Men Negotiating Identity in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

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**Abstract**

Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth* examines the masculine experience (both migrant and English) by reflecting on the complex effects that the history of Britain's colonial enterprise can have on one's identity. While her text mirrors many of the modern narrative responses to living in post-imperial British society and adapting to its multiplicities of identity, Smith redeployes the traditional conventions of the contemporary British novel by shifting between generational analyses of masculinity and focusing on the changing social codes between the past and the present. Smith challenges social constructions of masculinity by dissecting cultural belonging and nationality, analyzing the ways in which masculinity is ruptured and distorted (both in behaviour and in practice) in the various narratives of identity. Most importantly, the novel maps the significance of a person's roots/routes, necessitating an exploration of the history and journey involved in negotiating a masculine identity in the new postcolonial world.

**Keywords**

masculinity; Zadie Smith; *White Teeth*; identity; roots/routes

**Full Text:**

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