



**MEDIA SHAPING IDENTITY IN A POST-COLONIAL CONTEXT IN
SWING TIME BY ZADIE SMITH**

Necati ERKILINÇ

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Petru GOLBAN

2021



**ZADIE SMITH TARAFINDAN YAZILAN DANS ZAMANI ADLI
ROMANDA MEDYANIN SÖMÜRGE SONRASI BAĞLAM İÇERİSİNDE
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**Master's Thesis
Department of English Language and Literature
Advisor: Prof. Dr. Petru GOLBAN
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T.R.
TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MASTER'S THESIS

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TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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TEKİRDAĞ-2021
Her hakkı saklıdır.

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I vow that in all the stages of preparation of this Master's Thesis, I have been strictly abiding by the academic rules and scientific ethics and that I have provided reference for every citation I have directly or indirectly used and works I have benefitted from are comprised of those I have listed in my references and that I have behaved accordingly to the spelling dictionary the institute specified.

24/06/2021

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ABSTRACT

Institution, Institute	:Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Institute of Social Sciences
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Thesis Title	:Media Shaping Identity in a Post-Colonial Context in <i>Swing Time</i> by Zadie Smith
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As a novel, Zadie Smith's *Swing Time* invites all kinds of people to assess the very vocabulary which one might speak of human experiences. The book reflects the Formation of Personality, which is being the greatest component in Bildungsroman, in quite an impeccable manner with the perspective of postmodern and postcolonial period and related theories. Zadie Smith's second major preoccupation confronts with the reader with regards to the concept of relativity. The novel provides the reader with the process of development of the character in such an extraordinary way that the reader receives a sensation that nothing is represented in the borders of solid and invariable form of depiction and this allows the possibility of stretching borders even more. Therefore, such qualities as Hybridity, Split of Identity or Mimicry that some of the characters share in common as well as encapsulating the general view of postcolonial period, bring them all the sensation of placelessness along with it. This feeling of homelessness does not only cause characters to fight a battle within their psychic realms and minds but at the same time directs reader such a question that "Given who we are, who we are told that we are not or who we imagine who we might become, how do we find our way back home where we belong?" This question, in case it is analyzed in its own resolution, specifies in a crystal clear the reasons of the decisions that the characters made in the novel along with concentrating on where exactly these decisions have led them and whether these journeys that they take have truly led them to a place where they belong. And the author aimed to offer this study with the intention of disclosing all mentioned aspects of the characters in the novel

Key Words: Bildungsroman, Hybridity, Mimicry, Zadie Smith, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism

ÖZET

Kurum, Enstitü : Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
ABD : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Tez Başlığı : Zadie Smith tarafından yazılan Dans Zamanı adlı Romanda
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Dans Zamanı, bir roman olarak, okuyucusunu kullanılan dil vasıtası ile yaşanabilecek her çeşit insani tecrübeyi değerlendirip bunlar üzerine konuşabileceği bir alana davet eder. Bildungsroman içerisinde yer alan en büyük faktör olan Kişilik Gelişim Süreci'ni, insanlara sömürgecilik sonrası ve postmodern dönem bakış açısıyla ilgili teorilerden faydalanarak çok iyi yansıtır. Zadie Smith'in ikinci en büyük uğraş odağı olan görecelik kavramı ise roman tarafından okuyucusunun tarafına yansıtılır. Roman gelişme sürecini okuyucusuna öyle bir şekilde sunar ki; okuyucu hiçbir şeyin aslında mutlak betimleme biçimiyle sunulmadığı izlenimine kapılır ve bu da kesinlik sınırlarının genişlemesine sebebiyet verir. Bu nedenden dolayı, karakterlerin bazılarının sahip olduğu Melezlik, Kişilik Bölünmesi ve *Taklitçilik* gibi kolonileşme sonrası dönemin bakış açısı ve terimlerini kapsayan ortak özellikleri beraberinde onlara belirli bir yere ait olamama hissiyatını da getirir. Bu ait olamayış duygusu sadece karakterlerin kendi ruhsal alemlerinde ve zihinlerinde bir savaş yaşamalarına sebep olmaz, aynı zamanda da okucuya şu soruyu edebi sınırlar çerçevesinde yöneltir: "Kim olduğumuza bakıldığında, ya da kim olamayacağımız bize başkaları tarafından söylendiğinde, hatta ve hatta kim olabileceğimizi hayal ettiğimizde, ait olduğumuz yerin yolunu nasıl buluruz?" Bu soru kendi içerisinde çözümlenebilmesi durumunda, okuyucusuna romanda karakterlerin verdikleri kararları sebeplerini apaçık bir şekilde ortaya çıkartarak, bu kararların onları nereye götürdüğüyle beraber, yaptıkları bu yolculuğun sonunun gerçekte onları ait oldukları yere götürüp götürmediğine de odaklanır. Ve yazar ise bu çalışmayı yine bu karakterlerin bütün bu özelliklerini ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla sunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bildungsroman, Melezlik, Taklitçilik, Zadie Smith, Sömürgecilik Sonrası, Postmodernizm

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Aynı zamanda Tekirdaę Namık Kemal Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde yer alan dięer saygıdeęer öğretim üyelerine de en içten minnetarlıęımı sunuyorum. Kendilerinin özverili çabaları, bana olan inançları ve akademik kariyerime katkıları benim için paha biçilemeyecek kadar deęerlidir. Ek olarak, arkadaşlarıma, aileme ve bu yolda benden desteęini esirgemeyen herkese de teőekkür ediyorum. Eğitim sürecimde eğitim aldığım bütün eğitimciler hayata karşı bakış açımın, yaratıcılıęımın gelişmesinde rol aldılar ve bu sayede, öğrenim sürecimde öğrendiklerim ile birlikte otantik fikirlerimi tezim içerisinde harmanlama imkanına sahip oldum.

Son olarak, yazmış olduğum bu tezi hayatımda büyük izler bırakmış Namık Kemal Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı eğitimcilerine adıyorum.

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INTRODUCTION

Zadie Smith, in her appealing novel, guides reader into a direction to make them realise that an individual cannot truly become himself unless he does possess a certain set of values being embedded into his or her unique identity. Through such sphere, from the perspective of two mixed-race children, Smith subverts the concept of identity and invites everyone who attempts to read it to contemplate thoroughly over the things that many avoided before in their lives. Along with the novel's plot which explores the Postcolonial motifs taking the story of these two mixed-race girls growing up on the wrong side of town as a paradigm, the book forces everyone to assess the real human experience in a virtual battlefield where a person might be found as fighting to acquire a certain identity. As the concept of change which appears to be the central element in Bildungsroman functions in the book as the provider of a classic story of betterment of oneself, in which the ability to move, to change, is rendered as a form of power. However, the real question awaiting to be answered remains unresponded due to the ambiguity of "Who does truly hold control of this spoken power?"

Through the characters' climb from one existential branch to another, being presumably the higher one, the progression of the book enlargen the view of microcosmic atmosphere of each character so that the reader could be participated in their lives as if it is their own. And each time readers witness these life events of the characters, each time they may find themselves being confronted with such an unanswered questions as "Can anyone better oneself by just moving into more impressive house or do the powerful feel at home just where they are?" These questions conveyed implicitly throughout the book in the minds of those who receive them and from the very beginning reminds those who embarks on the same journey with the characters to be aware of the fact that this is not only a postmodern Bildungsroman but rather a Bildungsroman dealing with more humanitarian concerns reifying the former happenings in a world where everyone struggles to wipe away the mess that had been caused during the colonial era. The novel also in its potential representation of the concept of relativity creates its own thematic sphere to a large

extent to draw a likeness to remind everyone that nothing exists as absolute in this world and a triumph to one character might be the tragedy for another and currency of happiness is not objective success but rather subjective status of satisfaction. Therefore, *Swing Time* brilliantly and bluntly brings a lot of things about race, class, gender and postcolonial matters in front of its receivers in relation to one's perception of the reality allowing the multiplicity of the interpretative versions basing on the decisions that the characters make and where these decisions will be leading them.

CHAPTER 1

1. PROGRESSION OF THE NOVEL WITHIN THE BORDERS OF BILDUNGSROMAN, THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY AND HYPERREALITY

The literary discourse of Victorian Bildungsroman represents in its essence a well-structured literary pattern being accompanied by the system of aesthetic values within a larger system of another pattern which is that of novel's. As a system in itself, Bildungsroman, along with many other genres, belongs to the system of literature as Y.N Tynyanov states it. If someone takes the literature as a system consisting of other systems framed within the general system of culture such system could also be found in the literary works as well such as it is allowed to be found within the structure of Bildungsroman. According to Y. N. Tynyanov's opinion ([1927] 1977: 270-281), literature is a system in which a battle takes place between central and peripheral (marginal) elements, and the mutations happening on the level of whatever element provide and determine the mutations on the general level of the system. Literary validity of such a system strengthens the approach of the author in terms of the specific apprehension of Victorian Bildungsroman as a fictional system whose elements are also the elements of other fictional systems as going into twofold direction as one is that of both male and female and the other is the correlative aspects of the characters within the novel. Both aspects, for the other writer too, are

indispensable elements that constitute its general system of pattern ([1927] 1977: 270-281). Each writer, either male or female, is inclined to provide their own interpretative representations framing their novels basing on this literary system within a more general fictional system of their own and thus, elements of such system are interrelated and correlated with one another and with that of a female one which appears to be different. Through which the readers are invited to untangle this complex system of thematic and narrative elements within the general fictional system of Bildungsroman. With Y. N. Tynyanov's theoretical contribution, one might come up with an idea that the correlation between the elements of a literary work as a system does not occur only in between the representation of the literary text as an idea of male or female writer but, in the same breath, as a form of characters' correlative aspects affecting each other. Therefore, such a correlative aspects that characters share among themselves through the postmodern concept of Binary Opposition gains a 'constructive function' in the progression of the development of the characters in the book. However, yet again, for whom it is constructive remains its relativity. In addition, to hypothesize, one might speculate the fact that each individual presented within the fictional system of Victorian Bildungsroman is at the same time since the book preserved within the reflection of the ideological space of its writer and in this case, that of Zadie Smith's considering the book includes some of the Bildungsroman motifs adjusted to postmodern period, makes it in fact a postmodern Bildungsroman.

As Victorian writers aimed to show the complexity of the hero's psychological and physical experiences as an absolute process in their developments leading them either to the success of formation of their personality or a failure. Zadie Smith, by selecting to disclose complex characters, intends to do the very same thing but from a distinct point of view questioning the relativity of success or failure within difficult circumstances and bringing out postcolonial elements into discussion within diversifying setting.

Mainly, the story is set in London, New York, and West Africa following two mixed-race young girls, Tracey and unnamed narrator, those who seemed to have an aspiration in common to be tap dancers when they grow up. While Tracey

seems to have enough talent to ultimately make it in the chorus line, the other becomes a personal assistant to a famous singer, witnessing the life of extreme privilege along the way. However, when the narrator decides to use her experience for the philanthropic purposes among the less fortunate, her love of dance takes her to West Africa. Readers witness the novel as being divided into seven different parts and alternating between the two narration time one as one that of narrator's childhood in 1980s London and the other as her adulthood working for an Australian pop star named Aimee.

Narrated in the first person narration style by an unidentifiable narrator, readers feel drawn into a sense of ambiguity and the issue of identity that give those who read it an idea of unbelonging since identity appears to be a lost aspect at the very beginning and it gives them a hint that the narrator does not belong anywhere but in fact wants to. The story begins in 2008 and the narrator is actually a mixed-race child of a white working-class father and a mother of Jamaican descent, tells reader about her time growing up in West London. The mother is someone who possesses domineering characteristics with seemingly showing quite interest in politics and the betterment of the community even if she appears to be not having any particular degree to afford it. In 1982, narrator meets another mixed-race girl who resembles very much to her in terms of skin colour and high interest in dancing and a lot other common characteristics. As neighbours and dance classmates, the two become close friends, despite narrator's harsh, self-taught mother looking down on Tracey. The narrator recalls to narrate the reader that meaningful bond she makes with Tracey over their mixed-race identity and love of dance. Since both of them are mixed-race one coming from a broken family while the other is from a breaking one, here one should consider the postcolonial concepts of Hybridity and sense of Split Identity as Homi Bhabha being the pioneer. According to Bhabha's view point (Bhabha, 1994), the postcolonial perspective provided the basic for "the recognition of the more complex cultural and political boundaries that" existed on the political spheres of all over the world (Bhabha, 1994, p.173). Bhabha's idea of hybridity suggests that cultures come after hybridizing process, rather than existing before that. Looking in its essence one might understand that from the very beginning

reader is not allowed to see the true identity of the narrator which might be the result of her most likely undesired and abandoned lineage within a contemporary foreign background limiting her to exist within the pre-existed political and cultural boundaries. Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994, p.176) does also point out the importance of the postmodernism while claiming that it was actually the ‘arbitrariness of the sign, the indeterminacy of writing, the splitting of the subject of enunciation, those theoretical concepts, produced the most useful descriptions of the formation of ‘postmodern’ cultural subjects. From his perspective, history had always been experienced representation of discriminations and misinterpretations of the cultures and the discourses of contemporary cultural studies had always been dealing with problematic issues such as race, nationality, gender, general life conditions, working conditions and other distinct forms of subjectivities. He also discusses that the diaspora people or immigrant find themselves mostly in the borders or away from the legal opportunities (Bhabha, 1994, p.174). Therefore, narrator’s desired dance career is hindered by her flat feet and though it might seem to be due to her heredity but in fact, she has been limited to exist in a limited sphere in a community as a different cultural subject, while Tracey being an assimilated subject moves on with what she aspires to become and loves to do winning several awards for her dancing talent. When the girls are ten, they are caught performing and videotaping a highly sexualized dance at another girl’s birthday party, inspired by an Australian pop star, Aimee.

The roads of the two begin to drift apart from one another, the moment the narrator deliberately fails an exam to join a public school while Tracey moves on to a private one. In 1998, following narrator’s graduation from college, she finds a work at the music station called YTV. A month after a brief encounter with Aimee occurs, then the narrator catches her attention in a brief moment to be hired afterwards as the pop star’s assistant when the former assistant quits. A while after, now being in her 30s, part her job requires her to make frequent philanthropic trips to West Africa, to a specific location called Gambia on behalf of Aimee’s charitable purposes. During this travel to Gambia to help Aimee open a school for girls with the help of a large Senegalese population led by a man named Lamin, she meets there with Hawa, the

middle-class daughter of teachers. However, she draws a portrayal to be different than the narrator in respect to her attitude towards the village life in general providing her a different angle of experience since Hawa does not contempt it but rather choose to embrace it which could be suggested through:

“She had, unlike me, no contempt whatsoever for village life: she loved the smallness, the gossip, the repetition and the closeness of family... I lay on the floor next to her each night, on our neighbouring mattresses, grateful for the blue aura that came off her Samsung as she scrolled through her messages... laughing or sighing at pictures that amused her, breaking up the dark (Smith, 2016).”

According to logic, one might suggest that ‘*Would not it be better if she had left the village for a better life?*’ But the real question is: it will be better according to whom? The narrator chooses to see the village as pitiful, however, both Hawa, a privileged member of it and Granger, Aimee’s African American bodyguard, view it in a different perspective and their perspectives have been shaped according to what their origin, ethnicity or life conditions provided them and still they have chosen to embrace it all breaking the chains of materialistic sociopolitical impositions. In case of Granger, his point of view about the village life might be explained by taking the following paragraphs from the book into consideration:

“Where I saw deprivation, injustice, poverty, Granger saw simplicity, a lack of materialism, communal beauty... Where I saw polygamy, misogyny, motherless children (my mother’s island childhood, only writ large, enshrined in custom), he remembered... a depressed single mother [and] spoke to me with genuine tears in his eyes of how happier he might have been raised by not one woman but 15 (Smith, 2016).”

Recalling her childhood once more, she reflects on her time deliberately failing an entrance exam to a private grammar school as mentioned earlier, despite being identified as an advanced reader by her teachers. Tracey attends a performing arts school instead, being separated from the narrator along the way. However, their paths cross at a party one night, during which the narrator loses her virginity in an incident. She also witnesses that Tracey was taking drugs to a large extent to

overdose it, and thus the narrator calls on her mother to take her to the hospital. Another incident includes the girls assisting a dance show at their old studio, during which Tracey steals ticket money from the show. When Tracey is accused of stealing, Tracey's mother, in return, blames the pianist, Mr. Booth, for sexually harassing her daughter. The narrator, however, supposes that Tracey was likely sexually assaulted by her father as a child.

After graduating college and finding a few trivial jobs, the narrator reunites with Tracey during a production of *Guys and Dolls*, in which Tracey is performing. Four months later than that, the narrator secures an internship at YTV. When the narrator informs Tracey of her decision to leave the show for YTV, Tracey sends a letter afterwards telling her that she had seen her father performing sexual intercourse with a black inflatable doll dressed like a golliwog. From that moment on forth, the narrator decides to cut ties with Tracey for eight years until seeing her again in a production of *Show Boat*. When the narrator sees Tracey's two potential children with Tracey's mother after the show, she decides not to wave a greeting and leaves the place pretending as if she had not seen Tracey. Later on, in present day Africa, the narrator hears a rumor that Aimee has fallen in love with Lamin and is seeking to obtain a green card for him so he can return with her to New York to move into there with Aimee. Meanwhile, the narrator faces a series of thorny tasks in Africa, which she thinks is punishment for opposing Aimee and Lamin's flirtation without knowing that it is really due to the narrator's mother becoming a Member of Parliament and opposing the local government near Aimee's school. Afterwards, the narrator visits her mother and discovers that Tracey had actually been sending her mother a series of wrathful email regarding widespread conspiracies. When the narrator confronts Tracey, she learns that her old friend is now overweight, is no longer able to dance, and has three children from three different fathers. In a final visit to Africa, Aimee and narrator find themselves presented before a beautiful newborn baby. The narrator, who has a brief affair with Lamin, feels alike with the baby which, in fact, proves that she had no idea about who she was innately and which lineage she did belong to, just like she is deprived of her own identity. But because of her unstoppable rising emotions for Lamin causes her to be fired when

Aimee learns from cunning Fern who seems to be a jealous helper who is in love with the narrator that the narrator slept with Lamin. By many, this attitude can be interpreted as a rebellious behaviour of her identity screaming out its own existence only to be acknowledged by someone else maybe hoping to find a particular place to belong rather than being oppressed under another identity just like Aimee's. and Narrator's lack of identity, but in fact seeking out for it is projected onto her idol, the very first person that inspired and encouraged her to take on dance lessons Fred Astaire, thus cementing her attitude. She is alienated from herself and states that she wishes to consider herself a stranger, she feels that this alienation is something to aspire to, as demonstrated by Astaire's dancing. Given the impression that she is received from dancing is, in her way of perceiving the world, equivalent to the alienation of oneself from the rest of the world. As she is too someone making barriers between herself and the rest of the world dance becomes another mechanism that prevent herself from coming to terms with her identity and through these quotations of her it can be better understood:

“This is what I understood by it: that for Astaire the person in the film was not especially connected with him. And I took this to heart, or rather, it echoed a feeling I already had, mainly that it important to treat oneself as a kind of stranger, to remain unattached and unprejudiced in your own case. I thought you needed to think like that to achieve anything in this world. Yes, I thought that was a very elegant attitude” (Smith, 2016).

Near the end, back in London, she feels stunned to learn that Aimee adopted that beautiful baby from Africa, which she has named as Sankofa. Angry about being fired, narrator informs the press of Aimee's illegal adoption expecting that it could harm her prestige on media. However, Aimee tries to counter by making up a fake name for her and defaming her in the press, but the public sides with the narrator. Aimee, then, has the narrator sent to London, where she pays Lamin to meet her despite her unromantic feelings for him. While in London, Tracey posts the video online of her and the narrator performing a sexualized dance at the birthday party when they were only child. This directs the public against the narrator. This immediately allows the emergence of the concept of Hyperreality under the title of

Baudrillard's book *Simulacra and Simulation* in which he furthers the idea that our current society has replaced all reality and meaning with symbols and signs, and that human experience is a simulation of reality. Furthermore, he argues that receiver take 'maps' of reality from media tools as being more real than our actual lives. These simulacra or hyperreal copies precede our lives, such that our television friends may seem more 'alive' to us than the real person playing that character. He also studied how media affected the perception of reality of the receiver and the world around them. And according to him, Hyperreality is a generation by "models of a real without origin or reality" and by moving on with following statements he claims that "everything in this universe comes to exist only through its representation which can be endlessly multiplied. As a result of the proliferation of these models, the contemporary world is "the desert of the real itself" (Baudrillard, 1984, p.1). Considering this aspect of the Hyperreality, it would not be faulty to state that the narrator uses media as a tool of construction of reality to affect those who will be receiving it through media to turn them all against Aimee over the reason of her illegal adoption as well as Aimee giving a counter response by making up a fake name for her to defame her in the press. However, media functions twofold in here, both as a tool to affect and manipulate others and a tool from which many characters are being affected such as the narrator is one of them when she watches Fred Astaire for the first time on TV dancing and singing who truly gives inspiration to her or making her dream about the life as if it is always the way how it is presented on that TV and that similarly, she can dance and sing too just like Astaire is dancing alone, unattached from the crowd and isolate from the rest of the world such as she desired. Similarly, in the case of Tracey's publishing the tape to direct public against the narrator taking advantage of these maps of reality.

Tracey possesses a gift that appears to be wasted on the wider world: "a gift for seeing that seemed to have its only outlet and expression here, in my living room, in front of my television, and which no teacher ever saw, and no exam ever managed to successfully register or even note, and of which, perhaps, these memories are the only true witness and record" (Smith, 2016). This quotation from the book proves the fact that no matter how talented she is, still she could not manage to go beyond

her restricted area and her talent and carrier only remains whatever media wants it to be, in the consumerist society being led by these illusions of reality.

After that the narrator visits her dying mother for the last time in hospice. Her mother pleads her to adopt Tracey's children so they will be well taken care of. However, she refuses the request when she learns that Tracey continues to send insulting emails to her ill mother. The novel ends on the day the narrator's mother dies. And rather than visiting her mother in hospice, the narrator decides to visit Tracey's flat, where she witnesses Tracey dancing with her children.

1.1. The Representation of the Characters and Unfolding Bildungsroman Characteristics

1.1.1. Discussion of the Characters' Familial Life, the Concept of Fitting in, Vocational Pursuits and Sense of Belonging

Part of the narrator's shifting identity in fact stems from being the daughter of contrasting parents. Her mother, a black woman from Jamaica, is ambitious and intellectual, while her white, working class English father is the nurturer, determined to give his child more stable, loving home than he had. She wryly notes that her process of growing up in the estates occurred in such a 'widening gap' between her parents and their lack of harmony that eventually resulting in divorce. She is neither parent's child exactly in this sense, a sentiment that, in her father's case, is irritated by meeting his white children from a previous relationship. To the narrator, they seem to be more genuinely his children than she is despite her father's clear devotion. Here, Smith provides the reader with her character unenviable insight: she could view this scenario from the opposite perspective but is unable to do so even as an adult. It is this self-awareness and paralysis that make this character both frustrating and compelling at the same time.

Throughout the novel's course including the shuttling between her upbringing with Tracey and her later career, Zadie Smith's characters act as foils for each other in way that make us question identity. Shared skin color, for instance, draws the narrator and Tracey who appears to be another biracial child together when they meet in a dance class. Being similar and different at once, both aspire to be dancers but only Tracey has the talent to do so and drive for it. Yet Tracey longs for a loving father: she romanticizes her own abusive father's absences, a tactic the narrator adopts when discussing her white siblings. For sure, such tactics and uncertain memory also complicate matters of identity. The epiphany that Smith's narrator has about herself is inspired by watching Astaire's performance in the movie *Swing Time* again. However, her realization that she forgot Astaire performed in blackface disrupts this moment. And the reader is left with a question: "*What is forgotten and what is untrue?*"

Connected with envy, the girls' friendship turns into a relationship of a mutual challenge. Sexuality also affects identity and the sense of belonging. Although the narrator remains Tracey's friend when the "nice" girls at school externalise her for early sexual maturation, time spent together occurs only on Tracey's terms. And Tracey is displeased with her when the narrator socializes with other girls, suggesting that the narrator's presence among them is a mere pretense. While playtime with nice girls like Lily Bingam offers the narrator relief from Tracey, it also invites her alienation. Lily has the characteristics of being white, middle class and "color blind" is hurt when the narrator shows her a film scene featuring only black performers. She does not understand what Lily means by "we" when Lily asserts "we" would be displeased if only black children were allowed to attend dance classes, both casually conferring and negating her friend's black identity. Such sense of alienation is echoed in Africa. There, the black residents are impressed that "white women" like the narrator and her employer, Aimee who is an actual white woman, can dance like black people do.

When it comes to their vocational pursuits, Aimee, an Australian pop idol, is perhaps the least intriguing of the Zadie Smith's characters, partly suffering from being too similar to a certain real-life pop idol and partly from her resemblance to a

force of nature. The latter also represents a comment on celebrity. Smith, however, permits Aimee to be personable, unafraid to cut through the emotional marsh, and more emotionally available to the narrator than her own mother. Possessing her mother's social awareness, the narrator cannot ignore how her identity may be used to avoid charges of insensitivity when she raises concerns that Aimee's carnival versions of African dances could be interpreted as cultural appropriations. She has ignored, of course: her work involves making Aimee's life smoother, not disrupting it as she eventually does. For some reason, Smith's narrator fails to inspire admiration rather than the way other women in her life might. She lacks a dream to chase or cause for which she fights, instead laboring in the shadows for others: her mother by whom she is recruited to participate in social marches, briefly Tracey for whom she was working as stagehand where she helps Tracey deal with costumes and love affairs, and Aimee, as her always on-call assistant. Over time, the narrator's existence is at last consumed under the lives of others since she has put a lot of effort their lives rather than her own and thus she cannot maintain her own social circle or romantic relationships while she services Aimee's life. The resulting scandal, while not an attempt to quit, nonetheless betrays her discontent.

In the aftermath of the narrator's scandal, watching Astaire's dance with three shadows of himself causes the narrator to realize that she in fact, "experiences herself as a kind of shadow". Dismissing these shadows, the question remains unanswered: "*Will she dance on stage as Astaire did?*" In other words, everything the narrator was going through is for her to be reconciled with her true self, seeking the true identity and bringing the restoration for the self rather than being lost and alienated just before it is mentioned in the earlier stages. *Swing Time* is a thoughtful meditation on identity that meanders but never loses its way from this concern. Whatever path the narrator decides to take with the revelations about herself, lie with Tracey, her leftbehind sister who happens to be the only one person that evokes sense of belonging that the narrator desperately seeking out.

1.1.2. Preoccupation with the Concept of Relativity and Anti-essentialism Regarding Feminist Perspective

The novel does not emerge in an instant but takes a little time waiting its receiver to fully comprehend the underlying implied messages in the process of reading. A while later, Smith's second major preoccupation welcomes them in the form of relativity. Relativity proves the fact that nothing ever happens in the novel in the absolute form of truth. Race, colour, class, even one's own happiness, exist only as relative concepts. If we look at the narrator she appears to be brown as being biracial in London, while in the Gambia she is quite white compared to them. Tracey comes from a broken home, the narrator comes from a breaking one. Aimee emerges herself as privileged in the narrator's eyes, whereas the narrator in the villagers'. Most important triumph to one character seems to be the tragedy to another and the currency of happiness here is not disclosing itself as an objective success but rather manifests as a subjective satisfaction. The narrator in the book constantly compares the Gambian village with her London estate, making note of her own estrangement in so doing. Young Gambian teachers have "an attitude I remembered from the old neighbourhood, a way of representing... I always felt absurd next to them". Hawa is a "kind of girl who wants only one thing from this life: to have fun. I remembered the type very well from my own school days, girls like that have always mystified me – they still do" (Smith, 2016). In both the village and the estate, the narrator feels a sense of unbelonging as it is expressed earlier. But Tracey does not. That is why, Tracey is the narrator's abiding point of reference, the one with the talent, the clarity and the fire. It is relative to Tracey, above everyone else, that the narrator seeks to feel successful. However, Tracey does not portray someone who dislike the village life but on the contrary, Tracey is very much like Hawa who appears to be contented with the village life and less motivated by a desperation to leave the estate than a desire to feel empowered within it. Her success as a dancer, however, is relative: for all her astonishing talent as a student, she never manages to go beyond the threshold as a professional but yet the neighbourhood girls regard her with a wild admiration. From the very beginning Tracey possesses gifts that appear to be wasted

on the wider consumerist world. However, if one feels tempted to view Tracey as a failure since she, too, ends where she begins, in precisely the same flat, watching precisely the same movies and moved by the very same passions – the narrator cannot. When the reader look at the final frame Tracey ends up becoming someone who is doing what she loves, surrounded by people she loves, a woman who has beaten her own path and followed it back to the temple of her familiar. On the other hand, the narrator appears to have lost herself on the way, relying on the light of others for breaking up the dark of her alienation. This shifting identities such as brown, white; goth, conscious; big woman, fallen heroine, the narrator seeks above all a place where she belongs and shows us that one's own concept of happiness is also ever-changing factor in the whole book since it is dependent to one's own perception of reality and acceptance of what is the real underlying truth in the happiness to them.

As a concept being the part of postmodern period, the *Essentialist* theory asserts the fact that there is no particular essence of any given thing, idea, or metaphysical entity but rather gender essentialism holds that there has to be some properties to be considered as a woman and for this reason, gender essentialist view unites all women under the same umbrella. However, according to Charlotte Witt (Witt, 1995, p. 322), ‘anti-essentialist feminists reject the thesis of gender essentialism in both its forms. They deny that there are any fixed properties that I have necessarily insofar as I am a woman. They reject the existence of a generic Woman; there is no single, shared property or properties that must be satisfied in order to count as a woman.’

Considering these explanations, one may claim the fact that there are no specific traits or ground of being which woman entities of that kind must possess in order to be considered ‘that entity.’ In more simple explanation, there is no specific truth that the term of an absolute truth can be foregrounded. Based on this idea, the acknowledgement of the truth of happiness varies from one character to another in the book. And characters’ aspects of an entity have no specific point of which they must definitely possess but rather novel displays a great deal of diversity of woman characters each of whom seeking to create something out of their lives and thus,

proving the fact that there is nothing to be taken for granted not by characters nor by its readers and the truth or rather those specific traits that the characters can be foregrounded depend on their personal experiences shaping them and drifting them away from an absolute form of truth or essentialist point of view.

1.2. Narrative Style and Bildungsroman Characteristics

1.2.1. Narrative Style of the Novel and Relationship of the Characters in the Enclosing Concepts Friendship and Motherhood

The story unfolds the story about two girls, Tracey and a nameless narrator, who live in council housing of 1980s London. These young girls are of mixed parentage and born into different shades of brown as a result. As it is stated in earlier statements, they met in dance school, however, they do not give off a characteristic of social misfits, yet are not entirely accepted by their classmates, as is apparent when they get invited to Lily Bingham's tenth birthday party. The two girls are completely out of their depth, as are their mothers, who are almost completely clueless on how to guide their children.

“Was it the kind of thing where you dropped your kid off? Or was she, as the mum, expected to come into the house? The invitation said a trip to the cinema – but who'd pay for this ticket? The guest or the house? Did you have to take a gift? What kind of gift were we getting?... It was as if the party was taking in some bewildering foreign land, rather than a three-minute walk away, in a house on the other side of the park” (Smith, 2016).

Swing Time is narrated in first person bringing to the story an environment of intimacy, a close involvement between the reader and narrator, which would be missing if the story had been told in the third person. This closeness between narrator and reader helps particularly if the novel is read as a Bildungsroman. However, trying to read the book within the traditional manner of reading is not an easy task to attempt due to unpredictable Joyce-like built sentence structures based on some

pages a series of single, uninterrupted paragraphs make it even harder to comprehend at some point of reading process.

The firm childhood friendship between the narrator and Tracey seems to wither away in adulthood. However, the relation of friendship the narrator had with Tracey is mainly brought out through certain flashbacks in the process that focus inevitably on the time narrator spent growing up in Thatcherite London with Tracey, experiences that inform her adult life. Thus, such emphasis brings the quality of ‘shared history’ which becomes an important aspect of friendship in the book. The book unfolds its sub-concepts within ever-changing cycle of postmodern development such as the life of a billionaire singer, Aimee being one. Her flashy life style flitting through her life juggling with various roles, including that of a mother, performer, musician, and philanthropist at some point, running some charity works by helping out African schools proves the reader the versatility of these concepts. For instance, in the book, narrator sometimes is talking about her mother who puts herself through college while her daughter is still in school. Later, the mother becomes a prominent politician.

‘Oh, it’s very nice and rational and respectable to say that a woman has every right to life, to her ambitions, to her needs, and so on – it’s what I’ve always demanded myself – but as a child, no, the truth is it’s a war of attrition, rationality doesn’t come into it, not one bit, all you want from your mother is that she once and for all admit that she is mother and only your mother, and that her battle with the rest of life is over. She has to lay down her arms and come to you. And if she doesn’t do it, then it’s really a war, and it was a war between my mother and me. Only as an adult did I come to truly admire her – especially in the last, painful years of her life – for all that she had done to claw some space in this world for herself. When I was young her refusal to submit to me confused and wounded me, especially as I felt none of the usual reasons of refusal applied. I was her only child and she had no job – not back then – and she hardly spoke to the rest of the family. As far as I was concerned, she had nothing but time. Yet still I couldn’t get her complete submission! My earliest sense of her was of a woman plotting an escape, from me, from the very role of motherhood’ (Smith, 2016).

As the paragraph claims it openly, the characters and concepts, in the development of characters, are depicted as if they are at war with each other at some point, it is analyzed through such statements that the narrator's mother, even if being admired by her daughter, can be interpreted by reader as someone who is plotting to escape from all the responsibilities that motherhood oblige her to shoulder. These are portraits, references and observations on mothering or the relationship between mothers and children including the mothers of the two girls – Tracey and the narrator, the grandmothers in the family compound of African schoolteacher Hawa, the mothers of the African school children, Aimee and her children and Tracey with her family. Hence, the novel, in some respect, reveals some cultural references, especially to the recent past and also proves to become the authorial recordings of events for the generation of Smith's children.

1.2.2. Disclosure of Bildungsroman and Anti-Bildungsroman Characteristics

In novel, there is an emotional loss that makes the protagonist leave on her journey; there is growing into maturity, which the narrator eventually achieves gradually and with difficulty; and there is also a conflict between the protagonist and the values of her upbringing, represented in her best friend, Tracey, which the narrator comes to accept which her mistakes and dissapointments then seeming to be over.

Novel is welcoming the reader with its parts divided into seven parts, as a form of representation of seven ages of man perhaps, and the novel tracks the mixed race narrator's childhood and adolescence in an impoverished area of North London and early adulthood as a personal assistant to an internationally famous pop star, Aimee as mentioned. This is what takes her from the council estates of Willesden to New York and West Africa. Thus, she leaves the places to achieve something bigger being discontented with the life she has in the place where she grew up before and

thus, getting a chance to have a status to be personal assistant of a famous star might also be considered to be climbing up the ladders of vocational career at some point. However, the relationship with Tracey looms large for the narrator as the novel progresses into further. Their friendship is formed by their sharing of a similar skin tone: their “shade of brown was exactly the same – as if one piece of tan material had been cut to make us both” (Smith, 2016), and endures because of the shared experiences of their youth. Tracey acts as an anchor to the narrator, preventing her from escaping her roots at some point and making her stay true to roots and origins as she gallivants around the world with the spoilt super star Aimee. However, even though having seen to be spoilt, she regards poverty as “one of the world’s sloppy errors, one among many, which might be easily corrected if only people would bring to the problem the focus she brought to everything” a belief that eventually led Aimee to set up a school in West Africa (Smith, 2016).

Novel’s being socially conscious and having full of intelligent insight into how various inequalities hinder people’s progress. The central theme of the book revolves around the search for home but while doing so, characters begin an urgent need for searching of an identity, of oneself or a place they would call a ‘home’. However, the motif of searching home, vocational pursuits, advancement of human developments are the basic needs of a genre to be considered Bildungsroman. However, Smith does also twist some aspects like that our true home is at the same time a place we seek to escape from: such as the narrator, after the flamour of working for Aimee, returns to Tracey, who lives in a North London council flat with her three children from three different fathers, while Aimee would spend “whole day in bed watching old episodes of long forgotten Aussie soaps ... in moments of extreme vulnerability” whereas the narrator’s mother who spent her life trying to go beyond her immigrant background through a ferocious obsession with education and activism explains as she lies dying of cancer: “I dream a lot. I dream of Jamaica, I dream of my grandmother. I go back in time...” (Smith, 2016).

When it comes down to the brief development of Bildungsroman, many scholars believed that in English Literature the Bildungsroman reached its peak with realism in Victorian Age. In its historical development, the subgenre borrowed some

elements from its preceding types owing great deal to Romanticism due to its emphasis on inner life and experience of childhood. The prototype of the subgenre is widely acknowledged by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travel*, which reflects the Romantic notion of the hero's growth and formation. However, the real flourishing of the subgenre is widely seen in realism in reflecting a linear development of time and space as well as giving details about past events and providing hero/heroine in relation to the society they live in, and touching on the concerns of that specific period of time.

Yet, one cannot claim that all Bildungsromans reflect the very common themes or rather circulate around one single topic but rather textualize the identity formations in different manners sharing some common patterns making it unclear in the end as to what the characters' fate is going to be remains uncertain. Despite the fact that they may not explicitly reflect its all thematic levels to its reader, still sometimes what can be acknowledged as a formation of a character might prove to be a failure in the end. According to Petru Golban, Bildungsroman contains the following elements:

- 1** a child (sometimes orphaned or fatherless) lives in a village or provincial town
- 2** he/she is in conflict with his actual parents, especially father, or any parental figures (the trial by older generation)
- 3** he/she leaves home to enter a larger society (usually city, especially London, definitely not a *ultima Thule*); the departure is determined by **2** or other external stimuli, or an inner stimulus (for instance the desire for experience that the incomplete, static atmosphere of home does not offer)
- 4** he/she passes through institutionalized education and/or self-education
- 5** a young person now, he/she seeks for social relationships with other humans
- 6** his/her experience of life is a search for a vocation and social accomplishment
- 7** he/she has to undergo the ordeal by society (professional career)
- 8** he/she has to resist the trial by love (sentimental career)
- 9** he/she passes through moments of spiritual suffering and pain
- 10** now in his/her early manhood, he/she experiences epiphanies that lead to (or should determine) his/her final initiation and formation (complete or relativistic, or not existing at all-that is to say, the final stage of the formative

process implies the dichotomy success/failure, or a third possibility of partial success/partial failure) (Golban, 2003a, pp. 239-240).

Although the order may vary in different types of Bildungsromans, nevertheless steps are all visible and trackable in terms of particular common characteristics that Bildungsromans share.

Petru Golban refers to the subgenre of Bildungsroman as thematization of the formation of a character on an autobiographical substratum reflecting the ‘‘biological and intellectual development usually from childhood till early maturity according to the principle of chronotope whose spatial and temporal components form the basis of its entire narrative structure and the basis for its analysis’’ (Golban, 2003b, p. 306).

For this reason, the development or rather a formation of the hero/heroine provides an unifying factor of different themes and motifs in which readers might witness the author’s threefold focus on childhood, youth and adulthood. Childhood years in general covers the indifferent years of oneself staying at home being unaware of who he/she is and experiencing crisis of identity till she depart from his or her home, which is mainly a provincial one to join a larger community, mainly a city where the character receives educational process and facing many struggles to achieve a formation which would not be achieved otherwise if the character did not leave the home. The third is maturity phase which forms the final process of becoming of the self where formation is decided whether to be a success or failure in the very end, a conclusion to decide whether the hero/heroine finds an authentic self or lost oneself in search of it being socially determined by the larger power structure.

The chronotope in the Bildungsroman refers to the chronotope of the home, roadway, city or even an existential one. Although home refers to the domestic circle of the characters’, in Zadie Smith’s description of home varies in a great manner with that of Bildungsroman’s in terms of the absence of origin fortified with a sense of homelessness and broken domestic sphere in both cases. And city, for this reason, leads character to many ordeals and struggles than it already does in ordinary Bildungsroman since the character is struggling at the same time with the consequences of the absence of an identity and being misfit. In similar manner, Smith’s heroines disclose character types that can also be witnessed in Victorian

Bildungsroman where individuals are being subjected to the forceful effects of social determinism as well as possessing Romantic notions of individual experience but Smith manages to deconstruct most of them by attributing to her narrator no particular name and origin. Therefore, a character is being laid open to social deterministic factors even more than usual with an addition to it a searching for an authentic identity.

In addition to all these, Smith's protagonist negotiates gender, race, poverty and perhaps above all immigrant and migrant hybridity, the idea that an identity could ever be narrativised into unity. The chapters where she divides her own mixed race Britishness between African-American influence and a 'need to return' to Africa under the guise of a celebrity-driven charity Project in the Gambia veer close to clunky but delivers the message nonetheless. Celebrity runs throughout the novel, from childhood fascination with Golden Age Hollywood in the example of watching Fred Astaire or Micheal Jackson, to the popstar Aimee, for whom the narrator works and who seems to be fusion of our modern day celebrities in depiction. That enables Smith to engage with our contemporary media and social media culture, which also has effects on our identities: on splitting with Aimee, it exactly turns out that contractually the basic sum of her existence and expression belongs in commodity fashion, to her. On the contrary to Aimee, Tracey appears to find her most 'real' or achieved identity in dance and in fiction, and in performance. However, so many reiterations of Bildungsroman especially those that have female characters depend on the protagonist maturing through successfully demarcating fantasy from reality in some terms: yet that would mean for Tracey to cut dance off and thus her fantasies she built within her mind what was helping her identity to be established and if that was taken from her, Tracey's identity would simply disappear and in the end, her meaning for the narrator would simply slip too.

Tracey is also key to another deconstruction of the assumptions of classic versions of Bildungsroman, which is an individualistic genre at heart. Here, Smith makes use of incidental dynamics where the paths of Tracey and the unnamed central character might cross once again in a slightly awkward way. Hence, the evolution of the narrative 'I' cannot simply be separated from the development of Tracey as well,

even if her self is absent. Through childhood experience, at some point, they had bounded themselves by an inseparability. The author implies that a female self cannot realise itself in a patriarchal culture without interrelationships.

A similar intertwining occurs with the conclusion as well between protagonist narrator and her formidable mother. An intellectual, forcefully progressive and politically active black woman, she is met with an illness dementia and this does not only mark the importance of relation to identity between mother-daughter but it caps the novel's consistently shifting time-scales. The book moves between several presents. As a postmodern fiction, it is not something to be surprised with, however, it breaks down the conception of linearity of time that Bildungsroman assumes. For this reason, the author at some point, does not come to terms with every single element that classical Bildungsroman assumes to be correct and proving this by bringing out the non-linear growing of self-consciousness of the characters.

1.2.3. The Purpose of Art, Epiphanic Moments of the Characters and Their Identity Formation in the Novel

In novel, art appears to be acting as a manifestation of beauty since it frames the reality for the narrator and others who would like to pay attention. It brings out the implication of narrator's mother when she claims that art is only valued by its performance quality. The narrator clings to her art as supports for shifting through her own experiences. Art here, in other words dance, functions as a vehicle to frame and develop the characters' identities.

In *Swing Time*, the narrator's mother uproots the dirt in her front yard. As she digs the garden, she performs for the neighborhood while wearing working clothes and a yellow bandana on her head (Smith, 2016, p. 59). She intends to use the plot of land as a community garden, but all she discovers is clay instead. The land appears that it cannot be used as a garden anymore. She states that her intention was always to find clay and create some pottery with the neighborhood children. The narrator's mother, however, as expressed in earlier statements, participates in politics. Each of her actions has a specific purpose often to persuade or advocate. Therefore, once

spoken garden turns into piles of clay, she changes its primary purpose. Mother acts as an authentic figure, yet she holds undisclosed motives of presentation. She often shows off her knowledge being very proud of herself before others, Tracey and the dinner party guests respectively.

For this reason, the narrator's mother by reshaping this community 'garden' motif into a pottery class. She creates pottery on her front balcony (Smith, 2016, p. 61). Additionally, she states that "Art means not having to be useful" (Smith, 2016, p. 62). Her proclaims about the description behind art surprises Tracey. Like so many others in her own culture, Tracey believes the fact that an object or individual's value lies in its usefulness. However, by casting aside this ideology, narrator's mother assigns new value to this culture's myth by changing it into the opposite. She is doing that especially when she allows the children to choose what they wish to create, such choice that she offers to Tracey and the other children is a deliberate attempt to convince Tracey to enlarge her perspective. Moreover, her "impractical pots" allows her to demonstrate her knowledge about a random civilization of people in front of Tracey. Her mother's attitude toward the creation of a form of art leaves narrator in confusion since she creates pottery as a tool of proclamation of her own self rather than self-expression as how an art form should be in essence.

She goes on her unusual descriptions saying that West African village women who create "strangely shaped pots, impractical pots" for their beauty alone. According to her, "they were actually making pots just for their beauty –no different from a sculptor –not to collect water, not to hold grain, just for their beauty, and to say: we were here, at this moment in time and this is what we made" (Smith, 2016, p. 62). Without having realised it for some time, narrator begins to shape her own identity in relation to the story of women creating "impractical pots" which is imposed by her mother. She chooses to see her reality through these descriptions of "impractical pots" in the dance form. While the narrator's mother oppresses her in many ways throughout her childhood period, she presents this "impractical pots" by means of dictation to force narrator at some point to develop her own identity acting upon it.

The purpose lies beneath the art form what narrator thinks of harshly contradicts with the one that of her mother's. Narrator's mother deliberately performs and speaks in search of other people's approval for herself, whereas the narrator does dance entirely for her own sake. The essential difference in their performances of art becomes quite ironic. Consisting of her own vision of art, narrator literally performs for the audience on stage, she does not seem to do that with the intent of gaining approval of others.

Later, narrator comes to an understanding that an art form should be unique and must be expressed authentically. She observes the dance appropriated by Aimee in depth who uses art only for her benefits since Aimee discloses a figure misusing the art others created when she frames her dance as a tribute. This art form to narrator becomes the most problematic, yet, Aimee claims the fact that "art is not appropriation, that was not the aim of art –the aim of art was love" (Smith, 2016, p. 369-370). Just like all the films including *Show Boat*, *Swing Time*, and *Ali Baba Goes to Town* that narrator watches as a child, Aimee appropriates art with personal intents, physical appearance, and dance that appears authentic and unique only from the surface layer. Her only intention in using art is to draw a better picture of herself in front of her audience. She preaches that art is just another tool of manipulation and does exist to gain status and desire. In confrontation with Aimee's desire to manipulate others by using art, narrator firmly believes the fact that art should be loved and left alone (Smith, 2016, p. 370). She also realizes that appropriations often overshadow the original artist's real intentions behind by corrupting it and leaving them in shadow.

However, Tracey mocks the narrator's view by appropriating art she observes using her body to obtain her desires. For example, in grade school Tracey displays some attributes allowing herself to be taken advantage of by the boys only to gain popularity in return (Smith, 2016, p. 168). She just knows how to use her body just like Aimee to manipulate her own friends. Dance has never come naturally to Tracey, she had to practice often and perform frequently for the audience's approval just like Aimee and narrator's mother. Here, the narrator's way of perceiving art part ways with that of Tracey's, Aimee's and her mother's. She fundamentally embraces

an art that will not need any desire for affirmation, validation. On the other hand, art offers narrator some sort of lens that will help her filtering her own experiences better. At the same time dance allows narrator to separate the influences and the motives behind them within the artistic appropriations she observes. The fragment pieces that she acknowledges from her culture through these artistic lens allows her to comprehend her experiences better.

Smith's narrator arranges her experiences in the artistic form to create a meaning. Throughout these sorting processes, the characters in the book begin to realise the ideal selves of their own. She discovers that her artistic lens mentioned about is invaluable to her once her role models are being excluded from her life, all she has is the art of dance to establish her identity. Thus, she continues creating her unique art through both her own experiences and observations.

Another point that need to be touched on is the epiphanic moments characters experience during their progression of self development. In narrator's case, her perspectives are influenced by their experiences living in the shadows of others. Throughout the novel, narrator draws a likeness of a character that seems to be drowning under the shadows of her boyfriends as well as Aimee, Tracey, and her mother. However, these shadows eventually are what give light to characters in the novel and make epiphanic moments possible illuminating the frames from which characters perceive and give shape to the reality.

Throughout the novel, the author erases the name of the narrator on a whim. An individual's identity is recognized by the specific name she/he possesses. Smith's choice to omit the narrator's name contributes to her narrator's shadowed perception of the self. To adress someone by his/her name does mean to know them. A person's name is a sort of belonging and a signifier of self identity that person shares with others during introduction. As a conclusion, Smith's decision to leave the narrator without a name points out the process of identity formation of the character.

In *Swing Time*, narrator describes her college boyfriend's searching about a girl who was given to Queen Victoria by the King of Dahomey. The girl has an african origin but the Queen names her as Sarah and raises her like a white european

girl (Smith, 2016, p. 292-293). However, her boyfriend Rakim, rejoices in the black skinned version of European nobility, while the narrator is not contented with it. In response, she explains, ‘‘I did not want to rely on each European fact having its African shadow, as if without the scaffolding of the European fact everything African might turn to dust in my hands’’ (Smith, 2016, p. 294). Narrator has a desire of seeing her vision of African culture in a European context. She experiences authentic cultures as twofold, one of which is from the movies in her childhood while the other is from real experiences in Africa as an adult. These illuminations evoke her desire for liberation while she creates.

Rakim, on the other hand, seeks either one part of his heritage or the other as not being unified identity. His shadow reveals the narrator’s inner division based on her mixed Jamaican and European origin. Therefore, she feels constantly at in-between space which constitutes her identity. However, as she realizes that she does not need Rakim actually, she does also begin to break out of Rakim’s shadow by filtering the light. Art provides her a glimpse into her fragmentary identity waiting to be collected by her.

Furthermore, Smith’s narrator appears to have devoted about ten years of her life to the popstar Aimee. In essence, she does not seem like she is in search of a job, but once employed by her she sacrifices many things from her comfort zone to serve Aimee. As Tortorici explains in novel that narrator is attaching her own light to the other people at cost of staying in shadows and losing her sight. Only after she loses her job and gets fired, then does she realize that she has been living beneath Aimee’s shadow. Ultimately, she grasps that all her friends are either Aimee’s friends or are connected to Aimee (Smith, 2016, p. 431). This truth is not revealed until she loses her job and thus, her former life style along with it. Without Aimee, she feels like she is no longer staying in shades but even after that she still does not value her own perceptions. Instead, she constantly feels that she is content living in the fleeting shadow of another person as if that person will be staying permanently in her life.

What’s more is that Aimee’s actual lifestyle does not take interest of the narrator even a bit. She is not fond of such a flashy light that appeals to popular culture. Yet, she does have trouble moving on from Aimee’s shadow not because she

values Aimee's perspective but rather because her route in life has been changed and hard to get used to for her. She feels accustomed to "devoting all time and energy to somebody else's existence, to somebody else's desires and needs and requirement that 'it's a shadow life and after a while it gets to you'" (Smith, 2016, p. 431). No matter how much she desires to move on after she is being fired from her job, still all her connections make her feel like she is still connected to Aimee in a way. Even her lifestyle in New York is funded by Aimee which brings out the implication that she is like a tool of manipulation in the hands of someone whom she acknowledges as superior to her. She gets used to living a 'shadow life' too much than necessary that even after she reaches out her new freedom, she does not understand nor does accept it. While living in Aimee's shadow, she makes concessions too much that she denies her own capacity for having an authentic vision of the life.

Throughout the novel's progression, narrator functions as an observer who appears to be observing the discontinuous flashes of light in her culture. Most of the time, her light is appropriated or manipulated by the perceptions of others. The narrator gives an explanation saying "I became aware that my voice –as long as I did not deliberately sing underneath the volume of the piano –had something charismatic in it, drawing people in" (Smith, 2016, p. 25). The narrator has the capacity to unify people around her own self as well as her own ideas through her view of the world as long as she does not prefer to stay in someone's shadow for good. She gives an exemplification as to how she filters the light for herself when she is freely able to do so and when she embraces the artistic occupation.

Smith gives the reader the interconnection between the art forms and shadows. In the novel, Tracey offers a portrayal of disguised figure whenever she dances. However, narrator at some point is not capable of reaching her authentic self whenever she is with Tracey. Early on, the narrator is overshadowed by Tracey who is content with living as a shadow of herself. For example, Tracey imitates the dancers that the narrator and she mutually watched on TV when they were mere children. As a conclusion, the narrator comes to a conclusion that she "was not really a person at all, but rather a shadow" of her ideal self (Smith, 2016, p. 429). In addition, Tracey's appropriation of dance for herself lead narrator to contemplate

over the characteristics of an authentic art form. It eventually directs her to a point where narrator feels necessity in herself to part ways with Tracey.

Moreover, narrator, as someone who is assuming the role of an observer, contemplates over the shadowed existence of existence from far away. While in Paris, she explains how artists and musicians become ‘no longer shadows but people in their own right ... I wondered how these people were able to tell, so precisely, the moment they began to feel like a person’ (Smith, 428). Therefore, this explanation is a clear emergence of the narrator as a free and liberal figure, realization of her own right of acquiring freedom just as how artists should be and she figures out the fact that she should not be overshadowed any longer by other people surrounding her. She views her shadow as a part of her authentic self extending beyond her. The expansive of her shadow signify her self-direction in life and perspective about the world.

Recognizing the interconnections and interplay between these shadows and lights, the characters in the novel come to an understanding that these are also mandatory for the character evolution since they help the advancement of characters’ vision through ordinary moments gathering collectively. Each woman in the novel filters their own experiences through numerous influences till, in narrator’s case, her shadow extends beyond her existence. These self-shadows that they create for themselves allow them to create new artistic visions enabling each woman to discern and filter their own experiences.

Last of all, in the process of identity formation, each woman’s confidence in their own identity has grown throughout the formation process learning much more from their own participation in or their recognition of artistic expressions. The narrator gives high value to the perspectives of others so much that she express these perspectives in a most authentic way creating a space in which she feels secure. This free space for narrator is when she is allowed to freely express herself not being dictated by anyone’s or more like her role models’ perspectives. Once her mother dies, she reaches another epiphanic moment that she has to accept her identity and take confidence in her own perspective of the world. Throughout her life in the novel, she glimpses moments of safety and security allowing free expression of her

identity. For instance, whenever she is far away from her mother, only then can she freely express herself in a better position. Her authentic identity is also seen while she and Aimee sit in 'the Heath,' the London park located near her childhood home. The local park gives the narrator a sense of ease and she often makes her way back to the *Heath* by instinct (Smith, 2016, p. 106). Then, the narrator encountering another safe space and lightness for her during her conversations with Hawa, a middle-class African girl (Smith, 2016, p. 221-222). She immediately feels familiar with these new spaces since it appears to be no different than seeing someone you know after a long time, in this case, someone with whom she can reach a state of safety. After having such experiences, and with each experience creating some personal spaces, her identity develops gradually. Her identity in the novel is firmly rooted in her English and Jamaican backgrounds and the cultures she experiences throughout her life. Near the end of the novel, she acknowledges identity as a process in itself, a process of experiencing the world perhaps, or rather a process of understanding the world and what is happening inside of it. Her gradual sorting of her experiences into some categories she created leads her to confidence and trust in her unique perspectives. Additionally, the women develop the ability to view their experiences from the perspectives of others. The narrator as being herself, she explains the perspectives of her friend Tracey, her mother, Hawa, Aimee and Rakim. From the very childhood phase, they begin to see the world from the perspectives of others. They grow out of their initial egocentric tendencies. And thus, many characters in *Swing Time* remains as self-centered since some seems to have dictated by others' perspectives at least once. Narrator provides a glimpse of her next steps which is including sorting of others' perspectives from her own. It reminds one that how well women are equipped and talented in sorting these perspectives and experiences throughout their lives.

As the narrator anticipates her mother's death, she feels a necessity within to apply her sorting experiences to this moment of ambiguity as well. She states that 'there might be something else I could offer, something simpler, more honest between my mother's idea of salvation and nothing at all' (Smith, 2016, p. 453). This is the narrator's epiphanic moment in fact, out of ordinary moment we reach a

state of meaningfulness. In the progression of novel, these moments seeming like ordinary do give narrator a clearer vision in return. Near the end, she understands that ‘everybody dancing’ (Smith, 2016, p. 453) in their own ways, just as Tracey dancing on her balcony after everything she had been through which seems like an ordinary moment having a profound impact in lives of the characters. Once narrator realizes that she can dance even if she has not reached identity completion. She does also understand her next step in identity development which is interconnected with the need of trust in artistic lens. Through her visions she takes a glance at clarity and stability in understanding her own identity.

Despite the fact that one’s identity is never complete, the narrator’s identity is always in constant development throughout the story of the novel even though the core remains stable. Learning to tune her artistic visions throughout the novel, narrator does also gain access to the ability of categorizing her fragmented experiences acquiring confidence in the worth of this process. She assumes a role of a filter as well through which light, in other words, her experiences can pass and redirect them according to her unique perspectives in the development of herself as an individual identity even further.

1.2.4. The Postcolonial Concept of Mimicry Incorporated within the Character Representation in *Swing Time*

The postcolonial discourse discloses bluntly the adverse effects of the colonial period with regards to the issue of one’s identity and struggle to holding onto it by showing an active resistance to the colonial residual form of domination. Edward Said, in his own interpretation, describes such tension between the ‘synchronic all encompassing vision of domination as –the demand for identity, status –and the counter pressure of the diachrony of history –change, difference in which the term mimicry represents an *ironic* compromise’ (Said, 1978). On the other hand, Homi Bhabha, by benefitting from the ideas of Samuel Weber in his article entitled as *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*, mentions the fact that ‘the colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed,

recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126-127). In other words, the concept of mimicry takes advantage of its atmosphere of ambivalence or ambiguity that offers those who attempt to read such discursive formation a sense of disturbance in comprehension. Providing the reader its difference, mimicry constantly appropriates the Other. The concept itself perpetually allows everyone to assess the limits of liberty before the illegitimate exercises of power system deprive individuals of their liberty. For this very reason, mimicry does not necessarily damage the whole discourse confusing the mind of the receiver with such an ambivalence but rather forces them to think over the issues of such uncertainty and thus, leading them to ‘partial presence’ of themselves that they have yet to discover. (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126-127). One another thing that is of great importance welcomes the reader by Charles Grant’s ideas in his book, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain*, touches on a point which is quite much interrelated with the novel and is about that only through “a reform of manners”, as he puts it, “a colonial would achieve a sense of personal identity” (Grant, 1812-1813).

In his article, Bhabha, claims through the way of thinking of Macaulay that “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126-127). This advocates the fact that mimic character or person’s urge to imitate will eventually have overwhelming results for them leading up to the oppression under that specific set of ideas or values that he/she tries to mimic. And therefore, racial and cultural characteristics of a person that define him/her may end up being lost along the process and may turn an individual into puppet-like being whose strings are being pulled off by someone else. Again, in the very same page, Homi Bhabha brings out an another important comparison between mimesis and mimicry claiming that “mimicry is a writing, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable.” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126-127). And desire to emerge as ‘authentic’ self through this process of mimicry is the real irony while the person, in fact, loses all unique characteristic aspects of him/her that will dismember the remaining qualities of that person’s

uniqueness. Through the double vision of the person, they are left with nothing else but to describe themselves as a mere partial representations of their own and of what they decide to imitate but also as objects of colonial representations. However, through such representation of '*partial presence*' of a person, as it is mentioned earlier, which forms the basis function of mimicry, it articulates those mentioned disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that threaten the narcissistic demand of colonial authority. Yet another important point comes from the perspective of Freud, despite the fact that it has nothing to do with the colonial terms but rather focuses on the psychoanalytical and psychic state of the person.

According to Freud, this "almost the same but not quite concept" as it appears in the book, becomes much clear when it is interrelated with the unconscious and preconscious state of the person, turning it into more problematic scenario, like mimicry, making him or her lose the sense of origin and he directs others into contemplate over these words of him:

"Their mixed and split origin is what decides their fate. We may compare them with individuals of mixed race who taken all round resemble white men but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other and on that account are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges" (Freud, 1915, p. 190-191).

Based on these informations given, the fact that the story itself is told the reader from a particular perspective of unnamed first person narrator which does exhibit the sense of ambiguity in matters of the absence of identity, the foreshadowed implication becomes clear as the novel unfolds in the process reading. Starting from a village of Northwest London leading up to New York where there the narrator enters a college provides those who read the novel a sensation of metropolitan atmosphere with the view of colonizer versus colonized relationship considering the fact that both Tracey and the narrator are mixed-race children living in a country that is not in fact being their own. But at the same time, narrator's becoming the assistance of the famous pop star Aimee and thus taking trips to West Africa where is considered to be one of the places that had been struggling with the colonial power relations having been marginalized as the Other. Therefore, in the light of the plot

and the emergent character aspects, one might realize the fact that novel actually goes beyond being only a single story of some characters' development of personality but rather implements into its own progression the purpose of raising awareness about the living conditions of those who lived under the ideological burden of being a marginalized subject in the most difficult circumstances by disclosing the societal operations of mimicry and interhuman deterministic factors that function in similar way to such an extent that the reader gains a chance to understand their reasons of placelessness, especially the narrator's. As the novel mainly concentrates on the relationship between the narrator and her childhood friend Tracey, the reader feel privileged to witness their inseparable advancement at first sight.

Even in the prologue readers are invited to share the first impression that mimicry was in use considering the fact that the narrator is represented as watching a clip of Fred Astaire dancing in a movie called *Swing Time* and thus the narrator was deeply moved by it recalling the scene from time to time in the book with flashbacks. This first hand experience in early childhood appears to be the main source of inspiration for her to take dance lessons in the first place, to be able to create a personal field in which, perhaps, she could be able to save herself from being forgotten to leave something behind that will help others to remember her as a person with an identity. Narrator mentions about a story of her childhood as well, as an another factor that led her to pursuit of the improvement of dancing techniques when she was ten and saw Aimee for the first time in a music video.

Given the fact that the narrator is raised by her cold, intelligent and highly political mother reminds the reader, in some sense, a form of domination between daughter and mother even though it should have been the opposite. Along with her oppressive mother and her kind but uninvolved father, shows broken domestic sphere in which the narrator experiences the divorce of her parents when she was only fourteen. As a child, she frequently attends tap dance lessons and there, she establishes a close friendship with Tracey and from that moment on out, her desire to be an authentic self through the process of mimicry takes over during which she feels an endless sense of unbelonging due to her fragmented personality and partial

representation of her own self abiding by the oppressive rules of colonial representative discourse as being a mixed-race hybrid without having any particular name in a foreign land rather than her own country. Even the issue in her domestic life, especially in the process of self development, in an early childhood years, prevent her from acquiring a self identity since in the first place, a child experiences the world around them through parental expressions they get to establish their own identity. This issue of identity results from either by the function of mimicry like ‘almost the same but not quite’ motif or preconscious determinism of the character having a split and mixed origin which even make it worse in the confrontation of the colonial impositions tried to be applied upon her identity as an ‘individual of mixed race who taken all round resemble white men but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature’ as Freud states (Freud, 1915, p. 190-191).

The narrator’s struggle to determine her identity in such an atmosphere, to reconcile the way she perceives herself with the way the external world perceives her plays quite an important role in her journey of acquiring authentic self. It is perhaps the core theme of the novel along with the concept of Formation. Throughout the progression of the book, the narrator is highly influenced by others and attempts to discern which of these influences is most in alignment with her personal aims and aspirations proves the fact that she is yet to figure out which way is right for her or which way is not. The narrator’s friendship with Tracey might be viewed through the scope of identity as well. Tracey provides a typical instance of a person who is different in terms of race and origin but assimilated in a culture as belonging ‘to a class of persons Indian (in this case a different one) in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.’ The name itself, Tracey, suggests reader someone who has blended herself with the mixture of two origins to lose her own one since Tracey as a name in its essence discloses a resemblance to the typical european names. However, she plays in the story a crucial role in establishing the narrator’s early priorities and perspectives. The narrator places enormous weight on her friend’s opinions, and for this reason, Tracey dictates many of her choices, from the games she prefers to the career she aspires to pursue. This can be looked at from the perspective of oppressor, oppressed or colonizer versus colonized relationships

and is most likely that she wants to prove her self against her value through the acceptance of the methods of mimicry and in the same way she has been going through in her life from childhood to the maturity. Even the narrator's obsession with dance is largely motivated by her desire to gain closer proximity to Tracey due to her identical skin colour and freckles along with other common physical characteristics. For this reason, the narrator feels that superior technical skill will allow her to become closer with Tracey. When their roads drift apart the moment narrator attends a public school while Tracey goes to private dance academy. As a consequence of this departure, it brings the narrator to the brink of questioning her identity even more when she becomes a kind of Goth during her teenage years. Another factor that has made her feel placeless is when mother was becoming more youthful and energetic considering the fact that she was leading a group of social justice meetings with speeches which a while after turns into a problematic domestic issue for her resulting in increasing sense of loneliness since her mother devotes much of her energy to community planning and energizing along with becoming a Member of Parliament which makes her largely neglect the daughter.

Chapter One of Part Six begins with the narrator's first days at an unnamed college, where she chooses to study on, Media Studies and experiences her first relationship with a boy named Rakim who is even more political and radical than her mother considering himself a Five Percenter, one of the five percent of the population that is blessed with an internal God. Rakim even tries to convince her of various conspiracy theories and criticizes her for not behaving womanly enough. For such reasons, the narrator grows increasingly unhappy with the relationship and eventually breaks up with Rakim by writing him a letter. This is another sign of the fact that mimicry is in function once again, how she is being influenced by others to a large extent that she unconsciously allows herself to be manipulated, dominated to lose her own self regardless of how much oppression she had to undergo in her domestic environment, she decides to establish a relationship with someone who possesses even more difficult characteristics than her mother has. And how even the name of the school she attends is concealed within the text reminds everyone about

the atmosphere that not only restricts the development of individuality and authentic self but also keeping her from acquiring a sense of belonging of her own.

In Chapter One, the narrator and her mother also share one another particular memory in which they were watching an interview of Oprah who asks Micheal Jackson about the change in his skin color. At that moment both the narrator and her mother are dissatisfied by Jackson's responses and turns off the television. In a symbolic way, it is a clear reference to Jackson's deliberate betrayal to his own origin through changing his skin colour from brown to white and the reason they turn off the television is because this is a sign that is relatable to their lives in the story as if they too were similarly betraying the origin of their own not by changing their skin colours but trying desperately to adapt and assimilate themselves into domination. It might be some form of escapist perspective not to confront with the inner disturbances that make oneself grow restless in time. In the one scene in Chapter One, when the narrator and Kramer spontaneously attends a dance show at a particular moment, where narrator sees Tracey for the first time since they have been drifted apart. In a condition that she changed her name to Tracee Le Roy, appearing elegant with straightened hair which suggests us another form of colonial representation that even one can find himself or herself in the position of being forced to change the identity in the way the colonial representation wants you to be. Tracey and the other dancers, dress as Africans and perform a racist show and the narrator, meanwhile, makes a critical commentary on it throughout the show. This alone clearly proves the fact that even though they shared some physical specialities, yet Tracey, as the name itself suggests, is the one amongst them who is being assimilated the most having affected by the forceful impositions of mimicry and colonial representations up to a point where there was nothing left of her former self to hold onto belonging to her origin. The narrator intends to speak to Tracey after the show ends but sees Tracey's mother was waiting outside with two children and, realizing that they were Tracey's in fact, then she silently leaves the place witnessing such an occasion.

After the college, the reader witness the struggle of the narrator to find a particular job till she is hired at YTV where she draws the attention of Aimee, only

later to be assigned as her assistant for three years. During this period of time, narrator aids the projects of Aimee who was making plans to build a girls' school in Africa and attempt to ease poverty there. From the first looking, Aimee seems to be drawing a likeness of benevolent and humane figure. Chapter One is set in Africa, where the narrator travels to meet Aimee to assess the economic situation of the village that she hoped to assist. Being an assistant of a higher status person provides her many privileges but at a cost of letting her identity to be controlled by someone else and yet here again, mimicry discloses its aspects in another form of domination. A person who she once admired in her childhood, now ironically holds the control of her life.

When it comes down to the setting which is London is where all of the 1980's focused sections occur. The novel is deeply rooted in this setting and is littered with references to the cultural atmosphere at the time of the narrator's childhood and adolescence. The narrator and Tracey share another aspect that both have in common since they share a neighbourhood in Northwest London when they were child, a place that they both sustained their lives on the brink of poverty which can possibly be explained by means of the potential role that was appointed to those without a name or those that were acknowledged as the Other in the community. For the narrator, Northwest London represents her growth and a place she eventually becomes isolated from, when her sense of partial presence intensifies and begins to feel a restless need to find somewhere to belong. As an adult, she focuses her work in New York and the wealthier parts of London, this shift does not only symbolize her rise from the poverty of her youth to acquiring better life conditions but in the same breath, reflects that even if she is a person of another origin in blood and colour, but becomes English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect which means that she may find herself in the ladders of vocational success as long as she follows the norms that the political, cultural structure required from her to mimic. However, at particular sections of the book, the setting shifts to West Africa where unique cultural practices are represented through rituals in which the boys of the villages are led by a ceremonial dancer called kankurang to the bush, where they are circumcised and symbolically turn to adults.

CHAPTER 2

2. POSTCOLONIAL, POSTMODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE NOVEL IN RELATION TO THE AUTHENTIC THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Zadie Smith, in *Swing Time*, spotlights the issues of female identity and female friendship in a contemporary century. She, in the same breath, shows that people are complex and might not be who they think they really are. The character representations point out the fact that this novel is about the illusion of identity in fact, that the biracial narrator does not fit into any category when it comes to her identity. She appears to be neither black, nor white. Although she initially identifies herself as black, however, later realizes that her African peers see her as white. As it is stated earlier as well, almost nothing in the novel is in the form of absolute acceptance. Another example from the book might just be that narrator has been acknowledged in quite a privileged manner in the eyes of the villagers of Gambia. Though she is always looking for a certain place to belong: with Tracey, with Aimee, in Gambia, or even as a goth. Throughout the novel the only constant thing in the narrator's life is Tracey's presence, whether in her memories or her actual life. Tracey's existence in her life might very well be acknowledged as a sense of home to the narrator. On the other hand, there might be some pointing out the fact that the friendship between the narrator and Tracey might very much be based on jealousy (one envying pretty dolls, the other envying a present father) and competition-like attitude as much as it might also show the attributes of mutual love and loyalty. Moreover, working for Aimee does not just help the narrator to find an identity, but making her to get some rest in doing so, and pause the seeking for a one in the process. As narrator makes an explanation with an epiphanic moment after getting fired from his duty as an assistant saying that she 'had always tried to attach myself to the light of other people, that she had never had any light of her own. She experienced herself as a kind of shadow'' (Smith, 2016, p. 4). From the beginning of the book, it becomes clearer as the reader unfolds the inner drives of the narrator that

she has always been looking for identity and a place to call 'home' and is significant that she does not have a proper name too. One might raise a question then as: What do we know about the narrator in the end? The names are only things after all with which we can identify ourselves that later directs reader to a question of ambiguity "Who are you?". The lack of identity is quite subtly emphasized by her lack of name. One another aspect that Smith is using in the novel is that the language and accent characters use. The best example, perhaps, would be narrator's mother who is using her best English accent when talking to other mothers about ballet shoes. She uses this to appear belonging to a higher social class by hiding her black British descent and identity.

The theme of postcolonialism has also been addressed in the book, among other by Linda Weinhouse and Efraim Sicher. They look at how 'the Jew' figures in the idea British society has of itself after the fall of the British Empire. In their book, Smith appears among the non-Jewish writers who struggle with identity issues in colonial setting or across the color divide. (Sicher, 2013, p. 1-285).

In Zadie Smith, some critical essays have been written about postcolonialism. Ulka Anjaria takes a look at another novel of Smith, *On Beauty* through a postcolonial lens and argues the fact that it "revives the domestic plot to interrogate the pitfalls of both traditional aesthetics and a deconstructive ant-aesthetic – both of which are unsuited to account for the complex experiences of post-colonial family life" (Anjaria, 2016, p. 278-294). As the domestic sphere of the narrator provides the reader a close inspection of a complex postcolonial family life, whose mother was trying to secure a place in the society to compensate her different background while her European father was trying to take care of them devoting all his energy and spending his spare time to his other white daughters from his previous relationship. One being self-devoted figure in terms of parental care while the other is cold-hearted and neglectful.

Analyzing the novel from the feminist perspective, even though being a theme that falls behind amongst all the other in search on Zadie Smith, issues of gender are still taken into discussion. In "Still Mammies and Hos: Stereotypical Images of Black Women in Zadie Smith's Novels", Tracey Walters discusses three

stereotypical images used by Zadie Smith, in the form of the mammy, the matriarch and the jezebel. Walter points out as well that using stereotypes might turn out to be quite dangerous since they may “create power dynamics that endorse sexist and racist beliefs” (Walters, 2008, p. 126). The most prominent example of this impact is slavery, where people of different color or origin were treated like cattle which reinforced a deluded idea of superiority considering the fact that the mammy mentioned above was also a name given to older slave women at the same time. Walter also points out that Smith’s female characters often lack different variety and are overshadowed by the male protagonists, they often do not surpass stereotypes (Walters, 2008, p. 125). Smith, in similar way, admits that she has difficulty writing about women since the complexity they possess and saying that men are much simpler (Walters, 2008, p. 126). It has also been pointed out by Walters that Smith’s use of stereotypes were functioning as satirical devices in the novel, and that black women are not the only characters she stereotypes (Walters, 2008, p. 127). Through such stereotypes she reveals people’s biases and shows how detrimental stereotyping can be (Walters, 2008, p. 128).

Smith uses such stereotypes in some other novels of her as well such as *Kiki On Beauty* can be recognized as a mammy as well since the term mammy does not only refer to the one having what it takes to be a mother but a person who has forgotten an identity and in this case, a black cultural one. This is something Kiki recognizes “I am alone in this... this sea of white. I barely know any black folk anymore, Howie” (Smith, 2005). She, at some point, confirms her role as the mammy by taking care of the household but not really having anything to say and deferring to Howard for real decisions (Walters, 2008, 131). Even if she does confirm and somehow fulfill her role as the mammy, Smith is able to make Kiki a much more complex character similar to that of how a mammy is.

Smith, by highlighting a sense of striving of the characters who are seem to be in constant search of an identity, place, sense of belonging, in this respect, being a female one, directs attention of the reader into the forms of domination and the struggles of such women are brought in front of their interpreters with the intent of disclosing that how one’s ethnicity, race, origin, skin color or even gender might

force them to be separated from the rest of the community they live in, especially in a patriarchal one as in the novel. Besides that, readers are invited to witness the struggles of an immigrant identity, a black one or in other words, 'mammy' in an atmosphere where neither escaping nor having an unique identity of oneself is possible unless one shatters everything what makes them who they truly are. Postcoloniality appears to have always been in function no matter how many years, decades may pass and implies the fact that one cannot simply escape from one's own roots or where they belong even if it means forgetting that identity temporarily and casting it away into the oblivion only for it to be reminded at some point of time once again. In novel, we are seeing the examples of such cases by confronting with the stories of Tracey, unnamed narrator or her mother. All of them share something in common that each are in search of an identity that will be their own, an authentic self. In case of narrator, it is pursuation of her ambitions to get better in dancing and perhaps, being better than Tracey by surpassing her and limits of her own, on the otherhand, in case of Tracey, it is the same ambition that has been driving her all along the beginning, that is being famous and well-known dancer throughout the world which is also the source of inspiration for narrator since she establishes a form of bond with Tracey knowing that she has almost everything narrator herself does not. And in the case of her mother, it is a form of escapist attitude in the form of activism proving the fact that she is in search of having a place in the community through her political actions. She is constantly trying to prove herself as a human being so that she could, in a way, escape from her origins that otherwise would always be coming up in her face unless she ensures her conditions by performing unforgettable societal works. Here, even such an endeavour alone is a sign that women do not give up, no matter how difficult or overwhelming societal impositions may be placed upon the shoulders of them. Though it becomes difficult one to sustain their own origin in such a system that constantly forces one to assimilate into what they desire the Other to be, still it cannot be faulty to point out the fact that postcolonial impositions has also been rejected in a way by such a personal active endeavor of each feminine character in the novel in a male dominated society. Thus, both postcolonial and feminist characteristics too are playing great role in mutual relation with one another.

2.1. Formation Through Ideal Self, Interdeterministic Factors with a Glimpse of Authorial Symbolisms

Another point that must be taken care of in depth is that when the unnamed narrator discusses Rakim, a college boyfriend. He appears to be an earnest young man, aware, fiercely right on, and so filled with conviction about his rightness that he believed somehow himself to be a ‘‘living God’’ descended from the heavens to enlighten the ignorant masses. Rakim, which is a name he gave himself, is something of an African chauvinist, as a possessive of his heritage, claiming its superiority over all the other without drawing any link to slavery and colonial plantations. He repeatedly utters such sentences as: ‘‘We have our own kings! We have our own queens!’’ The narrator gets tired of these utterances of Rakim, of his constant corrections, his impatience and unending lectures. Rakim manifests himself having awareness but somehow that awareness does not seem to be the self one, he comes to the idea that his mixed-race girlfriend struggles with identity while blindly proclaiming his being Five-Percenter in the community without having realised that his own mother is white. It somehow brings both satirical and ironical perspective to his position since despite all his talk of African kings and queens, Rakim would have cut a ridiculous figure in Africa, just as narrator does when she finds herself back in West Africa with Aimee and claiming that ‘‘she always felt absurd next to them. Compared to their sense of personal destiny, she looked like she was in the world by accident, having given no thought at all to what she represented’’ (Smith, 2016). Therefore, *Swing Time* is in part about the narrator’s self-quest to understand what she actually represents in such a world. Born in London to an intelligent, politically ambitious Jamaican woman, intent on making something of her life (that of having a social climbing to tolerate her mixed-race origin), and a gentle, unambitious, working-class Englishman, the narrator lives in an inner city estate. The area is described as mixed, and neighbourhoods a few scant streets apart are gentrified, gentrifying or rough, with the drugs and prostitution that are usually cliches of urban detrimental effect.

The narrator's family is described as having little money, but life, despite her parents' divorce, is stable. She is sheltered by her mother's devotion to improving their life conditions and circumstances and her father's unfettered love. Tracey, however, the closest thing to a friend for the narrator that she managed to form a bond with, is not as lucky. The girls became friends at first sight outside a dance class in a local church in 1982; only about seven, they are gravitated towards one another "for obvious reasons... Our shade of brown was exactly the same-as if one piece of tan material had been cut to make us both" (Smith, 2016). Even if they shared a sort of kinship with one another using such a words in their shared brownness, their mothers have perhaps little in common. The narrator's mother appears as a figure striking and severe with a 'terrific instinct for middle class mores', a dominant-like figurine who prefers to avoid any form of appearance of bad taste, whereas Tracey's mother is as disorderly as opposite to the narrator's overdisciplined mother, narrator notes that in such phrase: "her thin blonde hair pulled back very tightly in what I knew my mother would call a 'Killburn facelift'" (Smith, 2016). Smith, likewise, was raised in a similar family to the narrator, with a black mother and white father, in a similar estate. Therefore, she reflects her understanding of having small differences on the novel. And hence, shared brownness and a childhood love for Hollywood musicals and dancing cannot mask the differences in the girls' upbringings. Tracey has the dancing talent, the bright charisma, but being quite much consumed by the chaotic atmosphere in her family life. Sexually precocious, maybe as a result of abuse, Tracey, much like many other young girls, is trapped by her body. As the narrator's mother insists "all that matters in this world is what's written down." On the other hand, as she goes on: "to succumb to the body is playing their game by their rules... and if you play that game, I promise you, you'll end up a shade of yourself. Catch a load of babies, never leave these streets, and be another of these sisters who might as well not exist" (Smith, 2016). In the end, unlike Tracey, narrator succeed in leaving the neighbourhood, taking a step in self-improvement and forming an authentic self possibly.

After getting a job and getting closer to climbing the ladders of society with a pop superstar, her intense friendship with Tracey is replaced by an equally intense,

perhaps more complex and ambiguous one with Aimee. Both relationships somehow founder on betrayal. The novel offers two-stage between the narrator's life with Aimee, having a project to build a school for the girls in Gambian village, and her memories of life in London with Tracey. The use of first person narration style is providing reader with a self-effacing narrator since she does not possess one. Perhaps, it possesses some autobiographical characteristics of Smith's self-disgust or anxiety about saying "I" since the author is not fond of using first person narration style regarding other novels written by her. And perhaps, narrator reveals herself as if she is incidentally in the process of writing about other people, mostly Tracey. When viewed from this aspect, *Swing Time* is the narrator's monument to Tracey, a form of atonement for how even the sharp looking ones amongst us are dulled in the end. Tracey, despite the abuse she faced, despite the poverty and hard conditions of life, despite the children from different fathers that put paid to her dancing career, continuously retains a freedom of spirit, the spirit to cast everything aside and living in the moment where she enjoys. In the ending phrases of the novel, Smith gives reader an image of Tracey in her "dressing gown and slippers, her hands in the air, turning, turning... everybody dancing" (Smith, 2016). At first view, it may not be relatable to those but judging everything from the beginning to the very end and compiling them all in one single moment that is the one when she decides to dance, a thing that she has always been capable of doing with greatness and a form of triumph in a way, being defiant and proving that she can still dance no matter what happens. It is a conclusion for her who appears to be at peace with the rest of the world and prevailing herself over life she had to go through.

2.1.1. Foreshadowed Symbolical Meanings

As the novel's title and a recurring point throughout the story, the 1936 film *Swing Time* is a crucial symbol and playing great role in characters' stage of development. It represents the girls' ultimate fantasy of success in the dance world – it is an exuberant, old-fashioned film that celebrates the passion and power of dance. Yet what begins as an innocent obsession soon transforms into a cynical revelation of the major structural and individual flaw that hold the girls back. *Swing Time* stars

white people and advances white dancing, casting aside black dancers like the girls. It in fact represents a time period when racism was widely accepted; even the lead actor, Fred Astaire, was known to have racist sort of ideological thinking. As children, the girls overlook or even fail to see this, but as adults it becomes a bitter sign of the futility of their dance dreams.

Swing Time adapts as a symbol to the changing time periods of the narrator's mindset, perhaps symbol to the changing of initial purity of a child that is not able to separate reality from fantasy. There are quite a much role given to the term 'dancing' as if the characters' self-developments were circling around this theme and life is viewed as a dance stage. For instance, when narrator has been fired from her job as personal assistant to Aimee, though there are early hints of a betrayal and revealing that narrator has some role in it. Unsure of what to do with the rest of her life being 30 and jobless, narrator wanders through her native London until she finds herself sitting in the nosebleeds of the Royal Hall at a lecture by an art-house film director. The director screens some scenes from *Swing Time*, which narrator, being a childhood fan of musicals, quickly recognizes and remember what it is. Seeing the clip once again in her adult self for the first time after a long series of years stirs a revelation:

‘I'd lost my job, a certain vision of my life, my privacy, yet all these things felt small and petty next to this joyful sense I had watching the dance, and following its precise rhythms in my own body. I felt I was losing track of my physical location, rising above my body, viewing my life from a very distant point, hovering over it ... A truth was being revealed to me: that I had always tried to attach myself to the light of other people, that I had never had any light of my own. I experienced myself as a kind of shadow’ (Smith, 2016).

After having gone through such an epiphanic moment, she returns home to re-watch the sequence, only to realize, to her horror, that Astaire turns out to be in blackface. Narrator who was raised in Northwest London by a Jamaican-born mother and white father, is as shocked by her own selective memory as by Astaire's appearance. For her, dance provides a certain way to escape the self, it is also what enables her to see its extreme and disturbing forms in crystal clear. As theme of

dance also slips from shadow to substance, from breezy illusion to embodied authenticity, her critical assessment of her life takes shape in the form of dancing. This confrontation of the self through dance propels the novel in a way.

Novel acts against the backdrop of 21st-century pop culture and performance art. It primarily focuses on those who shape narrator's life, all of whom, in this regard, are no different than dancers on a stage.

Parallel to the story of the narrator's vocational career is another story with some hints of betrayal included, centered around her childhood friend Tracey, who is the embodiment of the narrator's biracial opposite (having white mother, black father), who is volatile, rebellious in characteristics and prone to conspiracy theories. However, there is a unbridgeable gap between them which points out the difference between self-acknowledgement of both. In contrast to the narrator, Tracey draws a self contented figure with her skin. She excels in many things including talent she has shown in dance classes and in pursuing a professional stage career, however, in the case of narrator, she assumes the role of an observer, which novel traces from her adolescence into adulthood. As she recalls it: "I really felt that if I could dance like Tracey I would never want for anything else in this world" (Smith, 2016). Not only does narrator place Tracey in source of inspiration for herself but she becomes almost irreplaceable for her which can be confirmed through such phrases as "other girls had rhythm in their limbs, some had it in their hips or their little backsides, but she had rhythm in individual ligaments, probably in individual cells" (Smith, 2016). Yet, after their ways part, it becomes clearer as how attracted narrator becomes to Aimee having its origins in her complicated and at times difficult friendship with Tracey, and like Tracey, Aimee is a talented dancer, whose self-confidence, self-sufficiency and accent that is "New York, Paris, Moscow, LA and London combined in description" are charming and appealing. Also there is Lamin inbetween, a love interest that narrator develops during her trips to Gambia as part of Aimee's misguided humanitarianism, who moves easily between social identities, cultures and customs. However, bestriding both narratives is narrator's mother, a self-educated, politically activist woman who, like every other character in the novel, having her own dance through social justice battles, seemingly uninterested in her daughter's

life. All combined together, these figures lead the nameless narrator to some understandings of relationships as double-edged dance of trust and betrayal, and here again, dance itself acts upon the achievement of self-command and personal liberation. Yet a dancer according to narrator was ‘‘a man from nowhere, without parents or siblings, without a nation or people, without obligations of any kind, and this was exactly the quality I loved, The rest of it, all the detail, fell away’’ (Smith, 2016). A dancer for her is someone who liberated himself from the burdens of life, someone who is from ‘nowhere’ cannot possibly have any necessity to have any need to acquire a self-identity at all, being free from all these impositions is what tempted narrator at first sight and lead her into this form of art.

Smith knows how to give a certain shape to the fantasy of limitless shapeshifting in symbolical meanings, and of dance as a force for freedom and authenticity. The novel, in fact, reject the tempting contemporary notion of dance as immune to one’s national identity, race, politics, and culture, a mindset that made narrator sort of blind as a child to the racial politics of Astraire’s dancing in the very beginning. Until the mid-19th century in the history, the dancing body was embodiment of social aptitude, sexual availability, or political relations. However, according to historical development, with the rise of eugenics and physiognomy, this physical movement became some sort of rubric for racial purity and reproductive fitness. It was not until the development of today’s modern dancing of 20th century that the idea took hold that dance sits outside of society, culture, and time.

Swing time, for this reason, contains full of descriptions and allusions of dance in, perhaps, its pop cultural, high modernist forms and uses the childhood dance class, providing reader with the glittering of the entertainment industry to break down the fallacy of dance as a timeless or universal form of expression. Given the details from the book, narrator’s experience of dance is quite political one from which she could not possibly escape. Modern dance becomes a metaphor for narrator’s mixed, biracial identity and its attendant confusions.

‘‘Could ballet shoes be worn for modern? What was modern? There was no one you could ask, no one who’d already done it, you were stuck, It was a rare mother whose curiosity extended to calling the number written on home-made flyers

stapled to local trees. Many girls who might have made fine dancers never made it across that road, for fear of a home-made flyer” (Smith, 2016).

Dance is depicted as a frame to understand patterns of influence and power as well in the novel. “Picasso would be incomprehensible to Rembrandt, but Nijinsky would understand Micheal Jackson” as narrator point out. She proclaims that how contemporary popular culture traps and influences individuals as if taking them within its graps to never let go. Although sharing similar profession Picasso was born hundreds of years later than Rembrandt and what is narrator trying to imply here is that our present contemporary period does actually force everyone to follow whatever is popular nowadays, in this case, if modern dance, for instance, does not allow colored people to get onto the stage, then the mechanism automatically erases your presence and does not even give you some chance or rather predetermine what part you are going to be playing. The real question to be asked is whether Nijinsky is claimed to have been understanding Jackson because of the similar nature of their physical movements or because of their shared social marginality.

Swing Time’s revelation of the embedded contexts make reader, in a way, wonder whether self-expressions like dance being one, represents the narrator as a shadow of others.

As the details of the narrator’s diverse betrayals of Aimee and Tracey come to the light, she finds herself once again, watching dance in a dark theater. This time being not that of Fred Astaire but instead Alvin Ailey’s who is the icon of black dance in America. She befriends with a couple sitting next to her, who remarks “It is nice to see *Revelations* with someone who hasn’t seen it fifty times” (Smith, 2016). An observation both humorous and tragic at one point because *Revelations* is the best-known work of the jazz-dance choreographer Alvin Ailey and someone who has quite much of an interest in dance would have probably seen it by that time more than once and tragic part comes from the ambiguity as how an appreciation of Ailey’s work could assist the narrator in the process of her self-amalgamation. Ailey most probably could be considered as a “pioneering staging of black identity within a high modernist aesthetic or as modern dance’s greatest commercial success, a

symbol of racial assimilation, dance consumerism, and a black politics made palatable to global white audiences” (DeFantz, 2002, p. 3-35).

Smith makes it clear throughout the novel that the concepts of dance and the dancer do not share similar concerns while almost every each character in the novel, has their own drives to dance upon, dance is perhaps a term that separates characters from one another by means of self ambitions and each dance is related to the personal way of perceiving the world around them that of a dancer's. Moreover, there is a scene in actual movie from which Zadie Smith decided to give it her novel's title, in which an hour further into the film shows another aspect in the stage called "Bojangles of Harlem" revealing Astaire in blackface with white gloves, a porkpie hat, and a grin from ear to ear, executing the sweeping geometrical patterns typical of Hollywood's golden-era musicals, the chorus surrounds "Bojangles" in dance sequence which does appear to be sexualized and racist. Yet, the scene comes to a conclusion with a quartet featuring Astaire and three silhouettes that are projected behind him moving in union for a while till they do part and perform their own steps. When is adapted into the novel, it is not clear who the real dancer is, or are they just shadows of their original selves, dancing just like the shadows of Astaire in the film. Lastly, the characters in the novel appear to transcend beyond their lives and their social conditions are the figures who are most metaphorically imprisoned by them. Aimee and Tracey, however, are incapable of making critical self-reflection, while their strong sense of self inhibits their purposeful insight into the nature of their connections to other people. On the other hand, the narrator, as protagonist is in perpetual state of reflection, about her own self and her relationships with others all of which allow her to develop even further. In the abyss of uncertainty between self and shadow, dancer and dance, a self-critical area emerges in a way that helps main character to play both an observer role and a participant one which leads to her inevitable growth in mindset, perception of the world, and sense of self. The protagonist's being dance-mad figure as someone grew up spellbound by the liberating moves of Fred Astaire or Micheal Jackson perhaps, has given life at first sight and then lost its footing until she finally picks herself, dust herself down and start all over again. In addition, Aimee's grand plan to set up a girls' school in

Africa does prompt strenuous but consciously slow-moving attempt to evoke a forgotten culture for the narrator as well as different notions of time. Time that she had before in her childhood years connected with her roots.

2.2. Effect of the Time, Politics and Domination upon Characters’ Development

Novel attaches importance to another concept namely ‘time’. The motif of time has been processed in relation to the former times of slavery and subordination and those burdened by it under the sphere of dance embodying a different kind of history. They try out cleaning every adverse effects of history out of its orbit into a utopian present to ease the weight upon their shoulders. Aimee, who constantly channels the legacy of black dance, becomes able to surf straight over ‘the waves of time’ to drop out every racist sort of ideology behind her that would otherwise drown ordinary humans to prove the reader that ‘a great dancer or performance has no boundaries of time.’

In contrast to the feminist and Marxist mother of the narrator that may remind reader of the iron hand figure that might be considered time-bound history. However, time inevitably drags her, her daughter and unfortunate Tracey down to earth. For this reason, Smith uses flashbacks throughout the novel, most likely to remind reader how the perception of the people has also changed in the progression of the history creating two poles in the novel one that defies usual boundaries of time while the other embraces it, it is as if a battle between synchronic and diachronic fiction. To the narrator, though in captivity to gravity and history-defying moves of the vaulting gods of Hollywood and MTV, she insists on denying the concept of time and for her ‘‘a dancer was a man from nowhere... without a nation or people’’. (Smith, 2016). In the village, she delights in the creation of pious, merrily conflicted trainee teacher Hawa who appears to be a smart girl who would feel right at home in Willesden, but the conscientious wrangles over the aid, power and philanthropy slow time to a crawl.

Despite the fact that they are trying to cast the unwanted historical past aside, there are still some examples of dominator against dominated that constantly emerges at some points of the progression of novel. If the relationship between narrator and Tracey has taken into hands with a closer inspection, it would not be a false statement to claim that Tracey is the dominant friend, the one who makes the plans, the one who the narrator looks up to and finds impossible to resist, but she struggles more than the narrator. She comes from a single parent family, her father is in prison, and unlike the narrator, she does not have a mother who pushes her to read and learn more in some respects. And eventually, Smith shows us how they grow into women in their thirties with lives that scarcely resemble each other, but they still have a magnetic pull towards each other. Although book reminds us of female friendship that was constantly shown as being together, fiercely caring for one another from an outer perspective, yet it is obvious that they are also jealous of one another in quietly catastrophic ways. But we also witness how her mother and her boss influence the narrator in life altering ways which brings out the mechanisms of domination and thus, ultimately points out the fact that history follows one partially at the same time, no matter how much one struggles to get rid of it. While book exploring the relationships between women, it also explores how do these women in the novel carry out the burdens of their past along with themselves, though some time has passed after the racial differentiation, and rise against this power system pulling strings behind to an extent where they want to see themselves as accomplished.

The fact that the concept of time is twisted by the author Smith since the story of the characters does not stick to a linear chronological timeline it moves between present day to their lives growing up without warning, similarly to that of twisted history by means of everlasting occurrences of same happenings in cycling motion. By doing so, Zadie aims to unbalance its readers and decenters her reader continually. Despite the fact that reader might also feel loose connection with the story of the book, still it might turn out to be a reminder of what has happened and will be.

Another important character that must be dealt with attention is the protagonist's mother and the way how an another form of domination she applied upon her. Her mother is disclosing as a self-sufficient, overambitious figure who appears to be constantly studying throughout her child's childhood period and growing years. Everytime she reads, learns, she does also try to spread her learning to her daughter which, in fact, may be regarded as something positive but if one dictates her self image upon others and does not leave any freedom of choice in learning something new to them, it becomes no different than the clash of domination between oppressor and oppressed relations rather than that of an ordinary familial atmosphere. She starts with completing high school, to doing her degree, to doing more, in every way she can she strives to become more of herself and thus, wants her daughter to be more of herself, to achieve something more by taking her freedom of choice away as a free agent. On the other hand, narrator responds back with some idea that her mother would not agree with that she wants her mum beside her and parental presence is all she wants but she does not want to fulfill the image of herself in the mind of her mother, she wants her mum just as her dad simply wants his wife nothing more. Her neglection of her family does not only keep them from being free individuals by enforcing such impositions but also keep her from achieving her own self which makes her unable to become free. However, when analyzed in depth, the reason she was neglecting her own family by paying attention to having a space in this world for herself might be because she does not want to be playing submissive stereotypical matriarch figure as a parent whose attributions will be restricted. Book gives better understanding to the issue from the perspective of the narrator :

‘‘What do we want from our mothers when we are children? Complete submission. Oh, its very nice and rational and respectable to say that woman has every right to her life, to her ambitions, to her needs, and so on – it's what I have always demanded myself – but as a child, no, the truth is it's a war of attrition, rationality doesn't come into it, not one bit, all you want from your mother is that she once and for all admit that she is your mother and only your mother, and that her battle with the rest of life is over. She has to lay down arms and come to you. And if

she doesn't do it, then it's really a war, and it was a war between my mother and me'' (Smith, 2016).

As the narrator clearly exemplifies on this quotation, both of them have some idea about how a parental figure should be and they were trying to shape each other in this war of attrition by acting upon the submission of each other.

Another interesting theme in book is international development and notions of Africa, Islam and the tabligh jamaat, and the contradictions and complications inherent in lived faith. By becoming a personal assistant for pop star Aimee for almost a decade, a role that takes her to Senegal to help Aimee building a school for the encouragement and empowerment of girls. A laudable idea in theory perhaps but in practice is fraught with problems and uncomfortable politics. The book at the same time examines the politics of international development, the power system imbalances that exist between the Global North and South, and the reach, limits and logic of capitalism through the story of Aimee's school, the people that are part of the village and her team who work with and around her to get real things done. The conversation that takes place between the narrator and Lamin exemplifies this at best:

'It was on the planet of Togo, six months earlier, back when Togo was still on the shortlist, before Aimee had offended that tiny nation by suggesting, in an interview, that its government did 'nothing for their people'. 'What's it like?' I'd asked, leaning over him, looking out of the porthole window, and meaning, I must admit, 'Africa'. 'I have not been,' he said coldly, without turning round.

'But you practically live here – I read your résumé.'

'No. Senegal, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, Ethiopia, yes – Togo, never.'

'Oh, well, you know what I mean.'

He'd turned to me, red-faced, and asked: 'If we were flying to Europe and you wanted to know what France was like, would it help if I described Germany?'' (Smith, 2016).

In relation to that the sphere that discriminates both areas of the world is in function that would make even those who are living there or lived in past to abandon it. Lastly, this becomes most likely a story of Britain, race politics and racism, about poverty, about structural and systemic issues, and about Blackness and Whiteness in juxtaposition.

CHAPTER 3

3. INTERSECTIONALISM, NOMADIC THEORY AND THE CONCEPT OF HYBRIDITY FOREGROUNDING THE ELEMENT OF DANCE

Zadie Smith's novel *Swing Time* explores the clash between individual identities and identity discourses. However, this time both women in the center of the action, unnamed narrator and her childhood friend, Tracey, are members of second-generation British-Jamaican diaspora in London, and it is their biracial hybridity that places them against this hegemonic discourses in contemporary British society. The text vividly portrays the consequences of their abnormality, particularly how the specific intersections of race, gender, and class they represent and embody limitation to either their cultural or socio-economic existence and impair their capacity to construct a stabile and sustainable identity. When taken into hands within the borders of a theory coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw named Intersectionalism, it "promotes solipsism at the personal level and division at the social level." It also "represents a form of feminism that puts a label on you. It tells you how oppressed you are. It tells you what you're allowed to say, what you're allowed to think" (Coaston, 2019, May 20). The term is developed to describe in its essence how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics 'intersect' with one another and overlap. Primarily, Kimberlé described how the people from different backgrounds encountered the world suggesting that discriminations the black woman has faced is of much more complications within compared to that of a white woman or black man. This cultural otherness marginalize the subjects of other origins from the communal residence.

Considering the fact that the novel draws out the very likeness of the characters struggling in the context of postcolonialism, the Intersectional mechanism works by means of forcing them at some point to assimilate into the communal norms that they have nothing but to accept, shaping them under certain ideology and predetermine who they are. Intersectionality proclaims that once someone is in minority group, they will be regarded with special acknowledgement in the eyes of other.

Braidotti's '*Nomadic Subjects*', which is interrelated with the very theory pioneered by her under the title of '*Nomad Theory*', as Özden Sözalán explains as well in her article. What is more is that by making use of Braidotti's '*Nomad Theory*', she provides us with a diverse 'configuration of 'woman as nomad' responding to women's universal 'homelessness' (Sözalán, 2014, p.14).

This nomadic woman can function as the 'third term' to deconstruct the binary opposition between the first and the third world women. That binary opposition itself is a 'construct employed here in order to foreground 'third world women' as a provisional category against the background of assumptions regarding the history of western feminism. At this point the category of third world women requires some clarification for it involves the risk of addressing a large variety of women's experience under a single rubric' (Sözalán, 2014, p. 14). Moreover, as she goes on, these third world women 'have in common a form of subjectivity, which can be compared to that of a traveller in an act of constant shift of locations and levels of experience' (Sözalán, 2014, p.15).

Sözalán does also claim that a 'nomadic subject is the example of the people(s) that are literally nomadic, whose cultural experiences are, more often than not, shaped by forms of resistance against settling into socially coded modes of thought and behaviour' (Sözalán, 2014, p.17).

Taking all of these into account, each women in the story were shaping their identity in the context of binary opposition constructed between first and third world women by showing a sort of resistance and defiance to the oppositional relations in their own identity formations. Given the fact that binary thinking partially persists in Western societies proclaiming homogeneity and biracial people are accepted as

‘‘different’’ it just does not only make the subjects’ awareness of themselves in reality harder and difficult to reach but positioning them as the Other depriving them of forming an empowering self. As homogenizing identity of women are rejected by Braidotti, the narrator’s and Tracey’s racial and cultural heterogeneity somehow help them in facilitating their own advancements as nomadic identities. No matter how many impositions they have been forced to encounter in the face of colonial materialistic and symbolic impact as diasporic identities, their heterogeneity functions as a source of both discouragement and empowerment. Braidotti’s deconstructive nomadic theory seeks to overcome essentialist, unchangeable and deterministic Western hegemonic concepts of identity by reshaping it in the form of performative becoming through dance motif. As a result of such identity performances, one becomes able to transcend beyond the predetermined identity categories and essential ideologies, interpreted in Braidotti’s words as ‘‘variables,’’ or ‘‘axes of differentiation’’ (Braidotti, 2011). However, such nomadic transcendence is not universally valid for all but presupposes cultural and material privilege, since a political consciousness and individual awareness of power relations does not simply erase the cultural and material impact of these power relations upon individual identities.

Crenshaw’s theory foresees the division of individuals based on their race, class, gender, and other individualistic factors, a divisive form of caste system that is to say, however, Braidotti’s theory does deny both this polarisation and essentialist ideology represented by means of book’s plot dividing the women through juxtapositions of Western and African, similarly in skin colour as well, as White and Brown. Crenshaw’s Intersectionalist approach does not aim to form a draft to this essential form of identity categories but rather focuses on how these varying and separating intersections lead individual agents to socio-economic and individual crisis that impacts them at personal level. In addition to this, on social level, these unendingly turning cogwheels of Intersectual system places subjects into specific set of categories on the basis of their origin as simply marking the issue that it all will be depending on where they are from or what they choose that will also determine their position in the community by means of acceptance or isolation as a result. Therefore,

one may speculate over the fact that these intersecting identity categories created by the power relations might bring about some consequences that nomadic identity seeks to accomplish or overcome. For this reason, the desire to prevail over this predetermined hegemonical identity categories through performative way is playing a crucial part in the dimension of characters' life and advancement in the book. Moreover, not only does the cultural characterisation of the characters affect them in the categorization but also the socio-economic classification lead them to the marginalization due to intersectional difference and ultimately, resulting in the emergence of nomadic identity

Tracey's lack of socio-economic conditions as well as the narrator's lack of cultural aspects render them both as subjects that are unable to overcome hegemonical discriminations of identity categories, however, only enable them to prevail over it through nomadic practice, in other words, perpetually seeking something of themselves. Both theories play a great role in the characters' rising of social awareness, each of them in different ways. As Braidotti explains, the political practice of "bonding, of coalitions, of interconnections" between individuals allow them to share their knowledge and experiences (Braidotti, 2011). Through such way enabling them to become socially aware in the identity formation process.

Both the narrator of *Swing Time* and Tracey displays a performative approach to their formation of identity, possibly through dance motif by engaging in some form of acting against a mechanism in a particular way they know the best. Yet, socio-economic differences between them are projected into essential distinctness in their performances. Tracey, being the daughter of a black Jamaican man who constantly abuses her and a long-term unemployed white British mother, lacks socio-economic conditions and upward social mobility because of which her mother as a white woman faces many difficulties in working area as a result of having two people of another origin in her domestic life. Her continuous exposure to such form of discrimination increases her political consciousness and ultimately, leads to her engagement in nomadic performances of "as if" creating her own sphere in this performative act of dance. By contrast with the narrator, even though growing up in the same working class estate, Tracey enjoys the upward social mobility. On the

other hand, since narrator's British father does draw a portrayal of self-dedicating figure he manages to get promoted in his job at the postal service and facilitates both his daughter's and his wife's academic education and their elevation to the top layers of the societal and the political conditions. However, such socio-economic conditions for the narrator drifts her further away from viewing socio-economic structures and cultural discourses as critically as Tracey does and perhaps, that is why, it takes some time in the novel for her to gather up fragmented pieces of the self to achieve authentic personality. Moreover, narrator's mother would rather choose to read than cook or do house chores and constantly looks down on Tracey's mother who appears as a figure that have no other ambition than to spoil her beautiful daughter to the best of her limited ability. For this very reason, her mother wishes to draw out the best from her daughter making her politically unconscious not allowing her to produce an authentic performance like Tracey but instead she only produces a performance of "as if" as a reproduce of something that has already been produced adapting herself to the dominant identity concepts of which cannot be taken into account as nomadic. Unlike Tracey, she only manages to become politically aware towards the end, especially when narrator and her mother meets for a lunch and her mother looking out of the window at the bridge over the Thames saying "those poor boys," referring to two young men who had previously been thrown into the water by a group of teens, leading one boy's death. As the conversation goes on, her mother shows quite sympathy for the boys thrown into river and those who threw them in. After that narrator describes the grotesque sadness of their lives, listing the details about growing up in estates, being abandoned by their parents, getting kicked out of school or home and dealing with sexual abuse and drug abuse. However, her mother's concern gets agitated her and says, "We can't all be innocent" ... "Somebody has to be guilty!" (Smith, 2016).

The core of novel's awareness lies in the idea that nothing is simply a matter of guilt and innocence, but rather a series of factors and circumstances all leading up to a situation in a certain context. The bridge here also visually drives home the notion of the "sentence moving in two directions."

When the narrator and her pop star boss, Aimee, start to make visits to the village in West Africa, the characters are contrasted against the new setting. They stop at the communal gardens to see the “limits of subsistence farming.” Upon arrival, Aimee immediately responds to seeing a field full of women at work: “Oh, I see what’s happening here... You gals get to really talk to each other out here. No men in sight. Yeah, I can just imagine what goes on.” And then the narrator reflects:

“I thought of how little I could imagine of what went on. Even the simplest ideas I’d brought with me did not seem to work here when I tried to apply them. I was not, for example, standing at this moment in a field with my extended tribe, with my fellow black women. Here there was no such category...” (Smith, 2016).

The narrator had arrived with some expectation of feeling a kinship to the people of the village. Instead, there is no tribe of her fellow black women but rather many different unique cultural tribes by whom she is treated as a foreigner. Aimee’s reaction – that of a wealthy Australian pop star – is so blatantly tone deaf, it’s clear that she doesn’t fully understand the reality of the situation. Neither of these notions is uncommon – both women have projected something onto the villagers in a particular way that is often tied in with race and privilege. What makes it so striking is that reader are shown how women from two very different backgrounds can make the same mistake, even if it unfolds differently for each.

In *Swing Time*, Zadie Smith’s use of contrast and context allows her to draw out complex concepts to grant reader an understanding of the multifaceted nature of complicated social issues. “However, in contrast to Braidotti’s proclaim, a political consciousness and understanding of these multifaceted natures of complicated social issues are not enough alone for someone to overcome these intersecting embodied ‘axes of differentiation’” but rather requires both cultural and socio-economic understanding for nomadic performances to be successful.

Tracey’s awareness of this intersectional discrimination is fostered by her parents’ awareness of colonial-racist power. In the progression of the novel, she repeatedly engages in practices of “as if” by trying to transcend beyond the binary identities in order to escape predetermined subjectivities and gain access to better

socio-economic conditions and control over her life. Tracey initially emphasizes the difference between Lily's middle class and her own working class positions as she takes on a Cockney accent (Smith, 2016, p. 76), but then she slowly builds up her authority at the expense of the presence of Lily's mother by going beyond the social rules attached to binary identity categories. She does even perform sexually obscene gestures during a car ride to the cinema at the driver in the car behind to transgress the gender norms as well as age conventions to go against the authority that Lily's mother exerts over her children (Smith, 2016, p. 77). Symbolically, this might be regarded as another point of the fact that Tracey's socio-economic and cultural awareness is growing larger and larger to the boiling point when it will not be enough for her to stay in the corner and remain silent. Another point is that while entertaining the other children, this performative act grants Tracey to seize her own authority over predetermined norms.

Tracey's behaviours can just be described in relation to what Braidotti does also describe as a 'vacuum opens up by busted dichotomies' (Braidotti, 2011). In the novel, vacuum's emergence signifies the Tracey's defiance of racial dichotomies to upset these power relations embedded in them as well as the life they are sustaining by bringing about this performative act of 'as if'. Astonishment of the other children and Lily's mother proves their interrelation to this binary conception of subjectivity and power. With such performative acts of her own, being a radical nomadic agent who has achieved political consciousness, she opens up and occupies an emerging 'in-between space' in correlation with Homi Bhabha's concept of 'third space' to exert an alternative political subjectivity (Bhabha, 2004). Therefore, this performative act of Tracey, enables her to surpass the mere limits of power relations of age, race, class, gender within the context of Lily's birthday which does also help her to overcome hierarchies and construct a subjective self beyond dominant models.

Tracey's performative acts do also form the basis of her economic conditions. As a dancer, first as in voluntary classes, later professionally on London stages, enables her to reach a stage where she shifts between identities to make a living, one being her own and the other is what these hierarchical system has imposed upon her.

As she struggles to improve her performance skills to perfection (Smith, 2016, p. 26), ‘‘including ballet’’ (Smith, 2016, p. 51) –which she associates with ‘‘white music’’ (Smith, 2016, p. 24) –she earns partial parts in musicals where people of different color would take only marginal roles.

In *Guys and Dolls*, she uses gender and excessive performance of femininity in order to deviate the attention of the audience from the white female star to herself, a black dancer in a minor role (Smith, 2016, p. 347). Similarly, in *Showboat*, she is given a supporting parts again having adapted her appearance to that of western’s dominant beauty standards by straightening her hair (Smith, 2016, p. 356), yet the main part of a ‘‘tragic mulatto’’ is still given to a white actress (Smith, 2016, p. 359). Somehow she rearranges the choreographic elements within her part to that of Fred Astaire’s as well in *Royal Wedding* (Smith, 2016, p. 359). It might just be clear reference to Astaire since once before he was using the moves of Bill ‘‘Bojangles’’ Robinson by reinterpreting them in blackface (Smith, 2016, p. 4). Similarly, in her case, Tracey too was reinterpreting the configurations of the choreographic elements to her needs just as they were interpreted in Astaire’s version.

Tracey’s performative act of ‘‘as if’’ is used by her both on stage and off to also gain access to better economic conditions. Patriarchal hierarchies functions outside the world of theatre such as Chalky, who does belong to upper middle class Kenyan family who takes up an inferior position (Smith, 2016, p. 344). A clear example of this would be that when Tracey rejects his offer to leave his wife for her (Smith, 2016, p. 342), since she does also view relationships as another performance where she plays another part in to gain access to financial betterment and ‘‘a free education’’ (Smith, 2016. p. 346). Therefore, Tracey utilizes her gender as both on and off stage performance as well to gain access to more material resources. On stage, she does bring out a likeness of the objectification of the feminine figure to have taken patriarchal structures for granted but off stage, in her private zone, she performs the role of a woman in opposite manner in which she consciously keeps her relationship with Chalky outside the established patriarchal norms limiting it to an extra-marital affair, most likely, to secure her superiority over him, with the intent of exploiting him even further and gain even more material benefit.

Within the borders of specific 'freedom' that Tracey acquires for her own self, she temporarily deconstructs the symbolical effects of colonial discourse. Understanding the material consequences at the intersection of race, gender and ethnicity since she earns her living from dancing, and take advantage of Chalky to compensate for the economic need for her education. Tracey's firm connections to the understanding of operations of power system allows her to gain access to taking advantage of them too at some point being a nomadic feminine figure. Therefore, her relation to Chalky provides her with social fund in the form of materialism which enables her to sustain better socio-economic conditions. Despite the fact that Tracey's behaviours can be considered as exploitative and transgressive, it results from her socio-economically and culturally marginalized position that is depriving her of all sort of supportive resources forcing her to be casted aside due to Intersectionalist power mechanisms that separate individuals into categorical sections by means of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions of one.

Last but not least, Tracey's exploitative performances produce ambivalent outcomes, because of the predetermined identity conceptions in Western societies which is brought forward in the case of postcolonial biracial subjects. No matter what they do to act against such systematic cycle, at one point, all their struggles become futile due to their racial difference that places them in vulnerable and victimized positions constantly. As a result, these nomadic performances of such character fail to be empowering them but rather lead their social isolation. During her school years, she is constantly bullied by her female schoolmates when she was displaying her feminine body and gender, staging a performance of taking her coat off 'with terrible relish, unzipping slowly and in such a way that her breasts were presented to the rest of us with as much impact as possible, barely contained by an unsuitable top that showed off her abundance where the rest of us still had only nipples and bones' (Smith, 2016, p. 168). And gradually, from that moment on out, all the girls in her class begins to exclude her, black, white and brown. In another example, even the narrator's father behaves her in humiliating manner when he sees that she wears middle class clothes and performs a middle class accent during a casual encounter. In addition, he was feeling like her style is actually out of place, as

if belonging to a “different neighborhood, a different world” (Smith, 2016, p. 263). What’s more, she maintains her accent even when she talks with her friends and in return they respond back saying “but you’re not serious, are you, Trace? Stop it with all that –it’s just us here! No need to talk fancy with us. We know you, we’ve known you since you were this high, you don’t have to pretend to be Lady Much with us!” (Smith, 2016 p. 262-63). As it can be recognised from such phrases of her friends, Tracey is being encircled by the political norms of diaspora identities with a strong feeling of necessity that consciously or unconsciously she behaves living up to the expectations of these norms. Even narrator’s father cannot help himself laughing and giggling at her, in the middle of King’s Cross Station. Both reactions, in fact, imply what is the expectation of unitary gender and class identities in minds of each subject with some ideological backgrounds attached to them. Therefore, on the one hand, these acts of defiance, nomadic performances, in professional context allow Tracey to move beyond predetermined binary identity categories as only partial representations by expressing and embracing her hybridity, as well as gaining access to resources through interconnections of her with others, on the other hand, the rejection of her performances coming from her peers in her private life results in her self isolation which ultimately reduces her supportive network as well as her socio-economic conditions. In a nutshell, her job as a professional dancer becomes the sole source of income which is endangered once she feel obligation to quit after giving birth to three children. For this reason, the intersectional power dynamic makes Tracey vulnerable and marginalize her to a point where she would need to quit her only source and ambition which is her dancing career to raise her children as a single mother with no relative or friends to get support from.

Contrary to Braidotti’s proclaim, Tracey’s diaspora identity category along with its social and material consequences cannot be overcome only with the help of performative act, her ‘dance’. One may undeniably witness the colonial-racist power that is intersecting her on basis of gender, class and race, while consumerist ideology socio-economically marginalizes her. Reduced to a mere material, without any supportive network or resources, she becomes deprived of both socio-economic

conditions of her former self as well as the ability to professionally perform a nomadic cultural identity through her dance.

The narrator's social progress counterparts that of Tracey's. Not only does she have parents whose background is clearly the opposite of Tracey's parents since it is in this case, her mother is Jamaican while her father is white British postal worker, she does also grow up with better socio-economic conditions that Tracey lacks. Having some intersectional privileges from university, she does acquire the position of broadcaster on YTV and then into being assistant of white global pop star, Aimee (Smith, 2016, p. 346). After that narrator of *Swing Time* becomes able to overcome any potentially negative impact of her materialistically and socio-economically defined identity. In the course of her employments, she embarks on trips that would widen her cultural context to provide her with the understanding of shifting identity positions and help her to understand the interconnection between different people belonging to different origins. The solid difference between Tracey's nomadism and narrator's lies in narrator's lack of political consciousness, which means her lack of political consciousness lead her practice of 'as if' into non-nomadic figure which end up turning into mere reproductions. Narrator and Tracey is like a counter double, narrator has better socio-economic conditions but lacks the understanding of cultural and political consciousness whereas Tracey possesses better political and cultural perspective of life but lacks socio-economic standards. However, taking trips around the world and encountering with critical and self-reflective fellows eventually make her aware of colonial power structures as well as identity categorizations and prompt her reflect upon her own position and actions that she might take. Spatial changes expands her cultural consciousness and socio-economic conditions that she has access to. For instance, her colleagues and herself are given free things during their travels. Once Aimee takes her under protection, she travels between London, New York City, and West Africa, with some additional tours to other destinations. London and New York City are two main home bases for Aimee's musical career, places where she dwells and work on her self public image. However, West Africa too, becomes recurrent destination since Aimee plans on building a school there under the label of charity project. This charity projects draws

quite public attention from local population, even though the president never arrives to the planned meetings, and Aimee herself avoids attending festivities organized in her honor. It is mostly her employees that represent her. Some other benefits appears for the narrator such as in housing: the narrator gives up her flat (Smith, 2016, p. 143), as she is provided with a room in Aimee's house, or an alternative flat in New York City (Smith, 2016, p. 363-64). After being fired due to her affair with Lamin, she still manages to sustain her life in privileged condition since Aimee's assistant arranges a separate flat for her in London (Smith, 2016, p. 436). The narrator's professional relations help her climbing up into the upper middle class conditions at the cost of some potential cultural disadvantages related to her unchangeable origin and class categorization in the face of Intersectionalist mechanism. The socio-economic elevation that she reaches help her, for instance, when Lamin insists that she cannot take a narrowboat after they missed the last ferry to get to the village in West Africa, however, as a woman she feel unable to wait in public for the next ferry and instead she uses her socio-economic status to overcome her gender inconvenience to pay Lamin for the boat passage (Smith, 2016, p. 172-173).

The privilege of being an assistant to worldwide known super star comes with a cost and may not seem as appealing as it looks, it actually requires too strong dependence on exactly what Aimee wants her employees to be, just as dynamic power systems in practice. Narrator does not only give up on her flat but also on her friendships as well, cutting ties to her own mother since Aimee's lifestyle demands her employees to be unchained without anything that would bind them to anywhere or anyone except for her own self (Smith, 2016, p. 143).

Although being a personal assistant at first sight is what narrator wanted perhaps, a social elevation, the idea of securing one's life but as the book progresses further it reveals reader that having someone at the center of your life does mean that you will be deprived of everything that makes you who really are and makes you incapable of performing any act as freely as an individual subject as she puts it:

‘‘I'd never really paid for anything in New York: I lived on Aimee, ate with Aimee, went out with Aimee’’ which leads her up to the questioning of her own limits as a free agent but with chains and the importance of that freedom (Smith,

2016, p. 431). Ultimately, Aimee's environment wants her to be disposed of, and drive her out of United States back to London at the turning point of the novel. However, the mobility that comes with Aimee's work enlargen narrator's view of identity positions in positive manner in comparison with her biracial mixed identity. Spending her time within Aimee's sphere for some time, it is as if she forgets who she really is and returns back to the times with flashbacks when she was dancing and singing and last enjoyed the moment during her childhood with Tracey: in New York. Moreover, in West Africa, she reaches a state of feeling that she found "the joy [she'd] been looking for all [her] life" (Smith, 2016, p. 165), perhaps a sense of familiarity and after that she immediately connects herself to the dance and joining the villagers during celebration, using only her instinct to align herself to the beats of fellow dancer (Smith, 2016, p. 417). This moment is like a sudden return to one's origins if analyzed in detail and she feels comfortable being surrounded by the people with whom she shares the similar origin. The fact that narrator accidentally continues to sing after the end of the song and that she is recognized by villagers as quite white in their perspective and that her dance was no more than a resemblance to the original one, does simply imply the fact that she lacks the control over prefigured identity conception within people's minds (Smith, 2016, p. 138).

The narrator's attempt to assimilate into only a singular cultural context and her lack of ability to cut the border encircling the identity positions in order to establish a complete domination over it and bend it to her biracial identity fails in the end and does not allow her to progress further as a nomadic feminine character. Her attempt to adapt does only keep her away from the outcome of adaption since she is confined within the unitary identity discourses, her hybridity constantly comes to the surface that plays an alienating role for her from her own consciousness as well as the environment.

One of the examples in the novel might be her first meeting with her white half siblings (Smith, 2016, p. 46). When she meets her half siblings, she feels disoriented and this thought makes a sharp contrast between the origin of them and the narrator just as her effort to adapt to the villagers' life and ways in Africa results in similar contrast between villagers and the narrator because of their perception of

her as white (Smith, 2016, p. 417). Despite the fact that she is not affected by the socio-economic and cultural results of her being different in terms of gender, race, or class as Tracey actually is, her performative act of ‘as if’, contrary to that of Tracey’s, does not become an act of rebellion of nomadic heroine but rather becomes a repeated effort to assimilate which perpetually reproduces the variance between her hybridity and surrounding. This hybridity of her leads to a state of uncertainty between cultures and deprive her of sense of belonging.

The narrator’s lack of a nomadic political consciousness, in other words her inability of understanding the political mechanism of intersections, is reflected on her insensitivity and vulnerability to power structures and her conscious attempt to detach herself from any form of social environments like a dancer and to run away all the responsibilities which makes her relationship with Aimee and rest of the world even more complex. Apart from being entirely dependent on sources that Aimee provides for her, narrator becomes a partner in crime in some ways for Aimee’s postcolonialist practices. When she assists Aimee in the establishment of a girls’ school in West Africa it brings out the former colonial dependency and somehow it does also socially divide the villagers since the boys appears to have been excluded from this new school and are being forced to dwell in their old one gives a sensation that they are abandoned in a form of discrimination and separation. In addition to this, Aimee’s arrival to the village does lead them to deterioration of medical and infrastructural conditions and water quality (Smith, 2016, p. 300). What’s more is that she organizes an exhibition of photographs that replicate images taken of various dancers (Smith, 2016, p. 426), and witnesses how Aimee make use of dance moves of the villagers for her show, in other words, for her own benefit (Smith, 2016, p. 366).

Therefore, the narrator’s practices of ‘as if’ that only assimilate these subject positions that constantly change gain no effect. However, as a result of her intersectional privilege being assistant to Aimee, her indifference to these materialistic differences and implied colonial structures with cultural intersectional relations, she reproduces them at some point. This intersectional othering and discrimination of the village under the label of Aimee’s charity work mirrors the

same structural constraints on Tracey's own self development. Cultural arrangement and the narrator's indivisible subjectivities are the evidence of the Western cultural power dominations in hegemonical identity formations that Tracey attempts to break down by disclosing a defiance with her own nomadic performance.

The contradictions that is present between Tracey and the narrator from the very beginning of their friendship ultimately gets out of control and turns into a clash between an intersectional force of domination versus feminine nomadic agency that attempts to prevail over it. The narrator confronts Tracey in the novel by means of numerous emails she sent to narrator's mother who had, at the time, reached to the position of parliamentary representative of their constituency. In a hostile tone, Tracey's mails accuse the narrator's mother of being partner in crime in copying structural neglect that constitutes her everyday lived experience. Without consulting Tracey about the subject matter, the narrator rejects her accusations by saying that those accusations are "a surreal mix of personal vendetta, painful memory, astute political protest and a local resident's complaints" (Smith, 2016, p. 399), admitting those mails as harassment of her mother. In the clash between Tracey and narrator, Tracey proclaims that what narrator is doing is no different than revealing the acceptableness of her mother's negligence and denying the existence of a form of mutual understanding. According to the narrator, as she claims that "there is a system" that Tracey and her own mother are part of and that she points out the fact that impossibility of transcending beyond this intersectional system (Smith, 2016, p. 406). Although Tracey being unaware the fact that they are actually part of this system of 'intersectionality', she implies that the narrator and her mother have been actively supporting all along this power structure based on their actions of intersectional marginalization and silencing people that are sharing similar origin with them.

Near the end, Tracey publishes a video tape to force the narrator into realization of her conformity with the system (Smith, 2016, p. 438-39). The recording contains their childhood dance she and the narrator performed together during the game of "Putting on a Show" at Lily Bingham's birthday party (Smith, 2016, p. 79-81), a dance that demonstrates both the narrator's habit of adaptation and

her confinement within a cultural ambiguity. On the other hand, Tracey's consciously using a song of Aimee to surpass and go beyond the boundaries of culture and origin narrator joins in on the dance and fulfills the role Tracey assigns for her (Smith, 2016, p. 80-81). Here, the publication of tape works as a tool for the realization of narrator to push mechanisms of cultural and structural power systems in function into narrator's mind to force her making self judgment on her practices with Aimee. This incident forms a part of her self political, structural and intersectional awakening at one point which is also facilitated by her trips to some locations of her origin to extend the understanding of her place in the world's vastness.

On another case, her witnessing the transformation of Hawa plays a great role in the expansion of her view, her closest friend in the West African village, an important figure among the other local woman that transforms from a feminist supporter into a married and settled woman who gives up her passion for dance (Smith, 2016, p. 303-304). Narrator's state of astonishment after witnessing the transformation of Hawa shows the catastrophic effects of "evil spirits, whose existence in the world [she] no longer doubted" (Smith, 2016, p. 416). These evil spirits are power structures functioning behind controlling the subjects and molding them into some shapes in accordance with predetermined cultural register that sets roles for each individual subject of different origin beforehand. Thus, the dramatic change of Hawa demonstrates to what extent people are determined by social and political constraints.

Another step that must be analyzed thoroughly in the process of narrator's development of political consciousness is when she encounters with a former colleague of her own, namely Fernando Carrapichano, who is being a project manager with extensive knowledge in international development who plays a role in coordinating the construction of Aimee's girls' school in West Africa. He resigns from his job discussing the ethical issues in Aimee's charity work the issue of which brings narrator to the brink of realization once again that she "had always been quick to interpret everything personally, where Fern had seen the larger, structural issues" (Smith, 2016, p. 449). In the moment of this encounter, narrator becomes ashamed of

her self-centered view on things, especially those previous interpretations of Tracey's emails as a personal attack against her and her mother.

These experiences of transformations make the narrator revisit Tracey's emails, and their conflicts once again. She comes to a conclusion that she "had a sacred duty towards [Tracey]" but she "left her back there, in the ranks of the unwitnessed where you have to scream to get heard" (Smith, 2016, p. 448). In this very moment, narrator becomes closer to being a feminine nomadic agent. She begins to understand the importance of the interconnection of people belonging to the same origins unlike her former self who neglects these connections which results in amplifying effects of colonial powers. The narrator realizes that not only did her lack of care for Tracey was what deprived her of better social environment and thus, of the means to overcome socio-economic struggles she was facing but also her behaviours against Tracey contributed to her othering process when she refused to understand the problems Tracey identified in her email and before that when her mother was looking down on her till her daughter and Tracey part their ways. Instead, both of them denied her voice and social presence which is amply shown throughout the text. To give an example, shortly after their graduation from school, the money they had collected from a particular event at their church just disappeared and was nowhere to be found, however, the narrator's mother and their dance teacher immediately makes Tracey the prime suspect without even investigating the case further. This suspicion emerged to be on Tracey's head alone in spite of the fact that both Tracey and narrator had access to the keys where the money was held, yet, Miss Isabell's commentary leaves the narrator's family out of this case, reinforces the idea that they cannot be suspects in this incident, not "with a family like that ..." at a cost of marginalization of Tracey (Smith, 2016, p. 280). Thereby, narrator's mother cutting her ties to Tracey, reduces Tracey's circle of friends and forcing her even further into othering process. Instead of recognizing the intersectional differences brought about by power structures, the narrator and her mother does just push Tracey to a location of marginalization while they are retaining their benefits of having supportive network and its resources.

The final scene of the novel gives a glimpse that the narrator's recognition of the social and material effects of these intersectional differences creates an opportunity for two protagonists to link their individual characteristics as well as socio-economic differences they have access to, and by doing that, they establish some form of nomadic interconnections in Braidotti's own sense of understanding in order to reduce their vulnerability to these colonial structural and cultural power mechanisms by embracing their hybrid cultural origins. After having this realization of her contribution to Tracey's othering process, the narrator walks up to her housing block and see her dancing with her children on the balcony again. This encounter appears to be left undescribed and left open to commentary, however, the narrator gives a sensation to the reader that she approaches to the estate with "an idea, new to me, that there might be something else I could offer, something simpler, more honest, between my mother's idea of salvation and nothing at all" (Smith, 2016, p. 453). The fact that narrator's words signify her desire to fulfill atonement for taking a part in Tracey's marginalization process and thus, she comes up with an idea that what Tracey actually needed was a simpler option between her mother's idea and nothing with an honest understanding, a friendship and support of someone who understands her. Smith directs reader into a thinking that interconnection between nomadic characters and their practices of "as if" play great part in the formation process of cultural identities in the novel. Author calls attention to the fact that the understanding of intersectional mechanism functions and differences and thus, its results is crucial part of knowledge as well as the resources exchanged through these interconnections. In Tracey's exemplification, her nomadic performance and transcendence of the predetermined cultural identity categories rely on her defiance as a marginalized subject through her nomadic act in the face of this cultural othering process and not submitting to her own socio-economic conditions. Last of all, nomadic identities must be acknowledged as linked to one another in order for a person of hybrid origin to be considered a culturally and socio-economically empowered subject.

3.1. Hybridity Affecting Course of the Novel and Characters' Dance of Ambiguity

Hybridity, according to Elmo Raj in his article, is “the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Raj, 2014, p. 125-128). These contact zones are the junction points for transcultural forms giving birth to the creation of an “in-between space” which appears to be “constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 37).

When these instructions are taken into consideration and applied into the flow of the novel, the unnamed narrator finds herself holed up in her flat, disgraced and out of job since she has been fired, for reasons which are not disclosed quite well from her position as the longtime personal assistant to a widely known superstar Aimee. In her muted solitude, she is left to reflect on her former actions and possibly as a self repentance. Until one day, when she leaves her flat and goes to a lecture, where a clip from Fred Astaire’s *Swing Time* plays. It becomes an epiphanic moment when she realizes the fact that Astaire was in blackface in fact out of such moment comes a clarification by her:

“I saw all my years at once, but they were not piled up on each other, experience after experience, building into something of substance –the opposite. A truth was being revealed to me: that I had always tried to attach myself to the light of other people, that I had never had any light of my own. I experienced myself as a kind of shadow” (Smith, 2016).

Considering the fact that narrator thinking of herself as a human being who has always tried to attach herself to the light of other people as a result of her shadowed origin placed him in the center of the “in-between space” created by the colonial power dynamics. The understanding of the self for the narrator is developed through the interconnected stories of other characters which is suitable for a character considering herself as a shadow depending to the others surrounding her. Story encircling around four women, the narrator and her mother, Aimee, and her

two friends, Tracey and Hawa marking the path she has chosen from her past to the present. As stated in earlier explanations, Tracey stands for a figure, a fellow child of the estates whom narrator meets in a dance class sharing similar skin tone ‘‘as if one piece of tan material had been cut to make us both’’ (Smith, 2016). Tracey shares narrator’s love and passion for dance and provides her own light to the narrator in this sense from which she is drawn. On the other hand, narrator’s mother emerges as a autodidact figure who actually lacks ‘‘the fundamental skill of all mothers –the management of time’’ and according to whom, ‘‘all that matters in this world ... is what’s written down’’ which afterwards identifies Tracey as a bad influence for the narrator casting her away (Smith, 2016). This is again, a symbol of differentiation of diaspora subjects, even though they both are sharing similar origin, she discourages narrator from pursuing dancing career, from being a mere black body in a world that will not respect her and see her only a colonial representative on stage without having any realization the fact that they too are all diaspora subjects in fact by proclaiming her superiority just as living under mentioned ‘‘in-between space’’.

Tracey possessing everything narrator lacks and thus, becomes some form of dictating source for the narrator. It reminds the reader of Tracey’s flat, when the girls watches soap operas and play a videotape called *Top Hat* on loop while they are lying belly-down and write some things about ‘‘ballet dancers in peril’’ which Tracey dictates the writing. Tracey assumes the role of dominative here, quite similar to that of colonial dynamics in function, dictating the writing and thus, becoming a manipulative narrative figure giving another shape to the process. And long after their friendship has ended, when Tracey reappears but this time this skill of manipulation becomes her means of revenge.

Narrator leaves Tracey behind and Tracey continues to follow a path connected to what narrator’s mother told her once that ‘‘to succumb to the body is to be playing game by their rules and if you do that, I promise you will catch a load of babies, never leave these streets, and be another one of these sisters who might as well not exist’’ (Smith, 2016). In the meantime, narrator goes off to college, gets a job at YTV and gets chance to be personal assistant to Aimee. But in similar manner, Aimee becomes a load of baby for the narrator: like in the case of her mother, she

again suspends her own life to attach her light again to the others, in other words, to manage the life of another's, this time her boss's. And when Aimee decides to open a girls' school in West Africa the narrator is sent out to gather information about the conditions of the rural folk and there she meets Hawa, as her host, whose future like many women is threatened by the imminent burden of children. The shift between the meaning of women that get into narrator's life as well as the men and their significance bring out the idea of "in-between space" at some point reminding how the meanings and symbols of culture has no fixed or unitary meanings and thus, same signs can be translated anew and transform into different versions of their former presence just like the representations of people and their meanings for the narrator change over the course of novel. During her relationships with these women and men she get chance to know, narrator does not reveal much about her overall characteristic features which leave reader in suspicion that she is in fact the one dwelling in that "in-between space" whose identity shapeshifts into many forms as in relation to the people she meet.

As a child, reader witnesses the narrator's resistance to Tracey's "steady notions" about race and class when she claims that "black music, white music –[I knew] that there must be a world somewhere in which the two combined" (Smith, 2016). Here again, Tracey's proclaim of the existence of a space in which both black and white cultural aspects are united is interrelated to the "in-between space" as hybridity puts it that way but the difference is that in this location the concepts are rehistoricized and figured anew.

One day, narrator spots a dancer in the 1937 musical *Ali Baba Goes Town* who looks just like Tracey named Jeni LeGon, one of the first black women to have a solo career in tap dance and races to show her friend the scene. However, only on replaying the tape does she notice the fact that what she overlooked in her excitement was that the blackface performance of the lead, Eddie Cantor, standing right before Tracey's look-alike figure. Similar discursive formations that are in play within the borderline of hybridity, changing the course of understandings and shaping them anew, this time in racist and insulting manner overshadowed by the entertainment setting.

The narrator's desire to recover black art and 'kinetic joy', a phrase that she uses often times even as it appears in quite much perverted forms that without *Ali Baba* there would be no Jeni LeGon which is why, colonial system takes even the presence of those who possess another origin under its control to either allow them to exist in a particular part within the community or not. However, their roles still remain depending their coming to terms with the needs of operations of system. The ability of dance to cut across these barriers is restricted by the history itself and thus, with the emergence of illusions of identities. Cantor being in blackface, Fred Astaire disguised in blackface, yet narrator fails to recognize it at first sight. She still continue to cling blindly to the idea of the universality of the dance, a once performance that can transcend the borders of race, sex, class, and even time. She is fond of a story of Fred Astaire begging Micheal Jackson to teach him moonwalk, contemplating over an idea that "a great dancer has no time" just as Jackson who moves eternally through the world that any dancer in any age would still be able to recognize him. But then real question arises, why did he decide to change his origin by bleaching his own skin? When in confrontation with Oprah in a TV show, he looks down and gives an irrelevant answer that he is "a slave to the rhythm" which gives a hint to the narrator that even if the concept of dance may manage to live outside of temporal boundaries, but the dancer, sadly, cannot since a dancer is in interconnection with other terms constituting conditions of a subject in communal system as a whole as class, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions and origin. The fact that dancer cannot be taken into hands as separated from these terms, he can't live out of time and regain his freedom of acknowledgement.

Aimee, who is an ultraprivileged woman in the novel, perceives differences as "never structural or economic but always essentially differences of personality" (Smith, 2016). Therefore, these personal differences have been taken advantage of by her under the diguise of philanthropical approaches which ultimately leading up to display of her appropriation of West African dance for her own self. When she adopts a black child from the village, she even names her as *Sankofa* which is in itself an West African symbol of a bird meaning "look back over itself" a symbol of reminiscence referring to what has been lost to the past. Aimee's actions imply that

what has been lost in the past is brought again in a new form and rehistoricized in the hands of Aimee with her marginalization and appropriation of West African people.

Narrator's unendingly continuing search for the self gives a feeling in fact that narrator is an unfulfilled agent by her supporting role, unlike her own mother, she has yet to find her own path and one can experience the way how narrator experiences herself as a shadow, a shadow dominated by hybrid origin and trapped inside of "in-between space", a dimension one cannot possibly escape since it is not possible anyone to get rid of one's own origin nor is it the right to do so. Hybridity lead subjects of diaspora into a turnout where they either feel to assimilate into the requirements of their societal norms or decide to defy against them to a large extent that they might eventually face the danger of exclusion from the community regarding these everchanging discursive symbols and meanings of culture that have no fixed meanings. Entrusting her light to the light of others at the expense of remaining in shadows, she becomes partially assimilated, till experiencing herself as shadow does bring her to the edge of making self-reflection on herself which is resulting in an epiphanic moment. Only from that moment on forth, does she begin to realise that the light she needed to find was in her own self to begin with, in her own actions of perceiving the world through artistic lens filtering each experience as an observer and that her role in such a world is to not leave her light for the others but rather accept who she really is, or where she does belong to.

CONCLUSION

Zadie Smith comes forward with deliberate intentions having some things to say about race, class and gender. From the very introduction of the book, the readers are invited to participate in the lives of characters from the first person narration. Differentiation between the characters on the basis of their interests, drives, wishes or even the identities that they would like to acquire give the receiver of the book a sense of ambiguity whether they were belonging somewhere, someone or something that has a value in itself. This value comes up in the form of different interpretation of the book considering most of their interpretations are relative. The

reader becomes a part of this process with regards to character development as they become like they are one of the characters in the increasing tension of the process just as the narrator who suffers from the unending sense of dislocation, alienation and striving in desperation to find herself a place or identity she may feel belong to. The book projects, in the light of the remnants of former colonial world and its ideological treatments that are once imposed upon the individual subjects, that in such a world where a person feels being forced to abide by a certain set of rules and is expected to follow a particular pattern to such an extent to annihilate his/her own customs, ethnic background and all that makes a person who he/she really is, it manifests the difficulty and complexity of one to sustain both his origin and act of rebellion in the threat of estrangement of oneself.

Mimicry in practice strips those of their identities assigning a new ones instead. All in all, as the protagonist of the book, the narrator divulges her complex insight to everyone and the process of her coming to terms with who she really is. But for sure, for many of whom, the narrator is a clear paradigm of how one would lost the light in an attempt to leave one's own light for the sake others. Ultimately, the unevenness in her memory disrupts her so much that he does not recall anything of her origins any longer. Therefore, Smith's novel delves into the interrogation of identity with an emphasis on how such a concepts as class and race are intertwining with one another and affecting one's process of self-development or even upbringing. In another case, one may end up finding oneself closer to the advance of Tracey, the one with the talent and ambition in pursuit of dancing career going no further than what she is predetermined to become in the hands of this power system of dynamics conducting its works from behind the shadows. Judging from this perspective, Smith projects her self thoughts into the novel as well to declare that everything the narrator was going through was for her own sake to be reconciled with her inner fragmented identity, who, from the very beginning, seeks out a particular way to put her scattered parts together to bring the complete restoration of the self instead of being entrapped within her own confinement for the rest of her life.

The whole book is circulating around the meditation on identity that is meandering but never losing its own way of representation and the reader is invited to play an active participation in the novel to find a path for the narrator in this sense of unplacelessness within the borders of postmodern and postcolonial elements. For this reason, characters are juxtaposed with one another as well, narrator is the one who has the flat feet and is not suitable for dancing career nor does appear to have such talent to pursue it. However, on the other hand, Tracey has the talent, ambition, desire for dancing career where she succeedingly takes the step toward without reckoning the life's plans that has been made for her. At some point, uneasiness, sense of homelessness and illusionment are what make them tragic in essence. Although their tragic scenarios remain as subjective evaluations of success or failure. Both of them claiming their own victorious moments leading different results having various endings in different interpretations relatively.

Narrator realizes the fact that she could not possibly have any authentic self as long as she chooses to entrust her light in the hands of others abandoning, in other words, abandoning her own identity and fate in the hands of those who she acknowledges as a role model, friend or idol such as her mother, Tracey or even Aimee. While in the case of Tracey, her victorious moment is highlighted when narrator sees her as having put on weight and dancing in the balcony alone becoming a mother of multiple kids from undefined fathers as an act of rebellion for everything she had to go through in the process, seizing her moment of ambition one more time, refusing all the impositions that life has brought upon her but only accepting who she is or what loves to do, dancing. These two examples are playing great roles in understanding how one's understanding of tragedy might be the triumph of another in different interpretations.

As mentioned in earlier explanations, characters are portrayed as in self-reflective trials trying to find some ways to shrug their burdens off their shoulders to reclaim their lost selves in an intersectional society that is primarily created with the aim of dividing individual identities as both at personal and social levels. Once an agent in the community represents a minority group, that person becomes more likely to be treated in a special way of acknowledgement just like both the characters are in

the novel. Therefore, the characters makes an active or passive resistance depending on their act of performance by showing a sense of rebellion so as not to be imprisoned by these false identity masks they are expected to wear for the rest of their lives. To do so, they assume the role of a "Nomadic Heroine" to destruct the ideological boundaries that separate women as first or third world placing them within a predetermined set of categories without having their. Thus, characters' glorious moments lie not in their failures in the process of reconciliation of the self but rather their resistance against the system without giving up on embracing the opportunity of re-establishment to emerge as an authentic identity. Although Western colonial perception of homogeneity rearrange the categories of those belonging to heterogenetic origins and labeling them as the Other, the characters in the novel do constantly draw some figures that seek to overcome this essentialist conception of the women. Their performative act of dancing unite them under the same term where they become able to avoid this marginalized otherness. This performative act of dance is what binds them together to the each other, to the rest of the world, to reclaim lost pieces of identity parts and keep them going empowering the desire of living for something more, a purpose.

All of these possible characteristics of the novel eventually provide an idea that *Swing Time* can be looked at from different points of view with its relativity as a postmodern Bildungsroman. It can be read as a postmodernist novel dealing with postcolonial problems and conforming to the ideal of the formation of an unique identity in socio-political oppressive background; it could be read as a Bildungsroman with some feminist Anti-Bildungsroman characteristics embedded into it; or it could be regarded as a novel in which "Nomadic Heroine" figures are applied in practice. The thesis has been particularly dedicated to the analysis of the protagonist, the narrator, and her abiding point of reference, a character which she is in juxtaposition, Tracey involving such interpretations and possible results.

Lastly, to show the way in which *Swing Time* fits and, at the same time, departs from the Bildungsroman thematic patterns, the following table would be explanatory:

Table 1

Thematic Elements of the Bildungsroman	How <i>Swing Time</i> Reflects the Thematic Pattern
a child (sometimes orphaned or fatherless) lives in a village or provincial town	The narrator has a mother who is depicted as having a Jamaican origin, while her father is possessing white skin colour, namely having a European origin, while in case of Tracey, it is the vice versa having a black father in skin colour and a disorderly mother unlike narrator's mother in juxtaposition which does also point out the fact that neither of them are orphaned. However, in similar manner of the characteristics of Bildungsroman, they indeed grew up in a provincial town of London sharing neighbour with one another.
the child is in conflict with his actual parents, especially father, or any parental figures (the trial by older generation)	The narrator is raised by her cold, intelligent and highly political mother which does draw a likeness of struggle for domination between, especially when narrator is in need of the establishment of an authentic self. Experiencing oppression from mother and witnessing her kind but uninvolved father shows an already broken domestic sphere which ultimately leads narrator to experience the divorce of her parents when she was only fourteen years old.
the child leaves home to enter a larger society (usually city), and the departure is determined either by (2) or other external stimuli, or by an inner stimulus (usually the desire for an experience that the incomplete, static atmosphere of home does not offer)	In order to discover her original self, after narrator and Tracey's ways departed from one another and narrator goes to a public school, it brings her to the brink of questioning her own identity even more after she was placing enormous care on Tracey's, she turns into a goth in her teenage years with the addition of problematic domestic issues she faces in her home resulting in increase of the sense of loneliness both of which play stimulant factors for narrator to enlarge her social view of the world, to set sail to the unknown for a better understanding of who she is.
the child, or the adolescent, passes through institutionalized education and/or self-education	When the narrator and Tracey decides to take different paths, narrator chooses to take her education in public school, while Tracey goes to a private dance academy, pursuing what she think she is doing best. Narrator

	chooses to study on, Media Studies might very well be the foreshadow as to learn how the political and cultural power mechanism function to shape people's ideological selves.
a young person now, the character seeks for social relationship with other humans	The first bond she ever managed to form is with Tracey as a friendship but after that when she attends to the college, there she experiences her first relationship with a boy named Rakim who appears to be even more political and radical than her mother is. He thinks that he is one of the five percent of the population blessed with an internal God. Constantly criticizing narrator for not behaving womanly enough which is proving the fact that she is being affected the function of these power mechanisms in the example of choosing a person who is trying to dominate her just life she has been dominated by various factors in the story.
his/her experience of life is a search for vocation and social accomplishment, as well as, or rather above all, a working philosophy of existence	Vocational pursuits for narrator and Tracey vary from one another in similar contrasting manners. After the college reader witness that narrator faces great struggles of finding a particular job till she is hired at YTV where she joins as a newbie until she draws the attention of her childhood idol, famous pop singer Aimee. However, even if at first it provides her many benefits and privileges but at the cost of letting her identity to be controlled by another person once more. On the other hand, in Tracey's case, after some while later, narrator confronts Tracey for the first time in a dance show since they have been drifted apart. Seeing that she now has changed her name to Tracee Le Roy appearing as elegant as possible with a straightened hair which is suggesting another form of colonial representation for someone of different origin. In such stage, she and other dancers are depicted being dressed as Africans and performing a racist show in fact.
he/she has to undergo the ordeal by society and occupational requirements (professional career)	Being an assistant to Aimee seems to be appealing for the narrator with the priveleges that comes with it till it all collapses in an instant. Aimee, a figure she adored when she was a child, begins to dominate her, trying to detach her social interactions from the outside world and limiting her range of freedom by requiring her to move into her

	<p>own side by deciding everything in narrator's life instead of letting her do that. When Aimee sends her to the West Africa for some so-called charity purposes, even there she does not become aware that she was a tool in the hands of Aimee, as Aimee desires to appropriate the West African villagers to improve her public image. On the other hand, inspite of the fact that Tracey is the one with the gift of talent and she pursuits her ideals through educational career, still in a society where a person of another origin is required to assimilate into what they require the Other to be, she becomes a wasted potential with a gift she has, performing racist shows out of necessity and having childs from different fathers.</p>
<p>he/she has to resist the trial by love (sentimental career)</p>	<p>Narrator's first love affair occurs during college years with a boy named Rakim who is much more radical, political and cold than her mother is, however, the other relationship she develops is with Lamin, a person who moves easily between social identities, cultures and customs, and a love interest she develops during her trips to Gambia which results in her being fired due to Aimee's feelings for him. However, Tracey appears to be trapped inside her body, even from the early teenage years, she uses her feminine factors to take an advantage of other to gain access to the popularity and acknowledgement by others. This might be due to the abuse in her domestic environment. Her performative act of 'as if' lets her gain access to better economic conditions both on stage and off stage. In the explanation of off stage version, when Chalky, who does belong to upper middle class Kenyan family offers her to leave his wife for her, she rejects viewing relationships as another performance where each individual plays another part in to gain access to materialistic resources. Therefore, she utilizes her gender as both on and off stage performance as well to gain access to better socio-economic conditions. She performs the role of a woman in opposite manner in which she consciously keeps her relationship with Chalky outside the established patriarchal norms limiting it to an</p>

	extra-marital affair.
the character passes through moments of spiritual suffering and pain	Narrator is a portrayal of a person who constantly tries to form a relationship with various people surrounding her and by doing that, she does also entrust her self image to be dominated by others, a figure of which is being dictated by others ironically in search of an authentic self. Starting with Tracey, following her mother and Aimee, each of whom force narrator to the questioning of the self even more till she eventually realizes these systems of cultural, political mechanisms. In contrast to the narrator, as she grows up, Tracey gains self-awareness of these mechanisms but taking advantage of them too as having gift of seeing things which appear to be wasted in real world. Instead, she begins to take advantage of it by using her femininity and taking advantage of the men that come into her life in a form of another domination.
now in his/her early manhood/womanhood, after having passed through physical change, the character experiences epiphanies that lead to (or should determine) his/her final spiritual (psychological, moral) change in the sense of initiation and by this achieve formation as the concluding stage of the process of development; formation is complete or relativistic, or not existing at all, that is to say, the final stage of the formative process upon entering maturity implies the dichotomy success/failure, or a third possibility of partial success/partial failure.	Throughout the novel, narrator is a figure drowning under the shadows of others, her mother, Tracey, Aimee and her boyfriends, however, these shadows are what give light to characters in the novel and make epiphanic moments possible. As a protagonist whose novel is erased from the story brings out the necessariness of the identity formation. By confronting with various sufferings that she awakens a bit in each circumstance. To exemplify it, only after she loses her job and gets fired, does she realize that she has been living beneath Aimee's shadow. Ultimately, she grasps that all her friends are either Aimee's friends or are connected to Aimee. Without Aimee she feels like she is no longer staying in shades but even after that still does not value her own perceptions. She continues to feel that she is content living in the fleeting shadow of another person at some point. Throughout the novel, most of the time her light is appropriated by the perceptions of others and she realizes that she has the capacity to unify people around her own self as well as her own ideas through her view of the world by filtering the light for herself and others when she embraces the artistic occupation. Smith provides the reader with the interconnection

between the art forms and shadows. In the novel, Tracey offers a portrayal of disguised figure whenever she dances. However, in case of narrator, she becomes not capable of reaching her authentic self whenever she is with some other being overshadowed by another existence. Tracey's appropriation of dance for herself lead narrator to contemplate over a question as what an authentic art form should be. It eventually directs them to a point where narrator feels necessity in herself to part ways with Tracey. She gains understanding of the importance of not being a shadow, just like musicians become no longer shadows but people in their own right. After that she realizes her own right of acquiring freedom just as how artists should be and decides to be no longer shadowed by other people surrounding her. The expansive of her shadow signify her self-direction in life and perspective about the world. Recognition of these interconnections between shadows and lights guide characters to the evolution and each woman in the novel filters their own experiences through numerous influences till, in narrator's case, her shadow extends beyond her existence. And these shadows that they create allow them to create new artistic visions enabling each woman to discern and filter their own experiences. Narrator gives high value to the perspective of others too much that she express these perspectives in a most authentic way creating a space in which she feels secure. This free space for narrator is when she is allowed to freely express herself not being dictated by anyone's or more like her role models' perspectives. Once her mother dies, she acknowledges her identity and take confidence in her own perspective of the world leaving working for Aimee afterwards. Throughout her life in the novel, she glimpses moments of safety and security allowing free expression of her identity. For instance, whenever she is far away from her mother, only then can she freely expresses herself in a better position. After having such experiences, and with each experience creating some personal spaces, her identity develops gradually. Her identity in the novel

	<p>is firmly rooted in her English and Jamaican backgrounds and the cultures she experiences throughout her life. Near the end of the novel, she does realize the fact that identity is actually a process in itself, a process of experiencing the world or rather a process of understanding one's place in this world. Gradually sorting her experiences into some categories she created leads her to confidence and trust in her unique perspectives. Additionally, the women develop the ability to view their experiences from the perspectives of others. Therefore, characters grow out of their initial egocentric tendencies. Many characters appear to remain as self-centered in the book since some seems to have dictated by others' perspectives at least once. The realization of the meaningfulness of ordinary moments, narrator reach to a state in which she views everyone as dancers but dancing in their own ways, just as Tracey dancing at the end on her balcony with her fatherless children seizing the moment she has and dancing freely as if nothing has gone wrong. Narrator realizes that she can also dance freely. However, her identity is never complete but rather in constant development throughout the novel. Learning to tune her artistic visions throughout the novel, narrator learns to categorize her fragmented experiences assuming a role of a filter through which light, her experiences, can pass and redirecting them by means of her unique perspectives in the development of herself as a free agent.</p>
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As it can be seen, the main difference between *Swing Time* and the traditional Bildungsroman is that Smith's novel emphasizes the principles of formation of identity to be considered a relatively fulfilled endeavour using contradictory and ambiguous characters not only with regards to self fulfilment but rather to concerning life as a stage and each one having their own performances and performative acts of 'as if' varying from one another. Denying essentialist point of view, Smith aims to show difference of ideas that for a person narrator might not be accomplished heroine whereas for the other she might be seen as successful. Smith

makes reader question about the concepts we take for granted, as origin, ethnicity, talents, identity, parental relations and our self images in the eyes of others.

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