White Teeth: Symbolism Of White Teeth

White Teeth by Zadie Smith is a symbolic novel that illustrates the nature of people and how they relate to each other. Teeth, as widely used in the novel, are a symbolic term that is used to mean people. Teeth are essentially white no matter the race of an individual; this factual concept of the teeth makes them a unifying symbol of unity among all human beings. In the same context, they are widely endured and preserved in the skull even after they are long gone. Teeth, therefore, in this context, leave a long legacy and a means of connecting people at all times in history. Zadie uses the analogy of the teeth to present the various ways that people relate and behave in normal life scenarios, for instance, the canines are typically referred to as the ripping teeth used in a normal bite. In a positive sense, the canine helps us to experience sensuous stuff that life offers, while also in the negative sense, the canine is a predator's teeth and therefore are threatening. In the novel, Alsana compares the influence of Chalfens on Irie and Millat to the ripping apart of children by Chalfens, and this destroys the qualities in them that are essential to their parents. The above analogy is a sample representation of how Zadie uses imagery and symbolism to address certain issues that face people in normal lives. The essay will thus discuss the novel, analyzing critically various concepts and themes critically discussing the ideologies of life.

Molars, on the other hand, are typically referred to as grinding teeth; they are usually used to help in the digestion of food. Metaphorically, the molars help us in the processing of information we perceive as the take into ourselves. In the chapter titled ‘Molars,’ the characters Millat Magid corner Samad together with Poppy as they enjoy a bite into the apple using their white teeth. In this context, the writer uses the analogy of teeth and especially molars to reflect on the event where the twins “digest” the actions of their father and so are destined to take on the same footsteps.

In most cases, teeth lead to trouble, for instance, when Clara’s upper teeth get knocked off her mouth or in the incident when Millat and Migad corner Poppy with Samada. Moreover, the teeth can be lost very easily. For instance, in the case where Clara losses her teeth in the accident involving her scooter, she then rejects the Jehovah's Witnesses, and so she ends up losing part of her identity. During the violence following Indira Gandhi's demise, the writer tells that in the Indian Streets, “teeth” were all over, scattered in the land, mingling within the dust” As the Indian people engage in violence and unrest, they too end up knocking each other’s teeth, refuting the understanding that teeth actually unite us as human beings and that is the factor that makes us common.

Root canal has been used in the story symbolically to imply the examination of another person’s past. Teeth are a universal element, but all the same, they are without meaning in the absence of their roots. Samad tries to have Magid sent back to Bengal where his roots are, but as the Smith states, “You would not get to no place speaking of the first sign of tooth decay to be as a result of something rotten, something that is degenerated, something deep into the gums. Roots were the savior, the ropes one throwing out to the rescue of the drowning to save their souls” The action of salvaging the root of the tooth that is the root canal, one does not actually require to have the tooth saved. Indeed, even sending Magid to Bangladesh does not stand as a barrier to him from coming out as intellect in English (YILDIZ, F?rat, 34).

In the story, the character that is mostly affected by their root is Irie. She hates how much her cultural heritage and her past restricts and complicates her present. Thus, she ends up feeling deceived when she found out that Clara's upper teeth were false. The teeth of Clara are rootless, a representation of her lack of connection to her heritage. In order to locate her roots, she seeks out Hortense. In the wake of Clara's frustrations with her roots, it fits her perfectly to be a dentist. In Smith's metaphor that the teeth are people, a dentist would thus present the ideology of relationships between individuals that tends to keep them healthy.

At the beginning of the story, Smith starts with a quote that states, "the past is a prologue." In this context, she tries to set the stage for a tale that will try to connect generations. However, legacy and heritage do not operate in a smooth, parallel line, much alike with Smith's story, which veers from the direct. Although legacy might not necessarily be definable, in the concept of white teeth, it is, however, not escapable. Take, for instance, the lives of Millat and Magid. Smith explains that Millat and Magid are seemingly destined to honor the existence of their roots to express the past further since, as immigrants, escaping their history was not a concern, just like the teeth cannot hold position without their roots. Smith brings about the ideology of heritage and our past in relation to the teeth, just like the teeth only exits because of the firmness of its roots; so is our heritage, which holds us firm to our past. However, even though the actions of the twins were a thing of the past, they still had the power to make and rewrite their own different stories away from the past. In her works, Zadie Smith stood for cultural diversity and humanism and became a voice for the depressed people more so for the blacks (Naik, & Pandey, 3).

Magid was a precious kid; he was overly serious and was near genius. His great intelligence seemingly threatens Samad, who desires to have his son fulfill the legacy of Mangal Pande of total devotion to the people of Bengali. In this case, one would similarly think as samad that by sending Magid to his home town Bangladesh, he would easily acquire the legacy. Surprisingly, Magid develops a desire in English knowledge and thus ends up being an English intellect; by this, he espoused the progressive views that Samad had as fears in place of the traditional one that Magid intended to learn. However, Magid indeed is his father's kid since he is a storyteller. Magid is compelled to impact his wisdom to the others the same way Samad felt when he was compelled by to have his legacy shared with Mangal Pande, whether it was relatable at that time or not. Samad still has the hope for his legacy to be carried by Millat, because he considers himself to be good for nothing. By coming up as a controversial person and deciding to stand up for what he believed in, he seemingly honors the story of Samad very dear, which he refers to as Pandas bravery. Just like Pande, Millat declined to do what he was told, and the attempt to challenge the authority with unrest does not do him any good. He actually pays for the crime by serving community service.

Irie clearly despises the manner in which heritage tends to complicate and bound the present. Because of this, she decides to embrace the Chalfenism with the focus on the future and the present. However, as Archie the daughter of mediocre root rejecting Clara, she longs to have a heritage, and so she seeks Hortense. Although Irie is so reluctant on her part to acknowledge it, her thirst for knowledge links her to the Bowden traditions just connected as she is to Chalfenism. Towards the end of the novel, it seemingly appears that Irie has finally found a balance Chalfenism and Bowdenism because she is finally in Jamaica her homeland. Irie's daughter demonstrated the general ideal state of heritage's inescapability. In the novel, she is described to be free from her past because of the fact that she will never have the chance to know his father. However, as a matter of sense, she comes out to have the richest of the

heritage of every character. Irie is seemingly destined to have a follow of a collage of her roots; these are assembled from all the various cultures that exist and surround her. Smith clearly links up imagery of the white teeth in her explanations of heritage and finding of one's roots. It is true that we can't really define our past and tell our story without the understanding of our roots, just like the teeth cannot stand firm without its roots.

Smith also introduces the concepts of coincidence and chance, which can be applied to either discredit or justify the notion of destiny. For instance, after Millat and Magid are separated, they become subject to constant coincidences, right from breaking their noses to the extent of defying death. It is a presentation of sheer luck and coincidence that happens to follow them at all times. At the same time, their story also unfolds of how they would later carry on with their family legacies. With Millat and Migad, fate and chance are the confounding factors that seem to follow them at all times in the story, as presented by Smith. Things that abruptly happened by chance lead them to a destiny that is inescapable.

Archie, for instance, is ever leaving the most relevant decision to mere chance; whether or not Perret will have to die, Whether Millat or Magid should seek re-uniting, and whether or not committing suicide should be a consideration. Archie, in his part, is very indecisive, so ironical chances like heads or tail give him assurance. Since little Archie excites Archie to the extent that he is thus required to make a decision, he seems to be contented with relinquishing control of his own life. It is thus mostly out of these characters that when he decides to jump in the front of Militant in the last part of the novel. Instead of taking pride in oneself and making decisions on a particular coin, Archie then takes a much bigger chance when he decides to have trust in himself. He ends up being rewarded with the knowledge, which made him understand truly his purpose in life.

In the novel, Smith enters the concept of Nurture debate, and this is a practice that is very deeply rooted in the faculty of biological sciences. By looking at how Smith presented the twins, Millat and Magid, it is easy for one to consider and conclude that various privileges and nurture are over nature, which is the experience over intrinsic because Millat and Magid are concluded to be geniuses. Millat is very rebellious and derelict. Magid, on the other end, is very intellectual and obedient. Since they are twins and identical for that matter, much of their differences must have been due to their experiences, Magid as a youth, and Millat, who was at home. The analogy of the teeth is also used in this context in that the teeth are all identical by color and shape, but they take different functions, the molars, for instance, are for grinding, and the canine are for tearing, Smith presents Mallet and Magid who are twins and look alike but just like teeth they hold different personalities.

Smith again presents the aspect of nurture dichotomy with the characters Marcus Chalfen and Joyce. Joyce is presented to be nurture at church, and her counterpart Marcus is simple in nurture. Joyce presented as a fervent horticulturalists and also a mother. Joyce had a belief that she would take up any plants and nurture it the desired end; it was in her belief to take a wayward teenager like Millat and successfully turn them around for the better. She quite well attributes to Irie and Millat's shortcomings to the lack of a strong father figure, meaning that they were never nurtured in the right way (McMann, Mindi, 12). Joyce acquires points for the side of nurturing by way of helping Millat improve his grades. Also, she does so by ignoring the son Joshua and therefore turning away from nurturing him. Joyce decides to let Joshua grow wild in the world. Marcus, on his part, represents the side of nurture in the debate. She creates time and devotes his life to the understanding that involves altering something's nature, which alters

it permanently. She ensures that the future mouse would not have a chance to escape their nature; this is to create the cancers that he programs into the genes. She also declines the favor of Irie; she believed Marcus was predisposed to meet a genetic engineer while the latter is a barbershop.

Smith presents his characters in a multicultural aspect across a cross-section of modern London. Zadie brings about the concept of Assimilation, where most of his characters are trapped in between different cultures and the urge to assimilate with the cultures and feel like a part of them. For instance, when Clara is a teenage girl, she, like Millat, finds herself trapped in a maze between honoring her parent's ways of life and exploring the interesting pop culture of the West that was all around her (McMann, Mindi, 3). She tried to stray from her heritage for the first time, and this gets her teeth knocked out. The second time she tries the same action by marrying Archie, she gets disowned by Hortense. The same fate follows Millat when he tries to stray from Samad’s plan for him to acquire traditional Bengali views. He is labeled as good for nothing in the process of doting Magid.

Magid is also caught in the middle of the cultures but strays in the divergent direction. He realizes inspiration in the secular and embracing genetic engineering as his new form of God. Again at the end of the novel, Samad is caught between his only two sons who, being in their opposite ways, betray the ideology of Bengali and its identity. This developmental phase in the novel presented by Smith brings out the concept of ethnicity and how crossing over to the opposite culture was deemed as very offensive means of your culture. Smith brings clear the above conflicting concepts in that regard (YILDIZ, F?rat, 12). Race and ethnicity in the novel is a great theme or factor that expounds on various people's way of life. The race has remained to be an integral point of discussion racism is not yet a thing of the place in various places around the globe. Smith, in the novel, brings across the ideal situation of race because they are all relative to our daily lives.

Conclusion

The teeth hold the central view of Smith’s theoretical explanations of her characters. The white teeth are a symbol of unity and a reference to how nature and our heritage are all integrated. The developments and imagery that Smith uses in his novel creatively articulate the concept of the teeth to the normal activities of human beings. The phases and characters are presented with a story that is all in line with the context of the White teeth.