War. However, Britain does not accept a Bangladeshi as a citizen in the real sense according to Samad. So, he feels the dilemma of “torn between” and asks himself when he is in the war years: “What am I going to do, after this war is over...Go back to Bengal? Or to Delhi? Who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?” (Smith, 112) Samad clearly pictures the main dilemma of an immigrant identity by those words. He cannot put himself into an exact place as being English or Bangladeshi, because according to him, he is not exactly suited for either of these identities. However, when Samad chooses or has to choose living in England after the war, he begins to experience similar dilemmas. Like many immigrants who have a different background from that of English people, Samad has the dilemma of either adapting into the new culture of the society into which he moved or holding on to his original culture strongly. Surely, one could defend that an immigrant could save her/his origin and at the same time adopt a new one. However, if a person such as Samad Iqbal, who does not want to leave the cultural and religious elements of his origin but cannot avoid having a tendency to the opposite ones, s/he has to face a dilemma in his psyche.

Here, cultural norms and religion are the key aspects which have significant impact on the formation of an individual's self. That's why; religion appears as a major aspect that could create conflicts in the identity of the immigrant and her/his hybrid child. "Considering the complexity and indeterminacy of the question of hybrid identity the multicultural personae faces in the postcolonial era, apart from the physical features, there is the function of religion as well"⁶⁵. The immigrant identities mostly move into a society holding different characteristics from that of society and one of the most important of them is the religion. As religion is an important issue forming one's identity, it could be difficult to live in a religiously different circumstance for an immigrant and s/he may tend towards religious-based conflicts, firstly in her/his inner life and secondly in the outer world. In Smith's novel, the first generation immigrant parents, Mr. and Mrs. Iqbal, reflect the religious conflicts experienced both in their family and in their inner lives. While Mrs. Iqbal, as a "really very traditional, very religious, lacking nothing except the faith" (Smith,64) immigrant Muslim woman, has no religious conflicts within herself, Mr. Iqbal, despite being a traditional and religious man, experiences really big conflicts in his inner life. In religious issues, Mrs. Iqbal does not have any conflicts like her husband.

The reason of that situation could be mostly accepted as a result of her being a bit isolated from the outer world. Throughout the novel she is seen getting in touch only with some particular people such as Jones' or some Bengali families. However, her husband Samad is not isolated from the English society like his wife; contrarily he has to participate in a society holding different religious aspects from those of Samad. As a result of that differentiation, he lives some conflicts related to his religious background because some of his deeds are opposite to his religion and his believes. To illustrate, although Samad is a religious person and he wants to bring up his sons according to Islamic doctrines, he cannot avoid an affair with his children's music teacher Poppy Burt-Jones. While Samad tries to preserve his children from the spiritual corruption, he has been "corrupted by England" (Smith, 114). Samad has chosen a way that is to live in England; however, he feels the conflict of living in a country which prepares his frustration. Throughout the novel, he presents himself as a conservative man trying to live according to Islamic codes with his family. However, almost all his experiences

⁶⁵ Şebnem Toplu and Mati-Turyel, "Relocating Chinese-Jewish- British Identity in *The Autograph Man* by Zadie Smith", *Imperium*, Luton, Vol.5, University of Luton, England, 2006. Retrieved July 22, 2006, from <<http://www.imperiumjournal.com>>

seem contradictory to his belief. Being aware of his wrong deeds, he complains about his conflicted attitudes and behaviours about his religion saying that “I want another woman...I swear. I eat bacon...I drink Guinness. My best friend is a kaffir non believer”; and he asks himself “how will I absolve myself when the Last Judgement comes?” (Smith, 149).

It is certain that when Samad confesses his sins to himself, he feels a huge remorse. As it is apparent, Samad has difficulties and conflicts resulting from what he does and what he must do as a Muslim man in a religiously different society. His best friend, Archie, is an atheist English having a black wife, he (Samad) has had a love affair with his sons’ white English teacher; and his sons are not good Muslims. When he makes a self criticism about his faults, he asks himself how he can show the straight road to his children when he has lost his own bearings (Smith, 189). He feels as tempted in a milieu which prepares his frustration.

The conflict that is felt by Samad in *White Teeth* is very similar to that of Nazneen in *Brick Lane*. It is the struggle between fate and free-will. Like Samad, Nazneen has a love affair when she is married to Chanu. Although she is Muslim, too, she cannot avoid that un-Islamic deed with Karim, who is a young Muslim working in an Islamic group and defending the Islamic elements. It is also ironic that although he presents himself as a soldier of Islam, he commits one of the biggest crimes, which is adultery, according to the Islamic doctrines. In this process, Nazneen feels the conflict of being a married Muslim woman with two daughters, but at the same time having a lover. It is totally banned according to her religion and cultural values. That’s why, she feels the dilemma of following her desire or her belief:

“He was the first man to see her naked. It made her sick with shame. It made her sick with desire. They committed a crime. It was a crime and the sentence was death...beyond death was the eternal fire of hell...”
(Ali, 299)

Nazneen feels the pain of committing a crime according to her religious belief; however, she cannot put an end to that situation and she follows her own desire. In fact, her conflict of “stay in between” is different from that of Samad. Although both of them represent the immigrant selves, what makes the situation different is their gender. In this aspect, Nazneen has had a more complicated role that is to be ‘a woman immigrant in a multicultural world’. That’s why; her conflicts are mostly related to the conflicts of a “common immigrant woman” and so, the problems of the immigrant women who

experience *double alienation* because of being both an immigrant and a woman in the society come into existence.

In *Brick Lane*, this issue is pictured by the conflict of Nazneen who is “oppressed” like many immigrant women. Monica Ali depicts the oppressed identity of the immigrant women by the figure of Nazneen in her novel. In this aspect, the concept of “faith” is presented as the reason of that oppression. From the beginning of the novel, Nazneen is expected to obey her faith. Her mother says “we must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate” (Ali, 14). That expectation means not to resist against her faith whatever happens; such as her marriage at the age of eighteen to ‘an old man, at least forty years old with a face like a frog’, who would take her from Bangladesh to England. Like many immigrant women, she submits her fate and her life passes in their flat in England without almost any social activity for many years because her husband, Chanu, does not see any necessity for her to adopt into the society. Nazneen always stays at home and she does not even learn English for a long time -like many other immigrant women being illiterate when they leave their homelands - until her daughters get as much older as to speak in English to her. In fact, that oppression is met as natural by Chanu, who sees her as “an unspoilt girl from the village”. He defines Nazneen:

“...not beautiful, but not so ugly either...not tall, not short...all things considered, I am satisfied...what’s more she is a good worker. Cleaning and cooking and all that. The only complaint I could make is she can’t put my files in order, because she has no English. I don’t complain though. As I say, a girl from the village: totally unspoilt.”(Ali, 23)

Chanu does not see her as a life partner. There is no love or emotional relation between them and their marriage is ordinary and traditional. His point of view towards that marriage is “any wife is better than no wife” (Ali, 23). Although Nazneen is aware of the situation and her position, she accepts it as it is. That oppression continues for a long time. Although Chanu claims being an educated and academic person and also a gentle husband, he does not see any good reason for her to go out or integrate into the society; and he keeps her at home and explains its reason as below:

“If you go out, ten people will say, ‘I saw her walking on the street’. And I will look like a fool. Personally, I don’t mind if you go out but these people are so ignorant...Besides I get everything for you that you need from the shops. Anything you want, you only have to ask... I don’t stop you from doing anything. I am westernized now. It is lucky

for you that you married an educated man... And anyway, if you were in Bangladesh you would not go out. Coming here you are not missing anything, only broadening your horizons.” (Ali, 45)

Chanu is under the impact of his illusions. He cannot see the wrongness of marrying a woman who is brought from the village at a very early age without any education. Besides, he despises Nazneen, intentionally or unintentionally, because of her cultural deficiencies. He sees the isolated life of Nazneen, which is created by him, very natural. However, his point of view about that issue is very conflicted. While he claims being a “westernized” man, he behaves in an “un-westernized way”. Ali shows that even “an intellectual person or an academician” coming from a patriarchal culture cannot always succeed not to oppress his wife.

This attitude towards the immigrant women that is to keep them at home being isolated from the outer world, is very common to form oppressed woman identities. Like many immigrant women, Nazneen passes many years speaking no English, “only thank you and sorry”. That’s why, she does not even want to go out in case she has to speak to some strangers and so she spends her days alone. At home, that oppression makes those women feel “trapped” like Nazneen: “She looked and she saw that she was trapped inside this body, inside this room, inside this flat, inside this concrete slab of entombed humanity” (Ali, 76). Surely, Nazneen is not the only immigrant woman who feels trapped. Many immigrant women face that kind of attitude. For instance, Nazneen’s friend Razia wants to work to meet the needs of her children. However, their community does not approve it and they assume that if a woman (from their community) works out, it means her husband cannot feed her. Although Razia could stand against that point of view and asks “What about the community? Will the community feed me?” (Ali, 97), many immigrant women cannot stand against the norms of the community.

In *Brick Lane*, at the beginning, Nazneen is pictured as a passive woman whose life is directed by his husband. She has done nothing to hinder her marriage; she has not run away like her sister Hasina but has only wept on her wedding day. Then, throughout her marriage, she has done nothing except the will of her husband. However, “her passive soul” (Ali, 405) turns out to be more powerful when she meets Karim. Although, as mentioned before, her intercourse with him makes her have a conflicted and depressed period in her inner world, she feels more powerful after putting an end to

their relationship. Her transformation from a weak character into a more powerful one is mentioned as below:

“If ever her life was out of her hands, it was now. She had submitted to her husband. And now she gave herself up to a power greater than these two ... When the thought crept into her mind that the power was inside her, that she was its creator, she dismissed it as conceited. How could such a weak woman unleash a force so strong? She gave in to fate and not to herself.” (Ali, 299-300)

For the first time in her life, she has decided something about her life by herself, that's why; she feels more powerful. It is true that she feels the conflict of staying between her beliefs and her desires, like Samad, when she has a love affair with Karim. However, while Samad's dilemma inclines him to a more conflicted situation and makes him weaker, Nazneen's conflict turns out to be a solution. She recovers from her conflicted situation and begins to take decisions about her own life, when she objects to going back to Bangladesh that is the idea of Chanu. Now she has taken a step to achieve self-actualization:

“What could not be changed must be borne... So that when, at the age of thirty-four, after she had been given three children, when she had a futile husband and had been fated a young and demanding lover, when for the first time she could not wait for the future to be revealed but had to make it for herself, she was as startled by her own agency as an infant who waves a clenched fist and strike itself upon the eye.” (Ali, 16)

As mentioned, Nazneen starts her life as a passive and oppressed wife like many of the immigrant women who shape their life according to the norms of other people, however, she transforms into a stronger character who can take her own decisions. She becomes aware of her own potential and steps into the future with hope and power. At the end, she stands against her fate and decides not to go back Bangladesh with his husband and not to marry Karim, either. She adopts an assertive attitude and shows her power against the patriarchal dominance.

The self-actualization of Nazneen in *Brick Lane* reminds us Willa Cather's *My Antonia*. Like the protagonist of the novel, Antonia, who “succeeds in standing on her own feet whatever the conditions are”⁶⁶, Nazneen gains a self-actualization at the end of the novel. Contrary to Nazneen, the main immigrant woman figure in *White Teeth*, Mrs. Iqbal, stays really passive throughout the novel. She is seen only in a very limited

⁶⁶ F. Gül Özyazıcıoğlu, *The Theme of Self-Actualization in Some of Willa Cather's Novels* (Atatürk University, The Institute of Social Sciences), Erzurum, 2000, p. 55

perspective. Her characterization as flat and single-sided could be accepted as an indication of the oppression of immigrant women in the novel in that sense.

While the first generation immigrant parents and their second generation children have experienced such inner conflicts which are mostly related to their identity and identity crises, they have also had some other clashes in their families. In this aspect, the lines of conflicts narrow into the family borders and in this sense, the multi-racial or immigrant families can be accepted as a microcosm of the multicultural society. As “the family is an important symbolic territory because the social arrangements and relationships found there are very much a microcosm of those in the larger social order”⁶⁷, it would be significant to examine the familial conflicts in a multicultural society. The conflicts, dilemmas and other problems between the family members, related to the multiracial structure of the family or the multicultural environment in which they participate, are easily seen in those families pictured in *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*. However, the most apparent and complicated conflicts are observed especially between the parents and the children in other words: “***the conflict between the first and second generation immigrants***”.

The generation gap is very significant especially in multi-ethnic or immigrant families in a multicultural country. In Smith’s novel, those conflicts and dilemmas are very apparent in the life and relations of the immigrant Bangladeshi family Iqbals. The most strict conflicts are experienced between “Eastern father and Western sons” (Smith, 161). In fact, the father-son conflict has been very common almost in all generations and some analyses have been put on the stage to examine that conflict:

“Father is to be outdistanced and outmoded, but not because he is a strong representative of another culture, well entrenched, not because he is a weak and ineffectual attempt to imitate the new culture; he did very well in his way, but he is out of date... Therefore, it is not necessary to fight him, to knock him out of the race. It is much easier and quicker to pass him.”⁶⁸

Sollors sees the best way for putting an end to the fight between father and son as to ignore and pass the father. However, the father-son conflict is not as simple as it seems and it has almost always been a difficult process in the family. In *White Teeth*, Samad Iqbal, as a traditional Muslim father, intends to bring up his twin sons according to

⁶⁷ James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, USA: Basic Books, 1991, p. 173

⁶⁸ Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, New York: Oxford UP, 1986, p. 229

Bangladeshi customs which are mostly different from the English ones. However, to achieve his aim is not very easy for Samad in a society where people do not live according to their own customs. Contrary to his will that is to bring up his sons as real Bangladeshi, his children want to adapt into the English society like ordinary English boys in their childhood. So, as a result of those adverse wills, the conflict between the first generation immigrant parent and his second generation sons becomes inevitable.

Samad wants his sons to live and behave like Bangladeshi people but he does not want to realize that they live in the English society, go to the English schools, speak and live like any English. So, it is natural that they want to go to the Harvest Festival or to be called by English names. As mentioned earlier, when his sons are eager to go to the Harvest Festival, Samad strictly rejects it by a great anger asking the headmistress of the school: “What is all this about the Harvest Festival? What is it? Why is it? And why must my children celebrate it?” (Smith, 129). So, that polar attitude between the father and the sons creates some conflicts especially in the adolescence process of those children.

When Samad realizes that the country is making something wrong to his sons and they are going towards a direction that is different from he wanted, he decides to send them back to their homeland Bangladesh where they could be brought up like real Bangladeshis. However, because of financial difficulties, Samad can send only one son, Magid, who is more intelligent and promising than the other one. Ironically, Samad’s plan concludes totally different from what he expected. After long years, Magid returns to England as ‘more English’ than a real English man. In fact, when Samad sends his ‘precious child’ to Bangladesh expecting him to grow up according to his own cultural doctrines, he does not take into account that Bangladesh is still a cultural colony of England in the modern time and the English lifestyle and even the English points of view have significant impressions on Bangladeshi people.

Although, at the beginning, Samad had big expectations about bringing up good children, “two boys are driven to different ends of the world” (Smith, 442) and both of them become frustrations for their father. Neither Millat, who is “radicalized” and becomes a marginal Bangladeshi Muslim participating in an illegal Muslim organization; nor Magid, who returns to England as an atheist fulfills Samad’s will for them. The conflicts between the family members can be seen as the product of a multicultural surrounding in the modern times. Millat and Magid, who are brought up in

different circumstances, create different reactions against the society they lived in. While Magid tends to the 'Englishness' in Bangladesh, contrarily Millat tends to the 'Bangladesh-ness' in England. However, by the time Samad realizes the last point where his sons arrived, he has nothing to do apart from watching and bewailing for his children:

“Allah knows how I pinned all my hopes on Magid. And now he says he is coming back to study the English law...he wants to enforce the laws of man rather than the laws of God. He has learnt none of the lessons of Muhammad... he is nothing but a disappointment to me. More English than the English... The one I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white suited, silly wig lawyer. The one I keep here is fully paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist.”
(Smith, 406-407)

Samad sees the ways on which his sons are going as disappointments and totally different from what he expected:

“They have both lost their way. Strayed so far from the life I had intended for them. No doubt they will both marry white women called Sheila and put me in an early grave. All I wanted was two good Muslim boys. (Smith, p.406)

As it is seen, Samad sees his sons as frustrations although it could be discussed whether they are really frustration or not. In fact, Magid turns back from Bangladesh to England as a promising intellectual, winning an essay competition with his essay “Bangladesh-To Whom May She Turn?”, taking important compliments from “India’s very finest writer, Saraswati”, and keeping on his studies in England. Nevertheless, the conflict between Samad and Magid increases because of the way Magid wants to go on. Samad does not want Magid to study law and he does not approve the intellectuals with whom he communicates. Samad hates the writer Saraswati and calls him “colonial-throwback, English licker-of-behinds” and he is strictly against the relation of Magid and Mr. Chalfen, who is working on genetic science. Samad sees Saraswati as a supporter of western doctrines and Mr. Chalfen as a man who is trying to interfere into the “godlike” works with his studies on genetic. Contrariwise, Magid’s point of view is totally different; in spite of being against the English doctrines, he supports them. So, although Magid becomes a man who is accepted and appreciated by most, his father does not see the positive sights and successes of him; contrarily, Samad accepts him as a failure and the conflict between them turns into a “Gordian knot”.

Besides, Samad's considering his children as frustrations, Millat also considers his father as a disappointment and does not approve his life and his deeds. Millat says that "he prays five times a day but he still drinks and he doesn't have any Muslim friends... I am more Muslim than he is" (Smith, 334). Without doubt, the conflicting attitudes between Samad and his children are not totally related to the second generation. Samad asks himself: "I just don't understand where I have gone wrong?" (Smith, 406) Although Samad, as a first generation immigrant parent, has a big responsibility in that paradoxical situation, he is not aware of his wrong behaviours towards his sons. He disregards his own part about the extremist positions of his sons. He cannot educate his children properly. He does not communicate with his children. Although he makes so many mistakes, he keeps on criticizing his sons. Certainly, the strong conflict between Samad and his sons cannot be solved as they do not communicate and try to accept each other as they are.

The conflicts between the first generation immigrant parents and their second generation children are pictured also in *Brick Lane*. However, this time, the conflict occurs between *the father and the daughter*. In the novel, the first generation immigrant father Chanu and his second generation daughter Shahana have similar discussions like the Iqbals. While Chanu wants her daughters to be brought up as Bangladeshi and to behave as ordinary Bangladeshi girls would do, his elder daughter Shahana does not accept that Bangladeshi role. Chanu desires them to speak Bangladeshi at home, to wear traditional clothes, to know many things about their own culture such as their literature and history. However, Shahana shows a big reaction against his father's wills and rules. For instance, she strictly protests his rule of not speaking English at home. Shahana feels a big gap in her relation with his father. What his father wants is a daughter living in England in reality but behaving as if a Bangladeshi girl living in her homeland. Surely, what he expects is very utopian as it is not possible for Shahana to isolate her outer life when participating in this. Chanu, as an academician, should know that if they are living in England, there will be interactions with other cultures. When he arrived in a different country, he should have envisaged that his children would not be like Bangladeshi kids living in their homeland.

Furthermore, by insisting on this attitude, Chanu makes her daughter hate him. When they discuss, Shahana repeats the same sentence to her mother: "I hate him. I hate him" (Ali, 194). In fact, both of them look to the situation from their own points of

view. While Chanu wants an ideal Bangladeshi daughter, Shahana wants to behave as she wants. She explains her defense against her father's attitude saying all the time: "I did not ask to be born here" (Ali, 181). In a way, she accuses her family to make her "torn between two cultures". She deeply experiences the dilemma of being English or Bangladeshi. Although she chooses to be English, her father wants to see her as Bangladeshi. In this aspect, the conflicts experienced between the first generation immigrant parents and their second generation children are mostly resulted from not accepting each other as they are. The gap and tension between Chanu and his daughters are told as follows:

"The eternal three-way torture of daughter-father-daughter. How they locked themselves apart at this very close distance. Bibi, silently seeking approval, always hungry. Chanu, quivering with his own needs, always offended. Shahana, simmering in-worst of all things-perpetual embarrassment, implacably angry." (Smith, 205)

Although they live in the same house, they are far from each other. Like Samad, Chanu does not communicate with her children properly. The lack of communication forms big gaps between them. The parents are more conventional and as their cast of mind works conventionally, they want the same point of view from their children. Though this is impossible, he expects it from them. Shahana, as a girl experiencing the puberty at the same time, is always angry and pessimist towards his father. There are always conflicts in their dialogues. In this process, their mother Nazneen is not very active to solve those problems like many other mother figures in the first generation immigrant families. The passive attitude of the mother comes to an end when she decides not to go back to Bangladesh as Chanu wants, but to stay in England with her daughters.

It is important to note that the conflicts appearing in immigrant families in the multicultural societies are based on the relations not only between first generation parents and their second generation children but also between the same generation family members, even between the twins who hold the same genetic codes. In *White Teeth*, that situation could be seen in Iqbal family's twin brothers Magid and Millat. The plurality of ideas, the different points of view or beliefs and the conflicts which arise related to that plurality in the multicultural world are reflected on the interfering characteristics of the twin brothers. In fact, Smith shows us very clearly that in the new

world in which diversity is inevitable, even twin brothers who hold the same genetic structure are totally different individuals from each other. Magid's

“willingness to defend genetic engineering-established somewhat archly as the millennial symbol of Western culture- locates him within a four-square secular Englishness, and brings him into direct conflict with his brother Millat, whose adolescent fascination with clans, especially ‘clans at war’, draws him into a militant Islamic group.”⁶⁹

Although those brothers have the same genetic codes, their thought systems are totally different. While Magid is a “non-believer” having no relation to the Muslim traditions and adopting the Western way of thinking and lifestyle, Millat is a radical Muslim being against the Western doctrines. In fact, that differentiation is natural when a person is not accepted as isolated from the intellectual and cultural currents:

“How men and women think is not simply a function of what they have seen or felt in their own lives. Nor is their form of thought a genetic shadow cast by their parents or grandparents. People think within the intellectual and cultural currents that surround them- currents that they believe themselves to be swimming against.”⁷⁰

Surely, the way of thinking is more than a genetic code or parental heritage. The intellectual and cultural surroundings, especially in multicultural circumstances, have crucial importance like in the example of Magid and Millat. In this aspect, ‘the conflicts of the brothers’ in *White Teeth* and their polar status as a Westernized brother opposed to a conservative one are important to show the diversity and the conflicts resulted from that diversity in the multicultural world. In *Brick Lane*, the daughters of Chanu, Shahana and Bibi, show also that differentiation. They are also a little different from each other. Although we cannot talk about a totally contradictory characteristic (like between Magid and Millat) between the elder and younger daughters, Shahana is pictured as more rebellious against her father's traditional approach while Bibi is shown more passive. As we only know about the childhood of those girls, it is not possible to make an exact decision about the contradictory positions of those sisters.

Related to the conflicts mentioned above, one of the main reasons of these conflicts emerging between immigrant or intermarried parents and their children could be mainly accepted as *‘the lack of history or rootlessness’* of those hybrid children. The second generation children who are born and brought up in a different country

⁶⁹ Dominic Head, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction 1950-2000*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002, p.184

⁷⁰ Todd Gitlin, *ibid*, p. 200

know almost nothing about their familial country, nation, culture and history. The history and historical memory are very significant in this aspect as someone cannot have a healthy identity without knowing about her/his familial history. This issue is very important “for history is to the nation rather as memory is to the individual and an individual deprived of memory becomes disoriented and lost, not knowing where he has been or where he is going”⁷¹. Hence, the family history and the family root or origin are very significant issues both on the formation process of one’s identity and to cope with the conflicts of hybrid identities in immigrant or multiracial families. The importance of history is so strictly mentioned in *White Teeth* that Zadie Smith begins her novel with the inscription of the statue named “The Future” in Washington museum: “What is past is prologue”. That inscription is inspired by Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*.

In Smith’s novel, both Irie and Millat are frustrated for not having any family history which could help them belonging to an origin or root. Irie sees her parents as hypocrites because they do not enlighten her with their familial history:

“To her, this was yet another item in a long list of parental hypocrisies and untruths, this was another example of the Jones/Bowden gift for secret histories, stories you never got told, history you never entirely uncovered, rumour you never unraveled... These parents were full of information you wanted to know ... She was sick of never getting the whole truth.” (Smith, 379)

Irie wants to know all things about the stories, information, secret events of her family background. However, she is aware of the fact that many things stay untold and covered. She knows that the gap between their parents and them is the lack of a historical bridge which could connect them. Irie and Millat suffer from that big gap in their historical memory that makes them have conflicts both in their families and their inner selves. To illustrate, once Irie has a discussion with her mother Clara, she exhibits her anger resulted from her conflict saying that for other people “every single fucking day is not this huge battle between who they are and who they should be, what they were and what they will be” (Smith, 515). Irie, being aware of the fact that her dilemma is mostly resulted from the lack of history, decides to go to the house of her Jamaican grandmother, Hortense, and to stay there for a time. When she finds something in that house that ‘all belonged to her, her birthright, like a pair of pearl earrings, birth

⁷¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, JR., *The Disuniting of America*, London: W.W. Norton Company, 1992, p.45-46

certificates, maps'; she chooses to learn more about her family history by laying claim to the past and she enters into the conflict-solving process by turning to her roots. So she decides to go to her mother's homeland, Jamaica, with her grandmother.

However not all the 'problematic' identities are able to direct towards that solution as Irie did. For instance, Millat has no information about his family history, either. That's why he feels troubled and uncertain about where he belongs. The dilemma of not belonging to a place and the lack of historical memory, especially for the second generation children, create significant failures and conflicts in their lives. Millat, like most of the other second generation children of immigrant parents living in a society without any history of their roots, hungers for a family root. However, he has no knowledge about his origin in Bangladesh and in this aspect the lack of history or historical memory becomes important reasons for his conflicts. History has a crucial importance for "the hybrids of multicultural societies"; and "it is impossible to make a new beginning without the past recollection because then the beginning has nothing to hold on to"⁷².

In White Teeth contrary to Iqbal and Jones families, the family of Chalfens, the English family of the friend of Irie and Millat, has a different attitude towards their history. The difference between them is that, as Irie mentions:

"Chalfens actually knew who they were in 1675; however, (his father) Archie Jones could give no longer record of his family than his father's own haphazard appearance on the planet in the back-room of a Bromley public house circa 1895 or 1896 or quite possibly 1897..." and her mother "Clara Bowden knew a little about her grandmother, and half believed the story that her famed and prolific Uncle P. had thirty-four children, but could only state definitively that her own mother was born at 2.45 p.m. 14 January 1907, in a Catholic church in the middle of the Kingston earthquake. The rest was rumour, folk-tale and myth." (Smith, 337-8)

It is natural to feel the necessity of wondering the history of their family as second generation, especially when they meet a family whose genealogy is distinctive. As Irie feels, to know something about one's history and root has had a significant importance. Therefore, the lack of history or historical memory issue brings out significant conflicts and dilemmas both in the family and in the individual's own self.

⁷² Şebnem Toplu, " 'Where are you from, originally?': Race and Gender in Bernardine Evaristo's *Lara*", *InterCulture*, Tallahassee, Florida, Vol.1, Florida State University, Florida, December 2004, Retrieved November 15, 2007, from <<http://www.fsu.edu/~proghum/interculture/Race%20and%20Gender%20in%20Bernardine%20Evaristo's%20Lara.htm>>

Parallel to the lack of history of these identities, another main reason of those conflicts experienced in the family comes as *‘the degeneration of the original culture in multiracial or immigrant families’*. In multicultural societies, to live only according to one’s own original culture or beliefs and to be alienated from all other cultures are almost impossible. Especially for the second and further generations of these families, an isolated lifestyle that is totally related to the original culture cannot be adopted so easily. As a rich and delicious multicultural salad is waiting for them, they tend to taste every piece of it. Surely, the diversity of cultures adds richness to one’s identity; however if a person takes an opposite way to his/her original culture, the conflicts and dilemmas are possible to occur. The degeneration of the original culture in those families generally occurs in the identities of second generation children who experience the process of identity formation.

In *White Teeth*, the “degeneration” concept is also mentioned by the metaphor of “white teeth”. One of the most premier characteristics of black or blackish people is their “white teeth”. However, in the novel, the cigarette addiction of the second generation children makes white teeth turn into yellow. While the colour of “white” reminds us purity and innocence, its transformation into yellow represents the degeneration of these wisdoms. In the novel, the concept of degeneration is very apparent in the immigrant families such as in Iqbal’s family. As stated before, Samad Iqbal is a traditional Muslim Bangladeshi and desires to see his sons like real Muslim Bangladeshis. However, the degeneration of their original culture shows itself in the lifestyles of his sons in their early childhood. To Samad, the main problem is having no sense of tradition and morality for the new generation; according to him there was a big:

“trouble with Millat, mutinous Millat aged thirteen, who farted in mosque, chased blondes and smelt of tobacco, and not just Millat but all the children. Mujib (fourteen, criminal record for joyriding), Khandakar (sixteen, white girlfriend, wore mascara in the evenings), Dipesh (fifteen, marijuana), Kurshed (marijuana and very baggy trousers), Khaleda (seventeen, sex before marriage with Chinese boy), Bimal (nineteen, doing a diploma in Drama)...” (Smith, 218)

Those children are growing up according to the English way of life and contrary to Muslim morality and tradition. According to Samad, all those deeds are totally antithetic to their truths and traditions, but that generation is marching on those wrong deeds.

Like Samad, the other parents cannot understand "... what had gone wrong with these first descendants of the great ocean-crossing experiment ..." (Smith, 218) and they are aware of the fact that the degeneration process is going to somewhere that is more hazardous for their families. Samad Iqbal as the voice of those parents who are really worried about the degeneration of their original culture thinks that "those children are nothing but trouble, they do not go to mosque, do not pray, speak strangely, dress strangely, eat all kinds of rubbish, have intercourse with God knows who" and he bewails saying that "no respect for tradition, people call it assimilation when it is nothing but corruption. Corruption!" (Smith, 190) As Samad mentions, those children have little relation with their original culture. When Millat's music teacher asks him what he listens to "at home" and she waits for an answer mentioning some ethnic songs or singers from the 'East', Millat gives the answer of Bruce Springsteen and Michael Jackson. It is apparent that there is almost nothing from their original culture.

Although the appearance of those children, their clothes which carry the brand of *Nike*, their hobbies or other deeds can also be accepted as an adaptation to the existing lifestyle of other young people, this approach is accepted as a degeneration period by their parents because of the conflicted attitudes of those deeds with their original culture. When Samad makes a self criticize about the misdeeds of their children, he points out an ironic situation. He asks:

"Didn't they have everything they could want? Was there not a substantial garden area, regular meals, clean clothes from Marks 'n' Sparks, A-class top-notch education? Hadn't the elders done their best? Hadn't they all come to this island for a reason? To be safe. Weren't they safe?" (Smith, 219)

Samad remarks that the parents have done the best for their children and made life easy for them. According to him, there should not be anything to complain about, but he cannot understand why the children are still unsatisfied. In fact, there is a secret answer within those questions. All those immigrant parents had come to England by the expectation of a better life for their children; however, when the time passed, what they faced with was frustration for them. Their children had turned out to be totally different from what they had expected. It was true; they were not safe anymore because they had been degenerated when looked form the parents' points of view.

That degeneration process is also emphasized in *Brick Lane*. While Nazneen is talking with her friend Razia, the bad behaviour of the new generation is voiced by Razia:

“When I walked the across the estate today, I saw a gang of boys-fifteen, sixteen years old-fighting. I called to them but they shouted abuse at me. Only a few years ago they would never speak like that to their elders. It is the way things are going.” (Ali, 126)

According to them, the things are going on the wrong way and their second generation children have had a negative transformation in that new land. Those parents are worried about their children who “are copying what they see there, going to the pub, to nightclubs, or drinking at home in their bedrooms where their parents think they are perfectly safe” (Ali, 31). The parents see the English society as a threat for their children. Those children are seen with white girls, they wear “trousers up around their ankles” or listen to some “vicious music, heads rocking back and forth”; on the other hand, they do not go to mosque or behave as Muslim. Like in *White Teeth*, the immigrant parents think that the outer world is an insecure place including many traps for their children.

That degeneration process is sometimes met as natural by some others. For instance, in *White Teeth*, Alsana’s niece Neena thinks that to be different is natural for the second generation and it should not be accepted as really bad. When her aunt Alsana expresses her worry about Millat, Neena says: “...he is running from himself and he is looking for something as far away from the Iqbals as possible. What are you afraid of Alsi? He’s second generation-you need to let them go their own way” (Smith, 346). It is apparent that Neena sees the deeds of Millat very natural as a second generation boy; however, his mother Alsana is anxious that she has ‘lost her family’.

In *Brick Lane*, when Nazneen is talking with her friends Razia and Jorina about their second generation children and their some rebellious deeds, they also point out that important situation. Razia thinks that their children do not want to have a life being made by the parents for them and Jorina includes: “...that is our problem-making lives for our children. They want to make them for themselves” (Ali, 482). So, as they express, trying to understand the second generation could solve the conflicts among them more easily. At the same time, the parents should judge themselves for the faults of their children. They disregard the fact that the parents do not have enough communication with their children and they do not give cultural and historical

consciousness to the children from the early childhood. They are not efficient examples for their children. The children being innocent and open to everything attractive feel trapped and inferior when they face with the dominant culture and they want to become one of the members of that society. The parents do not make self-criticism and they do not see that reality.

However, the immigrant parents tend to a different way apart from those mentioned above for the solution of those conflicts experienced between them and their second generation children. In both *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*, the solution that is very common among the immigrants is depicted very well. That solution is “**turning back to roots**” in other words “**going back to homeland**”. Monica Ali names that phenomenon “Going Home Syndrome” and adds: “Many of the characters in *Brick Lane* nurture their dreams of home, even the young radical (Karim) who was born in this country and has never even visited Bangladesh”⁷³. In fact, the idea of going back to the homeland after earning enough amount of money is an earlier plan for the immigrants as they have not accepted the country they immigrated as “home”. As mentioned before, most of the immigrants have come to work as temporary workers and so they have always had that idea in their minds. In *Brick Lane*, from the beginning, Chanu has had in his mind the plans to go back to Bangladesh when he is a “success”. In fact, London is the home neither for Nazneen nor Chanu. Although Chanu’s success does not come, he still plans to go back, this time for his children. Chanu, like many immigrants, does not want to grow up his children in a foreign country as he thinks it will cause a corruption for his family. Chanu expresses his worry about that issue saying that they will go back before his children “get spoiled”. When he makes future plans for his little son, Ruku who dies in his infancy, he also develops the idea that going back to home is a solution:

“I don’t want him to rot here with all the skinheads and drunks. I don’t want him to grow up in this racist society. I don’t want him to talk back to his mother. I want him to respect his father... The only way is to take him back home.” (Ali, 111)

Chanu’s point of view towards the future of his children does not change when his daughter Shahana gets reactive against his father as a teenage girl. He again revives the

⁷³ Monica Ali, “Where I’m Coming From”, *The Guardian* (June, 17, 2003), The Guardian Online, Retrieved May 25, 2006, from <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,,979007,00.html>>

issue saying: “She is only a child, and already the rot is beginning. That is why we must go” (Ali, 182).

However, when the immigrants have established their life in another country, it is not very easy to change their life and go back to their own country mostly because of financial problems. In fact, they have no choice apart from continuing their life in the countries they immigrated since most of them have settled in other countries because of the unemployment in their own country and have not been able to earn enough money to turn back. Nevertheless, when their second generation children grow and they began to experience some conflicts or they begin to do “unwanted things”, the idea of “going back home” comes into existence once more and those parents want to send, at least, their children back to their homeland. That solution seems as a salvation for their children who are in the danger of corruption. In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen’s friend, Razia, talks about the daughter of a Bangladeshi family, who have trouble with ‘their son seen with a white girl drinking in a pub’ and want to save at least their daughter:

“They have sent her back... Of course to be married and to live in the village... She is sixteen...They took her out of school. She begged them to let her stay and take her exams... The brother has gone bad, and they wanted to save the daughter. So there it is. Now she can’t run off for a love marriage.” (Ali, 49)

Those parents thinking that the country will make their daughter spoiled find the solution in taking her back to the village and making a marriage arrangement at the age of *sixteen*. Surely, their point of view is really oppressive and unjust. However, the reality is that they see that way as the best solution for the possible corruption of their children. Like Chanu, Samad “concentrates on saving his sons” and thinks that sending them back to home is a choice of morality and a solution to the problems of his children. While Chanu wants to go back with his family, Samad can only send one of his twin sons, Magid, because of financial difficulties. Ironically, Magid, who is sent to Bangladesh to grow as a good Muslim man, returns to England as a typical English man and an atheist being totally away from Islam.

It is contradictory that the fathers try to take the decision of going back to homeland by themselves; neither Chanu’s nor Samad’s family approve that idea. Nazneen and her daughters, especially Shahana, object to his idea and want to stay in England. Nazneen sees that idea very meaningless, she asks: “If everything back home is so damn wonderful, what are all these crazy people doing queuing up for visa?”(Ali,

427) Surely, Nazneen is right in her thought; she knows that it will not be better at home than in England. As the children have also no connection with the “homeland”, they do not approve that plan, either. In the family of Iqbals, the situation is a bit different. Indisputably, the mother, Alsana, is totally against sending her children back home. As a mother, her point of view is different from that of Samad and she wants her sons near her. However, as mentioned before, the decision maker in the family is the husband and the oppressed woman cannot hinder him to send Magid back to Bangladesh. As it is apparent, the first generation immigrants have almost always seen “turning to roots” or “sending their children back home” as the solution of the conflicts they experience in their families.

However, as we see, the immigrant or multi-racial families have not been successful every time. The five aspects for a healthy integration and co-operation in the family are depicted in the book named *Family Patterns of Stress and Distress* as follows: Firstly, the family must show respect for the individuality of each member; secondly, the family must build up an equal appropriate images of themselves and each other; thirdly, they have to develop an interaction regarding common family concerns; fourthly, the family must create a border which gives security; and fifthly, it has to deal with the tensions between the sexes, between the generations and people outside the family relations⁷⁴. However, many immigrant or minority families, especially the parents as pictured in the novels, have not been able to actualize those aspects. They have not shown respect to the individuality, have not regarded familial concerns, have not tried to form an interaction and have not been successful to find solution to the conflicts experienced within their family.

Their solution that is “going back to homeland” has not been successful, either. Sometimes they have not been able to go back or send their children because of financial problems. Sometimes their children have not wanted to go back or even if they go back, they have not been able to solve their conflicts; contrarily they have experienced more problems. That’s why, in the process of conflict-solution, those parents have failed. So, the conflicts or dilemmas of those second generation children have stayed the same or doubled or tripled and a new conflicted process has initiated, this time, in the society. Thus, the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies have

⁷⁴ Gillian Parker, “**Family Patterns of Stress and Distress**” in *Social Problems of Modern Britain*, Eric Butterworth and David Weir eds., Fontana: Fontana Collins, 1972, p. 80

continued to keep those problematic identities and have had to face some crucial conflicts within themselves. In this aspect, the conflicts on the social base have broken out in multicultural societies. Those conflicts standing on the social base will be examined in the following part related with Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*.

4.0. SOCIAL CONFLICTS ON THE BASIS OF MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

“What happens when people of different ethnic origins, speaking different languages and professing different religions, settle in the same geographical locality and live under the same political sovereignty? Unless a common purpose binds them together, tribal hostilities will drive them apart. Ethnic and racial conflict, it seems evident, will now replace the conflict of ideologies as the explosive issue of our times.”⁷⁵

The conflicts occurring on the basis of a multicultural society should not be thought as separated from the individual conflicts that were depicted in the earlier chapter. However, in this part, the focus will be narrowed into the clashes on the basis of the multicultural society of England related to Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* although the borders of the conflicts in a multicultural society are difficult to define.

Arthur Schlesinger explains the conflicts between the different tribes as the inevitable results of the human kind and he says:

“The hostility of one tribe for another is among the most instinctive human reactions. Yet, the history of our planet has been in great part the history of the mixing of peoples. Mass migrations have produced mass antagonisms from the beginning of time”.⁷⁶

Schlesinger sees that hostility as an inevitable instinctive reaction. As he mentions, those kinds of antagonisms between different tribes are like irresistible fate. The hostility of one tribe for another has been observed throughout the history; that’s why, the clash between different nations is unavoidable. It is natural that in England, as a multi-ethnic society, we see the same panorama.

As the founders of multicultural England could be accepted as the immigrants, the beginning of the conflicts, in the twentieth century on the basis of the society is related directly or indirectly to them. If that is so, then what are the factors preparing the clashes on the basis of the multicultural society? In fact, by the first steps of immigrants into England, the problems began to occur. Although those immigrants were thought to be temporary workers, they settled completely, and after the birth of further generations, the problems started to be more complicated. However, the basis of the clashes in the

⁷⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, JR. *ibid*, p.10

⁷⁶ *Ibid*.

society begins with the “first generation immigrants” and their problems within the society. Since they arrived into the country, the immigrants have been looked upon with suspicion. In *Social Problems of Modern Britain*, immigrant is defined as below:

“The term ‘immigrant’ seems to denote a person who is alien, probably unable to speak English, with different and possibly inferior ways of life and perhaps implicitly, a threat to the existence or the continuance of the ‘British way of life’ ”.⁷⁷

It is understood from the quotation that the word “immigrant” is closely related to pejorative connotations. An immigrant is seen as an enemy-threat to the dominant British culture. The cultural differences of the immigrant are also considered as inferior. The immigrants have been considered as “the other” and viewed with prejudice and also oppressed in some ways, and this attitude has created anger and hatred in the immigrant society. The anger and hatred has transformed into the appearance of rebels and radicals by the polarization between the races, cultures or religions. In this context, the breaking point of the conflicts in a multicultural society is the “*prejudices*” towards ‘the other’.

Prejudice literally means ‘pre-judging’ someone without having almost any knowledge about her/him but making certain conclusions because of some characteristics, such as her/his nation or race. It is an attitude towards another person or group of people based on ‘stereotypes’. In *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, prejudice is defined as follows:

“A hostile opinion about some person or class of persons. **Prejudice** is socially learned and is usually grounded in misconception, misunderstanding, and inflexible generalizations.”⁷⁸

The incorrect conceptions about other people are accepted as prejudices being the results of generalizations. In *The Functions of Discrimination and Prejudice*, it is stated that the original usage of prejudice refers to a ‘prejudgmental’ statement of ill doing, or an evaluation or decision made before the facts of a case could be properly determined and weighed or interpersonal hostility that is directed against individuals based on their membership in a minority group (Levin, 1982: 65). In this aspect, what is (are) the secret(s) behind those prejudices and stereotypes? The sub-consciousness of prejudices is strongly related to the ‘ideologies’. The Marxist definition of ideology claims that on the basis of ideology there is a false or deformed consciousness which curtains the real

⁷⁷ Eric Butterworth and David Weir, *ibid*, p.312

⁷⁸ Hirsch, E.D. Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil eds., *ibid*, p. 441

relation of people with their own worlds. The main reason of that attitude is that the main ideologies in a society serve for the benefits of the dominant social class (es) in that society. Marx and Engels explain that kind of misrepresentation process and they strongly argue that our ideologies are the products of the outer world; all of our ideas, even the understanding of ourselves, are the results of the illusional world in which we live (Marx and Engels, 1976). The studies of Althusser, a French theorist, about ideology have also significant importance in this sense. Althusser opens a new field about how ideology makes itself “internalized” and how the dominant ideologies become the “own ideas” of the people. To understand the working process of ideology, Althusser applies to the idea of the construction of the subject by the language.

Althusser’s follower Michel Foucault has also researched on the field of language-ideology relationship. As mentioned before, the studies of Foucault stand on the basis of ideology and language theories. Foucault, by giving great importance on language analysis, mentions that language, throughout the classical ages, has been placed and thought as discourse, namely as self-analysis of representation⁷⁹. Foucault’s claim that no knowledge is innocent, and contrarily that all knowledge is related to the mechanism of power or rulership leads to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, which constructs the “colonial discourse” studies. As *Orientalism* emphasizes, some literary or cultural texts construct a dichotomy between Europe and “the other”.

The prejudices and ideologies reflect the illusional aspects attributed to ‘the other’. In *Social Problems of Modern Britain*, it is mentioned that “the majority of people in Britain have been brought up to believe in, or at least view with respect, certain myths which lead to prejudice”⁸⁰. These myths are mentioned such as “the superiority of some races”, “the inferior children of mixed marriages” and “temperamental differences between races”. In this aspect, those myths contribute to strengthen the established prejudices. The fundamental approach which underlines those myths and helps to make them more influential is described as “ethnocentrism”:

“This is the belief in the unique value and ‘rightness’ of one’s group and one’s actions (or ‘what I do is natural’ and ‘what you do –if it is different- is peculiar, wrong or immoral’). This attitude enables the majority group to exploit, or keep down, minority groups.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Michel Foucault, *Kelimeler ve Şeyler İnsan Bilimlerinin Bir Arkeolojisi* (trans. by Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay), İstanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2001, p.328

⁸⁰ Eric Butterworth and David Weir eds., *ibid*, p.314

⁸¹ *Ibid*

The ethnocentrism is the dominance of the majority group which accepts the truth and the normal as a product of them. What they do is right and normal but the other things related to the minorities are wrong and abnormal. The superiority complex makes them see themselves as the centre of the world and justifies their attitude of exploiting “the other”. In this aspect, the prejudices towards “the other” (in that context towards the immigrant) are founded in the society by the attribution of misrepresentations and the established ideologies.

The social prejudices which would create big gaps in the multicultural society have been reflected both in *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*. In *White Teeth*, Samad, as a Bangladeshi immigrant, voices the reality of prejudice and the meaninglessness of it when he is speaking to his English friend, Archie:

“If ever you hear anyone speak of the East ... hold your judgement... If you are told ‘they are all this’ or they do this or their opinions are these, withhold your judgement... because that land they call ‘India’ goes by a thousand names and is populated by millions, and if you think you have found two men the same amongst that multitude, then you are mistaken...” (Smith, 100)

Samad, being aware of the prejudices in the society towards them, wants only a fair judgement as all people from one nation cannot be put into the same category. In fact, to put the people of a country into a certain category and to define them with certain connotations are opposite to the scientific methodology. However, the immigrants are pre-judged in the society and put into a category even by some English who claim being modern and civilized. For instance, Millat’s school manager identifies the children of immigrants as “children of disadvantaged or minority backgrounds” (Smith, 308). He sees them unlucky and pitiable.

Furthermore, there is always an expectation about the immigrants that “they should all go back to their own homelands” (Smith, 163). Samad depicts the tragedy of the immigrant who is not “welcomed” in the new lands by these words:

“You hand over your passport at the check-in, you get stamped, you want to make a little money, get yourself started... but you mean to go back! Who would want to stay? ... In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Just tolerated ... Like you are an animal finally house-trained ... you belong nowhere... then you begin to give up the very *idea* of belonging. Suddenly this thing, this *belonging*, it seems like some long, dirty lie...” (Smith, 407)

Although the immigrants consider themselves as a part of the society, they understand that it is not true. Samad mentions that “belonging” to the English society for the immigrant is difficult to achieve as people do not accept them as a real part of the society and they look them down on. Like Samad, Chanu in *Brick Lane*, also sees the life of the immigrant as difficult and defines it as a tragedy: “This is the tragedy of our lives. To be an immigrant is to live out a tragedy” (Ali, 112). Hanif Kureishi points out that tragedy saying:

“In the mid-1960s, Pakistanis were a risible subject in England, derided on television and exploited by politicians. They had the worst jobs, they were uncomfortable in England, some of them had difficulties with the language. They were despised and out of place.”⁸²

As it is apparent, since their arrival, the immigrants have been considered as low and inferior. They have been humiliated by the English society.

In *Brick Lane*, Chanu mostly talks about that Western point of view towards “the other”. He tells his wife, Nazneen, about those prejudices by these words: “... to a white person, we are all the same: dirty little monkeys all in the same monkey clan” (Ali, 28). Surely, those prejudices towards the immigrants form a gap between ‘the self and the other’. The immigrants, who feel alienated, cannot adapt into the life as they do not feel belonging to the society they live in. Chanu points out the prejudices towards the immigrants and the categorization of them into a stereotype as follows:

“I have been in this country for sixteen years. When I came I was a young man. I had ambitions. Big dreams. When I got off the aeroplane I had my degree certificate in my suitcase...I thought there would be a red carpet laid out for me. I was going to join the Civil Service and become Private Secretary to the Prime Minister... That was my plan. Then I found things were a bit different. These people here didn’t know the difference between me, who stepped off an aeroplane with a degree certificate, and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only the lice on their heads.” (Ali, 34)

As Chanu mentions, he arrives into England as an educated man holding big expectations. Different from many other immigrants who come to England only because of financial concerns, his aim is not only to earn money but also to be better-equipped and have a better status. However, he is put into the same category with other immigrants only because of his nationality.

The prejudice and oppression towards the ethnic minorities are not only related to their race. The socio-economic background of those people make them feel and to be

⁸² Hanif Kureishi, *My Beautiful Laundrette and Other Writings*, London: Faber & Faber, 1996, p.73

seen as lower, too. The reality about the bad conditions in which the minorities live is voiced in many studies:

“The absence of black ghettos may give rise to qualified optimism, but it should not be allowed to obscure the possibility that West Indians, residentially clustered or not, occupy a definable and, generally speaking, socially deprived position within British urban society.”⁸³

Although England is a welfare society, it does not mean the same thing for the minorities. As reflected in the novels, the status of the immigrants and minorities in the society is usually low. The immigrant women generally work as charwomen or they sew at home like Alsana in *White Teeth* and Nazneen in *Brick Lane* or do the “business with a machine work which ruins the hands, the back, the eyes” like Razia, who use it up for her children (Ali, 189). The immigrant men work even in lower status, like the black guards on the door of McDonald’s toilets to keep out the blacks (Smith, 165). It is ironic that, in *Brick Lane*, Razia’s husband dies in the slaughter house where he works by the falling of seventeen frozen cows on top of him. Immigrants do the most difficult and dirty jobs for little money, which the English do not wish to do anymore; they are like the slaves of labour.

Besides the miserable working conditions, another problem is that their families are overcrowded. Chanu expresses that situation: “Overcrowding is one of the worst problems in our community. Four or five Bangladeshis to one room” (Ali, 330). As they have overcrowding and their houses are generally smaller than needed, the quality of their life worsens. Furthermore, many of the new generation sell and/or use drug. Meanwhile, the socio-economic level of immigrant families is really low and that situation makes them to be seen lower and inferior in the society on a large scale.

Whatever the reason is, the prejudices towards the minorities and the isolation of them from the society cause a more complicated conflict in the society: “**racial discrimination**” and furthermore “**racism**”. Racial discrimination is accepted as an action or behavior based on prejudices. When the prejudices turn into the action, racial discrimination appears. Racism, on the other hand, is the prejudice or discrimination based on race/ethnicity. However, it has been a more sophisticated phenomenon since the twentieth century because the racial differences have begun to turn into the gaps in

⁸³ Roy Haddon, ‘A Minority in a Welfare State Society. The Location of West Indians in the London Housing Market’, *New Atlantis*, Vol.1, No.2, 1970, p.88

the societies and especially in multi-racial societies, such as in Britain, racial issues are generally being heard by “racist” expressions.

Racism is generally described as the ideology that a race is superior or inferior to another race or races. Although the racial prejudices have been observed since early periods of time, racism has been widespread in the modern period. Especially during the 19th century, in which “scientific racism” appeared, that concept took a different direction. Related to ethnic nationalism, Germans who accepted their race as a “master race” carried racism into an inhuman area. Endeavoring to present a racial clarification between the nations, in fact, they served for their own benefit. In this aspect as Hannah Arendt has said in her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the racist ideology which developed at the end of the nineteenth century legitimizes the “imperialist conquests of foreign territories, and crimes that accompanied it” (Arendt, 1951). Foucault is also one of the names who support the idea that the formulation of racism has appeared as a historical and political discourse of sovereignty (Foucault, 2003). That’s why; the racist issues appear something more than biological racism or scientific racism of the 19th century.

Although both the scientific racism and modern racism could be accepted as an implement for the dominant power, in modern sense, racism emerges as a social discourse. As interpreted by Foucault, this “discourse of race struggle” is not related to a biological notion, but it is strictly related to historical and social one. For this reason, the borders of racism expand to a larger area such as the “capillaries” of a body. So, as a social discourse, racism has been enunciated in all parts of the society. In an interview, Salman Rushdie mentions that racism attracts those who do not know to look at ‘the other’ and he adds that the more closely you look to ‘the other’, the more you see yourself in her/him; if you can see yourself within ‘the other’, you do not become a nationalist. May be, our main tragedy is to resemble each other more than we think⁸⁴. Rushdie, by emphasizing the significance of understanding ‘the other’, mentions that all nations resemble one another on the basis. However, when we do not see that resemblance, the differences appear and the clash among different races occurs.

By the attributions of racial prejudices, as mentioned before, racism began to come into sight both on the individual and the institutional basis. Especially in multi-racial societies, racial discrimination has been very apparent related to racial prejudices;

⁸⁴ Yasemin Çongar, *Milliyet*, March 17, 2007, p. 11

“even nations as stable and civilized as Britain and France, Belgium and Spain and Czechoslovakia, face growing ethnic and racial troubles”⁸⁵ in our day. Britain, as a multicultural nation which has been created by its multi-racial structure, has faced the disadvantages of that formation. In particular on the fundamentals of society, that kind of multi-racial structure has led to many problems. To comprehend the dimension of racial issues in Britain, it is important to mention *Race Relations Act*, which has appeared as a necessity in Britain. By the increase of racial discriminations, the government observed the crucial importance to intervene into the issue. As a result of that requirement, they formed the legal foundation for the protection of a person from racial discrimination by the *Race Relations Act* in 1976. By this law, “racial discrimination” is defined as treating a person less favorably than the others related to racial grounds such as race, nationality or colour and it makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of ethnic or national origin.

By that *Act*, the government aimed to create a more tranquil society and it also imposed positive duties on many public authorities to promote racial equality such as in the issues of applying for jobs, training, housing or education. Nevertheless, the governments should have seen the insufficiency of the *Act* and felt the necessity to make some changes in it. That’s why some regulations were made, such as in the *Race Relations Act* 2000, which requires a positive duty on all major public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. By that new approach, racist incidents ranging from harassment and abuse to physical violence are accepted as attacks under the criminal law; and according to the law, provocative racial hatred is also a criminal offence. Publishing and distributing materials such as leaflets and newspapers that are likely to provoke racial hatred is also accepted as a criminal offence. However, those regulations must have been unsatisfactory because new regulations have been introduced again in 2003 as a result of new requirements.

Although the amended *Act* imposes a general duty on all major public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations, this law protects a person from people’s racist actions; it cannot hinder the racist opinions or prejudices against “the other”. For instance, someone breaks the law if they refuse to give a person a job or rent her/him a house as s/he wears a turban, but if they are privately prejudiced towards a

⁸⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger JR., *ibid*, p.11

particular racial group, it doesn't comprise breaking the law. Considering that the *Race Relations Act* is concerned with the legal side of racial issues, the sociological dimension still stands as a problem. In this aspect, a distinct difference between prejudice, racism and racial discrimination appears. Although they are like the related rings of a chain, they come into view as diverse notions. As mentioned before, the *Race Relations Act* can interfere in people's actions and the effects of their actions, not their opinions or beliefs. So, racial discrimination, with which *The Act* is concerned, is not the same as racial prejudice or racism. It means that this *Act* cannot prevent or judge "prejudice and racism" except there is an action.

How much such Acts are introduced, they are exclusive on the social base. They cannot be influential enough because it is difficult to change the established ideas in the collective consciousness of the societies. In this aspect, it can be said that the governments have not been successful enough; racism and racial discrimination have been widespread all over the world in the new century. Like Monica Ali says in an interview published in *The Sunday Times* in December 2003, "there is certainly racism in our society", more than half of Britons believe they live in a racist society. A major survey on race relations has suggested⁸⁶:

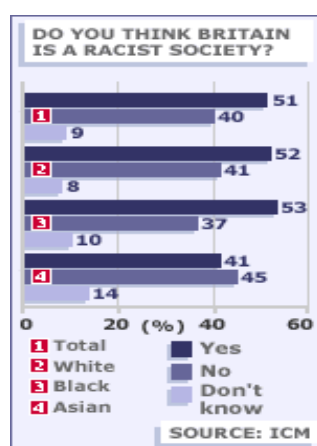


Table 2. Survey on the race relations in Britain

As understood from the table, most of the people in England think that English society is racist. In a way, it shows the dimension of racism in Britain.

⁸⁶ "Britain 'a racist society' ", *BBC News* (May, 20, 2002), Online Special Report, Retrieved March 18, 2007, from <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/race>. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1993597.stm>>

The conflicts between different races, or in other words racial issues such as racial discrimination and racism, have also come into existence in the novels reflecting the multi-racial and multi-cultural Britain. *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane* are also two examples involving racial matters within them. Although *White Teeth* tells the friendship between white English Archie and blackish Bangladeshi Samad, “a friendship that crosses class and colour” (Smith, 96), it also reflects racial polarization in the society. For instance, in *White Teeth*, Archie faces racial discrimination as his wife, Alsana, is a Jamaican, or in other words, as she is black. The company he works in cannot even tolerate to see blacks in their annual meetings and they try to find a way not to invite Archie and his wife to the meeting. The company director, who always mentions ironically ‘*he is not a racist*’, explains why Archie should not come to the annual meeting as follows:

“... that dinner with the Sunderland team... I talked to Maureen and I think we need to cut down on the numbers... we put the names in a hat and yours came out. Still, I don’t suppose you’ll be missing much, eh?”
(Smith, 73)

Although the director tries to make a reasonable explanation, Archie knows that it is related to the race of his wife. As racist attitudes are very common in multiracial societies, it is met as natural by Archie.

In *White Teeth*, Samad, as a blackish person, faces such a racial discrimination when he applies for a job. He wants to start up in a security firm in 1979, but nobody wants to “hire Paki bouncers and he comes back, a little less aggressive, a little more despairing, like a broken horse” (Smith, 142). The racial discrimination is really widespread in the English society and Samad is refused because of his race.

The racist attitude towards the black people is voiced by a woman, named Mad Mary, in *White Teeth*. Mad Mary, who is also black, wanders in the streets and talks about black people. One time, when she meets Samad, she begins to shout as follows:

“BLACK MAN! DEM BLOCK YOU EVERYWHERE YOU TURN!... BLACK MAN! DE BITCH SHE WISH TO SEE YOU BURN!... *What ‘as dem ever done for us body bot kill us and enslave us? What ‘as dem done for our minds bot hurt us an’ enrage us? WHAT’S DE POLLUTION? WHAT’S DE SOLUTION, BLACK MAN?*” (Smith, 177)

Mad Mary, who does not like white people, talks about the oppression against black people. She says they are blocked, burned, killed, enslaved, and hurt. Being the voice of the blacks, she names those attitudes as pollution and asks for the solution.

In *White Teeth*, an Indian Muslim butcher Mo faces with racist violence and theft many times in a year but cannot find a legal solution for it.

“... he had been a victim of serious physical attacks and robbery... Mo had been knifed a total of five times, lost the tips of three fingers, had both legs and arms broken, his feet set on fire, his teeth kicked out and an air-gun bullet embedded in his thankfully fleshy posterior.” (Smith, 472)

It is strange that although Mo experiences a serious violence, he does not report it to the police. In fact, he is only one of the men who faces racist violence and he knows that there is no need to report it. The helplessness of Mo is given as follows:

“This was one man against an army. There was nobody who could help. The very first time, when he received a hammer blow to his ribs in January 1970, he naively reported it to the local constabulary and was rewarded by a late-night visit from five policemen who gave him a thorough kicking.” (Smith, 472)

Like many of the minorities, Mo experiences violence, and furthermore, he cannot ask for his rights in law. Executive power show discriminate inclinations. Racism is in such a great dimension that even the police behave in a racist way. The police holding the responsibility to supply confidence in the society do not behave fairly and that kind of unfair behaviours have been observed with anxiety by many people as reflected in *Social Problems of Modern Britain*:

“Recently, the minority group whose relations with the police have caused most concern is the racially and culturally diverse group of peoples we call ‘the coloured community’. There is little doubt that relations between police and coloured minorities have been deteriorating.”⁸⁷

As mentioned, the minorities have both faced crime and confusion and been exposed to discriminatory and violent attitudes by the police. For they are reacted violently by the police, they do not have courage to take their problems to the law.

As it is apparent, the immigrant have come to the new lands with the hope of a better life but almost always faced with the question “Why don’t you go back to your own country?”. They have been prejudged, despised, alienated and faced racial

⁸⁷ Eric Butterworth and David Weir, *ibid*, p.337

discrimination and racism within the society and finally they have experienced frustration which will lead them to anger and moreover towards contra-violence.

The immigrants' transformation from a desperate identity into a furious one is very apparent in the novels. In *White Teeth*, Samad, who comes to the country with hopeful expectations, maintains his life as a waiter working in the restaurant of his cousin, Ardashir, who does not increase Samad's salary. In fact, Ardashir's attitude is very natural for him as an immigrant who wants to survive; like Alsana says, "Survival is all" (Smith, 64) for the immigrant. Without doubt, survival is the main point for the immigrant. When Samad wants a rise in his salary, Ardashir says to him: "If I made allowances for every relative I employ I'd be walking around like bloody Mr. Gandhi. Without a pot to piss in" (Smith, 60). The conditions make the immigrant egoist because each of them tries to survive; however, not all of them succeed in this process and they cannot avoid from frustration.

In *Brick Lane*, Chanu is the best example for the frustration of the immigrant. When he arrived in the country, his aim was "being a big man and a success" and going back to his homeland. However, he cannot reach his aim. Chanu tells his daughter, Shahana, about the failure in his life as follows:

"When I was at school, I used to get very good grades. Your mother is also clever, though she takes care to hide it. But, you see, we have not been able to make our way. We have tried... Sometimes I look back and I shocked. Every day of my life I have prepared for success, worked for it, waited for it, and you don't notice how the days pass until nearly a lifetime has finished." (Ali, 320)

Although Chanu is an educated person and works hard to gain a better status in the society, he cannot be successful and he realizes that his life has passed for nothing. When he does not take a promotion in the academic world, he has had to find another job to earn money. Then, he begins to work as a taxi-driver! His career becomes a secondary importance as earning money is crucial to survive. Although what Chanu wants to achieve is to be a successful academician, the conditions lead him towards a totally different direction. Surely, Chanu is only one of the immigrants who face many difficulties, experience frustration and then feel anger and hatred against the power holders. Consequently, the reaction of the minority group which will create later a clash of cultures in the society becomes inevitable. This situation is presented in *Social Problems of Modern Britain* as follows:

“It is common to regard minorities as creating problems for the society in which they live, but this is more likely to be a consequence of certain attitudes and practices by the majority. The process is not a simple one: stereotyped opinions about the minority are widely held, and distinction between ‘our people’ and them are made. The feelings developed in the minority may lead to a strong sense of grievance against the majority and an increased determination to retain their identity.”⁸⁸

The initial hatred of the immigrants is a reaction against the power-holder majority, who sees the immigrants as ‘lower and inferior creatures’ than themselves. That point of view which is the result of the distinct discrimination between “the self and the other” created by the West and the extra negative conditions construct the hatred and reaction of the minorities.

The minority groups having many problems and conflicts in the society, such as racial prejudice, oppression, racial discrimination and even racism; and being failure and frustration in the life, begin to feel anger and hatred towards the country they moved in and towards its people. We can say that the violence lead to the violence. Schlesinger mentions: “One set of hatreds gives way to the next... As the era of ideological conflict subsides, humanity enters-or, more precisely, re-enters- a possibly more dangerous era of ethnic and racial animosity”⁸⁹. The anger of the weak and oppressed immigrants against the power holder is often voiced by Chanu in *Brick Lane*. Chanu sees England as the founder of the catastrophe of his country, Bangladesh: “They bequeathed us law and democracy. That’s what they think. And never a word of the truth-that they beggared us, that they brought Bengal to its knees...” (Ali, 249). He blames the colonizer England for having weakened their country and debilitated them. He also wants his daughters to know about the pitiless characteristics of England:

“... the famine which came to our country in 1942 and ’43...Three million people dies because of starvation... While the crows and vultures stripped our bones, the British, our rulers exported grain from the country”. (Ali, 370)

Chanu wants to show that England has played a negative role not only in the present situation of the immigrant but also in the history of their motherland. When he remembers their colonial history, he feels grudge against England.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.310

⁸⁹ Arthur M. Schlesinger JR., *ibid*, p.10

Apart from the anger, which comes out as a result of colonial issues, the immigrants feel a big antagonism towards the country they immigrated and towards the culture of it and blame them as being guilty for their own problems. In *White Teeth*, Samad puts all the blame on England; according to him, the reason of his corruption is England. He complains:

“I should never have come here-that’s where every problem has come from. Never should have brought my sons here, so far from God. Willesden Green! Calling-cards in sweetshop windows, condom on the pavement, Harvest Festival, teacher-temptresses! ... my dearest friend, Archibald Jones, is an unbeliever! Now: what kind of model am I for my children?” (Smith, 145)

Samad shows a defense mechanism by putting the blame on England. He blames the English culture even for his own wrong deeds. According to him, the corruption of both him and his sons is the product of England. He blames England and her people saying: “This country is no good. We tear each other apart in this country” (Smith, 201). Samad believes that England makes the family fragmented and causes big conflicts. He criticizes the country by these words:

“... this place where there exists no patience or pity, where the people want what they want *now*, right now, expecting their lovers, their children, their friends and even their gods to arrive at little cost and in little time, just as table ten expect their tandoori prawns... These people who would exchange all faith for sex and all sex for power, who would exchange fear of God for self-pride, knowledge for irony, a covered, respectful head for a long, strident shock of orange hair-...”

By looking at the people who are waiting for their order in the restaurant Samad is working for, he criticizes their egoistic behavior. He blames them to be impatient and merciless about all things. According to Samad, those people can sacrifice faith, chastity and fear of God for material things. Samad criticizes them for being materialists who give importance to power and self-pride and he feels a big fury towards those people.

However, Samad is absolutely right when he feels anger against England and when he blames it for being a part of his corruption. Samad is a biology student at the university in his own country. When the English authorities call the Bangladeshi people to the English army in the Second World War, he attends the army. Samad thinks that this decision was a mistake leading him to a frustration later. He tells that process as follows:

“ Samad Miah Iqbal, we are going to confer on you a great honour. You will fight in mainland Europe-not starve and drink your own piss

in Egypt or Malaya... So! I went. Italy, I thought, this is where I will show the English army that the Muslim men of Bengal can fight like any Sikh. Better! Stronger!... And are the best educated and are those with the good blood, we who are truly of Officer Material... on my third day, a bastard fool as we stood in a trench, his gun went off and shot me through the wrist. ” (Smith, 88-89)

Samad wants to show his power by attending the English army because “this war was to have been his opportunity. He was expected to come home covered in glory, and then to return to Delhi triumphant” (Smith, 105). However, that war takes his power away because he loses the function of his one hand in that war. So, it is natural that he feels anger towards those who make him ‘feel the necessity’ to participate into a war to which he has no connection. The ironic situation is that “he wished to defend a country that wasn’t his and revenge the killing of men who would not have acknowledged him in a civilian street” (Smith, 95). When Samad understands that his service in the English army has no meaning for the English, he sees his efforts meaningless: “We are from the East. What have the battles of the West to do with us?”

It is apparent that the first generation immigrants usually criticize England and its culture as being harmful both for them and their children. In this aspect, the immigrant who is prejudged, despised or humiliated begins to depreciate the dominant culture as a reaction. In *Brick Lane*, Chanu despises English culture as follows: “... our own culture is so strong. And what is their culture? Television, pub, throwing darts, kicking a ball. That is the white working-class culture” (Ali, 254). In this way, to make a comparison between the cultures and to consider one superior to the other develops the clash of cultures in the society.

Although the *clash of cultures* begins with the first generation immigrants who feel anger towards the dominant culture, it becomes more conflicting by the second and further generations. The first generation is more passive, quiet and oppressed lacking of real power while the second generation sees itself more powerful. Chanu expresses this situation: “We always kept quiet. The young ones don’t want to keep quiet any more” (Ali, 258). In fact, that power comes from the need to have an identity and prove them in the society.

Both the anger inside the second generation and the necessity to identify them create a reaction against the dominant cultures. In *White Teeth*, Millat is the best example for that situation:

“Worst of all was the anger inside him. Not the righteous anger of a man of God, but the seething, violent anger of a gangster, a juvenile delinquent, determined to prove himself, determined to run the clan, determined to beat the rest. And if the game was God, if the game was a fight against the West, against the presumptions of Western science... he was determined to win it.” (Smith, 446-47)

Second generation immigrant has such a great anger in her/his inner world that an enormous hatred appears. In fact, “the anger has deep roots in the lives of many second-generation Pakistanis who find themselves stranded between Britain’s imperial past and its multicultural future”⁹⁰ and Millat is only one of them who feel such an enormous anger against the West and declare a war. As Millat sees their war as jihad, he is strongly determined to win it. Millat and the others like him want to change their fate, which has given them only misery. They want to change the history and prove themselves:

“Millat was here to finish it. To revenge it. To turn that history around. He liked to think he had a different attitude, a second generation attitude. If Marcus Chalfen was going to write his name all over the world, Millat was going to write BIGGER. There would be no misspelling his name in the history books.” (Smith, 506)

Millat wants to take revenge on the history, which have brought defeat to his nation. As a second generation individual, he feels more powerful and stands against the power-holder majority. For instance, he contests Marcus Chalfen, the scientist studying on genes with his brother Magid. Millat is totally against the scientific studies of Marcus who,

“created beings and went to the edges of his God’s imagination and made mice with rabbit genes, mice with webbed feet...by DNA microinjection, retrovirus-mediated transgenesis, embryonic stem cell-mediated gene transfer. ” (Smith, 311-12)

Millat accepts the deeds of Marcus against the law of God and he sees Marcus as the representative of Western power that is always mentioned in history books; however, he aims to change the history by marking his name on it.

In *White Teeth*, the story about Samad’s great grandfather Mangal Pande, who fought for independence against the imperial power, is very important to show the reaction of the weak minority and how history or historical roots renew themselves and affect the further generations. Samad, who is always proud of his great-grandfather’s

⁹⁰ Hugh Barnes, “**Born in the UK: Young Muslims in Britain**”, first published in 2006 by The Foreign Policy Center, ISN Online, Retrieved November 24, 2007, from <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&id=26632>>

patriotism, proves his grandfather's story when one of his nephews finds a book which is the only surviving copy in the Cambridge College. In that book, Mangal Pande is defined as a patriot who fired the first bullet of the Indian mutiny of 1857 (against England) and whose self-sacrifice gave the siren to the nation to take up arms against an alien ruler; it is said that although the effort failed in its immediate consequences, it succeeded in laying the foundations of the Independence to be won in 1947 (Smith, p.259). In this context, like his great-grandfather, Millat aspiring to fight against the power holder majority wants to be a success in the history by firing the bullet to the Western powers.

This attitude of Millat reminds us the "grandfather complex" as described by Ernest Jones and Karl Abraham in 1913. These psychoanalytic theorists presume that "many children wish to be the parents of their own parents- and the identification with the grandparents permits this fantasy to be acted out symbolically"⁹¹. Like many children, Millat desires to be like his great-grandfather Mangal Pande and identifies himself with Pande's patriotic deed towards the Western powers.

In that dimension, a crucial conflict appears in the multicultural societies of the new century. The anger inside the minorities, the need to adopt an identity and the struggle to prove themselves in the society lead the minorities to rebel against the dominant powers, and consequently the "*polarization in the society*" comes into existence. In Western societies, that polarization can be either on the basis of race/ethnicity or on the basis of religion. When it is looked from the dimension of ethnic identity, it can be said that the importance of ethnic identity changes from one individual to the other:

"The importance of ethnic identity has varied enormously within each ethnic group. For some individuals, it has been a badge to be worn proudly before the world. For others, it has been a way of life to be personally treasured, although not made a public issue. And for still others, ethnic identity has been incidental, or curiosity- or a stigma to be forgotten, evaded, or escaped as much as possible."⁹²

As mentioned, ethnicity has little or much importance for the individuals. However, when an individual strikes a disturbing attitude about ethnic origin and wants to present her/him by ethnic identity, it can cause a binary reaction from the other ethnic group in the multi-racial society and so, the ethnic conflicts begin to occur. However, as religion

⁹¹ Werner Sollors, *ibid*, p. 231

⁹² Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America*, New York: Basic Books, 1981, p.294

has a much more powerful and unifying affect on people, the polarization is formed on the basis of religious borders rather than ethnic ones in multicultural societies. In this aspect, while the Muslim minorities identify themselves under the Islamic groups against the Christian Western culture, Christian authorities stand against Islamification in the world.

While this century is accepted as “the death of the Lord” (Smith, 430), it turns out to be the age of reactionary fundamentalism. As a result, Islamic and Christian groups come face to face and the polarization in the society deepens. In fact, some powers have identified Europe with Christianity and have pictured Islam as the religion of the Eastern primitive beings⁹³. In this aspect, the gap between “the self” and “the other” is formed once more by a new dimension: Christian West versus Muslim East.

In *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*, polarization in the multicultural society of England is depicted in similar dimensions. In both of the novels, the Islamic organizations or groups aiming to stand against the “unfair” attitudes towards Muslims and to demonstrate their power, and the contradictory Christian organizations opposing against the Islamic groups are illustrated. In *White Teeth*, the Islamic group, in which Millat participates, is named KEVIN: ‘*Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation*’. KEVIN is an ironic abbreviation, an English name for an anti-English Islamic group. This organization is defined as follows:

“The idea of KEVIN had been born within the black and Asian community. A radical new movement where politics and religion were two sides of the same coin. A group that took freely from Garveyism, the American Civil Rights movement and the thought of Elijah Muhammed, yet remained within the letter of Qur’an.” (Smith, 470)

KEVIN, like many other Islamic groups, has both political and religious attitudes. It springs from the thought of civil rights of the blacks and Muslims and aims to follow the rules of Islam. The aim and the social structure of the group are defined by the narrator below:

“ KEVIN: an extremist faction dedicated to direct, often violent action, a splinter group frowned on by the rest of the Islamic community; popular with the sixteen to twenty-five age group; feared and ridiculed in the press...” (Smith, 471)

⁹³ Rana Kabbani, *Europe’s Myths of the Orient*, London: Pandora Press, 1988, p.106

As KEVIN practices violent actions and aims to perform some attacks against its enemies, it is not approved by all Muslims. However, it mainly attracts the young who try to belong to a group and gain an identity.

On the basis of that organization, a kind of reactionary fundamentalism against all kinds of English and Christian systems lies. They criticize the western morality system. In fact, that attitude towards the West is very common among the Muslim community. For instance, the survey carried out by The Foreign Policy Center shows that “nearly a third of British Muslims, 32%, are far more censorious, believing that western society is decadent and immoral and that Muslims should seek to bring it to an end”⁹⁴. The people who hold this view defend the idea that they should sweep away the corruption coming from the western morality systems.

Many Muslims believe that those kinds of corruptions are also the deliberate outcomes of the West. The participants of KEVIN, like many other Muslims, believe that the Western authorities aim to defeat the minorities exposing them to a ‘spiritual corruption’. The founder of the organization, Brother Ibrahim, explains it saying: “... the colonial powers wish to do to you, brothers of KEVIN. Firstly, they wish to kill you *spiritually*... they value nothing higher than your *mental slavery*” (Smith, 471). The members of the group aim to fight against the spiritual corruption which is created by the colonial powers. The ideological warfare of KEVIN is put against the modern world in which Muslim nations are directed towards a spiritual defeat such as drug addiction or other corruptions on the spiritual and the religious dimension. KEVIN supports that those kinds of defeat are produced by the West to make “the other” unable to view the events, and make them ineffective and self-destructive.

In this context, KEVIN, as a reactionary group, criticizes and despises England and the English. One of the members of KEVIN, Hifan- who appoints Millat as the head of the Cricklewood branch- says that he left the English education system some time ago and his education is formed by hadithes from the Islamic canon (Smith, 296). The members of KEVIN believe that the English maintain an assimilation process towards the minorities, especially towards the Muslims. They claim that in that process, drug addiction is used as an important weapon which will ruin the Muslim youth. Their thesis is: “drug is imported by governments to *subdue* the black and Asian community, to

⁹⁴ Hugh Barnes, *ibid*

lessen our powers” (Smith, 296). Hifan illuminates Millat about that thesis by the following speech:

“... and so marijuana weakens one’s abilities, one’s power, and takes our best men away from us in this country: men like you, Millat, who have natural leadership skills, who possess within them tssshe ability to take a people by the hand and lift them up. There is an hadith from the Bukhari, part five, page two: *The best people of my community are my contemporaries and supporters*. You are my contemporary, Millat, I pray you will also become my supporter; there is a war going on, Millat, a war.” (Smith, 294)

By accusing the West of poisoning their people with drug, Hifan, clearly expresses that they perform a war against the others who stand on the opposite side of Islam. In that process, he wants to save more people like Millat, who will fight in that war to the last point.

However, their aim goes beyond any kind of reconciliation; contrarily, they want to take the control in their hands and to be the dominant power. Millat says: “... there is a spiritual war going on... we need to make our mark in this bloody country” (Smith, 295). To Millat, the way which he follows is “a matter of protecting one’s culture, shielding one’s religion from abuse” (Smith, 235). To protect the culture or religion, to be recognized, to put a mark, to gain identity, to prove yourself ... Whatever the reason is, the reaction of the Muslim minority is so big that it turns to the idea of jihad and the appearance of some rebellious people and activities among the minorities become inevitable.

Brick Lane also includes the polarization in the multicultural society. In the novel, the Islamic group, named ‘Bengal Tigers’, is an organization aiming to be the voice of the weak and oppressed Muslims in the world. Like KEVIN, it appears as a reaction against the Western powers. Nazneen’s lover, Karim, is one of the premier members of that organization. He mentions their aim at one of their meetings as follows: “What are we for? We are for Muslim rights and culture. We are into protecting our local ummah and supporting the global ummah” (Ali, 241). As he mentions, their aim comprises not only to defend the rights of the local Muslim community but also to be the supporter of the global Muslim community. The group shows a reaction to the wars against the Muslim nations, such as in Iraq, Chechnya, Palestine and Bosnia.

Surely, in all of those wars, the dominant Western powers have directed their weapons not only towards the armies but also to the civilian population. In all those processes, the tragedy of humanity shows itself. Zadie Smith mentions that tragedy by these words: “If we are committed to the idea that a civilian death in the west is of equal value to a civilian death in the east, then we proceed in Iraq as hypocrites and cowards - and the world knows it”⁹⁵. Smith implies that the tragedy created by the West in the Eastern societies is known by the world, and it cannot be camouflaged by different discourses such as “democracy” and “freedom”. It is undeniable that there is ‘double standard’ in the practices of the Western authorities.

‘Bengal Tigers’ aim to react against those kinds of double standard and purpose to take the attention of Muslim community to those tragedies and to form a unity of Muslims. They express those tragedies with some photographs at their meetings:

“This is Nassar, aged one year. Weight, nine pounds and four ounces. Ideal weight, twenty-two pounds. The photograph was taken in Basra, December 1996.... Some more Iraqi children. Mashgal, Adras and Misal. All under one year. This was taken in 1998... Since the sanctions against Iraq began, over half million Iraqi children have died as a direct result. This is a conservative estimate.” (Ali, 282)

The tragic events of those wars and the anger and hatred which arise as a reaction to those unfair deeds against Muslims form the idea of “fight” in those groups. Arthur Schlesinger defines that polarization between the European and the non-European as follows:

“... making a single society out of this diversity of antagonistic European peoples is a hard enough job. The new salience of non-European, non-white stocks compounds the challenge. And the non-Europeans, or at least their self-appointed spokesmen, bring with them a resentment, in some cases a hatred, of Europe and the West provoked by generations of Western colonialism, racism, condescension, and cruel exploitation.”⁹⁶

The harsh realities of colonialism and racism, being a historical heritage of Western powers have created contra-attacks among non-Westerns. The hatred and anger of those non-European minorities in the English society have also started a fight against those powers. In *White Teeth*, Smith gives the picture of that process. Smith shows us

⁹⁵ Zadie Smith, “**We proceed in Iraq as hypocrites and cowards - and the world knows it**” *The Guardian* (February 27, 2003), *The Guardian Online*, Retrieved October 7, 2007, from <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/feb/27/iraq.world1>>

⁹⁶ Arthur M. JR. Schlesinger, *ibid*, p.120

the reality that how that kind of reactionary fundamentalism is produced by the ethnic or racist attitudes to “the other”. Although Millat knew nothing about the writer, Marcus Chalfen, whom they would protest, and he did not even read his book, he knew other things, such as the oppression, humiliation, injustice of the West against “the other”:

“He knew that he, Millat, was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other peoples jobs; or had no jobs and bummed off the state... that he should go back to his own country; that he worshipped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered. In short he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country, until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every newspaper and they were angry, and Millat recognized the anger, though it recognized him, and grabbed it with both hands.” (Smith, 234)

By making generalizations and attributing negative characteristics to the minorities, those people are despised and put into a lower, pejorative category. The English consider all the people coming from South-East Asia as “dirty Pakis”. The English majority tends to disregard them and their problems. Unfortunately, they are not recognized until they are murdered, or they raise their voices ‘angrily’ and ‘violently’ as a result of the negative attitudes against them.

It is apparent that “racist interpellation and ethnic suppression generates a groundswell of justified rebelliousness waiting to be unleashed”⁹⁷. For example, the immigrants, like Millat or Karim, face with many humiliations and oppressions in the society. They have no identity and no importance unless they raise their voices. That’s why, as Karim states, it turns out a fight: “It’s a world-wide struggle. Everywhere they are trying to do us down. We have to fight back. It is time to fight back...” (Ali, 243). Like KEVIN, ‘Bengal Tigers’ also want to revenge through action. Karim says: “What we need is action. What is the point of all these leaflets? We must stop talking and start doing” (Ali, 260). Like Millat, Karim thinks that ‘talking’ can do nothing to hinder those wars anymore, so they should defend their side now, fight against their enemies and the world disregarding the unfair attitudes towards the Muslims. The indifference to the unfair deeds in Muslim countries is depicted by reactionary Muslims as below:

“We should print nothing and do nothing. If a few Muslim children die, who cares? We should not write about our brothers in Iraq, or in Chechnya or anywhere else, because we do not care about them. To us, they ain’t anything.”(Ali, 283)

⁹⁷ Dominic Head, *ibid*, p.185

They criticize the communities being blind to all these tragedies. They mention the inhuman activities against the Muslim and react to the “inertia” of the world. They believe that the people dying in those countries by western weapons mean nothing for the rest of the world.

Their reactions against the Western powers not caring about the Muslim communities rise so much that it prepares bigger conflicts in the society. The polarization appears between the Muslim and non-Muslim. This time, the Christians who think that their society- even the world- is being more “Islamized” begin to take contra-attack. In this way, they form some associations against the Islamic ones. In *Brick Lane*, Ali reflects that kind of formation in the English society. One of the leaflets which are handed out by a Christian group blames the multicultural structure of England as the guilty of Islamification. That leaflet titled “Multicultural Murder” declares those:

“In our schools, it is multicultural murder. Do you know what they are teaching your children today? In domestic science your daughter will learn how to make a kebab, or fry a bhaji. For his history lesson your son will be studying Africa or India or some other dark and distant land. English people, he will learn, are *Wicked Colonialist*... And in religious Instruction, what will your child be thought? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? No. Krishna, Abraham and Muhammad.” (Ali, 251)

In the leaflet, it is complained that “the other” culture and the multicultural policies cause their heritage to have secondary importance. Although the colonizer background of England is a reality, those English want to show it as an illusion and a slander against them. This leaflet mirrors the anxiety, fear and even hatred against the multicultural structure.

As mentioned at the beginning of that study, multiculturalism has not been welcomed by all of the people in the English society. Some people have accepted it as a threat to the unity of white and Christian English society. When the minorities, especially Muslims, started to rebel against the dominant powers, those kinds of anti-multicultural formations adopted a defensive attitude for Englishness and Christianity and an offensive attitude against those who do not carry Christian-European-White identity. Especially, the Western Christians, who have identified themselves with the tradition of the undisputable superiority of Christianity over Islam (Bennett, 1992), have begun to feel uncomfortable because of the rise of Islamic discourses. In this way, the polarization between the Muslim and Christian groups deepens and creates crucial

conflicts in the society. In *Brick Lane*, those Christian formations blame Islam as the ‘fountain’ of those conflicts. They claim:

“Christianity is being gently slaughtered. It is ‘only one’ of the world’s ‘great religions’. Indeed, in our schools you could be forgiven for thinking that Islam is the official religion... Should we be forced to put up with this? When the truth is that it is a religion of hate and intolerance. When Muslim extremists are planning to turn Britain into an Islamic Republic, using a combination of immigration, high birth rates and conversion.” (Ali, 251)

Those Christians consider that their religion is in danger of Islam. The Christian side defining Christianity as superior to the other blames Islam- not the extremist Muslims- as the reason of the chaos and hatred in the society. They defend that Islamification of the society is so great that something must be done to hinder them. The negative representation of Islam by the Christians is continued with great effort. In another publication, they mention:

“The Islamification of our neighbourhood has gone too far. How long before the extremists are putting veils on our women and insulting our daughters for wearing short skirts? Do not tolerate it! Write to the council! This is England!” (Ali, 257)

Those people advocate the idea that the extremist Muslims are affecting their lives and threatening their life styles and they should not tolerate it any more. They want to remind “the other” that it is their own country and their rules prevail. In a way, those Christians, whose ancestors caricatured Muslims “as ugly, oily, deformed, sweaty, sadistic”, now re-present “modern stereotypes that mirror early characterization of Islam as the western conception of Middle Easterners and Muslims”⁹⁸. All Muslims are put into the same category being veiled or turbaned entailing hatred and danger. Nothing has changed from the earlier times until today. They preserve the same point of view towards the Muslim and the Eastern. At the same time, those Christians claim that not only the West and the Western but also Christianity are seen as lower, humiliated and even attacked by the Islamists.

Here, the point of view of those Christian groups is similar to Ian Buruma’s discourses on “Occidentalism”. As mentioned before, Buruma and his co-author Avishai Margalit claim that there is the Occidental view which describes the West with negative and humiliating connotations. Buruma defends the idea that

⁹⁸ Kamil Aydın, *ibid*, p. 23

“Calculation—the accounting of money, interests, scientific evidence, and so on is regarded as soulless. Authenticity lies in poetry, intuition, and blind faith. The Occidental view of the West is of bourgeois society, addicted to creature comforts, animal lusts, self-interest, and security. It is by definition a society of cowards, who prize life above death.”⁹⁹

To Buruma, that Occidental view sees the Western science, economy and bourgeois as worldly materials lacking soul. He argues this Occidental point of view is supported by the Islamist discourses which strengthen the idea of “war against the West”:

“Something else is going on: a war against a particular idea of the West, which is neither new nor unique to Islamist extremism. The current jihadis see the West as something less than human, to be destroyed, as though it were a cancer... The Islamist contribution to the long history of Occidentalism is a religious vision of purity in which the idolatrous West simply has to be destroyed.”¹⁰⁰

Buruma and the others who think like him attribute the Occidental point of view to the “Islamist” groups, especially in the new century. They see the Islamic actions as a big threat against the West. They claim Islamists conceive the West “worshipping the false gods of money, sex, and other animal lusts” and experiencing “jahiliyya which can mean idolatry, religious ignorance, or barbarism”¹⁰¹ and which must be destroyed. According to them, the Western aspects are judged, insulted and threatened by the Islamists. Parallel to that, some Christians who believe in that claim of Occidentalism come out against the Islamic attitudes and so the clashes and the polarization become deeper. In the novels, the discourses of the Christian groups who blame Islam and Muslims for threatening their Western attitudes reflect the contest against Occidentalism.

Without doubt, the polarization in the multicultural society on the basis of religion cannot be attributed to all Muslims or all Christians because there is not a stereotypical Muslim or Christian self who feels hatred to “the other”. In *Brick Lane*, that attitude is reflected by mentioning about the inner structure of those two polar groups. While there are white people who support the rights of Muslim community in Muslim ‘Bengal Tigers’, the Christian groups do not blame all the Muslims for the

⁹⁹ Ian Buruma, “**The Origins of Occidentalism**”, *The Chronicle Review*, Volume 50, Issue 22, Page B10, Retrieved March 24, 2008, from <<http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i22/22b01001.htm>>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

chaotic situation of the society. In an announcement of a Christian group, titled “March Against Mullahs”, it is written: “Most of our Muslim neighbours are peaceful men and women. We have nothing against them. But a handful of Mullahs and Militants are throwing their weight around” (Ali, 259). As apparent, those objective Christians dissociate some Muslims from the others by defining them as “peaceful”.

However, these exceptions are not enough to abolish the polarization between the two groups. While the Christian supporters claim that Islam is doing evil things to their country, the Muslim supporters claim that those anti-Islamic discourses feed racism in the society. In one of the leaflets, the Christians charge Islam as follows:

“All over the country, our children are being taught that Islam is a great religion. But the truth is clear. Islam burns with hatred. It gives birth to evil mass murders abroad. In our own towns, it spawns vicious rioters.” (Ali, 406)

The evil things and mass murders which are mentioned above are related to the suicide bombings and terrorist attacks. However, they blame Islam, not the people who practice those deeds, for being the convict of all those attempts. Karim claims that those discourses about Islam are mentioned intentionally to show it lower: “Islamic terrorists, Islamic terrorists. That’s all you hear. You never hear Catholic terrorists, do you? Or Hindu terrorist? What about Jewish terrorist?” (Ali, 407).

The question of “Islamic terrorism” has been a more complicated term especially after the terrorist attacks in London in 7 July 2005. Although it is used by many people, it is important to note that the term is problematic. Like Karim does, this term is looked suspiciously by some. Hugh Barnes, the Director of the Foreign Policy Center’s Democracy and Conflict Programme, mentions in his paper titled “Born in the UK: Young Muslims in Britain” that the term of “Islamic terrorism” is problematic. He says:

“The term itself is questionable since the discovery of bombers, born and raised in Britain, and ready to kill in the name of their faith, also came as a shock to Muslims on the streets of London, Birmingham and Manchester.”¹⁰²

Surely, as Barnes mentions, the terrorist attacks should not be attributed to all the Muslim community. Not all Muslims approve those attacks. Furthermore, there are still many ambiguities, speculations, and even “complot theories” about the real intentions and connections of the militants. Some people even claim that the attacks are the

¹⁰² Hugh Barnes, *ibid*

product of the Western authorities who want to put an enormous blame on the Islam world to have the opportunity to declare a war against them.

Karim also thinks in a similar way and supports the idea that the chaotic situation created by the Western powers aim to rise the racist attitudes towards the Muslims. He says: “All those people going around talking about gangs, all they’re doing is feeding the racists. The newspapers love it. But the truth is there are no gangs” (Ali, 407). According to Karim, the claim that Islam is supporting the gangs to cause violence in the society is not true. He believes that Islam is and also should be the representative of “peace” and “tranquility”: “When we march, we’ll show them how wrong they are about Islam. They will see we are strong. And we will show them we are peaceful. That Islam is peace” (Ali, 413). Karim emphasizes the peaceful side of Islam and he wants to show it to the world.

In this aspect, Karim stands against some other members of ‘Bengal Tigers’ who think that they should be militant to defend their rights. In a meeting, one of the members supports that idea strongly: “They take down one of ours, right, we’ll take down ten of theirs. Simple as that. Burn their office. What we waiting for?” (Ali, 240). It is apparent that all Muslims do not share the same ideas about how Muslims should react against the dominant Western powers. While some of them like Karim, defends to be peaceful, some others defend the philosophy of ‘blood for blood’. In this aspect, the fragmentation in the groups shows us that the fundamentalist groups have also diverse ideas about their activities and attitudes towards the opposing powers. However, neither of those motions seems to be affective as the problems are deeper.

Although there have been diverse attitudes and points of view in the radical or fundamentalist groups, it is undeniable that their main aim is to stand against “the antagonistic”. In the selected novels, the common purpose of the Islamic groups such as KEVIN and ‘Bengal Tigers’ is to show a reaction against the Western/Christian dominance, to gain a self-actualization by proving the Eastern/Muslim power or to take an action against the unfair attitudes of the Western powers towards the non-Western; and the main aim of the Christian or European groups is to hinder the “Islamification” and “Balkanization” in their society. Whatever the reason is, or whether all of these debates have a logical basis or not, the reality is that racism, xenophobia and polarization in multicultural England have produced inevitable social conflicts as reflected by Smith and Ali in their novels. Those conflicts are so complicated that the

world is still struggling to solve them and it seems this process will continue with rising nationalism and fundamentalism.

5.0. CONCLUSION

As mentioned, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the world began to experience a new process and all countries witnessed many changing dynamics. The two world wars put their marks on the history and the new age started with many diverse formations, one of which is the multicultural formation of the countries. In the twentieth century, the immigration movements gained rapidness so that the social structure of many countries which received mass immigrations changed from union to multicultural. In this aspect, many countries- especially USA and European ones- began to have a more multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structures and England is one of those countries having faced with mass immigrations either with her own will at the beginning because of the need for workforce, or out of her will later.

England facing a remarkable multicultural structure needed to adopt some policies to prepare a more tranquil and democratic society in which diversities would not create troubles. Therefore, multiculturalist policies which brought many discussions and divisions in the all layers of English society from the beginning were taken up in England, like in many other countries. In this aspect, it can be concluded that multiculturalism has not functioned properly and multicultural structure of England has created many conflicts which are the results of that ill-functioning. Although multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity are accepted by some as a source for cultural diversity and richness that should be appreciated, it is understood by the experiences both in the past and today that it has produced complex conflicts in the society.

On the individual basis, those conflicts have affected the immigrants and minorities on a large scale as reflected in the selected novels. Viewed from the individual dimension, it is apparent that the immigrants and minorities are the ones who have been negatively influenced most in the society although they have not been able to reflect their problems or react against the difficulties they faced with for a while. The immigrants coming to England, mainly because of financial difficulties in their own countries, and holding the hope for a better life have experienced firstly inner conflicts which have been mainly resulted from the dominant culture's point of view towards them. Particularly, the immigrants having a colonial background have been seen as lower because of their historical inferiority. The Bangladeshi families of Zadie Smith and Monica Ali picture those postcolonial immigrants in great deal. The immigrants or

minorities, who do not have a colonial background, have also been defined as “the other” because of their race, their colour, their socio-economic situation and their religion. That’s why it is not surprising that the point of view towards the minorities has created enormous conflicts and dilemmas within “the others”.

It is unquestionable that people are sophisticated and complex individuals forming their identities from various cultural, sociological, ideological choices. In this aspect, to form a ‘healthy’ identity, it is important to have social and inner tranquility by choosing from those alternatives. Otherwise, to experience conflicts, dilemmas and identity crises becomes inevitable. The problem of human identity is accepted as “a problem of her/his self-determination in historical space and time, so it works in two levels, socio-cultural and spiritual”¹⁰³. The conflicts of the minorities/immigrants are observed in those two dimensions: in the individual and social arena.

The socio-cultural identification is related to “human’s understanding of her/his objective place in natural and social worlds and socio-cultural identity is first of all self-determinations in space”¹⁰⁴. So, when a person moves to another place, s/he declares herself/himself being a part of certain family or ethnic group, certain country or continent. Meanwhile, socio-cultural identity appears as the feeling of belonging to a special group. However, when a person does not feel belonging to a group, the self-determination does not occur and the individual experiences many conflicts and dilemmas. In this aspect, the immigrant who is considered as “the other”, uncivilized and inferior being different from the “superior and civilized” English society, cannot feel as being a part of the society and cannot adapt herself/himself into that society. In addition, s/he cannot achieve self-determination and self-actualization. In the novels, both the first and the second generations experience that kind of conflict. The first generation, like Samad in *White Teeth* or Chanu in *Brick Lane*, cannot adapt themselves into the English society as they are accepted as “the other” because of their colonial background or their appearance. Besides, they cannot identify themselves in the socio-cultural area and so self-determination and self-actualization become almost impossible for them.

In this sense, not only the first generation immigrants but also their second generation “British-born” children cannot reach self-determination and self-

¹⁰³ A. Husseyinov Burçoğlu, “*Ethical Basis of European Identity*” in *Multiculturalism: Identity and Otherness* by Nedret Kuran ed., İstanbul: Boğaziçi UP, 1997, p.57

¹⁰⁴Ibid

actualization. Although they were born in England, speak English, have the same lifestyle as any other English, they are still considered as “the other”, like Magid, Millat, and Irie in *White Teeth* or Shahana in *Brick Lane*. Furthermore, those racial or cultural hybrid individuals experience an extra conflict: they are considered as foreigners both in England and in their mother countries. In fact, it is difficult to specify which country is their “motherland”. Since many of those hybrid individuals feel that England is the place where they belong to, the concept of motherland becomes more complex for them. For instance, although Magid is a Bangladeshi and brought up in Bangladesh, he feels as if England is the place where he is connected. However, in England he is considered as Bangladeshi and in Bangladesh he is considered as English. As a familiar example, the children of the Turkish immigrants in Germany reflect that situation significantly. They almost always complain about being called “Almançı” (a term used to describe Turkish workers working in Germany) in Turkey and “vulgar Turk” in Germany. Meanwhile, wherever they go, they cannot escape being seen as “foreigners”. In this aspect, the socio-cultural identification of both the first and the second, and also further generation immigrants cannot be easy.

The other dimension of a healthy identity that is “spiritual” presumes “man’s separation inside his own socio-cultural community, the process of his transformation into unique and unimitable personality”¹⁰⁵. The spiritual identification requires absorbing the outer world and forming a unique personal character. However, this process is not always successful for all the individuals, especially for the minorities and immigrants facing with many dilemmas and inner conflicts. The migrant identity feeling caught in between two cultures generally experiences a dilemma that hinders the self-definition. Sometimes the immigrant’s original culture and the culture of the society to which s/he immigrates can be contradictory. That kind of contradiction which is possible to create an identity crisis is resulted especially from the religious differentiations. For instance, the Muslims having immigrated to the countries of Christian origin face those kinds of inner conflicts as depicted in the novels. When they live away from the Islamic way of life, they feel a kind of guiltiness in their inner worlds, like Samad in *White Teeth* and Nazneen in *Brick Lane*. Samad wants to live according to the Islamic doctrines; however, his some deeds are totally contradictory to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

his will. Like him, Nazneen feels the dilemma of obeying the Islam rules or following her own desire.

That feeling of being trapped develops when the immigrants begin to worry about the self-determination process of their children rather than themselves. The immigrant who does not achieve self-actualization cannot help the successive generations to develop an exclusive self-definition. In this aspect, the inner conflicts turn into familial conflicts in these families. Those conflicts are observed especially as “father-son” or “father-daughter” conflicts. As the first generation immigrant mother has little right in the decision making process, we generally witness rough conflicts between the “traditional” fathers and “untraditional” sons and daughters like Samad and his twin sons in *White Teeth* and Chanu and Shahana in *Brick Lane*.

Although those kinds of individual and familial conflicts of the immigrants and minorities in multicultural England can be accepted as the “private” side, it is undeniable that they have contributed to bigger conflicts in the society. The immigrant identities who experience many conflicts and cannot achieve self-definition and self-identification because of many reasons as mentioned in the study are not able to integrate into the society in real sense and they enter into a new conflicting area. Those identities, being seen as inferior and other, facing with prejudices, racial and religious discriminations, subjected even to racism, form a side in the arena of social conflicts.

Surely, on the social basis, the conflicts in a multicultural society are more complicated. It is difficult to determine exactly which side is exposed to injustice in the multicultural society: Are the Christian English supporting the idea that the unity of their nation is being fragmented, their culture is being degenerated, their religion is being threatened by Islamification, and their “Englisness” is in danger in any event, or “the others” who are prejudged, humiliated, and discriminated as they are black or blackish, who are seen inferior as they have a colonial background, and whose religion is caricaturized in the European newspapers? As both of the sides look into the issue from their points of view, a more paradoxical situation comes into existence. The reactions of the Asians, blacks and Muslims who are exposed to prejudice, racial and religious discrimination and racism could be seen rightful and their requests to live maintaining their cultures and religions could be accepted reasonable. However, the radical ethnic nationalism or fundamentalism drifting the society into chaos, confusion, and polarization with some inhumane deeds such as unfair radical riots and terrorist

attacks are unacceptable. In the other dimension, while the anger of the English society being exposed to the black riots or the attacks of some radical Islamic groups can be seen natural, definitely, it is not possible to approve and tolerate the increasing xenophobia, discrimination and racism against Muslim or black community.

However, it is undeniable that the alienation, radicalism, and the foreign policies of the Western governments (such as policies on Iraq or Afghanistan) incite the anger and hatred of “the other”. Hugh Barnes, the Director of the FPC’s Democracy and Conflict programme, explains in his paper titled “Born in the UK: Young Muslims in Britain” that anger saying:

“Undoubtedly, there is anger among Muslim youths in Britain. It is hard to find a young Pakistani on the streets of Beeston or Whitechapel who is not angry about UK foreign policy in the Middle East or the assault on Islam across the world.”¹⁰⁶

The increasing tension of the young Muslims seems to continue as a reaction against the Western policies keeping on the imperialist role in the Middle East and their offensive attitude towards the Islam world. In the novels, those young minorities whose anger and hatred increase show that situation clearly. Millat in *White Teeth* or Karim in *Brick Lane* react against the USA and UK policies in the Middle East. They not only protest the unfair attitudes against the Muslim civilian community in Iraq, Chechnya, Bosnia and Afghanistan but also declare a war, namely Jihad, against the imperialist powers of the Christian West.

It cannot be denied that the dimension of the social conflicts both in multicultural England and in other multicultural societies cannot be limited with simple reason-result dialectic. Although many policies, calculations, and evaluations have been produced to solve the complexities of ethnic, religious and regional diversities, it is still difficult to achieve it. In this context, that kind of complexity draws attention in the countries such as France where black riots occur today or Germany where there are racist attacks against Turkish citizens. When we think about similar conflicts reflected in the novels, it is apparent that those situations in the new millennium continue in many multicultural countries by increasing.

Either the social or the individual conflicts pictured in the novels are still “bleeding wounds” of today’s multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. The increasing

¹⁰⁶ Hugh Barnes, *ibid*

racist attacks, the polarization and antagonism, the continuing fundamentalism and as a further step, terrorist attacks show that the governments have not been able to put essential and sufficient solutions to hinder that chaotic situation in their society. Furthermore, people have been provoked to take a side in that polarization under the name of “nationalism and religion”. That chaos has been used to serve for the benefit of “some capital groups” to make them more powerful. The appearance of “Islamic Terror” discourses, “the gothic” about the Eastern and Muslim have been used to prepare an ambiance to legitimate the deeds of those powers. In this aspect, the military force and attack of the USA against the Muslim countries is only one of the examples.

Although history has witnessed many times all kinds of chaotic situations such as racism, religious wars or fundamentalist attacks, the confusion of today’s multicultural world is more paradoxical. While the antagonist nations were coming face to face only in the wars in earlier times, in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure of the world, the deadly enemies are trying to survive in the same society. The situation is so worrying and complicated that it seems it is going to continue for a long time in this way until people learn how to deal with it.

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