

PAVING THE WAY FROM MULTICULTURALISM TO INTERCULTURALISM IN ZADIE SMITH'S NOVELS

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Abstract: Portraying the intricate network of complex relationships in many contemporary communities, Zadie Smith's four novels (White Teeth – 2000, The Autograph Man – 2002, On Beauty – 2005 and NW – 2012) signal the rather predictable transition from a multicultural to an intercultural paradigm designed to reflect the changing landscape of modern society. From such a perspective, this article offers a bird's-eye view upon problematic issues such as the loss of cultural identity; the dynamics of mixed cultures and ethnic diversity; the gender, religious or racial aspects of everyday life; the individual responses to the stereotypes of a certain culture and last but not least, the evolution and personal transformation leading to self-discovery.

Keywords: cultural pluralism, difference, individual vs. group identity, multicultural policies, integration

1. Terminological Distinctions

The complex phenomena of multiculturalism and interculturalism have given rise to debates regarding the possible dividing lines with an increasing number of contemporary scholars enhancing both their common and differentiating features and currently focusing upon the gradual transition from one paradigm to another.

Subscribing sociological and political polemics, multiculturalism and interculturalism generally refer to integration policies adopted by governments with respect to the migration process and the assimilation problematic of ethnic minorities. The beginning of the twenty-first century sees interculturalism as a valid alternative for multiculturalism without putting aside the idea of diversity, but drawing much more attention upon forging a common identity, especially in the case of second and third generations of immigrants.

In their attempt to distinguish between the two types of paradigms, Meer, Modood, and Zapata-Barrero (2016) first highlight the unifying elements of the two approaches, perhaps the reasons for frequent terminological overlapping: "cultural pluralism"; "a shared adversary in assimilationist and unreconstructed ideas of membership and policy perspectives concerning citizenship"; "a common aversion to formalist (or deontological) notions of liberalism that do not take into consideration the role and function of culture and identity"; "the inclusion of cultural difference" with the aim of reconsidering "the terms of fair and equal treatment" (9). By contrast, possible controversies are usually associated with the following major themes: "the status of dialogue, contact and interpersonal relations"; "the position of historical majority forms"; "the normative significance of recognizing groups in addition to individual citizens" and "the status of minority religious communities and organisations" (ibid.).

In 2012, Cantle was rather trenchant in his assessment of the new era of cohesion and diversity for which he advocates interculturalism to the detriment of multicultural policies which have failed to adequately respond to the changing structure of societies. From this perspective, he connects the idea of failure with “both the objective reality (significant levels of inequality, racism and community tensions) and the subjective reality (continued emotional resistance to diversity and a desire to halt or reverse the trend)” (53). As a consequence, the intercultural paradigm may be the answer to “the challenges of globalisation and super diversity” while supporting and facilitating community cohesion (ibid.: 88).

Tracing back the historical evolution and development of the two trends, multiculturalism mainly proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s affecting the political discourses which targeted ethnic minorities in US, Canada and Australia as well as the waves of Caribbean and South-Asian immigrants in Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s who “provoked resentment and hostility”, “were received with great suspicion and ambivalence” and were ultimately “pushed into manual occupations, linked to poor housing, often clustered around those employers which provided low-skilled and low-paid employment” (ibid.: 55). The immediate consequence was that the early multicultural policies were justifiably defensive and protective as a response to the inherent racism and discrimination of the respective period.

Dedicating one sub-chapter to criticism of multiculturalism, Genç (2012) examines the potential inaccuracy of using the term “unmeltable” in a definition of multiculturalism as the one proposed by Vertovec in 1996: “Multiculturalism envisages a mosaic society, which is made up of different, individually homogeneous minority uni-cultures that live under a similarly defined majority uni-culture” (16). Pleading for a new notion of integration, Genç reacts against the multicultural relativism with its complementary rejection of universalism and universal norms supposedly hiding the imposition of Western values. Another problem refers to the fact that multiculturalism “accommodates rights on the basis of groups not via individuals”, thus giving birth to “the tyranny of community over individuals” (ibid.: 53). Furthermore, an egalitarian multicultural agenda has generated compensatory mechanisms which were called affirmative action policies and favoured the minority groups posing a threat to the fundamental principles of a democratic society that is expected to reject the long-term special treatment of a certain group. In spite of its positive aims to ensure support and representation for the marginal ethnic groups, multiculturalism may end up reinforcing segregation, even encouraging cultural separatism or forms of self-government: “By recognizing identities, a multiculturalist policy is in danger not only of being non-operational, but also of having an effect which undermines its aims” (Wieviorka 1998: 904). On the same wavelength, Barry’s *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (2002) identifies a wide variety of multicultural failings such as

a refusal to set principled limits on minority rights and minority autonomy, a misguided hostility to the common sense of citizenship that binds together the members of a democratic community, an unhealthy preoccupation with questions of cultural difference, and a disturbing indifference to the challenge of redressing deeply entrenched socio-economic injustice. (Murphy 2012: 84)

Initially perceived as an uploaded or progressive variant of multiculturalism, the concept of interculturalism “can be traced back to 1959, while European perspectives date from the 1980s and 1990s” (James cited in Cantle 2012: 141). All in all, the evolution from

one paradigm to another marks the transition from multicultural co-existence to intercultural dialogue and communication with the former emphasizing the necessity to preserve cultural heritage and the latter acknowledging and enabling cultures “to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve” (Powell and Sze cited in Meer, Modood, and Zapata-Barrero 2016: 39).

Relying upon Cattle’s distinction between multiculturalism and interculturalism (2012: 89-90 and 2016: 144-45), the following components reveal both their similarities and differences:

Multiculturalism	Interculturalism
Protection of rather ‘static’ cultural heritage	Support for distinctive cultural heritage based upon a dynamic concept of difference welcoming evolution over time and challenging group identity
Focus upon homogeneous identity groups	Interest in fluid groups with heterogeneous group identity
Defence of minority differences against assimilationist tendencies to the detriment of the majority identity	Constant reconsideration of both minority and majority identities due to their interrelation and to external and global influences
Consolidation of the self-defined personal identity through reinforcement with people of the same background	Discovery of personal identity in relation to others, by means of exploration and openness, not by building a protective shell against any exchange.
Perception of ‘difference’ in terms of ‘pure’ identities tacitly supported through acceptance of categories like ‘Black’, ‘White’, ‘Jewish’, ‘Sikh’ and ‘Irish’ treated as homogeneous groups in legal and policy terms (funding and representation); suspicion of and even opposition to cosmopolitan identities	Recognition of plural identities, with increasing numbers of mixed race and intermarriage, alongside growing numbers of dual and multinational identities, with interventions that cross categories; the emergence of heterogeneous hybrid and cosmopolitan identities.
Understanding ‘difference’ around longstanding majority/minority divisions within each nation with a focus upon ‘accommodation’ between them.	Comprehending ‘difference’ beyond national references influenced by international events and exchange (e.g., through diaspora and transnational social media communication).
Defining ‘difference’ in binary terms, usually in relation to ‘race’ or ethnicity.	Enhancing the multifaceted character of ‘difference’, embracing gender, disability, sexual orientation and age, as well as nationality of religion.
Belief that difference is determined by socio-economic factors reflecting patterns of oppression and exploitation.	Recognition of socio-economic factors as important determinants of prejudices and stereotypes, but not as the sole determinants; emphasis upon education/interaction programmes as a means of avoiding stereotypes and preconceptions.
Promotion of passivism, fearing that any sense of commonality or belonging would tend towards assimilation and loss of group identities.	Proactivism and development of common values and a sense of belonging at a societal level; a multifaceted collective identity.
Restriction of debates about diversity to deny ‘the oxygen of publicity’ to extremists and to prevent the raising of any tensions.	Encouragement of more open debates to enable people to come to terms with change and support for a looser legal framework.

All of the afore-mentioned terminological distinctions acquire much more clarity in their detailed analysis in connection to Zadie Smith’s novels (*White Teeth* – 2000, *The Autograph Man* – 2002, *On Beauty* – 2005 and *NW* – 2012) which feature protagonists in search of a new identity in their struggle to cope with the challenges of the changing landscape of contemporary societies.

2. Post-Migrant Identities: *White Teeth* (2000)

Dealing with the history of three generations of immigrants, Zadie Smith's first novel *White Teeth* (2000) explores the transformations affecting the personal and social life of individuals belonging to minority groups, but continuously interacting with members of the majority culture. Step by step, issues such as identity, cultural heritage, gender, race or religion become the writer's focus in a novel whose value primarily resides in the authentic portrayal of the changing relationships among the protagonists as well as the inevitable confusion and unpredictability generated by the daily prerequisites of a multicultural community.

Advocating the preservation of cultural heritage, Samad Miah Iqbal always claims to be extremely proud of his Bengali background and his Muslim religion; his confession to one of his fellow workers expresses his fear of assimilation: "I have been corrupted by England, I see that now - my children, my wife, they too have been corrupted. I think maybe I have made the wrong friends. Maybe I have been frivolous. Maybe I have thought intellect more important than faith" (Smith 2001: 144). Creating a false aura of a legendary past, Samad tries to compensate for his menial job as a waiter in the London restaurant of one of his relatives and to blame the English culture for his personal weaknesses and failures:

I don't wish to be a modern man! I wish to live as I always meant to! I wish to return to the East! [...] I should never have come here - that's where every problem has come from. Never should have had my sons here, so far from God. [...] My dearest friend, Archibald Jones, is an unbeliever! Now: what kind of a model am I for my children? (ibid.: 145)

To a certain extent, Samad's resistance to change is merely declarative and is not reflected by his behaviour (e.g., he gives in to sexual temptation and cheats his wife Alsana with his children's music teacher, Miss Poppy Burt-Jones). The Epigraph to the second part of the novel dedicated to Samad embodies his reluctance to embrace the diversity of the present: "Are you still looking back to where you came from or where you are?" (ibid.: 123). Hoping to save their roots, Samad Iqbal sends his son Magid back to Bangladesh disappointingly realizing that upon his return Magid is "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" (ibid.: 407). The spectre of assimilation haunts Samad who is tortured by happy visions of returning to his home country:

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. Who would want to stay? But you have made a devil's pact... it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognizable, you belong nowhere. (ibid.)

The instability and the loss of the sense of cultural identity Samad experiences is actually the embodiment of "the post-migrant identity" which is "by its very nature a transitional one, characterized by continual reassessment and redefinition" (Scott 2007: 2).

Irie, Magid and Millat become representatives of the third generation of immigrants and as such, their background and developing personalities are in fact the result of what Zadie Smith calls "the great immigrant experiment":

It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with first and last names on a direct collision course. [...] It is only this late in the day, and possibly only in Willesden, that you can find best friends Sita and Sharon, constantly mistaken for each other because Sita is white (her mother liked the name) and Sharon is Pakistani (her mother thought it best - less trouble). (Smith 2001: 327).

Both Magid and Millat are caught in the identity struggle with the former finding a refuge in “the standards of an old-fashioned colonial identity” (Iversen 46) and the latter joining a fundamentalist group because he does not want to be defined in accordance with the multicultural pretences of the White English majority culture:

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 people's jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave all the jobs to his relatives; that he could be a dentist or a shop-owner or a curry-shifter, but not a footballer or a film-maker; that he should go back to his own country; or stay here and earn his bloody keep; that he worshipped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, 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 [...]. (Smith 2001: 234)

Millat's frustrations envisage Cattle's warnings against the negative effects of multicultural policies and mirror Salman Rushdie's concern with respect to the same issues: “Now there's a new catchword: ‘multiculturalism’. In our schools, this means little more than teaching the kids a few bongo rhythms, how to tie a sari and so forth. In the police training programme, it means telling cadets that black people are so ‘culturally different’ that they can't help making trouble. Multiculturalism is the latest token gesture towards Britain's blacks, and it ought to be exposed, like ‘integration’ and ‘racial harmony’, for the sham it is” (cited in Scott 2007: 2).

The entire novel undermines the multicultural claim of support for ‘pure identities’ and there are many examples to be mentioned in this case: Archibald Jones marries Clara Bowden who is of Jamaican origins and even the Chalfens themselves turn out to be representatives of a third generation of immigrants of Polish background. Last but not least, young Irie Jones has been viewed as “Smith's surrogate” (ibid.) in the novel and an embodiment of the idea of hybridity since she is the character who understands that in spite of her attempts to lay claim upon her grandmother's Jamaican roots, “roots won't matter anymore because they can't because they mustn't because they're too long and they're too tortuous and they're just buried too damn deep. She looks forward to it” (Smith 2001: 527).

3. Eluding Identity Categorization: *The Autograph Man* (2002)

Zadie Smith's second novel, *The Autograph Man* (2002), preserves the setting of multicultural London from *White Teeth* (2000), yet the two novels “differ significantly in their representation of multiculturalism, especially in the way the second generation of migrants is portrayed” (Terentowicz-Fotyga 2008: 57). The protagonist of the novel is Alex-Li Tandem, a British Chinese Jew who collects and earns a living by selling autographs of celebrities and has a troublesome relationship with Esther, a Black British Jew. In a postmodernist style, Zadie Smith “mixes up, parodies, and destroys stereotypes out of her belief in the

individuality of difference”; in order “to prevent the ethnic interpretations common to postcolonial criticism”, she highlights the “free-floating” character of “Jewishness” and “Goyishness” (King 2003: 100).

Similarly to what happens with the characters in *White Teeth* (2000), *The Autograph Man* (2002) distinguishes between the experiences of the first and second generations of immigrants to ultimately describe in detail the identity problems of the immigrants’ children. Alex’s father, Li-Jin briefly figures in the prologue, but his behaviour alludes to the fact that he perceives difference as a burden and he has the vision of a future in which his son would perfectly integrate: “He doesn’t want Alex ‘standing out from the crowd’. He knows that soon the boy’s life will become difficult and hopes conformity might be his saviour. And so he wants him to be ready, normal. He wants him to be part of this everybody” (Smith 2003: 6).

Alex’s family roots could be traced back to places in Eastern Europe, Russia and China and the same cultural blending characterizes his favourite 1940 movie star Kitty Alexander who used to be Katya Alessandro, “a Russian-Italian child of Capri” (ibid.: 272).

According to Terentowicz-Fotyga, “the Jewish diaspora in *The Autograph Man* is depicted as a cultural melting pot rather than integrated community” (2008: 58). If the novel starts with Alex recording characteristics that might help him publish a book upon Jewishness and Goyishness, by the end of the novel he realizes the futility of such an enterprise and when one of his friends asks him: “And how’s that book of yours? [...] The one about this is the opposite of that [...]”, Alex mockingly replies: “I got tired of it, finished it” [...] (Smith 2003: 330). In 2003, Furman acknowledges the fact that by the description of Tandem’s travails, Smith “explores the difficulty of claiming a viable identity given the increasing slipperiness of racial, ethnic, religious and class boundaries” (8). It is in fact the same “fluid sense of identity” mentioned by Terentowicz-Fotyga in 2008 (57) and embedded in the protagonist’s change of name (from the Chinese “Tan” to the supposedly neutral “Tandem”) read “as a symbolic transition from the reality of fixed identity (with a name as an indicator of background and origin) to the space of shifting meanings and multiplied signifieds” (ibid.), the intercultural space of multifaceted identity. On the same wavelength, Alex’s Black Jewish friend, Adam Jacobs, eludes any identity categorization and “lurched from one ill-fitting ‘identity’ to another every summer” (Smith 2003: 129); Alex’s own “instinct” was “to detest groupings of all kinds - social, racial, national or political - he had never joined so much as a swimming club” (ibid.: 167). Understood as the logical outcome of the transition process from a multicultural to an intercultural paradigm, Alex’s attitude reflects the rejection of the homogeneous identity groups and the interest in fluid communities with heterogeneous group identities; this is the reason why he manages to understand the ridicule nature of the Jewish and Goyish rigid coordinates: “Life is not just symbol, Jewish or Goyish. Life is more than just a Chinese puzzle. Not everything fits. Not every road leads to epiphany” (ibid.: 180). Although he repeatedly dismisses the relevance of the Judaic Kaddish which he will ultimately participate in, Alex complies with his friends’ insistence on this matter only to come to terms with his father’s death and his own lack of rootedness.

4. The Paradox of Multicultural Policies: *On Beauty* (2005)

Written in the spirit of her previous two novels, yet moving one step further, Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* (2005) consolidates her “multicultural vision” which “traverses the mores of ethnic and cultural existence in an upbeat celebration of fusion and hybridity” (Tynan 2008: 73). The Belseys and Kipps are the two families whose confrontation and development Smith follows throughout the pages of her third novel. Howard Belsey, English by birth and

American by residence, is a professor of art history in the fictional college town Wellington and has married Kiki, an African-American woman who works as a nurse and with whom he has three children, Jerome, Zora and Levi, “the lens of Smith’s ironical explorations of race, class and gender relations” (Batra 2010: 1079). The ideological clash is generated by the arrival of Monty Kipps, a neo-conservative Trinidadian British art historian, housed by the Black Studies Department of Howard’s college.

At the onset of the novel, Howard’s son Jerome spends some time in the midst of the Kipps family in London and assumes the role of revealing the flaws in the functioning of the multicultural paradigm to which his father has ascribed:

How could he explain how pleasurable it had truly been to give himself up to the Kippes? [...] to hear that Equality was a myth, and Multiculturalism a fatuous dream. [...] When Monty suggested that minority groups too often demand equal rights they haven’t earned, Jerome had allowed this strange new idea to penetrate him without complaint [...] When Michael argued that being Black was not an identity but an accidental matter of pigment, Jerome had not given a traditionally historical Belsey answer - ‘Try telling that to the Klansman coming at you with a burning cross’ - but rather vowed to think less of his identity in the future. (Smith 2006: 44)

Belsey’s wife Kiki becomes aware of her own ambivalent status at the moment when she hires Monique, “a squat Haitian woman”: “Kiki stayed in her strange moment, nervous of what this black woman thought of another black woman paying her to clean” (ibid.: 11); she also meditates upon the pre-established roles historically attributed to Black women: “Kiki’s great-great-grandmother, a house-slave; her grandmother, a nurse” (ibid.: 17). Unlike her husband, Kiki starts noticing the effects of change and the emergence of new identities as reflected by her children (e.g., she acknowledges the difference between herself and her son Jerome who is able to understand and emotionally respond to Mozart’s requiem: “Kiki felt moved, and then another feeling interceded: pride. I don’t understand, she thought, but he does. A young black man of intelligence and sensibility, and I have raised him [...]”) (ibid.: 70).

Somehow similarly to Irie Jones’s attempt to trace back her Jamaican roots, Zora does everything in her power to be accepted in Claire Malcom’s African-American poetry course, but not because she is truly interested in her cultural heritage; in fact, she sees it as another asset for her future career. On the other hand, the youngest son of the Belsey family, Levi, feels the pressure of the majority group which makes him explain: “I just don’t want to live here anymore, man... all everybody does is stare” (Smith 2006: 85); as a consequence, he ends up getting involved in a number of conflictual situations (he tries to convince his fellow workers from the music section of the supermarket where he had been working on Saturdays to join forces and refuse to work on Christmas, but he only manages to lose his part-time job; he starts hanging out with some other black kids who are selling second-hand items at the corner of the street; he joins marches organized for the rights of the Haitians; he blames Carl for his submission when he accepts the job of a hip-hop archivist in the library of the Black Studies department; he even steals a valuable painting from Kipps’s office because he is manipulated into believing it used to belong to the Haitians). Levi’s youth and confusion reflect his search for a new identity which will permit him to deal with his own hybridity.

One of the most interesting characters of the novel is Monty Kipps who exposes the threat of negative discrimination embedded in the employment of affirmative action policies;

Kiki describes him as a “black conservative” who “thinks it’s demeaning for African-American kids to be told they need special treatment to succeed [...]” (ibid.: 122). Monty always perorates on the paradox of multicultural policies leading to the discrimination of the majority group: “Apparently everybody gets special treatment - blacks, gays, liberals, women - everybody except poor white males” (Smith 2006: 148). All in all, Monty’s discouragement of a “culture of victimhood” which “will continue to raise victims” (ibid.: 368) is rather luring, but it remains only a piece of pompous rhetoric because he lamentably fails to put his theories into practice.

5. Negotiating New Identities: *N-W* (2012)

Situated in North-Western peripheral London, Zadie Smith’s fourth novel *NW* (2012) features four protagonists (Leah Hanwell, Natalie (Keisha) Black, Felix Cooper and Nathan Bogle) whose personal experiences teach them how to negotiate their identities in a multicultural environment. Whereas Leah is an Irish Protestant whose mother is from Dublin, Natalie is the daughter of Jamaican immigrants. The message the novel transmits is that “much more important than her gender, ethnic and religious identities [...] is the life each woman chooses to lead and what it says about the geographies she defines in her space” (Slavin 2015: 101). Out of the four protagonists, three of them lead a double life, still uncertain of their own identity: Leah is a married woman in her thirties who apparently tries to give birth, but who secretly takes contraceptives without her husband’s knowledge; Natalie becomes a successful lawyer and is a married woman with two children, yet she resorts to her ‘black’ identity to arrange meetings with strangers over the internet; last but not least, although Felix seems to have found stability at the side of his new girlfriend Grace, he has a final romantic rendez-vous with his Russian lover Annie and gets involved in an incident on the underground which leads to his death. Wells draws attention upon the fact that

seen in this light, the characters in *NW*, with their secretive double lives, play dual roles as representations of certain aspects of the multicultural reality of contemporary urban Britain and as manifestations of the ethical danger of reducing others to essentialized identities based on race or other factors while denying their uniqueness. (2013: 99-100)

This novel clearly depicts the transition to an intercultural world in which socio-economic factors play an important role in the development of an individual, but they do not represent the sole determinants of his behaviour: “While all three main characters are products of the same marginalized racial and socioeconomic environment, they each exhibit distinctive responses to the circumstances in which they were brought up” (Wells 2013: 100). By the character of Leah, Smith demolishes the classical stereotype that lack of ambition and underachievement characterize the representatives of the immigrant culture; unlike Natalie, white Leah is satisfied with a low-paid job in a local social agency and shows preference for a *laissez-faire* lifestyle smoking dope with her neighbours and dreaming of being eighteen forever. In spite of her mother’s Pauline prejudices against the Africans, Leah’s African-born husband Michael struggles to raise above his level and to provide a better life for his family. At the opposite pole, Natalie changes her name from Keisha “to distance herself from her impoverished black heritage” and is “willing to reject her family and her religion to pursue a legal career” (ibid.) that would make her achieve a different identity. The sadness pervading

Natalie's story arises from her belated understanding that a complete rejection of her cultural heritage cannot possibly give her the stability and sense of completion she hopes for:

Daughter drag Sister drag. Mother drag. Wife drag. Court drag. Rich drag. Poor drag. British drag. Jamaican drag. Each required a different wardrobe. But then considering these various attitudes she struggled to think what would be the most authentic or perhaps the least inauthentic. (Smith 2012: 245).

Natalie's final ramblings from Willesdane Lane to Killburn High Road to Fortune Green and Hampstead Heath depict the restrictiveness of her circumscribed area as well as her insecurity and the instability of her self; her old schoolmate Nathan Bogle is trapped in their common past and cannot escape his already ascribed identity. Like Irie in *White Teeth*, Natalie realizes that revelling in past history is not the answer to present problems, so, in spite of their common background, she is ready to call the police and tell them about Nathan's complicity in Felix's murder; the last line of the novel alludes to a reconciliation of her two selves: "I got something to tell you", said Keisha Blake, disguising her voice with her voice" (ibid.: 294).

6. Conclusions

The transition from a multicultural to an intercultural paradigm reflects the current dynamism of mixed cultures and ethnic diversity and becomes a worthy source of exploration in Zadie Smith's novels ranging from *White Teeth* (2000) to *NW* (2012).

All four novels undermine the multicultural support for 'pure identities' and celebrate the emergence of heterogenous, hybrid and cosmopolitan identities. The whole detailed analysis of the novels has revealed the fact that the transition process is accompanied by uncertainty and instability with representatives of second or third generations of immigrants still confused about their personal and cultural identity and struggling to gain a voice of their own.

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