

Representing the “Other”: Imposing and Resisting Definitions

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Master's Thesis

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September 2018

Norwegian Abstract

“Fremmedgjøring” (“othering”) er et resultat av fordommer, stereotyper og essensialisme, og betyr at man reduserer det “fremmede” til et objekt ved å bare fokusere på enkelte karakteristikker av en kultur (Dahl 2013: 70). I denne oppgaven undersøker jeg hvordan det “fremmede” (“other”) og interkulturelle relasjoner er fremstilt i litteratur i et historisk perspektiv, ved hjelp av fire romaner. Romanene problematiserer det “fremmede” ved å vise en sammenheng med det kjente, eller “selvet”, og ved å demonstrere sammenhengen mellom identitet, kultur og språk. To av fire er fra tidlig 1900- tallet og har kolonialisme som et hovedtema: *A Passage to India*, skrevet av E.M. Forster i 1924, og *Untouchable*, skrevet av Mulk Raj Anand i 1935. De to siste romanene er fra 2000- tallet, og omhandler diskusjoner som er relevante for multikulturelle samfunn i dag: *White Teeth*, skrevet av Zadie Smith i 2000, og *Brick Lane*, skrevet av Monica Ali i 2003. Sett i sammenheng vil de fire romanene tilby et bilde av utviklingen av kultur og identitet som elter sammen kulturer i utviklingen av nye kulturer. Samtidig indikerer romanene at multikulturelle diskusjoner i dag er preget av fortiden og kolonialisme, og kan gi et negativt bilde av det “fremmede.”

For å diskutere de kulturelle fremstillingene i romanene har jeg basert meg på et teoretisk rammeverk fra Postkolonial teori og Interkulturell Kommunikasjon. Først undersøker jeg hvordan “fremmedgjøring” og kolonialisme har en sammenheng, og ser på hvordan interkulturelle relasjoner kan føre til kulturell utvikling, før jeg fører diskusjonen inn i en kontekst av dagens samfunn ved å undersøke hvordan de nye romanene fremstiller disse aspektene. Til slutt vil jeg fokusere på sammenhengen mellom språk og kultur, og gå dypere inn i hvordan misledende kulturelle representasjoner er en basis for “fremmedgjøring.”

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisor, Randi Koppen, for all the guidance and help you have provided throughout this time. I never would have been able to finish this project without you. I greatly appreciate all your efforts, and especially how you are able to interpret my rambling.

I want to thank my fellow students, for providing a good work-environment and inspiration, as well as enjoyable Work in Progress-seminars.

Finally, a special thank you to my friends and family who have supported me through this period. You know who you are.

Bergen, September 2018

Marie Benedicte Ones

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Representing the “Other”: Introduction

This thesis explores literary representations of intercultural relations and “othering” in a historical perspective by examining depictions of the cultural and ethnic “other” in four novels. Of the four, two of them are from the early 1900s and concerned with colonialism and its implications for constructions of “self” and “other.” *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster was published in 1924, and *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand was published in 1935. The two other novels are contemporary novels by multicultural authors taking part in current discussions of integration and multiculturalism: *White Teeth*, written by Zadie Smith, published in 2000, and *Brick Lane*, by Monica Ali, published in 2003. All four novels are widely recognized as belonging to the category called “British literature”, while at the same time exploring changing conceptions of language, culture, and identity. I argue these novels were all political statements at their time of release. Read together they offer an interesting picture of lines of development in communication and identity formation across cultures, tracing a movement from tentative cross-cultural dialogue to increasingly hybridized cultures and identities. At the same time, they indicate how far present conceptions and discussions of cultural identity are rooted in the past, showing that even contemporary writers who aim to move beyond essentialist categories of culture, ethnicity and race, to some extent perpetuate oppressive representations of the “other.”

To explore this subject I will be drawing on ideas and concepts from the fields of Intercultural Communication as well as Postcolonial theory. In her book *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, Elleke Boehmer approaches colonialism and Empire as a “textual undertaking” (2009: 5). In this view, which this thesis shares, literature connected to colonialism does not simply reflect or mimic political and social developments, but rather serves as the force behind these developments (Boehmer 2009: 5). “Cultural representations were central first to the process of colonizing other lands, and then again to the process of

obtaining independence from the colonizer.” (Boehmer 2009: 5). Representing, or misrepresenting, the colonized cultures through literature was a way for the colonizers to justify colonization. This is where rhetorical processes of “othering” becomes significant. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* describes how the West dealt with the East, or the Orient, through the term “Orientalism”:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said 1998: 873)

This underlines how colonialism was a textual undertaking, as it states how describing other cultures and making statements about them lead to authority. I understand Said’s use of the “Orient” as a way to describe the cultural differences one encounters in the world as well as describing an East and West dichotomy, which is comparable to the non-Western “other.” Additionally Said states: “Without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically.” (Said 1998: 873).

“Othering” is the marking of difference in people, and is a result of essentialism, stereotype, and prejudice. By focusing only on selected characteristics, or essence, of a culture the “other” is reduced to an object (Dahl 2013: 70). Intercultural communications expert Adrian Holliday defines “othering” as constructing a threatening image of “them”, or the “other”, in a way that supports an idealized image of “us”, or the “self”, and excludes them from “our” “superior” group (Dahl 2013: 70). By making someone “other” they are immediately reduced to less than what they are (Dahl 2013: 70). Discussing this in the context of colonial literature,

Boehmer states that the colonizers were “overdetermined by stereotype”, and while characterizing the various indigenous peoples they would screen out their diversity, thinking, voices and language (Boehmer 2009: 21). This resulted in the natives being thought of as inferior, while in fact they were assigned characteristics based on the opposites of what was considered positive in the West. The West was convinced of its superiority because they compared themselves to the perceived lack of ability to think and rule of colonized peoples (Boehmer 2009: 21).

In his book *Intercultural Communication and Ideology*, Holliday has constructed an “Othering sequence” to explain the connection between “self” and “other.” He describes “othering” as self-imagining, because we set up who we are in contrast to others, and these contrasts can thereby not be neutral (Holliday 2011: 70). This applies “othering” to a “world level” (Holliday 2011: 70), and I will use this sequence as framework to show how there is a historical development to the term:

1. Identify “our” group by contrasting it with “their” group
2. Strengthen the contrasted images of Self and Other by emphasizing and reifying respective proficient and deficient values, artefacts and behaviours.
3. Do this by manipulating selected cultural resources such as Protestantism or Confucianism.
4. Position Self and Other by constructing moral reasons to attack, colonize or help.
5. The Other culture becomes a definable commodity.
6. The imagined Other works with or resists the imposed definitions. (Holliday 2011: 70)

Steps 1 through 5 is particularly relevant for the colonial aspects of the term, but postcolonial novels tend to focus on the last step. Step 6 encompasses the forms of “othering” problematized in a contemporary multicultural society, as one has to manoeuvre stereotypes or definitions that

remain from colonialist mentalities. This will be particularly relevant for my reading of *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*, to observe how the imposed definitions are worked with or resisted in a contemporary view of the “other.” Throughout this thesis I will be expanding upon the methods and consequences of “othering” to show that binaries of “self” and “other” are at play in all novels. However, the foundation will remain as the steps of the “othering sequence”, predominantly steps 1 and 6. Step 1 in a colonial context demonstrates a binary opposition between the East and the West, and step 6 is vital when examining representations of the “other.” It is worth remarking how the East and the West does not represent geographical locations, but rather works as a descriptor of difference.

This thesis will not be focusing on the earliest textual undertakings and the foundations for this mentality, the focus will rather be to study the evolution of the concept of “othering” on a timeline after the imagined “other” starts resisting the definitions imposed on them. By comparing literature from colonial times and contemporary literature, seeing *A Passage to India* as a transitional text that is still rooted in colonialism I wish to trace the development of a process of “othering.” I will argue that the textual undertaking of colonialism and the systematic practice of “othering” still shapes multicultural literature. All four novels are representing different cultures in various ways, either resisting or working alongside established stereotypes, intended for a presumably Western audience.

The novels I have selected represent a spectrum of colonial and postcolonial literature as well as representations of intercultural communication and “self-other” construction. Additionally, they allow us to trace all steps of Holliday’s “othering sequence” when considered in chronological order. Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970) published six novels, and *A Passage to India* was the last and most recognized novel he wrote (Forster 1924: i). Forster’s novel exists in a transition between colonial and postcolonial mentalities. Critics have written extensively about this novel, but there is still little agreement around its meaning. Mulk Raj

Anand (1905-2004) is one of the highest regarded Indian novelists writing in English, and *Untouchable* was his first published novel. He was born in Peshawar, which is located in today's Pakistan, but also lived in England for many years, and is educated at the universities of Punjab, London and Cambridge. He finally settled in a village in western India (Anand 1935: i). Compared with *A Passage to India*, *Untouchable* offers a different perspective on British as well as Indian cultures and a different take on the question of intercultural relations and identities. Zadie Smith was born in London in 1975, and *White Teeth* was her debut novel. Her parents grew up in Jamaica, and her mother migrated to England in 1969 (Smith 2000: ii). Because of this, the Jamaican culture has influenced her life, and multiculturalism in Britain has become an important topic for her. This is reflected in her novel. Monica Ali was born in Dhaka in Bangladesh, but she grew up in England, and still lives in London (Ali 2003: i). Ali has visited Dhaka several times after moving to England, but she has said in interviews that she feels more at home in Britain. Reading these novels alongside each other demonstrates how fluid culture is.

Some of the central terms of this thesis are connected to culture and cultural change. Before introducing these terms, it is pertinent to raise the question of what a culture is and what culture does. Scholars A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn compiled a list of over 160 different definitions of "culture" in their book *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. This was in 1952. One can imagine that with the increased focus on multiculturalism in today's society, the list would now be endless. One can of course use a definition from for example Merriam-Webster to describe "culture": "The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations." (merriam-webster.com: "culture"). Generally, a definition of "culture" will cover two aspects: culture is the understanding of our world and how you behave in it, and this knowledge is transferred or maintained through several generations. This form of

definition can very quickly turn in to an essentialist view of culture, which presents people's individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the culture in which they live, and the culture is associated with a separate physical space, like a country or a language. In this view, the stereotype will become the essence of who you are. I interpret an essentialist cultural view as a foundation for "othering", as people are lumped together under an imagined single culture, and this results in people not being allowed to step outside their designated cultural places (Holliday 2011: 5). A "non-essentialist" view would view the culture more as a complex social force that can flow, intermingle, cut across and through each other regardless of national belonging (Holliday 2011: 5). An essentialist view of culture is often rooted in a desire to fix culture, and the nature of cultural difference. "Neo-essentialism" is a more developed view that has realized that culture is complex in nature, but still oversimplifies it by characterizing people by language and discourse (Holliday 2011: 7). This duality between liberal and essential is according to Holliday rooted in western society's genuine desire to oppose cultural chauvinism as well as their inability to recognize chauvinism in their own cognitive structure (Holliday 2011: 7).

According to Holliday, "cosmopolitanism" is the realization that the world is not neatly divided into national categories, but boundaries are progressively more blurred and negotiable. Any behaviour outside the cultural norms the neo-essentialist would call exceptions to the rule, is normalized in the cosmopolitan mind-set (Holliday 2011: 11). In one way this new complex image of shifting, combining and splitting discourses is connected with the movement of people and intercultural relations. "Global cosmopolitanism" is something that occurs when cosmopolitanism cannot escape neo-essentialism (Holliday 2011: 12). This view agrees with the notion of complex cultures, but imagines this world from a Western perspective where western culture is at the top. This centre-west image completely ignores inequality, and does

not take the voice of the non-west into account: “Imposing and taking meaning with an unequal global order.” (Holliday 2011: 12).

The cultural view this thesis will be adopting is that of “critical cosmopolitanism”, which juxtaposes imagined certainty with acknowledged complexity (Holliday 2011: 14). This view, which is non-essentialist, recognizes culture as something complex, and acknowledges a fluid complexity with blurred boundaries (Holliday 2011: 15). Diversity is considered the norm, and therefore one becomes disinclined to support a view that provides any definite answer. Critical cosmopolitanism understands that every cultural reality should be able to express themselves without the restrictions of nations. In non-western communities, a reality free of national boundaries has been the case in the past, with villagers dealing easily with each other across small linguistic boundaries. However, this was destroyed by colonial powers, which at random divided these communities into nations for their own convenience (Holliday 2011: 13). Essentialism can be referred to as the way one may talk about culture in colloquial terms, and this coupled with the mentalities of divided nations left from colonialism leads to “othering.” Critical cosmopolitanism can be described as what British society is moving towards in some multicultural literature. This thesis takes the approach of critical cosmopolitanism, but for the sake of simplicity, I will sometimes refer to nations as cultures and vice versa, keeping in mind that this will still be describing cultures in which diversity is the norm. Culture has more to do with one’s sense of belonging than an actual geographic location. I may use ethnicities as a descriptive feature, but I rather consider a sense of belonging when talking about culture, because it has more to do with where one feels at home.

Expanding on critical cosmopolitanism, this thesis approaches culture similarly to how Brian Street describes it in his essay “Culture is a verb”, where he refers to culture not as something you have, but something you do. Culture is not static; culture is a process of meaning-making (Street 1993: 25). Culture cannot be seen as a fixed or shared inherited

meaning, but instead should be viewed as the active construction of meaning and definitions. Street states that culture is not a thing in itself, but has been made into a thing in order to be defined (Street 1993: 25). Therefore, I will not raise the question of what culture is, but rather what culture does. Culture does define, name, and create the categories we live our lives in, but when studying cultures it is not enough to examine similarities between people and finding definitions, it is about discovering the reason behind the definitions and how they were made (Street 1993: 25). This view highlights how individual culture is, and on how many levels culture exists. One can speak about culture in communities as small as your immediate family. Seeing culture as a process means that one cannot lose a culture, one can only make different meanings, and nothing is “wrong” in terms of your culture and sense of belonging.

Street rejects definitions of culture that include how it is a system of shared ideas transferred through generations, because these definitions do not allow for significant changes (Street 1993: 27). How one uses language to make and communicate propositions about the world, is connected to “the link between formalisation of language and the construction of culture” (Street 1993: 29), which implies that language is the most important part of a culture. This statement is reinforced by how one can trace change and evolution in cultures through language. In contexts in which a particular social group administers the language as means for asserting their authority, for example the textual undertaking of the British Empire or immigrants who fear their children speaking a different language, the connection between language and an active construction of culture becomes even clearer. “Under the cover of set terms and vocabulary, the rebellious and disadvantaged has smuggled in new meanings” (Street 1993: 32), which implies that cultural evolution and hybridity may be rooted in developments of language from oppressed groups.

There exists a multitude of vocabulary for describing the process of cultures coming together, developing, merging, and splitting. A central term in this thesis will be “cultural

hybridity.” “Hybridity”, or “hybridization”, is a concept that involves the blending of different cultures, and is highly discussed in postcolonial critique and diaspora works. Homi Bhabha popularized the term through his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), and uses hybridity to signal “in-betweenness”, being between two cultures and not being part of either, usually in the context of colonial interference. I will be considering this when using the term, while moving away from his usage of hybridity in correlation with “mimicry and camouflage” (Hutnyk 2005: 80), and bringing in the possibility of an evolved term describing cultural fluidity. John Hutnyk summarizes some uses for the term “hybridity” in his article “Hybridity”, while highlighting how the term has come to have several meanings connected with mixing and combining cultures as a result of intercultural communication (Hutnyk 2005: 80). Paul Gilroy finds the term useful in the field of cultural production, Stewart Hall suggests hybridity is transforming British life, and James Clifford emphasises travelling and flow, and a “new world of hybrid forms” (Hutnyk 2005: 80). I will be considering all these scholars when using the term, but using the framework of critical cosmopolitanism and culture as an active construction of meaning, “cultural hybridity” will primarily refer to the fluid evolution of different cultures that occur through intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication as a discipline, studies how different cultures interact, in addition to how culture affects these interactions. This is becoming increasingly important in today’s multicultural society. In this thesis, the term “multicultural” is used as a descriptive feature meaning cultures interacting, not as an ideological principle. Additional terms for describing cultural development that will be significant in this thesis are terms that remain focused on the power relation between the cultures, and how a minority culture may succumb to, or be absorbed by, the majority or more powerful culture. In this thesis, “hybridity” will imply a merging of cultures and development of new cultures because of this, while still considering that these changes can be a result of colonialism. “Integration” is defined as: “to

unite with something else” or “incorporate separate elements into a whole” (OED.com: “integration”). Because of this, “cultural integration” implies that one culture is adopting traits of another culture, while keeping parts of the original culture. Cultural integration will therefore be used in a similar way to cultural hybridization. Other central terms are “assimilation” and “acculturation”, which are also terms that serve to describe changes in one’s culture that occur because of intercultural contact. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably in conversational settings, but there are differences between them which will be illustrated in this thesis. Both terms involve someone of one culture adapting to a different culture, and by that losing the original culture. The connotations are, however, different. “Acculturation” is “particularly concerned with conquest”, such as that of colonialism, and a majority group (OED.com: “acculturation”), while “Assimilation” refers to the action of “becoming like” (OED.com: “assimilation”). The main distinction made between these terms is how acculturation occurs by conquest or force, whilst the other terms occur naturally through a process of intercultural relations. Assimilation can carry negative connotations, as it is traditionally defined as immigrants or other minority groups gradually being absorbed into a larger community, and in turn stripped of their original culture. However, considering culture as a process, one cannot be “stripped” of a culture without the force of acculturation. The culture is simply evolving, which is why I rather compare assimilation to integration or cultural hybridity.

What all these terms combined show us, is how there is a need for this vocabulary to describe all of these intercultural processes. I will be discussing how the four novels in question approach these issues of developing, hybridized cultures. The concept of hybridity has been criticized for the acceptance of “purity.” Phillip Stockhammer questions hybridity in his book *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridity*, and claims that hybridity can only exist in opposition to purity, and that postcolonial studies ignore this fact in order to use the term (Stockhammer

2012: 2). However, the fluid definition of culture that Street provides along with critical cosmopolitanism rejects the question of “purity”, as culture becomes the actions we do every day, and is constantly evolving. The concept of “purity” vanishes and all that is left is hybridity. The question of purity is not neglected, it is irrelevant.

Lastly, I want to clear up a few terms surrounding colonialism. I will be using “colonial” when referring to the general time-period of the British Empire, from the 1700s to mid-1900s. “Colonialism” indicates the act of colonial expansion and the exploitation of resources, and “colonialist” is more similar to an ideology which applies to colonizers that are particularly concerned with superiority and colonial expansion, having a positive attitude about the Empire (Boehmer 2009: 2). In contrast, “postcolonial” will refer to not only literature that came after colonialism, but literature that criticized colonialism and colonialist literature. Postcolonial literature is marked by experiences of cultural exclusion and divisions during colonialism (Boehmer 2009: 3). The term “postcolonial” is also used as an umbrella term in modern writings, as a way of bracketing together literatures from countries that were once British colonies (Boehmer 2009: 4), I will be distinguishing this usage by using “post-colonial” (Boehmer 2009: 3). Postcolonial will also serve as an umbrella term in this thesis, when considering literature and studies that criticise colonialism and specifically the British Empire. However, when dealing with anti-imperialist nationalist critical texts from after the beginning of the 1900s, such as *Untouchable*, I will be using the term “nativist” (Boehmer 2009: 96). This is a time and therefore a term that will be coloured by Britain’s imperial overstretch and insecurities coupled with oppositional movements in the territories fuelled by self-assertion and gaining confidence (Boehmer 2009: 95).

To look at how the representations of the “other”, as well as the hybridization of cultures, is rooted in colonialism I will firstly compare *A Passage to India* to *Untouchable*, and discuss the connection between them and the novels’ portrayal of “othering” when dealing with

different cultures. Then I will compare *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth*, and discuss “othering” in a contemporary context when dealing with migration and integration. This will provide framework to reflect on multicultural Britain today under different lenses, as well as considering the influence colonialism may have had on this. Finally, I will discuss all four authors’ use of language to portray culture in the narrative. Focusing on “othering” will provide a diverse way of analysing the intercultural aspects of these novels, which is why the topics I discuss can seem arbitrary. By keeping in mind critical cosmopolitanism and the idea of culture as a process, these topics have in common how representations of the “other” is expressed through literature, and relate the various representations to the depiction of intercultural relations.

Chapter 1

Representing the “Other”: Colonialism and Orientalism

In her book *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, Elleke Boehmer approaches colonialism as a “textual undertaking”, and focuses on how different literary representations convey colonial and anti-colonial sentiments. She centres her book’s views a statement from Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* that “cultural representations were central first to the process of colonizing other lands, and then again to the process of obtaining independence from the colonizer.” (Boehmer 2009: 5). There is a clear connection between this statement and the process of “othering”, as for instance explained in Adrian Holliday’s “Othering sequence.” The first textual representations of the natives that colonizers were producing had the effect of conveying the image of the natives as “other” by overly emphasizing the difference in cultural practices and values, which they considered negative, turning them into stereotypes. This was done to construct moral reasons to colonize, or “help” (Holliday 2011: 70). Later, around the time when *A Passage to India* (occasionally abbreviated to *Passage*) and *Untouchable* were published, there was a shift in focus among anti-imperialist nationalist writers to resist the definitions the colonizers imposed on them and to represent indigenous cultures in a way that called for independence.

I have chosen to work with *A Passage to India* because it is written in a period of transition. Forster displays a great deal of pessimism towards the British Empire in his novel, as the novel is commenting on the Empire through irony and satire. Boehmer points out how this pessimism has been broadly regarded by critics as a symptom of modernism. However, historically, this was a time when imperial retreat and forces of opposition were developing in the colonies, and this is likely to have contributed to Forster’s negativity towards the Empire (Boehmer 2009: 95). In the narrative Forster is showing how relations between Indians and

Englishmen exists as a possibility and a reality, and at the same time portraying how these relations usually end in problems, furthering a colonial perspective. I read this as Forster having the intent to alter the colonizer's image of the natives, but himself being too close to the mentality of the colonizers, leaving his text caught within a framework of "othering". While some of the focus in *Untouchable* is on the British colonizers, it is mainly centred on the Hindi and Indian cultures, and issues surrounding the caste-system. Anand's narrative speculates on the possibility of a hybrid culture, whilst educating his English-speaking readers about Indian cultures. I will argue that Anand's text may act as an answer to Forster's. Forster, as his title suggests, is trying to create a passage from England to India, and to represent the colonized in a way that weakens the strong contrast between the colonizers and the colonized "others." However, aspects of the characterization and use of language perpetuate a dichotomy between the East and the West. Anand is writing as the "other" in the process of creating an identity. By providing insight into how, as an "other", one can work with, or resist, the stereotypes imposed, he is expanding a passage from India to the world.

One of the main reasons why I have chosen to juxtapose these two novels is that there exists a dialogue between them. The authors have indirectly confirmed this, as Forster has written a foreword to the second printing of *Untouchable*, furthering the conversation between the texts. In the view of critic Joe George Emmatty, this foreword marks the acceptance of Anand by British liberalists, as Forster gives praise to the novel in his text (Emmatty 2013: 317). Continuing Emmatty's argument, I would say that the foreword accepts Anand's novel into British or English literature. Boehmer has stated that the more accurate way to present English literature is as literature in English (Boehmer 2009: 226), which supports this argument. In addition, Anand has proclaimed that he identified more as an English writer than an Indian writer. Cases of cultural hybridization such as this is usually largely attributed to colonialism, and as a result, native writers from previously colonized areas who write in English tend to be

considered postcolonial writers. I argue that these are cases of intercultural relations that have developed into intercultural literature and transnationalism.

In this chapter, I am going to explore how *Untouchable* can be read as an answer to *A Passage to India*, and demonstrate how these novels imagine a hybridized future, while I discuss the process of “othering” that is present in the narratives. Firstly, I will introduce the plot of the novels and bring together some ideas that will serve as a foundation for the chapter. Then I will show the “othering” found in the narratives and the problematics surrounding this, with a particular focus on Bakha being “othered” by his own community in *Untouchable*, and the racial tensions in *A Passage to India*. Finally, furthering the question of whether these novels imagine a multicultural future, I will consider if the novels can represent the voice of colonized peoples.

A Passage to India is a novel set in the fictional town of Chandrapore, near the Marabar Hills. The narrative is focused on life in this city in India under British Colonial rule, and mainly consists of critique of the British Empire, resulting in a text that is a mixture of satire and an attempt at representing the Indian culture. At the same time the novel is celebrated for its ambiguity, and countless scholars have read it with equally as many approaches, as Peter Childs writes in the Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster:

A Passage to India is the most controversial of Forster’s novels. The majority of critics regard it as his finest work yet no consensus has emerged about its meanings, partly because the book has proven highly responsive to so many approaches. Despite literary criticism’s changing focal points over the decades, from politics and spirituality through to ethnicity and sexuality, it has always kept *A Passage to India* firmly in its sights because Forster’s novel offers fertile ground for the broadest range of analytical and theoretical perspectives. (Childs 2007: 188)

Childs goes on to say that Forster himself stated that he wanted his text to be ambiguous, which leaves the question whether this reflects an undecidedness in Forster's thoughts and ideas at this time of transition.

A Passage to India follows the character Aziz, a Muslim doctor of Chandrapore, as he navigates the impossible task of befriending the English who live in the outpost there. The story begins when Aziz meets Mrs. Moore, an Englishwoman, who has abandoned her companions to visit a mosque. The narrative also introduces Adela Quested, a young Englishwoman who has travelled to India alongside Mrs. Moore. An aspect of "othering" is present at an early point in the narrative, as Miss Quested shows excitement over the prospect of seeing the "real India", opposed to being confined in the Club where they stay. The narrative briefly introduces Mr Fielding, an Englishman who proves central to the narrative when thematising racial divide. He states that to see the "real India" they should "try seeing Indians" (Forster 1924: 20). Another character, the Collector, indulging Miss Quested's wish suggests they invite the natives to a "Bridge Party", which is "a party to bridge the gulf between the East and the West" (Forster 1924: 21). This is an event of the Collector's invention, but next he admits: "Well, we don't come across [the Indians] socially." (Forster 1924: 21). The party proves unsuccessful, with which the narrative shows how Indian cultures cannot be understood in Western terms. Instead the characters have to discuss, discover, and experience these cultures organically. Aziz arranges an excursion to the Marabar caves for Fielding, Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore, and this trip proves to be the major turning point in the novel. On the excursion, Miss Quested asks Aziz whether he has more than one wife. He is shocked and takes offense, which leads to him leaving Miss Quested alone. His thoughts on this incident problematize the stereotypes that were placed on the colonized.

When the party returns to Chandrapore, Aziz is arrested on allegations of sexually assaulting Miss Quested. The build-up to his trial exposes numerous racial tensions between

the English and Indian peoples, and although the power-relations in the trope of a native raping a colonizer suggests the opposite of the reality of the Empire, it supports the notion of “othering” through the imagined sexualized, primitive, or barbaric nature of the natives. The Collector offers a reason for the problems: “I have never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially.” (Forster 1924: 146). The racial tensions also divide the English, as for example Fielding, who is fighting for Aziz’ innocence, is accepted by the natives and rejected by the English. During the trial, Miss Quested comes to the sudden realization that she must have hallucinated the assault, and Aziz is acquitted. Yet the friendship between Aziz and Fielding grows cold. When they meet again years later it seems that even the earth decides they cannot be friends at this time, but there is optimism for relations in the future. The novel offers time and reflection as a solution to these tensions, speculating on a multicultural future. This can be interpreted as providing a basis for the cultural hybridity we see in British society today.

Untouchable is a lesser-known novel than *Passage*, but it received positive critique when it was published, and for its first reprint, E.M. Forster wrote a foreword praising the novel, furthering the attention around Anand. *Untouchable* is set in the fictional town of Bulasha, and follows one day in the life of Bakha. He is a sweeper, and thereby an Untouchable in the Hindu caste system. Bakha is eighteen years old, and is born into his role as the lowest member of society, since his father, Lakha, is the Foreman of the town’s sweepers. Because they are performing the dirty work of cleaning the streets and latrines of high-caste people, they are considered ceremonially dirty, and the things they touch become polluted. Bakha has also been working in the barracks of a British regiment for some years, where he was “caught by the glamour of the ‘white man’s’ life” (Anand 1935: 3). Even though Bakha has learned that the English are superior people, *sahibs*, like the men from the upper castes, they treat him as a human being compared to the Hindus, and he is thus captivated by the English culture. The

novel explicitly problematizes the consequences of Untouchability, as well as questioning the notion of “othering” done by the colonizers. By comparing these two forms of dehumanization, Anand is highlighting fundamental issues within the Hindu culture as well as portraying a nationalist perspective.

The story revolves around the unfortunate events that take place in Bakha’s life, and his thought process around them. After cleaning latrines all morning, Bakha returns home to quench his thirst, so his sister Sohini goes to get water. To avoid polluting the water she cannot put her pitcher into it, and has to wait for someone to take enough pity on her to pour it in for her. A priest, Pundit Kali Nath, helps her, and in addition instructs her to come clean the temple later. On the way back to town, Bakha forgets to give the sweeper’s call, to let people know an Untouchable is coming, and he accidentally brushes up against a high-caste man. The man yells at him before striking him in the face, because now he has to do a cleaning ritual before continuing his day. This moment serves as a turning point for Bakha, as he has been thinking highly of himself because of his interactions with the British, and now he realizes that all he ever is going to be is an Untouchable. Bakha continues his wandering, and while eavesdropping on a service in a temple he notices his sister in the middle of a crowd, and Pundit Kali Nath is shouting: “Polluted, polluted, polluted.” (Anand 1935: 50). It turns out the priest had sexually assaulted Sohini, and when she screamed for help he claimed to have been defiled. This section demonstrates the hypocrisy of the caste system.

The narrative offers three possible solutions to the Untouchable-problem. The first is Christianity, as this is a religion with no caste, but the narrative proceeds to expose the hypocrisy of the missionaries. The second solution is that of Mahatma Ghandi’s path of virtue and morality. Ghandi states that the notion of being born polluted is the greatest sin of Hinduism, but he says that the Untouchables must purify themselves and rid themselves of “evil habits” such as smoking and drinking, to be able to abolish the Untouchable-caste. Bakha rejects

the latter, as he thinks Gandhi is blaming the Untouchables as opposed to the upper-caste men. The third solution is, similarly to *Passage*, time, but here in the form of modernization. A poet called Iqbal Nath Sarshar speaks of the flushing toilet, which will eliminate the need for humans to handle waste, and thereby eradicate the Untouchable-caste. Bakha finds the two latter solutions in harmony can be the solution: “‘Yes,’ said Bakha, ‘I shall go on doing what Gandhi says.’ ‘But shall I never be able to leave the latrines?’ came the disturbing thought. ‘But I can. Did not the poet say there is a machine which can do my work?’” (Anand 1935: 138).

The norm for the colonial Anglo-Indian novel was to perpetuate the fundamental separation colonial society was built on (Boehmer 2009: 65). Even though the natives might try to “Europeanize” themselves, there was little hope of any social interaction. Boehmer states how around the time when *A Passage to India* and *Untouchable* were published, after high imperialism, two different approaches to discourse about the colonial experience emerged in dialogue. These approaches are representative of nativist writing on the one hand, and colonialist writing on the other. Boehmer illustrates her point by contrasting the two novels:

Untouchable ends with the Dalit protagonist contemplating the possible end to his travail offered by promises of reform and ‘modernization’. In stark contrast, (...) *Passage*, hold[s] out little hope either for social interaction between Europeans and Indians, or for Indian national independence. British rule is represented as irrelevant; Anglo-Indian society as hopelessly solipsistic. Yet India’s tenebrous immensity offers no viable alternatives to the novel’s agonized liberalism. Indians appear to lack the pragmatic wherewithal to rule themselves. (Boehmer 2009: 97)

I believe Boehmer is referring to a section near the ending of *Passage*, where Aziz is making a plan to drive all the Englishmen out of India, so that he and Fielding can be friends. Fielding mocks the idea, inquiring who should rule India in such an instance. Aziz, after some time,

concludes that India can rule itself: “Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one!” (Forster 1924: 287), which is followed by more mocking from Fielding. This passage, like the rest of the novel, is very ambiguous and can be read in several ways. Aziz is hesitant and confused about the idea of India as its own nation, and paired with Fielding mocking the idea, this serves to perpetuate the reasoning behind colonial rule. As one of the novel’s main issues is the relationship between Aziz and Fielding, this conclusion can be seen as very pessimistic for social interaction overall, as Boehmer states. The ambiguity of the text, however, calls for exploration from different angles. Aziz wants to “drive every blasted Englishman into the sea” (Forster 1924: 289) in order to befriend Fielding, an Englishman, which makes it clear that the passage contains some irony. In light of this, Fielding’s mocking can be representative of the colonizers pushing their imperial agenda, making the discussion about Aziz realizing the colonizers were wrong and India actually can be an independent nation. This uncertainty and difference in interpretations is one of the reasons I argue Forster displays anti-colonial tendencies, while still subscribing to some colonial theories. He uses irony to undermine the British Empire, but the irony is based on colonial mentalities, as seen in the example above. I do believe *Passage* shows some optimism for social interaction in the future, and will provide an in-depth analysis of the ending later. However, there are pessimistic signs as well.

At the time when Social Darwinist ideas were popular, contact between the races would always result in trouble in the Anglo-Indian novel. This racial divide was essential to preserve the notion of European superiority, and any minor or major resistance or alteration to this system would threaten it (Boehmer 2009: 65). Considering this, Forster was indeed defying this system with the examples of intercultural contact the novel displays. Even though there are characters that share the mentality of keeping a racial divide, he has included characters like Fielding, who act in rebelliousness towards this notion. However, Forster has kept the notion of the social contact bringing trouble, as Aziz is wrongfully accused of a crime as a

consequence. Anand, through the narrative of *Untouchable*, further questions the issue of racial contact when he also introduces the Hindu caste-system. Contact between the races becomes less important in comparison. Anand is resisting the trope of racial divide by displaying how the caste-system allows for more contact between Englishmen and Untouchables, than other Hindus and Untouchables. This resistance can serve two purposes, to undermine the notion of European superiority, similarly to Forster, while also uncovering the issue of a society divided within itself to explore how colonialism is not the main issue in this area.

Untouchable can be read as an answer to *A Passage to India*. This reading's primary focus is on the portrayal of Indian cultures and how they are conveyed. I read Forster's novel as an attempt at explaining parts of the culture, or at least the parts that can be deciphered in western terms, to the Europeans. Anand in turn offers the perspective of an insider as a nativist writer. His cultural perspective is conveyed in a language that is different from what other authors from India use, for more people of the world to understand. This would mean that *Untouchable* and *A Passage to India* share a target audience, and have been read by many of the same people. This supports the argument that Anand was accepted into British literary culture. In the foreword Forster wrote for *Untouchable*, he compares the two novels and describes *Untouchable* as very realistic and "indescribably clean" (Forster 1935: 1), and to this he attributes Anand's success. I read this as Forster agreeing that Anand is showing a more realistic cultural image than *Passage*. Forster acknowledges that "all-white" readers will "go purple in the face with rage" (Forster 1935: 1) when reading the novel and realizing the troubles of the Untouchables. He is fostering a notion that if one thought the natives were poorly treated in *Passage*, *Untouchable* provides an even harsher image. With this, Forster recognizes his own position as an outsider, and remarks: "No European, however sympathetic, could have created the character of Bakha, because he would not have known enough about his troubles." (Forster 1935: 2). This statement proposes that Forster is questioning the authenticity of his characters,

and commenting that the problems with the caste system may be a more pressing issue at that moment in time than the dehumanization by the colonizers. However, an author will usually write what they know about, and for Forster that is the colonial experience. Forster does show his attitudes towards the caste-system when he notes: “Really, it takes the human mind to develop anything so devilish.” (Forster 1935: 2). This is a remarkably enlightened statement. Here he is referring to the tradition of Untouchability, that the ones who handle waste are outcast from society, but it could be true for so many aspects of human history. Forster’s statement can also be applied to the process of “othering” that came with colonialism and the British Empire, as they both are created from systematic dehumanization of another group of people.

There are a number of nuances to the process of “othering”, beyond stereotyping and racial dichotomies. Another textual aspect that supported European superiority is the “colonial gaze.” For Boehmer the colonial gaze refers to the commanding perspective assumed by the European, demonstrated through approaches of investigation, examination and poring over, which were representative of the colonial penetration of a country. In colonial texts, the gaze appears for instance as bird’s-eye descriptions (Boehmer 2009: 68). Because of this, the gaze is supporting the notion of the lesser or inferior colonized. Historian Matthew Edney discusses a connection between mapping and imperialism, and recounts how cartography, or the science of drawing maps, relates to the colonial gaze and “othering.” He presents military conquest, geographical conquest and cultural conquest as “functionally equivalent” (Edney 1997: 24). “The imperial power thus recreates the empire in its maps, subsuming all individuals and places within the map’s totalizing image.” (Edney 1997: 24). Edney references Said and his notion that imperialism was an act of “geographical violence” (Edney 1997: 24), because every space in the world was explored and thereby placed under control. When these areas were subsumed by Europe, there was a growing conviction that the world could be studied and understood in European terms.

The colonial gaze may present itself as bird's-eye descriptions in texts, and is additionally evident in mapping and studying landscapes and peoples, and recounting them as part of the Empire. Forster assumes the colonial gaze in *A Passage to India*, and this helps maintain the notion of “othering” present in the novel. Forster begins the novel with a description of the city of Chandrapore. Though it is not explicitly stated that the narrator is looking down at the city when describing it, the commanding gaze is implied through the descriptions: “Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, [Chandrapore] trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely.” (Forster 1924: 3). The city centre being hardly distinguishable from rubbish can entail seeing it from high up, the city being exceptionally dirty, or a combination. Edney recounts how the particular landscape of India was treated in the process of mapping the country, which can relate to Forster's images:

Knowledge of India was homogenized; particular variations and contingencies were subsumed within a “house of certainty”. Each town and district was identified and assigned its own particular location within the fixed and immobile mesh of meridians and parallels. (Edney 1997: 25)

Forster promptly places Chandrapore alongside the river Ganges, which acts as an important point of reference when describing India. This immediately makes the reader familiar with the image. However, Forster continues to explain that the Ganges is not holy here, somewhat disputing the stereotypical image of the city he has created, so he still displays ambiguity. Furthermore, Forster also locates Chandrapore in an imperial context: “Chandrapore was never large or beautiful, but two hundred years ago it lay on the road between Upper India, then imperial, and the sea, and the fine houses date from that period.” (Forster 1924: 3). Here I argue the scenery is subsumed into a European certainty of understanding, as the city is located in

colonizers terms, and the focus remains on houses that colonizers built as opposed to the landscape or other features.

Said writes how orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, whether poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries (Said 1998: 875). European colonizers were convinced that the rest of the world could, and should, be interpreted in “western” terms (Boehmer 2009: 76), and Forster is furthering this idea by assuming a colonial gaze in his descriptions of India. As mentioned, the colonial gaze acted as both a form of conquest and research, and it became a habit for Europe to approach other cultures as objects of study (Boehmer 2009: 69). The gaze is therefore applicable to more than the sense of the colonizers being superior. By being able to define the land by describing it in “western” terms, they are controlling Europeans’ image of the colonized areas, as well as negating a non-European understanding and aesthetic: “The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving” (Forster 1924: 3). Additionally, the narrator in *Passage* is continuously trying to excuse or explain the native’s behaviour. This happens particularly when a character states something, the narrative voice will explain what they meant: “He raised his voice suddenly, and shouted for dinner. Servants shouted back that it was ready. They meant they wished it was ready, and were so understood, for nobody moved.” (Forster 1924: 7). This is important concerning the gaze in the novel, as it carries a notion of studying the natives and being able to explain their behaviours. This entails that there is an overtone of prejudice in the narrative and a will to explain the “mysteries of the East”, that are mysteries to the West as the mode of understanding is different.

“Othering” was standard in British colonialist writing, and Forster displays aspects of this in his narrative. However, the “othering” in *Passage* is not presented as blatant as it was in the early colonizers’ narratives. Boehmer writes how they early colonizers and anthropologists described colonized people as “less human, less civilized, children, animals, savages, feminine

or weak” (2009: 76). Another option was to negate their presence completely, or describe them as a mass with no individual characteristics. For the people of India there was a particular inclination to represent them as feminine, describing their traits as emotional and irrational, and this is present throughout this novel. The main character Aziz has several of these attributes: “Fielding was not surprised at the rapidity of their intimacy. With so emotional people it was apt to come at once or never.” (Forster 1924: 54). Forster presents these ideas of “othering” through his English characters, who at the time the novel is set indeed would have subscribed to these mentalities. Is Forster trying to create realistic characters, or does he continue to further the process of “othering”? Fielding is one of the characters who are the most positive concerning the natives, and even he reaches decisions based on “othering.” Forster may be trying to change the idea, or show it ironically through characters we are not supposed to agree with, for example The Collector and his remark about the “Bridge Party.” There are also examples of natives agreeing with the “othering” presented: “‘Indians are incapable of responsibility,’ said the officials, and Hamidullah sometimes said so too.” (Forster 1924: 117). When Forster makes the native speak, and they are assigning themselves these traits, it becomes harder to decipher if Forster is supporting this notion or is presenting it more objectively as traits of these characters.

The District Superintendent of Police, who is described as one of the most reflected and educated men in Chandrapore (Forster 1924: 147) has his own reasoning about the natives:

No Indian ever surprised him, because he had a theory about climate zones. The theory ran: ‘All unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30. They are not to blame, they have not a dog’s chance – we should be like them if we settled here.’ (Forster 1924: 148)

This is another example of Forster making the rigid, English characters be the messengers of this type of statement. However, this statement can be broken down to a few different points.

Firstly, there is the distinctive notion of prejudice and stereotyping as the Superintendent states all natives are criminals. Then, he is rendering the issue and explaining (to those north of latitude 30) that this is factual. Lastly, the “othering” presented is somewhat challenged as he acknowledges that the process of who becomes the superior is completely arbitrary. This makes the statement ambiguous. The thought behind this may be Forster’s opinions coming through in the narrative, or the challenging of the accuracy of European superiority may be meant to encourage reflections about the subject from the readers. The acknowledgement that the roles could have been reversed, subverts the idea of natives being lesser.

Forster also problematizes the notion of European superiority and the justifications they made to be able to colonize for moral reasons. Hamidullah and Fielding are discussing religion, and Hamidullah and the other natives wonder if morality in England is declining as more people become atheist:

‘Excuse the question, but if [a decline in morality] is the case, how is England justified in holding India?’ There they were! Politics again. (...) There was only one answer to a conversation of this type: ‘England holds India for her good.’ Yet Fielding was disinclined to give it. (Forster 1924: 96)

Here we can clearly see the text’s ambiguity connected to how the novel works as a dialogue that give room for different voices without giving superiority to one. Fielding knows the answer he is supposed to give to such a question, but he is hesitant. He may be reluctant for the reason that he does not agree with this answer, or perhaps it is too one-dimensional of an answer to give to this multi-layered question. However, he does recognize that this is the only suitable answer according to the Empire. I argue that Fielding’s reluctance to provide the correct answer is meant to engage reflections with the reader and has to be interpreted as a wrong mentality all

together. This is an example to illustrate Forster's critique of the Empire, coupled with sharing the mentalities that are expected from colonizers.

Whether or not the narrative is supportive of the process of "othering" is as mentioned unclear, nonetheless I will argue that the narrative is supporting a dichotomy or a binary opposition between the East and the West. There are very few, if any, interactions in the novel that transcends the mentality of "us vs. them". However, the boundaries between "us and them" do become blurred at certain points in the novel. For example when Fielding shifts his allegiance to the Indians' side during the racial tensions leading up to Aziz' trial, but the challenging of these boundaries is based on the dichotomy being absolute, and this results in a paradox. The relations between Aziz and Mrs. Moore confirm this: "I don't think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them.' 'Then you are an Oriental.'" (Forster 1924: 17). Aziz is feeling heard and understood by an Englishwoman, and is quick to proclaim her to not be as the "other English." In fact, he declares her an "Oriental", or one of his own. This passage is rather ambiguous, because it is supporting a racial dichotomy where there is a binary opposition between the East and the West, whilst obscuring the boundaries in this dichotomy by concluding that one can travel back and forth.

As previously mentioned, different critics within a range of postcolonial approaches have placed different emphases on which aspects of the novel reflects upon colonial practices and modes of representation (Childs 2007: 191). Sara Suleri argues that negation symbolized through the Marabar Caves is the main theme in this aspect. Her argument takes into account that the process of "othering" took place through metaphoric geography (Childs 2007: 191). I have discussed what this means in terms of mapping, but when talking about negation it means what was represented as "other" most often appeared as dark holes beyond civilization or morality, so a European narrative portraying the East as hollow, or as a dark cave is to be expected. Being beyond civilization and morality also corresponds with the other faults Forster

has presented about India, which is contradictions and uncertainty (Childs 2007: 191), and as I have established in this chapter, the novel presents several ambiguities and paradoxes. The caves are simultaneously described as the only extraordinary thing Chandrapore has to offer, and utterly uninteresting: “Well, why are they so famous? We all talk of the famous Marabar Caves. Perhaps it is our empty brag.” (Forster 1924: 64). As a significant amount of the plot revolves around these caves, I do agree that the description of them can be representing the land as nothing, however I do not read it as the main focus. Still, if one also takes into account the colonial gaze and “othering” I have discussed above, the metaphorical geography is still quite significant: “The small black hole gaped where their varied forms and colours had momentarily functioned. They were sucked in like water down a drain. (...) Before man, with his itch for the seemly, had been born, the planet must have looked thus.” (Forster 1924: 130). The last part in particular fits well with the idea of negation, as the idea that the colonizers were creating a civilization out of nothing complements the religious implications of describing a land “before man.” The Marabar caves are described as chaotic, dark, and mysterious, however after the incident with Miss Quested, Mr. Heaslop advises the caves “were to be numbered in sequence with white paint” (Forster 1924: 177), to fit them into their house of certainty.

Several other critics, including Brenda Silver, argues that the core of the novel lies in what happens inside the Marabar Caves, and the colonial trope of rape (Childs 2007: 191). However, the story is based on a native raping an Englishwoman, not the other way around, and thus it may serve as a metaphor for colonial appropriation (Childs 2007: 196). Sexualized natives is a common occurrence in colonial writing, however this twist creates a paradox if one keeps in mind the question of power and the loss of power that rape entails. A native overpowering a European, paired with the fact that many natives were in reality raped by the colonizers, points to a metaphoric overthrow. Even though the rape never actually happens, the narrative supports the presumed sexual and primal nature of the natives. Aziz is arrested at once

without being told the reason, for example. Furthermore, the only English who believe Aziz is innocent are Fielding and Mrs. Moore, the ones who have gotten to know the natives, and this is no coincidence. Silver argues that when Aziz is reduced to his sexuality he becomes both a rapist and an object of rape (Childs 2007: 191). It is worth remarking that in the draft of the novel the assault actually happens, but Forster changed it at last minute to have a more ambiguous ending (Childs 2007: 196). This is important as I have been discussing Forster's mentalities around colonial subjects, and how the novel is written in a period of transition. If characters like the Superintendent had been correct in his statement discussed above, the novel would surely have been less ambiguous and display "othering" more clearly, in addition to displaying greater positivity towards the British Empire? Either way the lesson of the Marabar Caves for Aziz is that British-Indian relations are always established from an inequality of power (Childs 2007: 204). This furthers the notion of this text as a multi-layered construct with room for different views. The question that remains is whether time is a solution, and able to fix an inequality of power this systematically developed.

Inequality of power is correspondingly the most central issue in *Untouchable*, however presented through two different perceptions. The question of colonization and how the British, or the "Tommyes", treat the colonized is present, but the main focus in the novel is with regard to the Hindi caste-system and the systematic dehumanization it demands. I propose that these concerns presented in the novel are the main concerns in India regarding "othering" at this time, and that the narrative presents Bakha as a "twice-othered" individual, as he is experiencing two forms of "othering" from different standpoints. Furthermore, the problems concerning caste overshadows the issue of colonialism, and this may point to the significance of these issues in India. I will discuss in later chapters how colonialism and the "othering" it entailed may affect intercultural relations today, still, the issue of caste and Untouchability remains a major problem in Indian society.

By discussing how Anand exposes the issues concerning “othering” related to the caste-system in Hindi culture, I intend to highlight how the process of “othering” can become multi-layered when simultaneously dealing with colonialism. The debate on caste-ism and untouchability is far from extinct in independent India. “The modern progress provides legal remedies to achieve social justice and equality. The Hindu mind is still caste-conscious, and can’t free itself from caste-ism.” (Emmaty 2013: 317). Critic J. G. Emmaty points out that Anand invites the reader to identify the emotions of Bakha’s class by taking them through Bakha’s emotional life (Emmaty 2013: 317), as Bakha becomes increasingly aware of the cruelty of the upper-caste Hindus who has embraced the practice of untouchability. Still, Bakha has a utopian dream of becoming a “sahib” himself. Anand’s paradox shows how the British and the Hindus colonized the inferiors and low castes (Emmaty 2013: 318). They are kept in the inferior position through not allowing them the option to advance their position with for example an education, but are encouraged to hope for and wish for a rise in status (Emmaty 2013: 318). Bakha’s simultaneous disgust and respect for the upper-caste Hindus is a good example of this paradox.

When the narrative introduces the British who are stationed in Bulasha, their lives are described as glamorous in comparison to that of the outcastes. Bakha “had been told they were sahibs, superior people” (Anand 1935: 5), and his wish is to be like them. The “Tommies” had treated Bakha “as a human being” (Anand 1935: 3), compared to how the Untouchables are treated by Hindus. However, the novel still points to the “familiar abuse” from the British, and this is a strong hint towards a colonial mentality that supported European superiority:

Ever since he worked in the British barracks Bakha had been ashamed of the Indian way of performing ablutions, all that gargling and spitting, because he knew the Tommies disliked it. He remembered so well the Tommies’ familiar abuse of the natives: ‘*Kala*

admi zamin par hagne wala' (black man, you who relieve yourself on the ground).

(Anand 1935: 12)

Here we can recognize Bakha's feeling of shame over his culture, because the British branded it as lesser and more primitive compared to a Western culture. However, the narrative focuses on paradoxes, and Bakha states "he himself had been ashamed at the sight of Tommies running naked to their tub baths. 'Disgraceful,' he had said to himself." (Anand 1935: 12). By recognizing that the unfamiliarity with different cultures is not limited to the Europeans, the narrative further problematizes the notion of European superiority. Bakha continues: "They were, however, sahibs. Whatever they did was 'fashun'." (Anand 1935: 12). With this we see how the systematic dehumanization and "othering" done by both the colonizers and the Hindus have influenced Bakha's mindset. This passage makes it clear that Bakha is able to identify that the abuse he experiences might not be justified, yet he comes to terms with that the superiors can do what they want.

One of the novel's solutions for untouchability is Christianity, a religion that does not recognize the caste-system. Bakha meets a missionary called the Colonel, who tries to convince Bakha they are equal:

'Yes, Huzoor. You are a sahib,' said Bakha. 'No, no,' pretended the Colonel. 'I am not a sahib. I am like you. I am padre of the Salvation Army.' 'Yes, sahib, I know,' said Bakha, without understanding the subtle distinction which the Colonel was trying to institute between himself and the ordinary sahibs in India. (...) To Bakha, however, all sahibs were sahibs. (Anand 1935: 108)

Bakha's inability to perceive of a relationship without a superior and an inferior participant supports the argument that the systematic dehumanization the Untouchables experienced has been deeply ingrained in the cultural mentality. Even though the narrative presents complex

paradoxes, which encourages the reader to reflect on the issues of “othering”, for Bakha the issue is presented as rather simple in comparison. One can tell if someone is superior by his or her clothing, for example, but this in turn makes him place a great deal of significance on clothing, or “fashun”: “He wore all the other items of clothes that the sahibs wore. He was a sahib all right.” (Anand 1935: 109).

One can also tell Bakha has been influenced by a Western mentality that classifies most bodily functions as repulsive. Like Forster wrote in the foreword of the novel: “We have been trained from childhood to think excretion shameful, and grave evils have resulted, both physical and psychological.” (Forster 1935: 2). With this Bakha adds one more dimension to his perception of superiority, the rejection of what he calls “native habits”:

He did not, as his father did, blow on the tea to cool it. This was another of the things he had learnt at the British barracks from the Tommies. His uncle had said the goras [white men] didn’t enjoy the full flavour of the tea because they did not blow on it. But Bakha considered that both his uncle’s and his father’s spattering sips were natu [native] habits. He would have told his father that the sahibs didn’t do that. (Anand 1935: 24)

The “othering” as presented by the colonizers in this novel is diminished by how Bakha is treated by the Hindus. Bakha has a “sub-human status” (Anand 1935: 14) in society, and the British will at least recognizes him as human. Insults he receives from the Hindus draws parallels to the early colonizers and anthropologists forms of “othering” by describing the natives as animals, children, and sub-human in general. For example: “Dirty dog! Son of a bitch! The offspring of a pig!” (Anand 1935: 38), and “Keep to the side of the road, you low-caste vermin!” (Anand 1935: 37). This type of metaphor by tradition embraces the theory that “the other” is inferior because they are not as evolved, or they have a simplified cognitive process. Franz Fanon in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), explains this notion related

to language and a Western understanding that cannot encompass the entire world. If one cannot understand something, it is easy to disregard it as nonsense:

I see a gay group of children calling and shouting for the sake of calling and shouting – children in the midst of play, to the degree to which play can be considered an initiation into life. The Negro loves to jabber, and from this theory it is not a long road that leads to a new proposition: The Negro is just a child. (Fanon 1967: 27)

When discussing the “othering” by the Hindus, the notion of having a simplified cognitive process, like an animal, is not supported by lack of understanding from another culture. However, it is supported by the lack of opportunities for the Untouchable to get an education, for example. The similarities of the “othering” process is shown through the inability for the inferior to increase their status. Concerning the issue of caste, there is additionally the notion that the Untouchable is dirty, and this adds another layer to the animal metaphor:

The betel-leaf-seller dashed some water over it from the jug with which he sprinkled the betel-leaves now and again. Having thus purified it he picked up the nickel-piece and threw it into the counter. Then he flung a packet of ‘Red-Lamp’ cigarettes at Bakha, as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing around. (Anand 1935: 33)

These layers of meaning and levels of dehumanization is why I have labelled Bakha “twice-othered.” He has to navigate the Hindi culture and aspects of the British culture to become some form of “sahib”, but neither has the opportunities for him to realize this dream, particularly the Hindus. The narrative refers to “the prejudice of the ‘twice-born’ high-caste Hindus.” (Anand 1935: 10). The two upper castes in Hindu society justify their superiority by having earned their position through multiple good deeds through multiple lives, which is why they are referred to as “twice-born.” This leaves no opportunities for rising in the ranks except for earning a higher rank next life, and this can be an impossible prospect for an Untouchable.

For Bakha it seems more plausible to become a “sahib” by imitating the British: “But he dreamed of becoming a sahib. (...) Life at the Tommies’ barracks had fired his imagination.” (Anand 1935: 31). In Bakha’s simplified understanding, he can dress as the British and mimic them, and thereby further his position in society. He already “considered [other outcastes] his inferiors since he came back with sharpened wits from the British barracks.” (Anand 1935: 27).

This statement also shows that there are hierarchical differences within the castes as well, and even the outcastes from society are not equal to each other:

Although her face was now covered in wrinkles she had pretensions to beauty and was notorious as an assertive old hussy who thought herself superior to every other outcaste, first because she claimed a high place in the hierarchy of the castes among the low castes, secondly, because a well-known Hindu gentleman in the town who had been her lover in her youth was still kind to her in her middle age. (Anand 1935: 17)

The reader is here informed of how meaningful the hierarchy is in Hindu society, but the narrative also stresses that Bakha and the newer generation pay less attention to the hierarchical differences. Bakha is described as being a “child of modern India” (Anand 1935: 4), and the new generation brings hope through developing a new culture that is likely to be a hybrid culture in the sense that they develop new cultures with influences from Eastern and Western cultures, due to intercultural influence. However, the narrative also shows that the methodical “othering” eventually leads to the new generation succumbing to this mentality, and settling in their role as lesser. This is shown through Bakha’s “revelation” after being hit in the face for touching a man: “For them I am a sweeper, sweeper – untouchable!” (Anand 1935: 42). After this Bakha’s attitude and will for change in his status changes:

There were three sugar-plums in it, all slightly broken. ‘Throw me one,’ said Bakha. ‘Take it,’ said Ram Charan. But Bakha hesitated and didn’t hold his hands out. (...) ‘No,

give it to me, throw it,' Bakha said. Both Ram Charan and Chota were surprised. Never before had they seen Bakha behave like that. Ram Charan was admitted to be the highest caste among them, because he was a washerman. Chota, the leather-worker's son, came next in the hierarchy, and Bakha was of the third and lowest category. (Anand 1935: 83)

The narrative takes particular issue with the topic that the Untouchables are “twice-othered” by comparing the “othering” in Hindu society to the colonial “othering” that justified the empire. This message is from Ghandi's speech at the end of the novel, where Bakha regains hope about a change in his status as an outcaste: “As you all know, while we are asking for freedom from the grips of a foreign nation, we have ourselves, for centuries, trampled underfoot millions of human beings without feeling the slightest remorse for our iniquity.” (Anand 1935: 128). By asking the people to compare their struggle during colonization to the struggle of the Untouchable, the narrative confirms that the processes used to keep groups of people in an inferior position are very similar. The difference lies in that the colonizers' pretense to civilize and help the colonized offered a false hope for the people to rise in status. A lawyer in the crowd criticizes Ghandi for the speech being an “expression of his inferiority complex” (Anand 1935: 136), but the poet Iqbal promptly defends him:

Let me tell you that with regard to untouchability the Mahatma is more sound than he is in his political and economic views. You have swallowed all those cheap phrases about inferiority complex and superiority complex at Oxford without even understanding what they mean. You slavishly copy the English in everything... (Anand 1935: 136)

Boehmer sates that “to be true to oneself in borrowed robes” (2009: 110) was the main dilemma for the colonized native. The language and literary traditions transmitted by a colonial education were British, and European ways were believed to bring income and status. “The better to advance their position, native nationalists across a wide geographical spectrum adopted

the persona of enlightened English gentleman.” (Boehmer 2009: 111). The colonizers mission was to civilize the world, which in turn would provide the natives in the colonized areas with the “virtue of cultural inheritance” (Boehmer 2009: 111), however they were not considered civilized at source, and in their efforts to become the same they were also marked as different. “They mimicked Europeans, and were ridiculed for their mimicry.” (Boehmer 2009: 111)

The natives that “slavishly copy the English”, Bakha’s fascination with European apparel and becoming a “sahib”, and the representations of Aziz, are all depictions of mimicry in the novels. Franz Fanon writes:

The Negroes’ inferiority complex is particularly intensified among the most educated, who must struggle with it unceasingly. Their way of doing so, he adds, is frequently naïve: The wearing of European clothes, whether rags or the most up-to-date style; using European furniture and European forms of social intercourse; adorning the Native language with European expressions. (Fanon 1967: 25)

The civilizing mission of the British Empire creates a false hope for the natives to rise in status by behaving like the English, and some natives display this with clothes while some get educated. As discussed in the introduction, culture is an ongoing process. This does not entail that one can change one’s culture in a moment. The natives express the desire to be British through exterior measures such as changing one’s clothing and embedding new words into the language, but true integration or cultural hybridity is a more complex process. I argue that mimicry can be seen as a starting point for future hybridity or assimilation, but with an added focus on power relations, as there is one inferior party striving to be like the superior party.

The notion that the natives admire their colonizers is underlined in the narrative of both novels. Bakha’s reasoning for this admiration, being treated slightly better than by his fellow citizens, is made clear to the reader in *Untouchable*, as I have discussed above. In *Passage*, this

admiration is suggested from the beginning, in a conversation between Aziz, Mahmoud Ali, and Hamidullah: “‘The English take and do nothing. I admire them.’ ‘We all admire them. Aziz, please pass me the hookah.’” (Forster 1924: 6). This statement can be interpreted in several different ways. The most apparent approach would be to understand it literally, that the natives do look up to the English as superior to themselves. This also entails that Forster, as an Englishman, imposes these views onto his native characters. Confirming the admiration on behalf of everyone, and then asking for the hookah seems so matter-of-fact that the statement reads as true. However, if one were to consider the greater context, the statement can be read as ironic. Whilst these men sit, discuss, and smoke the hookah, their servants are making them supper and cleaning and keeping the house. Being jealous of the English’s systematic extortion and partaking in the same practice simultaneously can indeed be an ironic joke. It can be read as exposing the similarities that exist in both groups of people, which can be Forster’s way of undermining the power of the Empire and rebutting the notion that the Indians cannot govern themselves. A third option would be that the characters themselves are being ironic in their statements, and the casual remark asking for the hookah can support this reading as well. They do not really admire the English, and they are considered irrelevant, so natives can joke about it freely. These ironic readings are both possibilities. However, it does not necessarily give Forster a pass for the statement. If one reads it ironically, it is still a joke based around the mentality that the natives are subordinate and must admire the Europeans. These different readings are examples of reasons why I have positioned Forster’s final novel in an indeterminate state between the mentality of “othering” and the mentality that rejects it. Arguments support all these readings, but for the actual opinion of the natives, there is no answer.

In *Untouchable*, the narrative expresses how communication between cultures is the foundation for mimicry: “After working for a while in the British regimental barracks, he had soon become possessed with an overwhelming desire to live their life.” (Anand 1935: 5). Bakha

is described as having an “English-apeing mind” (Anand 1935: 45), because of his time in the barracks. Fanon’s description of mimicry draws parallels to the narrative of *Untouchable*. The only difference is that Bakha is not educated, and does not struggle with inferiority because he suddenly has become inferior, he is as discussed “twice-othered”, and has the lowest status overall. However, he does consider himself more educated than other Untouchables because of his connection to the British. “[Bakha] had been told they were sahibs, superior people. He had felt that to put on their clothes made one a sahib too. So he tried to copy them in everything, to copy them as well as he could in the exigencies of his peculiarly Indian circumstances.” (Anand 1935: 5). Bakha has, as Fanon described, a naïve perception of how to become a “sahib”. He has a particular focus on clothing, or “fashun”, a term he has adopted from English. The mimicry is additionally described as coming from the younger generation in particular, which can be a symbol of future changes:

The consciousness of every child was full of desire to wear Western dress, and since most of the boys about the place were (...) all too poor to afford the luxury of a complete European outfit, they eagerly stretched their hands to seize any particular article they could see anywhere, feeling that the possession of something European was better than the possession of nothing European. (Anand 1935: 87)

The narrative clearly shows how there is little difference between having rags and the most up-to-date styles. Bakha, having status as an outcaste, appreciates anything European: “A broken cane chair, the only article of furniture of European design which he had been able to acquire in pursuance of his ambition to live like an Englishman.” (Anand 1935: 15). Bakha is additionally influenced to be disgusted by “native habits”, as mentioned above, and this is represented through a metaphor of clothing in the narrative:

He didn't like his home, his street, his town, because he had been to work at the Tommies' barracks, and obtained glimpses of another world, strange and beautiful; he had grown out of his native shoes into the ammunition boots that he had secured as a gift. (Anand 1935: 66)

The role of mimicry has an interesting position amongst the natives in the novel. As mentioned, the consciousness of every child was to own something European, however when Bakha shows up in European apparel his friends mock him and call him "Pilpali sahib' (imitation sahib)" (Anand 1935: 6). This could mean the character of Bakha displays a hyperbolic image of the importance of mimicry, but "Bakha would always retaliate by pointing at the washer-boy's lashless, browless eyes and saying: 'That comes of using too much soap to whiten your skin.'" (Anand 1935: 26). This statement points to there being several dimensions of mimicry amongst the natives in the novel, with varying degrees of severity. The irony of Bakha's friends mocking him for being an "imitation sahib" can point to the hopeless mission of rising in status, which is Bakha's dream, or it can be read as an example of how the way of rising in status is simplistic and naïve: "He had followed the sahib because the sahib wore trousers. Trousers had been the dream of his life" (Anand 1935: 112).

There is, as established above, minimal opportunity for the "othered" individual to rise in status, still, Bakha's positive attitude towards the subject and the suggested solutions at the end brings hope for changes in the future. "I will look like a sahib,' he had sacredly told himself. 'And I shall walk like them, just as they do.'" (Anand 1935: 5). Here the reader can identify with the notion of dressing for the job you want, not the job you have. Bakha, who has been taught to walk with his head down, raises his head, and metaphorically his mind. It is perhaps a utopian wish for Bakha to rise in status, but the narrative calls for optimism. There is also a reference to a man wearing "hybrid clothes, neither English nor Indian" (Anand 1935: 55), and considering the importance of clothing in this narrative this can be read as an indication

of an exceedingly hybridized culture resulting from this intercultural connection. The narrative also contemplates on the cultural implications for the Hindu society if this change is realized:

‘Don’t know what this world is coming to! These swine are getting more and more uppish!’ said a little old man. (...) ‘He walked like a Lat Sahib, like a Laften Gornor!’ shouted the defiled one. ‘Just think, folks, think of the enormity!’ (...) ‘As if he owned the whole street!’ exclaimed the touched man. (Anand 1935: 39)

This passage can be read somewhat ironically from an outsider’s perspective. Someone walking with their head tall is no reason for the modern reader to think: “What is this world coming to?” However, in a society that is built on systematic dehumanization, that intends to continue the practice, small changes in attitude as the ones we see in Bakha’s character do indeed signify a threat.

Aziz in *Passage* shares some of Bakha’s attraction to European clothing. He has, however, a more eloquent way of describing why, concealing what can be interpreted as an inferiority complex for convenience:

‘Why in the hell does one wear collars at all?’ grumbled Fielding as he bent his neck. ‘We wear them to pass the police.’ ‘What’s that?’ ‘If I’m biking in English dress – starch collar, hat with ditch – they take no notice. When I wear a fez, they cry, ‘Your lamp’s out!’ (Forster 1924: 55)

Aziz’ performs his mimicry to “pass the police”, and not be bothered. This implies that the police bother natives who do not adapt in this way. This would mean that Aziz in theory does benefit, or experience a slight rise in status, from his mimicry. Furthermore Aziz’ answer was far from the answer Fielding was expecting, and his reaction further marks the difference between them. This entails that though Aziz receives some benefits from his mimicry, it does

not have the desired effect, which would be to bring equality to relations between the colonizer and the colonized.

Aziz' character displays throughout the novel what I define as linguistic mimicry. This type of mimicry can be understood in light of Fanon's statement: "Nothing is more astonishing than to hear a black man express himself properly, for then in truth he is putting on the white world." (Fanon 1967: 36). I disagree with the statement in itself, but it serves as a description of the colonizer's mentality, and relates to the ideology that the world had to be understood in western terms. The statement also entails that the mastery of a European language can be a way for the native to gain acceptance from European cultures. Aziz' linguistic mimicry is displayed through several dimensions. Firstly, there is the way Forster has rendered Aziz' speech in the narrative, his English is always correct and grammatical. This can be a way of making his ethnicity more ambiguous. However, Forster has not omitted Aziz' accent and changed it to grammatical English, because Fielding demonstrates in the narrative that Aziz is speaking English well. Fielding sees no way of improving Aziz' English:

'Everything ranged coldly on the shelves was what *I* thought. – I say, Mr Fielding, is the stud going to go in?' 'I hae ma doots.' 'What's that last sentence, please? Will you teach me some new words and help me improve my English?' Fielding doubted whether 'everything ranged coldly on the shelves' could be improved. (Forster 1924: 55)

This passage also demonstrates the second dimension of Aziz' linguistic mimicry, which is him assuming that he cannot understand Fielding because he is speaking too advanced English, but in reality it is unfortunate pronunciation from Fielding. This misunderstanding can be read as satire of the colonizers way of understanding everything in their terms, as it may seem like Aziz believes this theory, however wrongfully.

The final dimension of Aziz' linguistic mimicry is the way he uses his linguistic skill to assume a superior position, above other natives.

'See, he hasn't understood; he knows no English.' 'You spick a lie,' said the old man gently. 'I spick a lie! Oh, jolly good. Isn't he a funny old man? We will have great jokes with him later. He does all sorts of little things. He is not nearly as stupid as you think, and awfully poor.' (Forster 1924: 115)

This scene highlights the contrast between Forster's adaptation of Aziz' accent compared to that of other natives. In this case, the characters' speech is written phonetically, like Fielding's "I hae ma doots", but dialogue is most often written grammatically correct. I interpret this to mean that if Aziz had a noticeable accent, there would have been at least one instance in the narrative where this would have been drawn attention to. Aziz shows he is aware of his linguistic superiority by making fun of the old man's accent. This is demonstrated in the example above as he repeats the mispronounced word. Following is a series of demeaning remarks, all intended to diminish the worth of the old man. Here he is made lesser based on his accent, or inability to make himself understood.

Boehmer points out how postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha has explained how the act of imitating the white man's image displaced the representations of authority. She states that the mimicry performed by the colonized developed into a creation of something subtly but distinctly new, instead of a recreation. Those who, from a European viewpoint, had no culture, learned to selectively borrow and interpret European traditions (Boehmer 2009: 164). Bhabha's theory serves to clarify Aziz' mimicry to elevate his status in *Passage*. The theory, combined with the types of mimicry discussed above, can symbolize the start of hybrid cultures. Boehmer calls this "subversion by imitation", which is closely related to assimilation, and is an important mode for colonial resistance. This is shown through the altering of the English language in

colonial and post-colonial texts (Boehmer 2009: 165), and is shown in *Untouchable* through for instance the use of “fashun.”

As I have mentioned, one of the major thematic focuses in *A Passage to India* is the relationship between the British and the Indians – the colonizer and the colonized. The novel starts with a conversation on this topic. This debate is described as being sad, however Aziz remarks that it does not seem sad. “They were discussing whether or not it is possible to be friends with an Englishman. Mahmoud Ali argued that it was not, Hamidulla disagreed, but with so many reservations that there was no friction between them.” (Forster 1924: 5). Hamidulla argues that it is only a possibility for an Englishman and Indian to be friends in England, as he has been there before. This can be a hint towards future assimilation, as the natives have little opportunity to genuinely be integrated to British culture and further the notion of hybridization while in the colonies. The friends continue to discuss how the Englishmen arrive in India with the best of intentions to be a gentleman, and are then systematically taught to oppress the natives.

’You fellows will not believe me, but I have driven with Turton in his carriage – Turton! Oh yes, we were once quite intimate. He has shown me his stamp collection.’ ‘He would expect you to steal it now. Turton! But red-nosed boy will be far worse than Turton!’ ‘I do not think so. They all become exactly the same – not worse not better. I give an Englishman two years, be he Turton or Burton. It is only the difference of a letter. And I give any Englishwoman six months. All are exactly alike. Do you not agree with me?’ (Forster 1924: 6)

This is an interesting incident of irony or “reverse othering”. This passage contains the same form of essentialist statements that fuels the process of “othering”: “All are exactly alike.” By bringing this up in an ironic way, the narrative subverts the importance of colonial

“othering.” This is done by stressing how the important power-relation is arbitrary, and “othering” appears in different forms in different settings. However, the topic of intercultural relations is present throughout the novel, particularly represented through Aziz and Fielding’s relationship. Fielding is described from the very beginning as having a positive attitude towards the natives compared to the other English characters, and this results in him being a symbol of intercultural relations. This is reinforced throughout the narrative: “The feeling grew that Mr Fielding was a disruptive force” (Forster 1924: 52). He stands out from the rest of the more rigid, English characters who may symbolize the Empire in their taught negativity towards “other” cultures. Aziz and Fielding’s relationship can be seen as an attempt at blurring the boundaries between the East and West, and Fielding choosing Aziz’s side in the trial reinforces this effort. I will show how this relationship is significant in terms of hybridization of British and Indian cultures, in the future of intercultural communication.

I have chosen to approach this subject without the question of whether Forster was describing a homosexual relationship between Fielding and Aziz. Several critics have included this in their analysis, as shown by Peter Childs. This approach is supported by some supposed hints in the narrative, for example that “Aziz” means “beloved” in Urdu, in addition to the word “queer” appearing numerous times throughout the novel. “Queer” has several meanings, amongst others “strange”, which is how Forster uses it in this text. However, it started being used as slang for “homosexual” a few years before *Passage* was published, which is why some critics read it as a significant in the text. There is also some assumed sexual imagery, such as the exchange of Aziz’s collar stud in their first meeting, which has been described by many as phallic (Childs 2007: 196). My interpretation of the exchange of Aziz’ collar stud is connected to establishing the relationship between Fielding and Aziz, and offers an example of the power-relation that can be created in an intercultural relationship. Before the exchange, Fielding is asking Aziz to make himself at home, to be polite. Aziz takes the comment literally, and is

excited to be treated, in his understanding, as an equal and it serves to establish a relation. When Fielding breaks his collar stud Aziz promptly offers up the one he is wearing, “a gold stud, which was part of a set that his brother-in-law had brought him from Europe” (Forster 1924: 54), which implies it has value, either in the gold, or sentimental value, or value for “passing” the police. Aziz has shown his willingness to place himself in the inferior position by giving away his only stud, and is catering to the superior individual’s needs.

Boehmer writes how in the Anglo-Indian novel, contact between the races always brings negative consequences, and notes how this is stated in *Passage*, as Mr. Turton observes the same thing (2009: 65). Colonial society was built on separation between the colonizers and the local population, as it was believed that contact between them threatened race purity. This belief was particularly strong for half a century before Forster released *Passage*. Aziz and Fielding’s friendship can be seen as an effort to undermine this belief. Fielding as a symbol of intercultural relations in the novel acknowledges the notion of colonial separation. Fielding perpetuates a binary opposition between the cultures: “He had discovered it was possible to keep in with Indians and Englishmen, but that he who would also keep in with Englishwomen must drop the Indians. The two wouldn’t combine.” (Forster 1924: 52). However, the narrative shows that one Englishwoman, Mrs. Moore, does “combine”, and this way Forster retains the ambiguity of the text. Fielding is also used as a symbol in the racial tensions leading up to Aziz’ trial. Because he believes Aziz is innocent he (according to the colonial mentality) has to be on the “other” side. Fielding shows how one can grow relationships outside one’s culture, but it does not always benefit him: “He regretted taking sides. To slink through India unlabelled was his aim. Henceforward he would be called ‘anti-British’, ‘seditious’ – terms that bored him, and diminished his utility.” (Forster 1924: 155). Fielding’s character is as ambiguous as the rest of the narrative. He is a disruptive force concerning the race tensions in the novel, but in keeping with the notion of “othering”, is perpetuating a binary opposition between the cultures. This

theme is present throughout the novel, as I have pointed out before, and further affirms how Forster was writing in a period of transition between two mentalities.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida writes: “To have a friend is to be human. To have *an other friend*, therefore, is to challenge the dehumanisation of the other.” (Upstone 2017: 155). This means that Aziz and Fielding developing a relationship is in itself challenging the Empire. However, their friendship declines through the novel, which fits the narrative’s pessimistic outlook on intercultural relations. Aziz is told that Fielding has married someone Aziz knows, which he assumes is Adela, his enemy. When they meet again at the end of the novel, the misunderstanding is cleared up, but they still reach the conclusion that it is impossible for them to be friends now. Perhaps in the future or alternatively somewhere else. This suggests a connection to the discussion of friendship at the beginning of the novel, where Hamidulla suggests it is possible in England. I interpret this to be connected to hybridization and assimilation, which will be explored further in the next chapter. In light of Derrida’s statement, Aziz and Fielding’s inability to be friends may signify that the dehumanisation of “other” cultures is far from over, however there exists some hope for future.

The ending of this novel is vital for connecting Aziz and Fielding’s friendship with colonialist racial concerns. Forster uses powerful imagery to describe why they cannot continue being friends:

‘Why can’t we be friends now?’ said the other, holding him affectionately. ‘It’s what I want. It’s what you want.’ But the horses didn’t want it – they swerved apart; the earth didn’t want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single-file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn’t want it, they said in their hundred voices, ‘No, not yet,’ and the sky said, ‘No, not there.’ (Forster 1924: 288)

The last passage of the novel is ambiguous, and it makes it hard to decipher if the narrative offers any solution to the problem of “othering” and racial tensions. Several critics, including Boehmer, have therefore drawn the conclusion that the novel holds little or no hope for Indian and English relations. Through the imagery of the earth and the sky keeping Aziz and Fielding away from each other, their relationship is portrayed as something so fundamentally wrong that nature protests. Keeping in mind that Forster chose this imagery for the end of the novel, one can understand for example Boehmer’s interpretation of how intercultural relations are hopeless. However, India’s “hundred voices” clearly states that they cannot be friends *yet*, which I read as offering the solution of time and reflection, hinting at improved intercultural relations in the future.

India’s “hundred voices” is additionally an important part of this ending, and can be interpreted several different ways. On a surface level, by placing significance on the diversity of Indian cultures in this period of colonial anxieties, can be a way to undermine the notion of “othering”. This is because “othering” revolves around omitting any agency or voice that the native has, and of course generalizing. Forster’s focus on how India has “hundred voices”, counters this generalization. More accurately, he could have used “millions of voices”, but at least there is a higher focus on diversity in the Indian cultures than traditional colonial narratives. The “hundred voices” of India could also be referring to how the Indian cultures are beyond western comprehension, as I have discussed earlier. The colonizers might have one distinct experience, but there is so much more to explore in this country. This reasoning reflects the plot of the narrative, as the characters want to see “the real India.” The culture being beyond western comprehension is closely related to the last analysis I will put forward, which is how the “hundred voices” can be in reference to Indian cultures being oral cultures, opposed to European, written cultures. Being in contact with oral cultures encouraged the colonizers’ notion of European cultures being superior, because the oral cultures were easily overwritten.

Because its myths and traditions were not documented physically, the rich complexity of the cultures were not conveyed. However, time, reflection, and nativist movements show how the oral cultures are equally as enriched as the written ones, and that India's "hundred voices" are not as easily negated. This is exemplified through the positive attention *Untouchable* received upon its release only ten years later, as a novel where the western audience were able to experience another side of the culture than what is shown in *Passage*.

Forster may have implied that India consists of hundreds of voices, or diverse cultures, contrary to what a Western ideology believed at the time. However, Gayatri Spivak asks the question "can the subaltern speak?" (Spivak 1994: 25), where she questions if, in colonial and postcolonial texts, the subaltern ever had any opportunity to speak and to know their conditions, whilst occupying a position "other" to Europe. Does Forster make the subaltern speak through his narrative? I have shown in this chapter how there is an attempt, but I would argue no, as Forster himself stated in the foreword to *Untouchable*, it is challenging as an outsider to depict a certain experience. If one were to take Forster's inclusion of the "hundred voices" that speak to Mrs. Moore as an argument that the subaltern has a voice, one also has to consider that the last time these voices actually speak, at the ending of *Passage*, is to further a colonial notion of separation. To clarify whether the subaltern can speak, Spivak draws on arguments by Ranajit Guha, who writes that Indian nationalism is dominated by elitism, and thereby the only voices coming through to the world are from dominant foreign groups, and dominant indigenous groups on the all-India level (Spivak 1994: 26). This is because the Indian elite are the best informants for Western intellectuals who want to know about the experience of the "other" (Spivak 1994: 26), however the elite can rarely give an account of the worst cases, which is why the subaltern is erased. Guha has a third grouping of people who are dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels, and argues this group exists in a place of in-betweenness, as a barrier between the dominant groups and the people (Spivak 1994: 26). The final group is

the people – or the “subaltern class” – the terms are used synonymously to construct a new definition of people that illustrates the demographic difference between the total population of India, and the elite (Spivak 1994: 26).

A Passage to India, in agreement with Guha’s argument, portrays experiences of the two former groups, as much of the plot revolves around the English. One could argue that Aziz exists in the third group, as a doctor would be dominant and respected, but perhaps not necessarily on an all-India level. My main point is that there is little to no mention of the “people”, in Guha’s definition, and this is where I question the legitimacy of the cultural experience in *Passage*, compared to *Untouchable*. However, *Passage* exists in a state of in-betweenness, and there are suggestions of subverted voices coming through, such as the “hundred voices” speaking to Mrs. Moore. We also see how experiencing the “real India” becomes synonymous with getting to know the people of India in the beginning of the narrative, which is a notion that subverts the colonial experience, but the text fails to give accounts of the “people” in Guha’s definition. Forster’s focus on the “real India” consisting of the people may have been important for paving the way for Anand’s novel, but it can also be interpreted as an attempt at making the orient speak, in Said’s words, or rendering the mysteries of the East to the western reader. What separates *Untouchable* from *Passage* and other colonial and postcolonial texts, is that colonialism is not the central topic, the subaltern class is. There is a unique focus on the two latter groups of people, the people itself in Guha’s definition, but the two former groups are also present, resulting in a realistic balance of society in the story, even though the text is uncovering the cruelty of the caste-system. The inclusion of all four groups also help to illustrate the severe differences between the elite and subaltern, or the influence of dominant foreign groups, which I have previously discussed. If seeing the “real India” means “seeing Indians” (Forster 1924: 20), one will naturally experience more by including a more diverse set of characters, compared to revolving around the elite.

In this chapter I have discussed how Anand's text is an indirect answer to Forster's. Aspects of *A Passage to India* is continuing a dichotomy between the East and the West. Compared to Forster, Anand's narrative offers an expanded view of the Indian cultures, because he is showing a more diverse segment of Indian cultures. The dialogue between these novels was furthered when Forster wrote a foreword for the second printing of *Untouchable*. This foreword accepts Anand's novel into British or English literature. The norm for the colonial Anglo-Indian novel was to perpetuate the fundamental separation colonial society was built on. Anand, through the narrative of *Untouchable*, further problematizes the issue of racial contact when he also introduces the Hindu caste-system. The question of contact between the races becomes less important in comparison. I read Forster's novel as an attempt at explaining parts of the culture, at least the parts that can be deciphered in western terms, to his Western audience. Anand in turn offers the perspective of an insider. His cultural perspective is conveyed in a language that is different from what other authors from India use, for more people of the world to understand. This would mean that *Untouchable* and *A Passage to India* share a target audience, and have been read by many of the same people. The novels also display the dialogue between them through different modes of "othering", and particularly by Bakha being "twice-othered." Additionally, there exists an underlying notion of European superiority, which is expressed through mimicry. Both novels also hint at modernization as a solution for the systematic dehumanization that comes with the subversion of a group of people. According to these texts, the future and eventual cultural hybridization is the solution. We do see improvement in intercultural relations and less of "othering", however as will be argued in later chapters there are still imprints of colonial "othering" in western mentalities.

Chapter 2

Representing the “Other”: Integration and Hybridization

In an increasingly intercultural world, it has proven more and more impossible to classify groups of people into taxonomies, as early anthropologists could get away with when travelling from the centre of the Empire to the colonies in the eighteenth century. While the previous chapter was concerned with the older novels, this chapter will be bringing the topic of “othering” into a contemporary context. Using Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*, and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, I wish to show how these novels might perpetuate certain aspects of a colonial mind-set through their representations of the “other”, even though multicultural literature has the effect of furthering critical cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridization. As discussed in Chapter 1, Anand and Forster’s texts were published at a point in time where they were interpreted as politically motivated because of negativity towards the British Empire. Smith and Ali’s works similarly received a lot of attention when they were published, and their novels are often read as political statements. However, unlike Anand and Forster, in the case of Smith and Ali it becomes more difficult to verify whether or not this was the intention, particularly when considering statements from the authors concerning the subject. Because their characters display a sense of belonging to several different cultures, the novels are often characterized as post-colonial by critics. However, the texts focus on multicultural societies in Britain. By combining these aspects, problematizing integration and evolving cultures in the context of “otherness”, the novels thematise intercultural communication and fluid cultures, emphasizing cultural hybridization.

In this chapter, I will firstly discuss why I do not wish to pair the novels using the label “black British literature”, opening up for a discussion of multicultural literature. Then, through examples from *Brick Lane*, I will discuss how this novel explores identity in relation to

assimilation and hybridization, as well as highlighting some cultural tensions in the novel. Then, using examples from *White Teeth*, I will show how the novel represents British multicultural society and cultural tensions. Finally I will discuss the novel's outlook on the future of intercultural communication and hybridization.

Ali and Smith's novels are often paired and analysed under the labels "post-colonial" and "black British" literature. "Black British" literature is a term that became current in the 1970s. At the time it was a purely political label designed to categorize authors who had migrated from the former colonies to Britain, and which showcased a common experience of postcolonial migration and discrimination combined with a sense of belonging to Britain (Ledent 2009: 1). While Smith and Ali both have their origins in the former British colonies, the label "black British" author has become increasingly problematic when referring to their work. In this chapter I argue that their writing breaks away from the labels of "post-colonial" as well as "black British", opening up for a discussion of hybridity in its place.

The term "black British literature" has lost its original scope associated with the authors originating from the British colonies. Currently, the label only refers to authors of African or Caribbean descent (Ledent 2009: 1). This is a result of the term being overly focused on the proponents' skin-colour alongside British citizenship, as Salman Rushdie observed in an essay in 1983 (Ledent 2009: 1). Writers from the former colonies in Asia used to be included, but now there is a new classification of "Asian-British", which is where contemporary writers such as Ali would be placed (Ledent 2009: 1). Sara Upstone, in her book *Rethinking Race and Identity in Contemporary British Fiction*, is one of many who pairs Smith and Ali under the term "black British" authors. However, she does acknowledge there are problems with using this term to include both authors, and makes another distinction: when something is specifically Asian, she will be using "Asian-British" to separate the two (Upstone 2007: 336). Then again, this is the only problem she refers to. I disagree with this usage for a few reasons. Firstly,

Upstone is defining a separate “black British culture” and an identity established within this culture. She states: “you are black British whether or not you want to be” (Upstone 2007: 339). I interpret her use of the term, after she has made it encompass such a vast amount of people, as generalizing. Because Upstone refers to the need to distinguish the “Asian-British” from the term, I consider her use of the term to be under its original definition. However, she does not make this clear, and this definition is not the norm anymore, which is why the use might lead to confusion, even if she specifically states what is “Asian-British.”

Another issue with the label “black British” literature is that it has often been seen as divisive. There exists an assumed dichotomy in the expression itself, as it suggests a demotion from “white British literature”, a label that is not commonly used (Ledent 2009: 1). Each component of this label is problematic, “black” as well as “British.” The problem with distinguishing someone as “black” is the presumed need to mark “non-white” people. This fuels a binary worldview, because of the assumption that everything unmarked is “white.” Furthermore, the emergence of newer “categories” and distinctions, such as “Asian-British”, does not succeed in making the ethnic delineations neater, it is just creating a wider array of labels. The term “British” also causes problems. It should be simpler, as it refers to either citizenship or residence, but does it refer to the author’s sense of belonging? For example, a person brought up in Britain who then moves could certainly display a sense of Britishness, and a person brought up somewhere else that moves to Britain can display the same sense of British culture. Cases like this serve as testimony “to the inability of national labels to fully capture the complexities of literature in a global age.” (Ledent 2009: 2).

Irene P. Fernández writes in her article “Representing Third Spaces, Fluid Identities and Contested Spaces in Contemporary British Literature” that we can trace how “the incorporation of the works of ethnically diverse authors into mainstream British literature has been a crucial step in the process of re-defining “Britishness”.” (2009: 148). Which raises the question of why

one has to speak of “something-British” literature, when what it means to be British is constantly re-defined and evolving in accordance with its multicultural population:

The novels do not belong exclusively to either British or Black- and Asian-British literature; they are both and none at the same time. They are examples of British literature, even if of a hybrid sort. The ambivalent position in which these British-born, ethnically diverse authors are located is, thus, the product of the interaction of two literary traditions, yet the outcome is a multilayered British text. (Fernández 2009: 148)

This type of literature often comes with a set of shared preoccupations: “such as a keen interest in history, often combined with a special concern for “otherness”, not only racial, but also sexual and sometimes religious.” (Ledent 2009: 4). Such themes recur throughout *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth*, and because of this is they easily pair together under the “black British” label. As previously established there is a disconnect between the term in itself and its meaning. For this reason, I believe it is important to update the terminology to avoid over-simplifications and confusion. It is also important to avoid restrictive demands of authenticity and answerability that might follow from such labels. As Fred D’Aguiar points out in his 1986 text titled “Against Black British Literature”: “The assumptions of authenticity underlying the label confine their creative imagination which should know no boundaries.” (Ledent 2009: 1).

These “assumptions of authenticity” further problematize the writers being categorized as “black British” authors. When race is included in a discussion it stops being about the literary tradition. Many readers may interpret the inclusion of different races and cultures to be representative of the entirety of this race, which I would argue supports an essentialist view of culture and is in itself a form of “othering.” This is referred to as the “burden of representation” (Upstone 2007: 346), and is an established concept in literary critique. Authors keep trying to find ways to escape this view that the readers impose on them based on their ethnic

backgrounds. Ali herself has commented on this issue, as what she calls the “tyranny of representation” which means, “that when I speak, my brown skin is the dominant signifier.” (Ali: 2003). When Ali is approached about her novel, she is either asked to give a full account of the Bangladeshi community, or asked by members of the community: “What gives you the right to write about ‘us’, when you are clearly one of ‘them’?” (Ali: 2003). This is a clear indicator that our society is still working with as well as resisting the imposed definitions from “othering”. However, Ali states that because she has grown up with an English mother and Bengali father, she is in a unique position to observe and write “standing neither behind a closed door, nor in the thick of things.” (Ali: 2003). She particularly stresses that:

Any literary endeavour must be judged on the work alone. It stands or falls on its own merits regardless of the colour, gender and so on of the author. A male author does not need ‘permission’ to write about a female character, a white author does not transgress in taking a black protagonist. (Ali: 2003)

Ali emphasizes that even if she has written the novel based on her experience coming from Dhaka to London, she has never lived in the East End of London, and does not share any of the story of her protagonist, Nazneen. As Ali’s frustrations suggest, the novel has received a lot of criticism, and the debates have been surrounding whether or not the novel is accurately representing or commodifying “otherness.”

Both Ali and Smith have expressed rebuttals to the burden of representations that is forced on them. Ali has stated in an interview that she is simply writing about a family that happens to be in this community, not the community as a whole. Fareena Alam, writing for *The Guardian*, states that at the time *Brick Lane* was published Tower Hamlets had 300,000 inhabitants over 4 generations (2003). There is equally as much difference between these individual stories as there is between every individual experience. It is up to the reader to

recognize this and reflect on it, more than it is up to the author to accurately represent every aspect of a culture, which is simply impossible without resorting to generalizations. When the reader imposes the burden of representation on a text instead of responding to the story, there is a greater chance of disappointment. Ali, for instance, employs a great amount of humour in her text, and overly focusing on representations may distort that humor.

Smith's view on this issue is similar to that of Ali, but as Ali is struggling to fend off accusations, Smith takes a perhaps more nonchalant approach. Smith, who seems puzzled by the burden of representations, takes a stand that is post-racial in the sense that she accepts multiculturalism as a fact, not as something new and unmanageable: "I was expected to be some expert on multicultural affairs, as if multiculturalism is a genre of fiction or something, whereas it's just a fact of life – like there are people of different races on the planet." (Smith: 2000). Later in the analysis, I will discuss how Smith's post-racial observations come across in her writing. My point here is that the feeling of a "burden of representation" shows that the dynamics of "othering" is still present. Readers of *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth* want the book to be representative of one or several cultures, and impose this view on the text. This is not possible without resorting to generalizations, which in turn fuel stereotyping and "othering."

In *Brick Lane*, we follow the life of Nazneen as she moves from East Pakistan to London at eighteen years old to enter into an arranged marriage. Chanu, her husband, has already lived in England for quite some time, and claims to be properly integrated. However, their plan is to eventually save enough money to pack up their life and go back home to Dhaka. The story takes place within the Bangladeshi community of London, which is situated in Tower Hamlets, or more specifically, on Brick Lane. Through the novel, we witness Nazneen's transformation from being stuck in her apartment for six months completely dependent on her husband, to gradually engaging more with her community and gaining agency. Eventually she gives up on going "home" and stays on Brick Lane, living as an independent woman. The novel ends with

Nazneen fulfilling her dream of ice-skating. She does so in a sari, asserting her dual sense of belonging as well as a hopeful perspective for the multicultural community in the novel. Michael Perfect (2008), who has named *Brick Lane* a “multicultural Bildungsroman”, points out how the critics of this novel, including himself, share the view that Ali is using stereotypes to portray several of the characters Nazneen comes into contact with (110). However, those who are in defense of the novel emphasize that stereotypical images are used as irony to subvert the stereotype itself. As Perfect puts it: “Ali employs stereotypes as aesthetic counterpoints in order to further emphasize her protagonist’s final integration into British society.” (2008: 110). I want to read Ali’s use of stereotypes in light of the final step in Holliday’s othering sequence, where “the imagined Other works with or resists the imposed definitions.” (Holliday 2011: 70). The stereotyping and exaggerated characters in the novel can be read as a reaction to the process of “othering”, showing aspects of both sides in a contemporary context.

One of the characters who is repeatedly dismissed as a stereotype is Nazneen’s sister, Hasina. We only hear about Hasina from memories, as well as through her letter-correspondence with Nazneen. Hasina defies her parents to make a “love marriage”, and suffers the terrible consequences of this, being abused, oppressed and forced into prostitution. This story coincides with stereotypes imposed on cultures that have arranged marriages, which entails that a “love-marriages” are perceived as negative, or shameful. The question is whether the depiction of Hasina is a stereotype, or if the character serves as an aesthetic counterpoint for Nazneen. Hasina is the opposite of Nazneen in many ways, and I argue she is the “cure” for Nazneen’s “going home syndrome.” Nazneen’s decision to stay in England is heavily influenced by her sister, as she is scared to face the terrors that are described in her letters. Ali has admitted to receiving inspiration for her characters from various sources, including a case study of the conditions of Bangladeshi women in the garment industry, and as she has tried to include all the fates of these women into a single character, it becomes easy for the reader to

read it as stereotyping. Furthermore, if one takes into account the way her letters are written, with bad grammar and broken language it further perpetuates the notion of a person that is reduced to a stereotype. We also have to consider the audience she is writing for, as stereotyping the characters in Bangladesh can be seen as a way to “set the scene” for the western audience. I will return to the significance of the audience and language used in Chapter 3, but here I want to use it as an example of why this novel can be read as stereotyping some characters and in turn making them “other.”

On the other hand, the process of “othering” may not necessarily be exclusively negative. Here I will take into account Perfect’s reading of Ali’s stereotyping, where the stereotypes are implemented as counterpoints for Nazneen. I will examine how “otherness” can be a tool to realizing one’s Self or finding one’s identity. Nazneen undergoes an intense search for identity for the duration of the novel. This is one of the common themes in multicultural literature. However, the different characters and their ways of adapting have an interesting effect on Nazneen, which I interpret as the main focus of the novel. While living in England, Nazneen has been the observer of, and in turn been influenced by, several stages of integration. At the beginning of her journey, it is made clear to us that she does not go out much, and it is not customary for her to do so. Chanu, her husband, says people in the community will talk and it will reflect badly on him: “And anyway, if you were in Bangladesh you would not go out. Coming here you are not missing anything, only broadening your horizons.” (Ali 2003: 45). Chanu claims to be well integrated, and displays many aspects of having a hybrid culture. He speaks English, and goes to the office, but he also shows severe anxieties about some core issues, and there is a clear irony in the duality of him simultaneously wanting to fit in and go back “home.” This can read as mimicry, and is exaggerated in a humorous way. Ali offers confirmation that this way of thinking is not limited to Chanu, but that most of the women in this community also suffer the consequences of anxieties about assimilation. Nazneen talks

about how she is sealed away in a box, and so is the “muffled sound of private lives” around her (Ali 2003: 24). These sealed away voices represent the lives of all the people like Nazneen, and they are not only sealed away from the outside in their physical apartments, but the entire community is sealed away from rest of Britain. If one has a more essentialist view of culture, staying inside can be a means of preservation of culture, having as little as possible contact with the “other.” The restrictive environment of not leaving your home can be a symbol of a restrictive, static cultural environment. This is opposite to being part of an evolving culture, which is what Nazneen stays on the path towards, once she finally leaves her apartment.

Nazneen’s road to inventing her identity begins when she starts going outside and meeting people. In the constrained environment of their apartment there was no room to evolve through contact with others. I will demonstrate how the progression of Nazneen’s character development can be traced through her relationship to Dr Azad and his wife. When we first hear of the doctor, it is only in the context of him being invited to dinner. In the restrictive environment of their apartment on Brick Lane, where Dr Azad gets to come and leave as he pleases, his characteristics of a proper, traditional, Muslim is presented as something Chanu and Nazneen should be admiring. Azad demonstrates his traditionalism through acts like drinking two glasses of water before the meal to prevent overeating (Ali 2003: 19). Seen in contrast to Chanu’s sloppy indulging, this reaffirms Nazneen’s, and perhaps the reader’s, elevated impression of Dr Azad. This is ironic in the way it contrasts Chanu’s selective assimilation. It is funny that to “integrated” Chanu, a traditionalist view as well as going back home is what he strives towards. Still, Chanu is not completely oblivious (as his character is most of the time), and realizes there is something not right about Azad’s façade of traditionalism: “So, Azad, what are you hiding at your house?” (Ali 2003: 89).

The narrative describes how “the house itself gave nothing away” (Ali 2003: 106), much like Azad himself. This opens up for reflection around façade, and particularly when

considering the contrast between Dr and Mrs. Azad. When comparing them, there is nothing traditional at all in the representation of Mrs. Azad. Her hair is both cropped short and dyed, and she is wearing a purple short skirt with matching nail polish (Ali 2003: 106). Shortly after the reader is introduced to Mrs. Azad, she commands her husband to get her a beer. Every part of her representation is a challenge to Nazneen's character (Ali 2003: 109). The wife also reveals that some of the doctor's behaviours like drinking water before a meal are "bad habits" from when they had nothing, implying she is evolving while the doctor's character remains static. Dr Azad's daughter is not far off her mother, dressed in an even shorter skirt, and they both seem to be communicating primarily in English (Ali 2003: 111). However, Azad wishes to preserve the façade he has built around being a strong, traditional, influence in the community, and because of this, he very quickly tells Chanu and Nazneen to leave his house. Mrs. Azad, who has been painted in a negative light compared to the doctor, is the one to extend warmth to their guests and offer them dinner. This suggest that the impression of the characters we have been given is not to be trusted, however the impression we are given is through the still unevolved perspective of Nazneen. In addition, she clings to her religious reasons for elevating Dr Azad and putting down his wife, as she demonstrates when Chanu also asks for a beer.

Cigarettes, alcohol and drugs are recurring themes in this novel connected to the negative consequences of being integrated in the British culture, or going outside your community. These consequences are representative of the immigrant's fear of the "other." Chanu, being the mimic he is, explains how if one does not drink in London, one is an outcast, but back home it is the other way around, it is a cultural thing. Chanu sees no harm in, occasionally, taking part in the British culture. However, when the culture is completely absorbed he will take issue (Ali 2003: 110). The irony as well as hypocrisy of this character is shown when after this speech about fitting into the British culture, Chanu observes Azad's

family and proclaims in a loud whisper: “The only way [to save Ruku] is to take him back home.” (Ali 2003: 111). At the same time, Nazneen gains an affection for Mrs. Azad, once she sees her handling Ruku (Ali 2003: 114). However, at the same time, she is smoking a cigarette, and this image of handling a baby with one hand and smoking with the other, is very fitting to describe the contrast within this character. Nazneen’s experience of life outside their apartment, coupled with her realization that assimilation does not have to be frightening, can be seen as what sparks her search for identity. Though the character of Mrs. Azad is exaggerated, seeing her level of assimilation is an important experience for Nazneen’s character development.

Critic Leela Kanal reads *Brick Lane* as a celebration of acculturation. She points out how the feeling of displacement as well as stifling cultural traditions from the home country is common for writers of the diaspora. However, somehow, Ali has avoided this by deeply rooting herself in the new culture, and her novel is essentially a love-letter to England (Kanal 2008: 49). Even though Ali has lived an unarguably English life, she still has roots in Bangladesh, and shows a genuine concern for the immigrant experience in England. Kanal argues that through the character of Mrs. Azad, Ali is celebrating the need to accept the notions of acculturation and assimilation and adapt (2008: 54). When Chanu is performing his monologue on this subject, talking about the struggles of preserving one’s identity and conflict with Western culture, Mrs. Azad cuts him off and intensely replies:

Assimilation this, alienation that! Let me tell you a few simple facts. Fact: we live in a Western society. Fact: our children will become more and more like Westerners. Fact: that’s no bad thing. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes! (Ali 2003: 113)

It is through straightforward statements like this one, Kanal supports her claim: “What Ali tries to probe and highlight is the concept that although displacement leads to alienation and

self-searching, it is important to reconcile oneself with the concept of acculturation.” (2008: 54). My interpretation of Kanal’s statement in light of Mrs. Azad’s exclamation is that the usual themes found in multicultural writing may seem complex, but the solution is simply to assimilate. Mrs. Azad does not say it is a good thing, but she says it is no bad thing. Here she is showing acceptance, an acceptance that is extended to her daughter, unlike Chanu who has a different set of rules for everyone. Kanal bases the majority of her argument on this statement from Mrs. Azad:

’Listen, when I’m in Bangladesh I put on a sari and cover my head and all that. But here I go to work. I work with white girls and I’m just one of them. If I want to come home and eat curry, that’s my business. Some women spend ten, twenty years here and they sit in the kitchen grinding spices all day and learn only two words of English.’ She looked at Nazneen who focused on Raqib. ‘They go around covered from head to toe, in their little walking prisons, and when someone calls to them in the street they are upset. The society is racist. The society is all wrong. Everything should change for them. They don’t have to change one thing. That,’ she said, stabbing the air, ‘is the tragedy.’ (Ali 2003: 114)

Kanal states that the novel displays a need to adapt, and to not adapt is to willingly “live in abuse” (2008: 54). The character of Mrs. Azad embodies this notion, which she demonstrates through basically describing Nazneen’s early experience in England. After Nazneen has given the reader a rather negative image of the doctor’s wife, this view is cleverly changed back to Nazneen, making the reader alert to the fact that Nazneen is not integrated into society, and the challenges that come with this. Here the reader is made aware of the contrast between the two characters, but one has to think for oneself who is depicted in a negative or positive light. After pointing out Nazneen’s limited integration, Mrs. Azad is also trying to highlight that she has not lost her culture completely, because she is still willing to wear a sari. However, she speaks

of the traditional garment as a walking prison and references it as if it were a costume, indicating her disapproval of and disconnection from the culture of her homeland. This is a further signal that Mrs. Azad has in fact completely assimilated into the British culture. To adapt in this manner, Kanai describes as acculturation, the psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation but with overtones of military or political dominance (Kanai 2008: 49). I do agree with Kanai that Mrs. Azad represents acculturation in the novel, but I disagree with the claim that Ali is celebrating acculturation by displaying it as the best way of adapting into a new culture. There must be a better way than turning into a different person to the extent that your husband does not wish to look at you, as is the case for Mrs. Azad (Ali 2003: 111). Rather, she serves as an aesthetic counterpoint and challenge for Nazneen. Cultural change does not necessarily entail to transfer from one culture to another, completely leaving the first culture. Hybrid cultures is an option for giving a more accurate description of the process. It has become increasingly relevant in practice.

An interesting piece of evidence to support my argument is Dr Azad's speeches, the seemingly medical monologues filled with concern for the community, which he performs for Chanu. I briefly mentioned earlier that alcohol and drugs are motifs for the consequences of becoming a part of British society, and this is exemplified above with the wife and Chanu having a beer. However, before the state of his home life is revealed to the reader, Dr Azad gives a speech on the dangers of alcohol, in particular for young people (Ali 2003: 31). Then, when the narrative introduces his wife and daughter, one sees them openly partaking in these dangers, and the doctor's dismay over it. Later in the novel, Dr Azad voices a similar concern about the increased rates of heroin abuse: "It's really quite alarming. (...) You could call it an epidemic. Even a few girls are getting hooked." (Ali 2003: 247). This could be a doctor sharing his concerns for the community. However, when towards the end of the novel Nazneen builds up the courage to ask the doctor how his family are doing, the answer she receives indicates

that Mrs Azad has become addicted to drugs or alcohol: “‘Dr Azad, did your wife leave you?’ A shadow passed over his face. Wasn’t it obvious enough long ago that she had left? Nazneen bit into her tongue. ‘No,’ he said softly. ‘She is still there. In a manner of speaking.’” (Ali 2003: 456). Because of this, I do not see the celebration of acculturation in Mrs. Azad’s statements. She offers one side of a story, one option for integration, but this option also comes with a grave warning.

The character of Razia, however, is a much less extreme example than Mrs. Azad. Interestingly, she offers an alternative to conflicts rooted in difference that may arise in multicultural environments, such as the example of Mrs. and Dr Azad. It can be argued Razia is the embodiment of cultural hybridization, or representation of positive connotations to assimilation, which is made evident through for example her physical appearance. “Over her salwar kameez she had a baggy jumper with some kind of animal (a deer? a goat?) knitted in the front.” (Ali 2003: 69). There are several instances in the novel where she blends her traditional Bengali clothing with something “very British”, her appearance making her a comic embodiment of hybridization and the possibility of a new cultural identity. Razia also offers a more nuanced view of the cross-cultural community, as she has a daughter going to university as well as a heroin-addicted son. The character of Razia represents an alternative to the discourse of dislocation and “otherness” (Upstone 2007: 342).

Considering the state of her children, her daughter representing a success story and her son a failure, one would think Razia should be more divided on the issue of integration. As an alternative, she is very determined and direct on the subject: “Is [Britain] better than our own country or is it worse? If it’s worse, then why is he here? If it’s better, why does he complain?” (Ali 2003: 72). By making statements like this one, Razia is oversimplifying a complicated issue, similarly to Mrs. Azad. However, instead of directly challenging Nazneen’s beliefs, I would argue Razia’s statements work to offer her an alternative view. Razia’s point of view

proposes a straightforward assessment juxtaposed to Nazneen's emotional struggles. However, this does not mean that Razia is a naïve character. As Razia's character is evolving through the novel she has both positive and negative experiences with the British culture, but her view on Britain remains positive through even the hardest times:

She never talked about going home. 'Tell me this,' she said with her oblique smile. 'If everything back home is so damn wonderful, what are all these crazy people doing queuing up for a visa?' And she would get out her new British passport and bend it between thumb and forefinger. (Ali 2003: 427)

Sara Upstone offers an interesting insight into why the character could have been written this way, as well as why the novel has been critiqued for stereotyping:

Brick Lane is the narrative presentation of a problem rather than the transparent rendering of reality. The novel's reflexivity encourages self-reflexivity on the part of its readers. We are asked not to believe in what we read so much as to entertain questions about it. (Upstone 2017: 16)

Taking this into consideration, the simplified characters and attitudes in the novel can be justified, in my opinion. The goal is not to present reality, but to make the reader reflect on this reality. This is achieved by offering several alternatives to an issue from different perspectives and then present issues the reader is forced to reflect on. In keeping with this reading, Razia serves as an aesthetic counterpoint for Nazneen, and the way she presents her physical appearance is a clear indicator of this. When living in such a strict and tightknit cultural community, the ability to change one's appearance at will is a sign of freedom. Razia's idea of freedom is heavily influenced by this, as well as general practicality, as is evident from her reaction to cutting her hair, because she was "fed up with it, all that brushing and brushing" (Ali 2003: 73). This can also be a reaction to living in a homogenous society where it is easy to

pinpoint who “belongs” or not. Razia is also embracing other physical elements of British culture: “She was wearing a garment she called a tracksuit. She would never, so she said, wear a sari again. She was tired of taking little bird steps.” (Ali 2003: 95). As Mrs. Azad already commented on the sari being like a walking prison, the restraints of the sari can definitely be seen as a metaphor for the restraints of the community. By wearing the tracksuit instead, Razia is stating that she does not belong in such a restrictive environment. Razia maintains that her only concern is practicality, like her short hair is more practical. Still these decisions marks a clear distance for Razia to her community, and simultaneously proclaims her sense of belonging to Britain: “Since gaining her British passport she had acquired a sweatshirt with a large Union Jack printed on the front.” (Ali 2003: 188).

Despite Razia’s declaration of love for Britain, she is a perfect example of cultural tensions. Regardless of her scepticism about traditional thinking, and her Union Jack jumper, she declares that her daughter “will make a love marriage over my dead body” (Ali 2003: 51). As we can see in this example, Razia has definitely not completely disregarded the culture of Bangladesh when participating in the British culture. She is displaying tensions between the cultures, but is ultimately showing a hybridized culture, containing aspects evolved from both societies. Still, she has a strong sense of belonging to Britain, this becomes evident after the death of her husband. Razia has taken control over her appearance, but not over her finances. When her husband dies, she feels free because she can cut the final ties to her homeland, and stop sending money back (Ali 2003: 427). It is not as easy to be British as to own a Union Jack jumper and a passport. It is not a simple task to figure out where you belong in a multicultural society, and it cannot be done by knowing in which clothes you feel most comfortable. Still, Razia celebrates the British culture. Even though she fears for her children in this new country with all its dangers, and even when this fear becomes reality for one of her children, she still celebrates England as her home. This is very much drawn attention to in the final statement of

Brick Lane. The conclusion offers positive affirmation, and has attracted some uneasy critical response because of this (Upstone 2007: 343). Razia's love for Britain never stops showing, as well as her internal cultural tensions. At the end of the novel, referring to Nazneen ice-skating in a sari, Razia concludes: "This is England, you can do whatever you like." (Ali 2003: 492). This is an impactful statement to make. It is true to some extent, but still not completely. Razia may state that England has come farther than it actually has in regards to cultural acceptance, but this is also an invitation to the reader to creatively re-imagine reality, which in the context of British cultural politics means re-imagining a multicultural society (Upstone 2017: 16).

Upstone claims that even though Razia declares her Britishness and celebrates England as a place where one can do whatever one likes, she is not assimilating. Rather, she is celebrating a multicultural, celebrating that people can be different and live as they please (2017: 15). This supports a critical cosmopolitan view of culture and serves to further cultural hybridization. If Nazneen's character adopted this view, she would have the right to assert any kind of cultural identity. In this view, finding your identity is more important than *what* the actual cultural or religious origin of this identity is. Cultural hybridization is dependent on people realizing themselves through connection with others. Nazneen has been influenced, not only by a dominant culture, but also by several different stages of integration. Drawing on all these experiences, she can invent her own identity, which is why the feeling of "otherness" does not have to be negative.

Both *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth* imagine how people connecting with each other can help develop and form a new social landscape. Seemingly insignificant moments can be the fuel of this social transformation towards what Paul Gilroy (2005) calls "convivial culture": "Not the absence of racism, but rather the process of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas, and from which non-racial thinking might develop." (Upstone 2017: 17). If one considers this in the context of

Smith's statement on the burden of representation, and that her writing about different races is just the reality of living in modern day Britain, one can see the novel as writing towards a convivial culture, moving towards hybridized cultures as the norm.

White Teeth follows three families and their involvement with each other for about half a century. The novel is focused around the relationship between Archibald Jones and Samad Iqbal, who became friends while serving for Britain in World War II. After the war, they both settle in London. Samad, the traditionalist Muslim immigrated from Bangladesh, proceeds with an arranged marriage to Alsana. They have twin boys, Magid and Millat. British Archie rather unexpectedly marries Clara, a 19-year-old woman from Jamaica. They have a daughter, Irie. The novel examines several anxieties surrounding the question of assimilation and hybridization. The most prominent case is when Samad wishes to send his sons back "home" to prevent them from being "corrupted" by the British culture. However, he can only afford to send one. Hoping he will learn religious beliefs similar to his own, Samad sends Magid back to Bangladesh. Millat and Irie who stay in Britain continue the struggle with displacement, and a third family becomes involved, the Chalfens. The Chalfens are overachievers and in addition overly "normal." They are offered as a juxtaposition to the dysfunctionality of the other families. However, this family also have their history in immigration, being third generation Polish Jews. Their son, Joshua, befriends Irie and Millat whilst getting into trouble with them at school. They receive the punishment of having to study at the Chalfens, in the hope that their stable home life will have an influence on Irie and Millat. Marcus Chalfen, the patriarch of the family, also introduces an issue that divide some of the characters, his FutureMouse, which is a genetically modified, and improved, mouse. He befriends Magid through writing letters, and Magid takes a quite different view of the FutureMouse than his brother and the rest of the family, who see it as an abomination. When Magid returns, he has become atheist and looks "more English than the English" (Smith 2000: 365), to his father's and brother's

disappointment. Millat, on the other hand, turns in the opposite direction and becomes part of an Islamic fundamentalist group. Through events like these, *White Teeth* problematize ethnic and national categories as means of articulating identity. The novel also questions the importance of history through displaying the uncertainty of origins and roots, and celebrates hybridity by offering culture as a process of meaning-making. I will show how these views are put forward in the novel, primarily using examples from Archie and Samad's relationship and the separation and uniting of Magid and Millat.

In her MA thesis "Towards a post-racial reading of hybridity in *White Teeth*", Cicely Turkson points out how Samad's struggle as an "other" is related to his wish to challenge the confines of the immigrant identity (2009: 10). Samad wants to force others to see him as he sees himself, and not as "just an immigrant." This need is a consequence of migration and "othering." A unifying factor amongst immigrants is to be seen as more than someone from somewhere (2009: 11), and this reflects the need for an expansion of the English identity (2009: 10). The novel calls for a reimagining of imagined taxonomies of "self" and "other", "us" and "them." Samad is working as a server, and has the habit of talking to all his customers to assert his identity and to be recognized as more than one of "the others". He does this by letting them know he fought in the war for England, and that he has studied at Delhi University, to make people realize he is not as different from them as he may seem. He is just like everyone else, even though he is a traditionalist and believes his origins is the most vital part of his identity. This juxtaposition shows the complexity of cultural hybridity as well as demonstrating what effects othering can have on people:

[Samad] wanting desperately to be wearing a sign, a large white placard that said:

I AM NOT A WAITER. I HAVE BEEN A STUDENT, A SCIENTIST, A SOLDIER, MY WIFE IS CALLED ALSANA, WE LIVE IN EAST LONDON BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO MOVE NORTH. I AM A MUSLIM BUT ALLAH HAS FORSAKEN ME OR I HAVE FORSAKEN ALLAH, I'M NOT SURE. I HAVE A FRIEND – ARCHIE – AND OTHERS. I AM FORTY-NINE BUT WOMEN STILL TURN IN THE STREET. SOMETIMES.

But, no such placard existing, he had instead the urge, the need, to speak to every man, and, like the Ancient Mariner, explain constantly, constantly wanting to reassert something, anything. (Smith 2000: 58)

Samad displays a duality with this kind of thinking, as he wants to cling to his own culture and traditions, while his ultimate goal is to be accepted as an English. If Samad had not had the experience of being “othered”, he would not have a need for asserting his identity. This is where the need for an expansion of the English identity is most clearly shown in Smith’s novel.

Chanu from *Brick Lane* exhibits a similar need to want people to see past his “otherness”, and to keep asserting his identity, in the form of demonstrating his knowledge. At any point, he is inclined to bring up his degree from the university of Delhi, or his various other certificates, to prove he is more knowledgeable than that of other immigrants.

When I came I was a young man. I had ambitions. Big dreams. When I got off the aeroplane I had my degree certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be a red carpet laid out for me. (...) And then I found things were a bit different. These people here didn't know the difference between me, who stepped off an aeroplane with a degree certificate, and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only the lice on their heads. What can you do? (Ali 2003: 34)

What can you do, except tell everyone you meet how you differ from the other “others”? In this instance Chanu is demonstrating how the process of “othering” works in practice, people fail to consider others as individuals and see them all as a mass. Chanu is resisting this view by constantly explaining his various degrees and accomplishments to people, working towards a new British identity that will deem him an individual, as opposed to throwing him together with millions of people under one stereotype, negating their identities and viewing them as a mass. Through Chanu, who I have previously described as a caricature, Ali is also showing how the process of “othering” can appear in many different forms. Chanu says: “these people here didn’t know the difference (...) what can you do?”, implying the British lack the abilities to recognize their mistakes, or learn anything new. What is interesting in this statement is how Chanu is “othering” both the English, and other immigrants. Chanu is placing these groups of people in opposition to further an “us” vs “them” mentality. Under the pretence of having more knowledge than both groups, he desperately wants to separate himself from the “peasants” (implying other immigrants are the “others”), while simultaneously separating himself from “these people here”, and by that seeing the British as a mass, which leads to stereotyping. While Chanu is not in a position of power he is imagining such power in the form of knowledge, and his attitude can be interpreted as another aspect of his mimicry.

Samad is also struggling with integration and negotiating hybridized cultures. In *White Teeth*, the relationship between Samad and Archie is an important aspect of Samad’s struggle between identities, and his urge to fight the stereotypes placed upon him. “What am I going to do, after this war is over, this war that is already over – what am I going to do? Go back to Bengal? Or to Delhi? Who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?” (Smith 2000: 112). Samad is aware that he has developed a hybrid identity, and that it will not be fully accepted in either culture from his traditional standpoint, however he puts himself in a peculiar position as he chooses to live in England while also

staying as connected as possible to the culture of his homeland. He trusts that “Roots were roots and roots were good” (Smith 2000: 193), and this marks his struggle with his hybrid identity. Samad never made a conscious effort to assimilate, however it still happened to some degree, and he is aware of this. Mickey, or Abdul-Mickey, the cook in Archie and Samad’s favourite restaurant, offers his view on the matter: “*Accept* it. He’ll have to *accept* it, won’t he. We’re all English now, mate. Like it or lump it, as the rhubarb said to the custard.” (Smith 2000: 192). However, Samad’s struggle is related to his unwillingness to accept hybridization, perceiving it as him moving away from his roots, and being corrupted. He in part blames his friendship with Archie for this: “I have been corrupted by England, I see that now – my children, my wife, they too have been corrupted. I think maybe I have made the wrong friends.” (Smith 2000: 144). This would imply that he would have preferred to be in an environment similar to the one explored in *Brick Lane*, separated from the dominant culture in the community, but as previously discussed this is not the answer to the problems Samad and other characters have with assimilation. Whether or not one surrounds oneself with multicultural friends, one is still affected by society’s majoritarian culture.

Upstone discusses how intercultural friendship may offer a route towards a functioning multicultural environment, different from cross-racial sexual encounters. Sexual chemistry can be based upon difference, or it can be strong enough to eliminate difference, whereas a friendship does not produce the kind of chemistry needed to eliminate difference nor encourages the erotic association to otherness implied by basing attraction on difference (Upstone 2017: 146). This suggests that Archie and Samad’s relationship is based on similarity, which implies that these characters are developing hybrid cultures more similar to each other than that of previous generations. Samad might be more integrated into English culture than he admits, or Archie may represent a hybridized English identity. I interpret their friendship to be a combination of the two, as the novel points to a convivial culture that would have room for

such an identity to grow for both characters. These identities would be hybrid identities, but would be representative of British multicultural society. Even though Archie and Samad have their differences, these issues are discussed between them in a humorous way: “‘Where I come from,’ said Archie, ‘a bloke likes to get to know a girl before he marries her.’ ‘Where you come from it is customary to boil vegetables until they fall apart. This does not mean,’ said Samad tersely, ‘that it is a good idea.’” (Smith 2000: 98). The exchange of ideas and meaning-making is what makes a culture, and by doing this these characters are forming their own. Culture as an active process is shown through this evolution from imperialism to an accepted multicultural society with influences from several different environments, and Archie and Samad’s friendship embodies this convivial culture.

Boehmer makes the point that: “Despite imperialist intentions to transplant English culture abroad, in practice colonization brought with it a cross-fertilisation and eventual hybridization.” (Boehmer 2009: 124). In other words, the making of hybrid identities is not something new. Archie and Samad’s friendship started as a similar form of intercultural contact, where relations of power were still in place:

It was precisely the kind of friendship an Englishman makes on holiday, that he can make only on holiday. A friendship that crosses class and colour, a friendship that takes as its basis physical proximity and survives because the Englishman assumes the physical proximity will not continue. (Smith 2000: 96)

Their friendship begins with them as “other” to each other. Perhaps it is their otherness that helps form their friendship: “He’d never had another man grab his hand; his first instinct was to move or punch him or something, but then he reconsidered because Indians were emotional, weren’t they?” (Smith 2000: 100). This is clearly “othering” on Archie’s part, as he reconsiders punching Samad because he has emotional, feminine traits, according to the stereotype.

However, Archie shows some acceptance of the “other”, even though he bases his understanding on a stereotype, so this moment can be read as an important founding moment in their friendship. Some pages earlier, however, there is a scene where Archie and Samad are forced to fix a radio together. Samad is the most knowledgeable on the subject, and naturally takes the lead. Archie describes the situation as awkward: “It was awkward, an Indian telling an Englishman what to do – but somehow the quietness of it, the manliness of it, got them over it.” (Smith 2000: 93). Here we have an interesting juxtaposition from Archie’s perspective. He might find the situation awkward because he is “supposed” to be the one with most power and knowledge contrary to the subordinate, feminine Indian. However, the awkwardness that implies femininity is countered by his ability to recognize the “manliness” of being able to work together. This situation could be what starts Archie’s acceptance of the “other”, and maybe his continuation to insist on Indians being emotional is an over-correction from this moment. Either way, Archie very quickly changes his perspective of the “other” by befriending Samad, and seeing him as an individual as opposed to part of a mass.

Upstone derives her idea of friendship from the French philosopher Jacques Derrida: “To have a friend is to be human. To have *an other friend*, therefore, is to challenge the dehumanisation of the other.” (Upstone 2017: 155). There are countless theories regarding friendship, and many are focused on the Self and sameness. However Derrida tells us that: “The ideal friendship cuts across associations of friendship with finding ‘ideal double, his other self, the same self but improved’ to the very opposite of this.” (Upstone 2017: 156). This means Archie and Samad’s friendship can be read as both a resistance to the “sameness” commonly associated with friendship, but also as the most ideal and natural friendship there is. With their differences in culture, there still is a mutual acceptance of each other, and room for them to evolve together.

Samad's character displays a well-rounded understanding of the process of reducing millions of people to a stereotype, probably because he has experienced the effects himself. When he understands that he has found someone who is accepting and understanding of the "other" as more than a stereotype, he tries to spread the message:

'Please. Do me this one, great favour, Jones. If ever you hear anyone, when you are back home – if you, if we, ever get back to our respective homes – if ever you hear anyone speak of the East,' and here his voice plummeted a register, and the tone was full and sad, 'hold your judgement. If you are told "they are all this" or "they do this" or "their opinions are these", withhold your judgement until all the facts are upon you. Because that land they call "India" goes by a thousand names and is populated by millions, and if you think you have found two men the same amongst that multitude, then you are mistaken.' (Smith 2000: 100)

I consider this statement to be a way of explaining Samad's situation, and it has the same effect as the discussions he has with his customers. *We are not all the same.* Smith, through Samad, wants to subvert stereotypes and assert a multicultural identity that is generally accepted. Archie and Samad's friendship is metaphorically challenging the dehumanisation of the "other." Furthermore, by making such a request, Samad demonstrates his wish for the message to be spread beyond his friendship with Archie. However, Samad's anxieties are complex and evolving, and after some years, they extend to his children. Samad himself fears difference. He has an understanding of himself developing a hybrid identity when serving for England in the war, however he struggles with for example the religious consequences that come with this, and he struggles to accept that his children are developing differently than him.

"Roots were roots and roots were good" Samad claims (Smith 2000: 193), but he refuses to consider that his children, growing up in London, might have a different set of roots than

him. “Because there is rebellion in them, Archie. I can see it – it is small now but growing. I tell you, I don’t know what is happening to our children in this country.” (Smith 2000: 190). Samad interpret his children being different from himself as them being rebellious towards tradition, and in line with essentialism he place the blame for this on England. Meanwhile Samad display his own struggles with balancing his dual identity: “Samad gave up masturbation so that he might drink. It was a deal, a business proposition, that he had made with God.” (Smith 2000: 139). From this I interpret that Samad has a binary view of culture, as he is substituting different aspects in order to balance them. However, this can also be seen as him negotiating and re-negotiating his culture. Even though Samad display severe anxieties about hybridity, he recognizes it as true:

‘In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Just tolerated. Like you are an animal finally house-trained. Who would want to stay? But you have made a devil’s pact... it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognizable, you belong nowhere’ ‘Surely that’s not true’ ‘And then you give up on the idea of belonging, this *belonging*, it seems like some long, dirty lie... (Smith 2000: 407)

The text reveals an underlying issue of essentialism, referring to evolving cultures as belonging nowhere. Samad is not alone in his fears, Archie’s wife is also concerned about their daughter: “Clara saw an ocean of pink skins surrounding her daughter and she feared the tide that would take her away.” (Smith 2000: 328). She is also worried Irie will become too different from herself. Turkson writes that: “Identity negotiation is part of the daily life of the second generation. The post-racial connection among Irie, Millat and Magid consist of understanding how roots are inextricably entangled and origins are undependable.” (2009: 15). Through the second generation, the novel questions the notion of roots and thereby questions Samad’s essentialist cultural view.

Irie has one English parent and one Jamaican, which complicates the notion of “roots” even more. Her mother is described as having “white” features, while Irie has a “classic Jamaican” shape: “Irie, my love, you’re fine – you’re just built like an honest-to-God Bowden.” (Smith 2000: 266). Irie keeps trying to look more English to “fit in” at her school, by for example losing weight. Irie conforming to the “western norm” can also serve to express the English sense of belonging she might feel. Irie, similarly to Samad, struggles with being seen as an “other” in society, regardless of where she feels she belongs. Homi Bhabha states in an interview that “the notion of hybridity is about the fact that in any particular political struggle, new sites are always being opened up, and if you keep referring those new sites to old principles, then you are not actually able to participate in them fully.” (Bhabha 1990: 216). Irie serves to connect the rejection of roots and evolving a hybrid culture, which I will get back to. Being half Jamaican and half English, she also problematize the notion of being “in-between” two cultures.

Laura Moss, in her article “The Politics of Everyday Hybridity: Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*”, brings attention to the “Reinventing Britain” forum that was arranged by Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha in London in 1997. She references Bhabha’s suggestion of the “black British” being an “in-between” figure by stating there is a need for “cross-generational shift past negotiating in-betweenness.” (Moss 2003: 13). Second-generation immigrant Sonia Boyce, self-identified “black British”, had a response to this statement: “She is not *in-between* Britain and the Caribbean, she argues, she just *is* British. She doesn’t need to *re-invent* anything.” (Moss 2003: 13). Boyce argues that hybridity is reality for her, it is not something that needs to be invented and hybridity does not necessarily mean being “in-between.” I agree that having a hybrid culture is an everyday occurrence, as culture is an ever-changing process. It has just not been commonly accepted as such through history and in literature, but the reality in today’s intercultural society is that hybridity, in some form, is the norm. The presence of multicultural

novels like *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane* marks a change in this acceptance and celebrates Boyce's argument of an extended British identity.

“Ordinary includes a recognition of history, a negotiation of a mixing of cultures, languages, an acknowledgement of the politics of everyday life.” (Moss 2003: 14). This argument is also recognized in *White Teeth*. Alsana, after looking up facts from an encyclopaedia, says to Samad:

Oi, mister! Indo-Aryans... it looks like I'm a westerner after all! (...) you go back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think everybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy-tale! (Smith 2000: 236)

In view of all of this, *White Teeth*, *Brick Lane* and other “black British”, or multicultural literature is not necessarily trying to create any new hybrid culture. As an alternative, they reject the notion of purity by renegotiating formerly recognized history and literature that have shown us a more one-sided view, and that shares a colonial mind-set and an essentialist notion of culture.

The postcolonial perspective forces us to rethink the profound limitations of a consensual and collusive ‘liberal’ sense of community. It insists – through the migrant metaphor – that cultural and political identity is constructed through a process of othering. The time for ‘assimilating’ minorities to holistic and organic notions of cultural value has passed. (Bhabha 1990: 219)

The novels problematize multicultural societies in a way to make the reader aware there is an issue, and through statements like Alsana's it encourages the reader to reflect, and additionally calls for change by presenting the idea of a convivial culture. Irene Fernández described Smith's writing in a way I particularly agreed with: “Smith's intention is to present a multicultural

Britain where ethnic differences are deemed insignificant.” (Fernández 2009: 153). This is not to say that ethnic differences are unimportant in the novel, but it stresses that there are many, more significant aspects to one’s identity, and that one’s ethnicity should not be the main characteristic or signifier of identity.

In *White Teeth*, Irie becomes a symbol for a hybrid identity. In addition, she serves as a contradictory force for Samad’s traditionalist views. As a replacement for her trying to find her identity by looking more western, she starts digging in her parents’ past to find her “self.” However, ultimately she has an outburst that deems this endeavour useless. She finally finds her own identity by living in the present, and in neutral spaces, free of history. This is Irie’s vision of a “normal” family that are not concerned with culture as a generational trait:

What a *joy* their lives must be. They open a door and all they’ve got behind it is a bathroom or a lounge. Just neutral spaces. And not this endless maze of present rooms and past rooms and the things said in them years ago and everybody’s old historical shit all over the place. (...) Really, these people exist. (Smith 2000: 514)

This neutral space as Irie envisions it is different from the space of the “in-betweenness” as well as Samad’s rootedness:

They don’t mind what their kids do in life as long as they’re reasonably, you know, *healthy. Happy*. And every single fucking day is not this huge battle between who they are and who they should be, what they were and what they will be. Go on, ask them. And they’ll tell you. (...) Plenty of forgiveness. No attics. No shit in attics. No skeletons in cupboards. No great-grandfathers. I will put twenty quid down *now* that Samad is the only person in here who knows the bloody leg measurement of his great-grandfather. And you know *why* they don’t know? Because *it does not fucking matter*. As far as they’re concerned, it’s the *past*. (Smith 2000: 515)

From the passage above, I interpret that when Irie discovers how using the past to find her identity is not right for her, she forms the opinion that Samad is wrong to keep such a tight hold on the past. While completely negating the past is not a great option, Irie's more extreme view may be included in the narrative to underline a point. Samad's struggles surrounding assimilation and his kids being "corrupted" would be more manageable if he also embraced his hybridized identity as opposed to fighting it. Life should not be a battle between who you are or who you should be, one can just *be*. This is why I see Irie as the symbol of a hybrid identity, which also promotes a post-racial view. She realizes her hybrid identity, not by the process of assimilating or inhabiting a "black British" culture, but by just being in the present and being British. Moss states in her article that "the current state of globalization, diasporic migration, and contemporary cosmopolitanism has brought about a 'normalisation' of hybridity in contemporary postcolonial communities." (Moss 2003: 12). This would entail that Irie's view is right, in a sense, and the past might matter less in contemporary society.

Marcus Chalfen seems to be in agreement with Irie's notion that history is less important, which is demonstrated before his first meeting with Magid:

It would be just the two of them, then, meeting at last, having conquered the gap between continents; the teacher, the willing pupil, and then that first, historic handshake. Marcus did not think for one second it could or would go badly. He was no student of history (and science had taught him that the past was where we did things through a glass, darkly, whereas the future was always brighter, a place where we did things right or at least right-er), he had no stories to scare him concerning a dark man meeting a white man, both with heavy expectations, but only one with power. (Smith 2000: 422)

Here we can recognize the novel's post-racial, or utopian, view on the future, as the future is where things are, and will be done, "right-er." The Chalfen's are portrayed in the narrative as

being so normal they are not normal, but they still are put in a position of admiration from the other families. Perhaps because they are well adjusted by comparison, or in light of this statement it can be seen as a discussion of science versus history. The future versus the past, or Chalfens, Irie, and Magid versus Joneses and Iqbals. As discussed above, Irie deems the past irrelevant. Her statements combined with Marcus' perception that the future is always brighter, and that is why science is superior to history, open the question of whether they are on the path towards a convivial culture. When meeting Magid, Marcus does not even consider cultural differences in light of historical realities such as colonialism. Hypothetically, could an utopian environment be realized if everyone were to think like this? Negating the past can be dangerous, but so can living in it. Both Marcus, "the future", and Samad, "the past", are versions of these views. I read this as a suggestion to the reader to consider both sides. One has to acknowledge the past, as it is important to know that colonialism happened and has historical repercussions. However, one does not have to live in the past, and understand the present as "post-colonial." There are room for other terms to explain the increased fluidity between cultures that has developed.

The blooming relationship between Marcus and Magid may be interpreted as as a re-telling of Archie and Samads relationship in a different generation. It demonstrates a shift of power, as even though Marcus paid to get Magid back to England, Magid shows to be an equal in wits and in a way overpowers Marcus within seconds of them meeting: "How did you know it was me?" Magid's face grew radiant and revealed a lopsided smile of much angelic charm. 'Marcus, my dear man, you are the only white fellow at gate 32.' (Smith 2000: 242). This describes their friendship as based on sameness rather than "otherness." This can also be seen as Marcus presenting a post-racial view, and not considering race at all. However, the narrative does focus on race, and there is an irony in how Magid, who were sent "home", shows an identity that is described as "more English than the English" (Smith 2000: 365).

Magid and Millat are identical twins, which mean their genetics are exactly alike. In *White Teeth*, Smith uses this to explore the theme of developing identities in a multicultural environment, as well as exploring how much one's surroundings affects one's identity. The reader is presented with a multitude of stages of integration and hybridization, and the twins can function as an anchor to remind the reader how arbitrary this journey can be.

Magid and Millat are raised separately in different continents, producing unique personalities, to suggest on a very basic level that genetic identicalness does not produce identical identities. The narrative privileges the effect of social and cultural environment. (Upstone 2017: 49)

The narrative makes it clear that Magid and Millat's personalities were different even before separation, and how Samad had the most hope for Magid to develop in a way that supports his idea of a cultural identity. What actually happens disproves Samad's notion of roots being roots. Upstone points out that the twins do share one important characteristic, and that is how each twin develops in the opposite way of what is expected from their environments. "Being sent to India produces an Englishman, whilst staying in England produces an Islamic fundamentalist. This does suggest some shared personality trait – ironically, a reactionary resistance to socialisation." (Upstone 2017: 50).

The extreme contrast of the twins serves to explicate how culture is not determined from ethnicity. While Millat ends up as an Islamic fundamentalist, earlier in the novel he shows a greater sense of belonging to Western cultures. Throughout the narrative one can trace examples that contradict essentialism and celebrates hybridity. Even with the heightened focus on ethnicity that the twins provide, if one considers the context one is less likely to view them as stereotypes. The narrative demonstrates how characters that support a more static view of culture often reach conclusions that does not necessarily reflect reality:

‘And we can learn about each other through each other’s culture, can’t we?’ ‘YES, MISS.’ ‘For example, what music do you like, Millat?’ Millat thought for a moment, swung his saxophone to the side and began fingering it as a guitar. ‘Bo-orn to ruun! Da da da da daaa! Bruce Springsteen, Miss! (...)’ ‘Umm, nothing – nothing else? Something you listen to *at home*, maybe?’ Millat’s face fell, troubled that his answer did not seem like the right one. He looked over to his father, who was gesticulating wildly behind the teacher, (...) ‘Thriiii-ller!’ sang Millat, full throated, believing that he had caught his father’s gist. ‘Thriii-ller night! Michael Jackson, Miss! Michael Jackson!’ Samad put his head in his hands. (Smith 2000: 156)

The teacher is here trying to demonstrate how cultures are different, and wants Millat to give a stereotypical answer, emphasising the difference between his school and his home. Millat, however, does not recognize these stereotypes that are imposed on him by his teacher and father. This demonstrates how culture is changing, and that “otherness” is something that is taught by previous generations.

Finally, I will examine how the narrative communicates its views on intercultural relations in the future. FutureMouse symbolize a divide in all the families through furthering the dispute concerning the past and the future. The Chalfens, Irie, and Magid believes the modified mouse is valuable, while Samad and the others sees it as something wrong being created. However, it the mouse does bring all the families together at one point, at its exhibit where it escapes. The mouse’s genetic modification is described as the best for the future, and this may symbolize how cultural hybridity is the new norm, considering how Samad’s connection to roots have been represented. The mouse’s escape may be read as signalling optimism for the future:

He watched it stand very still for a second with a smug look as if it expected nothing less. He watched it scurry away, over his hand. He watched it dash along the table, and through the hands of those who wished to pin it down. He watched it leap off the end and disappear through an air vent. (Smith 2000: 542)

The FutureMouse, the future, is left ambiguous, anything can happen. This is confirmed through Archie's closing thoughts: "To tell these tales and others like them would be to speed the myth, the wicked lie, that the past is always tense and the future, perfect. And Archie knows, it's not like that. It's never been like that." (Smith 2000: 541). Although the future is left ambiguous, considering the statements made that represent a convivial culture, I consider the novel to be optimistic in furthering hybrid cultural identities as the new norm.

These two novels are in some ways furthering an optimism about a multicultural Britain, whilst shedding light on the issues immigrants experience from being "other" in the society in which they live. The narratives show traces of Holliday's "othering sequence", and by that one can determine how "otherness" has developed from colonial times. The novels use exaggerated and humoristic characters and situations in addition to examples that, in varying degrees of complexity, encourages the reader to reflect on these issues. This can be seen as a call for change in people's mentality, pointing to a realization of the utopian tendencies that exist in both novels, though held back because of "othering." The novels reject the notion of purity by renegotiating history and literature that shares a colonial mind-set and an essentialist notion of culture.

Chapter 3

Representing the “Other”: Language and Identity

Language is one of the most significant aspects of one’s culture. It is a process of meaning making as well as a medium for connecting with the rest of the culture. Boehmer writes that the most central issues in postcolonial debates about cultural authenticity are about the choice of language, alongside the recovery of history. These topics are a vital source of debate in the effort to define identity, in addition to postcolonial discussions about hybridity and cultural authenticity (Boehmer 2009: 197). During colonization, the suppression of local languages in favour of English was used as a tool to rule the Empire. Some cultures reacted by rejecting the English language, whilst others have adapted it to make their own variety of the language. Boehmer writes about how in post-colonial writing, for example in the works of Salman Rushdie, there was a growing inclination to reflect local context through using pidgin English, untranslated words and obscure proverbs (Boehmer 2009: 197). Such language use may result in a form of dialogism, or, in Boehmer’s term, a “multivoicedness”, as there are several perspectives being expressed, and a dialogue between them. This chapter will explore how such dialogue may include author and readers. All four authors I discuss in this paper write in English about a set of characters who do not speak English. Through their fiction, these authors represent the “other” to a Western audience. In previous chapters, we have discussed how this is done primarily through descriptions of the characters’ environment and behaviours. Another way they do this is by thematising the question of language in the narrative, for instance through forms of transliteration, to provide the reader with an authentic picture of the characters. However, if the language is rendered as faulty, it can result in the reader developing a derogatory stereotypical image of the characters. Considering language’s close connection to culture, I would argue that these novels are resisting and imposing definitions on cultures by

representing the “other” through forms of linguistic stereotyping. An author may choose to portray different indigenous languages in English to reach a wide audience with their literature. Considering this and the backgrounds of the various authors I intend to examine how languages are represented in the texts, and discuss if this is done in a way that promotes “othering.”

Commenting on the effects of racism and dehumanization Frantz Fanon observes: “A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language” (Fanon 1967: 18), and “to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture” (Fanon 1967: 38). This means that language is part of a cultural identity. One is participating in a set of cultural traditions when using another language, which also involves a risk of misrepresenting that culture. Although the English language is used as a lingua franca all over the world and is tied to a multitude of different cultures, it may be argued that in cases where fictional narratives choose to represent native languages in English, a question of appropriation may ensue, opening up for discussion of different forms of language use in these novels. In this chapter, I will examine how the four novels represent intercultural dialogue through their use of different languages. Further, this chapter also explore how this affects their perceived audiences. Fanon’s statement can also serve as an explanation for the willing and unwilling assimilation, and the cases of hybridity we have discussed in previous chapters. English is the language predominantly used in these novels. We have explored how in *Brick Lane* Nazneen’s assimilation venture is closely connected to her learning English, and it can be argued she is assuming the British culture. However, when Nazneen knows no English, Ali still has to use English words to mediate her thoughts so the reader can understand. If to use a language is to assume a culture, “to be cut off from a mother tongue implie[s] a damaging loss of connection with one’s culture of origin.” (Boehmer 2009: 197). This primarily refers to when local languages were suppressed in favour of English during colonization and shows how significant this was to the culture, and we will explore later in the chapter if this harm to the culture still

exists. Can a writer similarly “lose” the cultural identity of the character when representing their various languages in English?

To illustrate the connection between culture and language I will first present an example from *Brick Lane*. When dealing with hybridization and fluid cultures, the connection to one’s mother tongue can seem less significant. In both Ali’s *Brick Lane* and Smith’s *White Teeth*, we can trace how this is a source of conflict between the first and second generation. This serves as an explanation as to why the characters in these two novels display anxieties around the English language. The first generation of immigrants have their language as their main connection to their culture. When their children are fluent in a different language, connected to a different culture, it creates conflict. For example, in *Brick Lane* we are often shown how Shahana prefers both the English language and the culture, and how this marks her difference from her parents:

‘What is the wrong with you?’ shouted Chanu, speaking in English. ‘Do you mean,’ said Shahana “‘What is wrong with you?’” She blew at her fringe. ‘Not “the wrong”.’ He gasped hard as if she had punched him in the stomach. For a few seconds his jaw worked frantically. ‘Tell your sister,’ he screamed, reverting to Bengali, ‘that I am going to tie her up and cut out her tongue’. (Ali 2003: 201)

This scenario demonstrates how much power language choice can have. Chanu is trying to talk to his daughter in her preferred method – English – to support the hybrid nature of her identity, and his own belonging. When Shahana reacts by demonstrating that she is superior to Chanu in the language, he quickly switches to Bengali. This expresses a desire to reassert his dominant position in the conversation, or it may signal an emotional response where Bengali is the more natural way to express himself. Either way, this incident shows the authority language has over culture. Shahana is not only declaring her hybrid identity and difference to her father by

preferring English, she is additionally establishing her superiority because of it. Similarly an author has the choice of what languages to express in their texts and how. This choice holds power, as will be further explored in this chapter.

While the dialogue in this example is rendered in English, the narrative makes clear to the reader what is English and what is Bengali. The text is written in English, understandably, so the reader can understand without being bilingual. The marking of the language serves to reference the different languages involved, so that the reader does not lose sight of the cultural identity of the characters. There are many advantages for an author who writes in English, but when representing other languages simultaneously, there has to be a balance. Boehmer points out that:

Writers weigh the advantages offered by English as a world language against the diluting effects on identity of using not only the former colonial tongue, but the language which has, more recently, served as the medium of Hollywood's cultural hegemony, of the West-based popular music industry and the Web – in short, of the American imperium. (2009: 199)

There are several reasons why an author may choose to write in English, however, as Boehmer states, exposure may be considered as one of the main motives. The writers have to make a choice between accurately representing the culture through the language, or not being understood. The author stating what text is supposed to be in what language is one way to sidestep the issue, but it still leaves an impression on the text. There are other ways to bring attention to the characters' language choice in a novel, and these four authors are displaying many techniques. In this chapter, I will be exploring and comparing these methods. On the basis that to use a language is to assume a culture, I will be analysing how the author's language choices are representing the cultures in question. I will start by discussing and comparing the

methods used in Forster's *A Passage to India* and Anand's *Untouchable*. I will analyse how the authors have used the English language as well as the Indian languages in their novels, and show how this representation of the cultures may affect the perceived audience. Then I will bring the discussion into the present, as the English language is showing signs of its many transcultural journeys following colonialism, and this is shown in *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth*. Primarily I will analyse how Smith has chosen to portray Clara's Caribbean accent, and how this relates to her origins, and compare it to how Ali has illustrated Karim and Hasina's Bengali language. Using this information, I will examine how "othering" is demonstrated in practice through the choice of language, as well as how the writers mark different languages in their texts.

Despite E.M. Forster's well-meaning effort to create a passage between the English and Indian cultures, the local languages are not greatly represented. Catherine Lanone points out how this "denies the kind of textual passage the title might herald" (2013: 1). There are some words of Hindi or Urdu descent in the novel, but the embedding of foreign words into a text alone is not enough to raise the question of an accurate representation of the culture. I argue Forster is using the Indian words he has picked up to bring a sense of local colour to the narrative, and to authenticate it. Most of these words are titles or forms of address, and some are loan words that eventually became English, but they are exclusively words that a colonizer coming to India would learn quite fast. There is also the descriptive "Indian" titles, like the "Nawab Bahadur" (Forster 1924: 33) who is a central character only ever addressed by his title. The title has the sound of vernacular and means something like "brave senior officer", but the British created this title, so it is still not a native term. Some of the words that should be familiar to any well-read colonizer is "Brahman" (Forster 1924: 56), which shows up in several different variations, and is a person belonging to the upper caste, in addition to other forms of address such as "sahib" (Forster 1924: 52) or "memsahib" (Forster 1924: 17), the female variant.

“Bazaar” (Forster 1924: 3) is easily understood through context as a market, and words like “tonga” (Forster 1924: 11) have today made their way into the English language as Indian loan words. Lanone calls Forster’s use of language a “token-language”, and it is a way of signaling that one belongs to the colonial community (2013: 12). Second-hand expressions are exchanged like tokens, and words like “*topi, tongat, izzat, sahib or pukka*” function as “white lies” (Lanone 2013: 9), in the sense that one is misleadingly displaying participation in a culture.

Forster may have had the intent to convey a credible picture of India through his novel, and as he does not speak the language, he still has incorporated some of the language into the text. The words are borrowed and displaced, and can be used as means of adding legitimacy. Forster shows his awareness of these problematics in the narrative of the novel, as for example, when Mrs. Turton is demonstrating her knowledge of Urdu: “She had learned the lingo, but only to speak to her servants, so she knew none of the politer forms, and of the verbs only the imperative mood.” (Forster 1924: 34). This is meant to be humorous, imagine only communicating through commands. This can be seen as satire, because in this environment, Mrs. Turton realistically would not need to know more of the language than what is suggested, and by including this as humorous Forster is commenting on society. I also read this statement as a nod towards how the perceived superiority of the colonizers can be connected to language. The inclusion of how she only knew the verbs in the imperative mood demonstrates how much power is in this selective learning of language because, like everything else, the means of communication is in the hands of the colonizers. Forster is commenting on how the English never properly participated in learning about Indian culture, and this is what has prevented a cultural passage. However, Forster as the author is doing the same thing. He cannot use the language as an Indian would because he does not know it well enough. He still makes sure to emphasize that the language exists and has substance, which might be why he sprinkles the vocabulary he knows through the text. Forster wants the Indian language to be a part of his text

just as Mrs. Turton wishes to communicate with her servants, we can see this in places where he has included how a character “swore in the vernacular” (Forster 1924: 220), however not knowing the vernacular this is the most accurately he can represent the Indian languages.

Today, Indian writers who write in English risk being accused of betraying their nation and its many mother tongues compared to those who write in regional languages or Hindi. India has one official language per state, and writers, it seems, are expected to choose one of these languages, and limit their audience. Whereas some early Indian writers in English such as Mulk Raj Anand were regarded as provocative pioneers, today writing in English (with the exception of academic texts) is not considered as authentically Indian (Young 2009: 207). This reduces the scope for transnational literature that Anand helped open up. “Now, authors who write in English are criticized for displaying what Meenakshi Mukherjee has described as ‘an anxiety of Indianness’, driven by an interminable desire ‘to explain India’ to non-Indian audiences, anglicising it and homogenising it in the process.” (Young 2009: 208). This argument firstly serves to demonstrate how a colonial mind-set is still present today, shown through nationalist’s fears of being westernised. Secondly, it shows how important language is to this process, and how the loss of language can imply the loss of a culture. In *Untouchable*, Anand is explaining India to non-Indian audiences, and Bakha’s idealization of the English may serve to display anxieties of the Indian culture. However, I will argue that Anand’s intention with explaining the Indian culture and language to his readers is to mediate a passage between the cultures. By doing this in a bilingual text he is providing a concrete example of transnational literature. English has a long tradition in India, it is for instance the universal language of Indian academia. This creates a separation between the need to preserve a language tradition and the need to be understood. Anand is displaying both these needs in his novel. He is also calling for cultural changes, specifically in the caste system, in his novel, so perhaps Anand’s refusal to partake in the tradition of writing in local languages is a further retreat from the culture as it was.

Forster does use the Indian language throughout *A Passage to India*, but very differently from how Anand uses it in *Untouchable*. Even though one can trace some of the same vocabulary and usage, there are distinct differences that reveal how Anand's text is bilingual, whilst Forster's use of the Indian language I would argue is more a case of adding legitimacy to the narrative. At first glance at *Passage*, it may indeed seem as if Forster uses Indian expressions naturally in his vocabulary, but compared to a native writer, there are better ways of representing the language in the text. *Passage* as mentioned uses words primarily associated with titles, address, and caste, and they are unexplained to the reader. Some of these words, like "sahib" (Forster 1924: 11), I assume his audience would understand, as it is a polite form of addressing a man, and one of the "tokens" that the colonizers have picked up. There are also religious words that are unexplained, like "purdah" (Forster 1924: 33), the process of screening women from men, or "the Bhagavad Gita" (Forster 1924: 150), which is a 700 verse Hindu scripture that had no translation. Hindi and Urdu vocabulary are highly present in Anand's novel as well, but unlike *Passage*, *Untouchable* includes translations from one language to another, thus emerging as a legitimate bilingual text. By comparing these techniques, it may seem like Anand wants to legitimize and explain the Indian culture through explaining the language, while Forster wants to represent the culture by using the language, to legitimize the representations of the "other" and his position as the author.

Anand has several different ways of explaining the language that in reality would have surrounded Bakha. There are many more Hindi and Urdu words in *Untouchable* than in *Passage*, and the ones that are not explained, one can easily understand from context, or they have no real translation into English. Concerning for example clothing, like "tehmet" (Anand 1935: 35) or "dhoti" (Anand 1935: 37), such words are put in a list with other clothing items so the reader can immediately understand them from context, and one has the choice to investigate further if one wants. In some instances, the narrative voice explains, and quite often the words

are simply translated in brackets after. “His mouth began to water for the burfi, the sugar candy that lay covered with silver paper on a tray near the dirty clad, fat confectioner. (...) He knew the rate at which they were sold, a rupee a seer (two pounds).” (Anand 1935: 36). There are about 20 unexplained Hindi or Urdu words in *Untouchable*, and over 50 in *Passage*. Many can be understood because of their context, but not all. This is quite a dramatic difference considering the wider array of vocabulary in *Untouchable*. Why would Forster choose to make his text so obscure in order to partake in the culture, especially when one compares to Anand?

I mentioned how the word “sahib” is commonly understood, and Forster along with other non-native colonial and post-colonial writers use it continuously. Anand challenges their understanding and use of the word in his narrative, by being extremely specific about the different ways of using the term:

There were many legends current about this hat. Some said it was a symbol of authority of the *sahib logs* (white men) who ruled over the regiment. Others said that the hat had been forgotten in the regimental office by a sahib (officer) once, and since, being a sahib (rich man), he didn't care to reclaim his lost property. (Anand 1935: 86)

By doing this Anand is showing how complex and nuanced the language can be. He is demonstrating how, for example, Forster's use of the word is far from being an accurate native representation, and also gives the reader a deeper understanding of the language and the culture, as opposed to seeing the word for its exoticism only.

Anand furthers his legitimacy as a bilingual author by including complete phrases in Indian into the text. Most are translated, but some are not. “*Shioh! Shioh! Shi!*” (Anand 1935: 76), for example, is some sort of exclamation, and is not translated or explained. My research could not uncover any translation for this. Other times there are brackets that clearly explain the utterance: “‘*Baba peso de*’ (Oh, man, give me a piece).” (Anand 1935: 118). Translated or

not, using the local language throughout the text like this enforces and reinforces the reader's tolerance for the language that Anand is building with the narrative. This reinforces the notion that Anand is creating a textual passage between his culture and the presumably Western audience. Furthermore, "Oh, man" is characteristically English, the use of this expression for surprise or emphasis was predominantly popular in the early 1900's (Etymonline.com: "oh, man"), and Anand juxtaposing the two languages like this is working to support the bilingual nature of the text. These phrases also serve to further familiarize the reader with Bakha's language. Furthermore, Anand differentiates between when the characters are speaking in vernacular but the text is in English, and when the characters are speaking English. The English words Bakha has learned, "fashun" (Anand 1935: 4) and "gentleman" (Anand 1935: 28), are written phonetically. Lanone suggests that authors do this to make the reader "hear" accents and to build up the reader's visual competence (Lanone 2013: 4). I also think it is important to note that these are significant words for Bakha, in terms of him wanting to partake in the English culture. These accented English words help to remind the reader that the characters are not speaking English. In addition, they serve to show that there was a hybrid language in development at the time.

I have discussed in Chapter 1 how Bakha is mimicking and idealizing the English, and considering how this connects to his attire, it is clear that fashion is important to him. He also aspires to be a gentleman, which is a long way from being an Untouchable. That Bakha uses and identifies with these concepts is ridiculed by his friends and family when they are introduced, accentuating the cultural difference that these words convey. The accent can also serve to mark further difference between Bakha and the Englishmen he is mimicking. In this thesis, I have established that if Bakha were to assimilate, or be like the English, he would have to use the English language. When Anand emphasizes that the little English Bakha is using is pronounced incorrectly, it creates an emphasis on his difference, and to the western reader can

give the impression of him being inferior. Again we see how Bakha is simultaneously “othered” by his own culture and the western culture. These words tie Bakha to the English culture, but his pronunciation excludes him from the culture. This means that Bakha cannot become one of the English, but this reading calls for optimism for the future. During the narrative the usage of these words evolves. Close to the end of the novel, “gentreman” is used, in quotes, and sarcastically: “If only that ‘gentreman’ hadn’t dragged the poet away, I could have asked him.” (Anand 1935: 138). I read this as Bakha mastering the language, in a way. Through the narrative he is here realizing how he is using the word wrongly, and forces the usage to be right after all by making it a sarcastic joke. Still, this reading positions “a gentreman” as inferior to “a gentleman”, recognizing how Bakha cannot be part of the English culture, however this playing with language we experience at the end of the novel provides an optimistic view of a future, displaying both a hybrid culture and hybrid language.

In both texts, we find Hindi or Urdu words that have later been officially recognized as English loan words. These words are typically the “tokens” the colonizers adopted, but additionally words to describe the Indian version of something, for example “topi” (Forster 1924: 78) which is a type of antelope, or “chuprassy” (Forster 1924: 147) which is taken from Hindi and means “messenger.” Perhaps this was in favour of the natives so they could pronounce their given titles, but even this points to a sharing of cultures and hybridized languages. Even though these words are not commonly used in the English language, the fact that they have become English is evidence of the hybrid language these texts suggested could evolve. Forster shows no distinction between these words and other vocabulary he may use, but Anand does. The words that are now recognized as English have no explanation or translation. For example in the case of the word “izzat” (Anand 1935: 6), which is taken from Urdu and means honour. There are also words that are considered “historical English”, and were only used in a colonial context, for example “sepoy” (Anand 1935: 5), which is an Indian soldier

serving under British orders. This is a very specific case, and there is little need for such a word today, but it is a word created by the English that sounds Indian and this can support the argument about the evolution of a hybrid English.

There are also words that fall into a religious context that are not translated or explained in either of the novels. Forster uses vocabulary such as “saddhu” (Forster 1924: 90), an ascetic monk or holy person who has renounced the worldly life, “hakim” (Forster 1924: 209) which means the all-wise, and is a title in Islam, and “pujah” (Forster 1924: 116), which means worship, without any explanation or proper context. The case may be that Forster assumed the reader should know this, or he is doing it to show his knowledge. Forster does give an explanation for the word “tazia” as a representation of tombs on page 170, but this is not the first time he has used this term. We first come across it on page 101. Why did he decide 69 pages later that the reader now needed to know the meaning? This can be a technique to promote reflection throughout the text, or it can be meant as motivation for the reader to research the unexplained vocabulary. On the other hand, it can make the reader place more significance on the words that are properly introduced, ignoring the vocabulary that has no explanation through context, which may narrow the readers understanding of the cultures.

Forster’s explanations seem arbitrary, while Anand focuses on learning through context. Most of the unexplained words in *Untouchable* are religious words. I have previously mentioned The Bhagavad Gita, which is talked about in both novels. Anand refers to a sacred text called “Upanishad” (Anand 1935: 134), and “Vedanta” (1935: 134), which is the philosophy of this scripture, without explaining them. Some of these concepts are simply too complicated to be explained in parentheses, so instead they can be left as an added nuance for native speakers, or readers who research further than the information Anand offer through the narrative. For example, an old man is complaining about the “kalijugs” (Anand 1935: 39) and this is left unexplained, but it is written in italics to signal that it is an unfamiliar word. This

refers to the last of four ages of religious downfall, the “kalijug”, and the “kalijugs” are the ones that, in short, makes this last downfall happen. It is also made clear through the narrative that we understand the world in Bakha’s context, and the reader is learning with him, in a way. Bakha finds himself at a place of worship, where he hears many religious sayings he does not understand, and thereby it is not explained to the reader either.

‘*Ram, Ram, Sri, Sri, Hari, Narayan, Sri Krishna,*’ a devotee sang (...) Bakha had got his answer. The word ‘Ram’ he had heard very often, also ‘Sri, Sri’, and he had seen a red shrine with a monkey carved on the wall, caged from without with brass bars - that he knew was called the shrine of Hanuman. (Anand 1935: 47)

Bakha continues to explore the temple, “and he was more completely baffled when a man passed by repeating: ‘*Om, Om, Shanti Deva.*’ Who was Shanti Deva?” (Anand 1935: 48) After he has explored more and listened in on the morning service, Bakha has seemed to learn what these phrases of worship mean, and by the end it is explained in parentheses as usual: “‘*Sri Ram Chandar ki Jai*’ (Long live the Great God Ram)” (Anand 1935: 50). Here one can trace how Anand teaches the language and concepts, in a way that differs from Forster’s use.

Forster uses some Indian vocabulary that is more unusual than the “tokens” he has collected, and the reasoning for this is unclear. There are translations of these words into English, which Forster uses himself. The word “gram” (Forster 1924: 37), which translates to “Hindi village”, is used once, while in other places the English word is used. Is this to legitimize his ability to explain the Indian culture, since he is partaking in it with his language? I argue that he is. Instead of getting close to the culture by mediating a linguistic passage, Forster explains and gives reasons for how the Indian culture works and the vocabulary has a more decorative effect. Because if he was using the native language to create a passage to India, there should be explanations, at least through context, that the western audience can understand. He

would rather the western reader experience the difference between the East and the West and support that dichotomy. Anand explains the word when the reader first encounters it, and if it appears again the reader is expected to have learned the vocabulary. This, amongst the other ways he uses the Indian language we have discussed, makes for a natural flow between the languages. Compared to Anand, Forster is lacking this flow and that is the reason I use the word “sprinkle” when describing Forster’s inclusion of native language. The words appear and disappear with no explanation. Forster’s way of sprinkling the Indian language into the text is also the reason why I am less inclined to read the inclusion as a way to familiarize the reader with the language. For example, Forster uses the word “nullah” (Forster 1924: 76), which is a type of river although this has to be interpreted from context, several times over the course of a few pages, and then it is never used again. The choices seem too arbitrary, as if the words are Forster’s personal “tokens”, and they do not necessarily provide the reader with cultural insight apart from knowing the language exists.

Then again, Forster does also play with the idea of hybrid language in certain instances. After Mrs. Moore is sent back to England and the natives find out, they start chanting her name. The narrative explains how the syllables were “Indianized into Esmis Esmoor.” (Forster 1924: 199). Here the reader can “hear” the accent and start imagining the language. Additionally, this can signal hybridized cultures and shows how cultural and linguistic lines are fluid. The natives making an “Indianized” name for Mrs. Moore can symbol the acceptance of her into their culture, as the name serves to praise her. This may be a challenge towards the British Empire and the fear of intercultural contact. Mr. Heaslop finds it “revolting to hear his mother travestied into Esmis Esmoor, a Hindu Goddess” (Forster 1924: 200), symbolizing colonialist ideas of separation. By writing words phonetically and show cultural development through language, the novel can display cultural development more proficiently than by using “tokens” or unexplained vocabulary.

Anand, through his use of the English language wants to mediate a passage between the Indian and western cultures. Through including and explaining the Indian language and accents, he is reinforcing this passage, and showing optimism for the possibility of a hybrid culture in the future. Forster is explaining the Indian culture to his western audience through the characters thoughts and actions, and may be using the language to legitimize his position as the author. Forster's position as a non-native trying to explain a certain culture makes it very easy to result in stereotyping instead of a shared understanding, however the text does display signs of cultural hybridization through language.

There is a long history in India of writing in the vernacular, and Anand was breaking this tradition to use English as the medium of understanding. After colonization, the Indians were able to draw on local written tradition and integrate it into their "new westernized reality." In more oral cultures, however, there was a different reaction to the damage the colonizers had done to their local languages. In the early 1950's, writers from these cultures developed a tradition to have character fill their stories with "broken" English (Boehmer 2009: 193). This practice signifies a hybrid language, but does it signify a hybrid culture? Boehmer writes that for the once-colonized, to be able to incorporate their own understanding of the English language was a "bold refusal of cultural dependency." (Boehmer 2009: 195). Thus they used this "broken" English to mark difference to the culture which they now shared a language. I argue that Smith and Ali build on this tradition in their novels to express their character's cultural identities. However, considering the multicultural nature of the novels, they are not refusing cultural dependency, but gesturing towards a hybrid culture and an extension of the British identity. I will also take into account that Smith and Ali are writing for a wide audience using English as the medium of understanding. Writing a character's speech or writing grammatically incorrect is one way of marking the character's cultural difference, however it can be understood as stereotyping and "othering", as it has been by critics in the past.

Smith has chosen to accentuate Clara and Hortense's Caribbean accents by writing them phonetically. "But I tink to myself: come de end of de world, d'Lord won't mind if I have no toofs." (Smith 2000: 25). The questions this raises is whether this is done simply as a stereotypical mark of difference, if it is a symbol of a national identity as a result of colonization, or a statement calling for acceptance of a wider variety of "Englishes" into the British identity. Other characters do not have such a strong marking of their speech, there may be some omitted letters, for example, to make the accent British, but there is nothing as pronounced as the Jamaican accent. Mickey is the only one who also has a "thick" accent, "'Sbit early, innit?'" and the accent is British, but the English is still grammatically wrong. When setting these characters in contrast to other characters the grammatical differences in their speech promotes the superiority of the other characters, which is why Clara and Hortense's accents can be read as stereotyping. "Hush yo mout! You're nat dat ol'. I seen older." (Smith 2000: 25). I believe the reason why Mickey, or Abdul-Mickey, is a special case with his thick British accent is because he symbolizes a really integrated hybrid culture. Everything from his name, to his workplace is hybridized, "O'Connell's is an Irish pool house run by Arabs with no pool tables" (Smith 2000: 183), and this is accentuated by him having an accent. Neither Samad nor any of the other characters have a marked accent to this degree. Their speech is rendered more or less grammatically correct, nothing like Clara's "Bwoy" (Smith 2000: 24) for instance.

Boehmer points out that for Caribbean postcolonial writers there was a particular focus on adapting local languages and creating their own, because they were deprived of their original language, in order to free their "trapped tongues" (Boehmer 2009: 203). Smith may be building on these traditions and displaying the language of her culture in the novel.

Indian, African, Caribbean, and latterly Pacific nationalist writers focused on reconstructing from the position of their historical, racial, or metaphysical *difference* a cultural identity which had been damaged by the colonial experience. The need was for roots, origins, (...) in short, for a restorative history. (Boehmer 2009: 177)

I have shown in previous chapters how Smith's novel display these tendencies. Through characters like Samad *White Teeth* problematize the need for roots. The marking of difference in Clara's accent can also be a consequence of this restorative history. If Smith is building on these postcolonial writers way to take back the English, if you will, this can be the reason for why she is writing the Caribbean accent in this way. It is a way of standing out, but still being understandable:

To conceive an independent national identity, postcolonial writers concentrated on developing a symbolic vocabulary that was recognizably indigenous – or at least other to European representation – and yet at the same time intelligible within a global grammar of post-war politics. (Boehmer 2009: 179)

Smith could also be using this language to make the reader “hear” the accent, like Anand, and thereby attempting to merge this language into the British literature. The question then becomes why is it only Clara, Hortense and Mickey who the reader can “hear”? Or is the grammatically correct dialogue from for example the Chalfens and the second generation also a signal to their cultural belonging? Samad actually comments on the incorrect English spoken by the British: “Only the immigrants can speak the Queen's English these days” (Smith 2000: 181).

What began in postcolonial writing as the creolization of the English language has become a process of mass literary transplantation, disaggregation, and cross-fertilization, a process that is changing the nature of what was once called English literature - or more accurately, literature in English, at its very heart. (Boehmer 2009: 226)

Smith's possible need for highlighting the English that has emerged as part of the culture of her background could be an explanation for the marked English. That she uses this English woven into a novel like this, presented together with additional accents that are already accepted into the British literature can signify her calling for more variants of the English language to be accepted as part of the culture. It is not incorrect English, but a new English, that belongs to the British culture. This is not only relevant from a colonial perspective, but for all immigrants wanting to have their accent or form of English represented in literature. However, if the reader fails to consider these aspects, it can be read as stereotyping.

White Teeth demonstrates how English is evolving and changing within itself, and this calls for an acceptance of a wider variety of English as part of a British identity. Smith explains some slang the second generation is using to the reader: "'Chief', for some inexplicable reason hidden in the etymology of North London slang, meaning *fool, arse, wanker*, a loser of the most colossal proportions." (Smith 2000: 163). This slang is part of a generational misunderstanding that happens later:

After the first letter arrives home from Magid: "'He looks,' said Millat after a cursory glance, 'like a *chief*.' Samad, never au fait with the language of the Willesden street nodded soberly and patted his son's hair. 'It is good that you see the difference between you boys, Millat, now rather than later. (...) He will be a leader of tribes. He is a natural *chief*.' (Smith 2000: 216)

This incident can serve to further reject Samad's non-adaptive traits, because the reader and the future generations are in on the joke at Samad's expense. It can also be a sign of a developing culture in light of Street stating how the disadvantaged often smuggles in new meaning to language (Street 1993: 32).

Ali, like Smith, writes parts of her narrative in "broken" English, but it is presented in a different way, leaving a different impression on the reader. The ungrammatical language they use achieve the same goal, in a way, as in both cases they serve to mark and enhance the cultural difference between the reader and a character. If to use a language is to assume a culture, then using a language incorrectly can signal that one is not entirely part of the culture. However, as I have discussed, Smith is formulating her characters accents phonetically, to promote several different versions of the English language to be a part of the British culture. The difference is that Ali does not write grammatically incorrect in English dialogue to express a characters individuality or cultural connection. Most importantly, it is not written phonetically to convey how the character would speak English, it is merely incorrect. I will be discussing how this affects the reader, as Ali's use of language has been a source of debate amongst critics. I have argued how Smith is not necessarily perpetuating stereotypes when using unconventional English, but Ali does not have this validation following the same reasoning.

"I not mean to make you frighten. Few times this last year I take my pen and sit down. Once twice I begin the letter but words do not come. Even I do not write I think of you" (Ali 2003: 168) Nazneen has a sister, Hasina, who still lives in Bangladesh whom she communicates with throughout the narrative through letter-correspondence. Hasina's tales of misfortune provides the reader with an additional perspective of the idea of "home", than what for example Chanu provides. Hasina writes about her troubles after her "love-marriage" falls apart and she is forced to work as a prostitute. In Chapter 2, I discussed if her story is presented as stereotypical. She also has a friend who was the victim of an acid-attack, *"Acid melt cheekbone*

and nose and one eye” (Ali 2003: 381), and tells various other tales of her friend’s hardships. *“Straight away I called to Managers office. Only two reasons to go there. Sacking and death-in-family. Last week Khaleda was call. There was fire at her home. Three sons one daughter dead.”* (Ali 2003: 161). The question if Hasina is a stereotypical character rises from the multitude of traumatic events that happen to her, as Ali is reinforcing prejudices of oppression. Paired with her poor language skills, which can connote a cultural image in the mind of the reader, Hasina is placed in the story to depict the “Eastern other” that Nazneen, for example, is developing away from.

The letters, from start to finish, are written in a very simplified, or “broken”, form of English. Presenting for example wrong word order or missing prepositions, pronouns, or articles. By doing this, Ali is trying to convey that within the narrative, Hasina is writing the letters in Bengali.

It mean so much to me know you are well and husband also. Love is grow between you I feel it. And you are good wife. I maybe not good wife but is how I try for always. Only it very hard sometime. Husband is do very well at his work. He have already promotion. He is good man and very patient. (Ali 2003: 47)

When some of the characters speak, the reader has to imagine that they are speaking in Bengali, and as I mentioned initially, Ali also provides indication for what language they speak in the narrative. Why is Ali using this technique to convey a different language in Hasina’s case? The question this brings up is whether this style of writing comes from, for example, being directly translated from Bengali, to provide the English-speaking reader with an insight into the language without giving them passages to read they can’t understand. However, the grammar of Bengali has been described, by English speakers trying to learn it, as exceptionally perfect so this scenario is doubtful. Ali does not speak Bengali, so it is more likely the style of writing

is modelled after oral experiences on her part. In this case, the wording of these letters can indeed be read as stereotyping. The narrative makes the reader experience how Nazneen and other characters are learning English and adapting to the British culture and the dialogue may be presented in proper English to signal how they are a part of this culture. Hasina is the only character that is highly present in the narrative who lives outside of London, and this can result in the reader connecting the incorrect language to her being in Bangladesh. Bengali represented through broken English can result in “othering” if one understands this kind of linguistic inferiority as a sign of difference.

Critics and readers have been confused about this issue. Jane Hiddleston, who has written extensively on *Brick Lane*, was under the impression that Hasina and Nazneen were actually communicating in English. She points out how readers found it strange that the sisters who both speak Bengali would write to each other in bad English, and that the language made the letters seem banal (Hiddleston 2005: 63). She also brings up an interesting point about how the style of these letters, including the language, emphasizes how Hasina is bewildered and vulnerable, and her “non-mastery of English unnecessarily overemphasizes her weakness.” (Hiddleston 2005: 63). Because of the helpless nature of Hasina’s story, and that she will write about the death of someone close in one paragraph and then in the next discuss the colour of her sari or blush, I agree that this style of broken language can help the portrayal of her as a naïve and vulnerable character. However, I do argue that the broken language is to convey that she is writing in Bengali, because Nazneen does not speak English at the time when she receives her first letter, so it is impossible that they are in English. This exchange between Chanu and Nazneen happens a little while after Hasina’s first letter: “‘I would like to learn some English,’ said Nazneen. Chanu puffed his cheeks and spat the air out in a *fuff*. ‘It will come. Don’t worry about it. Where’s the need anyway?’” (Ali 2003: 37).

Hiddleston also suggest that Ali's text, and in particular Hasina's letters, can be read as "a forum where myths circulating around both cultures are exposed in order to provoke the reader" (Hiddleston 2005: 63), bringing up what we discussed in the previous chapter about using a stereotype to encourage self-reflexivity in the reader. On the other hand, Perfect points out that in the particular case of these letters, Ali has been "accused of propagating rather than challenging stereotypical notions of the oppression of women in postcolonial Islamic societies." (Perfect 2008: 112). Perfect states that Hiddleston is not alone in trying to read the letters as provocative rather than stereotypical, but emphasizes that the letters are, and should be read as, a literary device. "Hasina's letters are indeed a 'device', their ultimate function is to finally persuade Nazneen to stay in England – a decision which forms the climax of the novel – as well as to persuade the reader that this is the right decision." (Perfect 2008: 115). This goal is achieved through representations of otherness being reasserted, simultaneously as Nazneen's fear of her home country grows. Perfect also states that there is a "linguistic remove" (2008: 112) being placed on Hasina by her letters being translated, that seeks to emphasize her fragility. I agree with the critics portraying Hasina as a vulnerable character, and I argue that her character having her language misrepresented can result in a loss of identity that can be read as Ali reasserting the "other."

There is an explanation as to why Hasina's story seems like the combined suffering of all Bengali women. *Brick Lane* is heavily inspired by a study that Naila Kabeer did, called *The Power to Choose*, which focuses on female Bangladeshi garment workers. Ali thanks Kabeer in her acknowledgements for inspiration and lunch (Ali 2003: 493). Hasina's story thereby becomes the product of so many women's stories that it becomes a generalization and thereby a stereotype in itself. Ali's intention could be to convey as many of these stories as possible to spread awareness. Then why use the broken English to further emphasize the difference to the reader? The literary style is meant to be a simplified version of the language, but by simplifying

a culture one is inevitably stereotyping. Perfect also points out how Ali drawing inspiration from Kabeer's study can be an attempt at making an "authentic" character (Perfect 2008: 118). I argue that the broken English that is presented can support this claim. "*Mr Chowdhury tell to pack and not worry. 'Pukka building' he say. 'Bigger room.'*" (Ali 2003: 146). Ali also employs some of the previously discussed "token-language" in Hasina's letters, like "*pukka*" or "*bazaar*" (Ali 2003: 173). Ali has as discussed a Bangladeshi background, so it can be claimed that she is not using the words as tokens. The question becomes if whether this language is in place to further remind the reader that Hasina is writing in Bengali, and thereby reinstating some of her cultural identity, or if Ali, like Forster, is trying to add a level of authenticity into the narrative through the language.

Brick Lane does have one additional character who speaks with a marked language when he is speaking Bengali, Karim. This is done in a distinctive manner: "It was a strange thing, and it took her some time to realize it. When he spoke in Bengali he stammered. In English, he found his voice and it gave him no trouble." (Ali 2003: 210). This stammering serves several purposes in the narrative. Firstly, it is a way for the reader to know when the dialogue is supposed to be in English versus imagined Bengali. In regards to Karim's characteristics, the uncertainty he displays in Bengali juxtaposed to him "finding his voice" in English can be a signifier of his cultural identity. Karim is a second generation immigrant turned radical, however if the English culture is what he truly identifies with, the "radical Muslim" character he puts forward can be read as a front, or reverse mimicry. Karim also serves as an opposite force to Chanu, and this reveals itself through Karim displaying a level of confidence in English that Chanu cannot achieve, and Chanu possessing this confidence while speaking Bengali. These characteristics serve to elevate Nazneen's growing ability to navigate both languages and cultures, as this puts her in a position of power.

‘My husband had a mobile phone,’ she told him. ‘But he gave it up. Said it was too expensive.’ ‘Y-y-your husband is right.’ She switched to English. ‘Very useful thing.’ ‘Y-y-yes, but t-t-too expensive.’ She saw at once that she had made a mistake. She had drawn attention to the very thing she had thought to hide. He would not speak English now. (Ali 2003: 211)

Karim’s stammering coupled with Hasina’s incorrect grammar may leave a Western reader with an inferior impression of the Bengali language, or the language of the “other” in general. This can be interpreted as a form of linguistic negation, and can translate to a negative impression of the culture and subsequent “othering.” Even if Karim’s confidence in the English language is significant to symbolize his identity, the stuttering can depict his cultural identity in a negative way.

As discussed in Chapter 2, an author should not be representative of the cultures they are writing about, however I will argue that concerning language, specifically the translation of languages or in the case of *Brick Lane* perceived translation of a language, there exists a trust that the information encoded in the message is conveyed correctly. This chapter has explored several different ways of displaying native languages in English, and I have discussed how some words are translated and some are not, even though it appears as if the authors’ intention is to mediate gaps in understanding or explain the culture. I do not read this as unwillingness to translate, it is rather an issue of not being able to translate everything. This matter has been relevant since colonial times, and still is today.

Postcolonial critical discourse trusts to the translatability of texts taken from other cultures. The assumption, predicated on the global event of empire, is that some hybridized version of a western language or syncretic cognitive framework will mediate

gaps in understanding. The reality is, however, that there are utterances which remain out of reach of postcolonial interpretation. (Boehmer 2009: 241)

The issue is not that the Eastern cultures are keeping secrets; the issue is that one assumes that a Western language can encompass another culture. I argue this assumption is a form of “othering”, as there is a notion of Western superiority. As we have seen in this chapter, all four authors are making efforts to mediate the gap in understanding that an intercultural meeting might generate, however, one has to be aware that there is a difference between having a “multivoiced” text and “explaining the mysteries of the East.”

One’s language is one of the main aspects of one’s culture, and by conveying different languages in English, these novels are presenting different cultures to a Western audience. It can be difficult to manoeuvre how to make the various cultural identities of the characters clear to the reader, in English, without resulting to stereotyping. Authors still choose to write in English to reach a wider audience. Anand, as a native writer, is displaying his culture and language through his bilingual text, and the narrative encourages the reader to learn about it. This creates a thought-provoking juxtaposition to how Forster is sprinkling the Indian language and culture through his novel, to legitimize his text. Ali and Smith do not have bilingual texts in the same way, but they stylize the English of certain characters to emphasize cultural differences. The chosen styles can encourage “othering”. As the novels encourage the reader to reflect, there is the option that they consider how the non-grammatical English is used in an ironic way. Every person does not currently understand each other, but using English as a lingua franca is the closest we currently can get. This shows in literature when the authors further mediate gaps in understanding and supports the development of hybrid languages, a result of a hybrid culture.

Representing the “Other”: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored colonialism as a textual undertaking, and considered some of the repercussions of colonial representations through four novels. I have examined how authors represent different cultures in their texts, primarily focusing on the process of “othering.” Within the framework of Holliday’s “othering sequence” one can envision how the concept has developed from colonial times, and how it is still ingrained in our literature, and that we can imagine a future that transcends this mentality. I have examined four novels representative of different time-periods or cultural backgrounds, and looked at how these novels represent “other” cultures, as well as signs of cultural hybridization. While each novel represents forms of cultural hybridization and rejects colonialist mentalities, nonetheless, aspects of their characterization and use of language serve to perpetuate dichotomies between East and West. Even when attempting to represent new cultural identities as opposed to only resisting imposed definitions, the authors are caught up in ingrained relations of “self” and “other.”

I have in Chapter 1 showed examples of “othering” found in the narratives and the problematics surrounding this, with a particular focus on Bakha being “othered” by his own community in *Untouchable*, and the racial tensions in *A Passage to India*. Colonial Anglo-Indian novels usually perpetuate a fundamental separation that colonial society was built on. This racial divide was essential to preserve the notion of European superiority, and any resistance or alteration to this system would threaten it. Forster and Anand’s novels explore the potential consequences for cultural dialogue. Both narratives emphasize that even though Indians try to “Europeanize” themselves, there is little hope of any real social interaction. However, this “Eurpoanization”, or mimicry, can be seen as a building block for future cultural hybridization. Anand problematizes the issue of racial contact when he introduces the Hindu

caste-system. The question of contact between the races becomes less important in comparison. Anand is further resisting this trope by displaying how the caste-system allows for more contact between Englishmen and Untouchables, than other Hindus and Untouchables. This resistance serves two purposes, to undermine the notion of European superiority, similarly to Forster, as well as uncovering the issue of a society divided within itself to explore how colonialism is not the main issue in this area.

Boehmer demonstrates how the early colonizers and anthropologists described colonized people as “less human, less civilized, children, animals, savages, feminine or weak.” (2009: 76). Another option was to negate their presence completely, or describe them as a mass with no individual characteristics. Parts of Forster and Anand’s narratives are perpetuating a racial dichotomy where there is a binary opposition between the East and the West, whilst paradoxically obscuring the boundaries of this dichotomy by concluding that one can travel back and forth. Even though the narratives presents complex paradoxes, which encourage the reader to reflect on the issues of “othering”, for Bakha and “othered” individuals the issue is presented as rather simple in comparison. One can tell if someone is superior by his or her clothing, for example.

By being able to define the land by describing it in “western” terms, the early colonizers controlled Europeans’ image of the colonized areas, by negating a non-European understanding and aesthetic. Franz Fanon explains this notion related to language and a Western understanding that cannot encompass the entire world. If one cannot understand something, it is easy to disregard it as nonsense. The colonizers mission was to civilize the world, however the natives were never seen as civilized, and in their efforts to become the same they were also marked as different: “They mimicked Europeans, and were ridiculed for their mimicry.” (Boehmer 2009: 111). Aziz’ character displays throughout the novel what I have called linguistic mimicry, recalling Fanon’s statement: “Nothing is more astonishing than to hear a black man express

himself properly, for then in truth he is putting on the white world.” (Fanon 1967: 36), which represents the early colonizer’s mentality. The statement also entails that the mastery of a European language can be a way for the native to gain acceptance from European cultures, and later established how on misrepresenting native languages furthers “othering.”

Aziz and Fielding developing a relationship is in itself a challenge to the Empire. Their friendship declines through the narrative, and this may mean that the dehumanisation of “other” cultures is far from over. However, there exists some hope for future. As I explored in Chapter 2, Samad and Archie’s friendship is also important to symbolize how “otherness” may evolve into convivial relations. Intercultural friendships may provide a significant means to further a functioning multicultural environment. By combining colonialism and multiculturalism, and problematizing integration and evolving cultures in the context of “otherness”, the novels thematise cultural hybridization and fluid cultures, pointing towards increased intercultural communication in the future. The two contemporary novels show optimism with regards to a multicultural Britain, whilst shedding light on the issues immigrants experience from being “other” in the society in which they live. This results in exaggerated and humorous characters and situations, as well as examples that, in varying degrees of complexity, encourage the reader to reflect on these issues. Because themes of “otherness” and displacement are recurring throughout both *Brick Lane* and *White Teeth*, they are usually paired as post-colonial novels. Because of this a “burden of representation” is imposed on the novels, which is a clear indicator that our society is still working with, as well as resisting, the imposed definitions from “othering.”

White Teeth, *Brick Lane* and other “black British”, or multicultural literature is not necessarily trying to create any new hybrid culture. As an alternative, they reject the notion of purity by renegotiating formerly recognized history and literature that have shown us a more one-sided view, and that shares a colonial mind-set and an essentialist notion of culture. These

novels represent hybridity as reality. It is not something that needs to be invented, and hybridity does not necessarily mean being “in-between.” Hybridized cultures are an everyday occurrence, as culture is an ever-changing process. The reality in today’s intercultural society is that hybridity is the norm. This is speculated on in the older novels, and made clear by the second generation in the contemporary novels.

Throughout this thesis, I have been looking at how a narrative represents cultures, and how “othering” exists in literature. The last chapter further problematizes “othering” by considering how one’s language is part of one’s culture, and examining how the authors represents accents and languages in a multicultural or bilingual text. This is something that can be recognized through all four novels, and can be interpreted as a form of “othering” in some cases. In other cases, there exists a multivoicedness in the text. Some cultures reacted to colonialism by rejecting the English language, whilst others have adapted it to make their own variety of the language. It is interesting to see how authors from different backgrounds present different languages and accents in relation to one another, because then we can start forming a picture of how one can use native languages to represent culture in a text in a respectful way that does not promote “othering.” An author may choose to portray different indigenous languages in English to reach a wide audience. Considering this and the backgrounds of the various authors I have examined how the languages are represented in a text, and in several cases representing native languages in an English texts promotes “othering.”

Anand, as a native writer, is displaying his culture and language through his bilingual text, and the narrative encourages the reader to learn about it. This creates a thought-provoking juxtaposition to how Forster is sprinkling the Indian language and culture into his novel, to legitimize his text. I have argued how Forster is using the Indian words he has picked up to bring a sense of local colour to the narrative, and to authenticate it. Words like “*topi, tongat, izzat, sahib or pukka*” are words that colonizers picked up quickly and was adopted into colonial

literature like tokens one collected. He still makes sure to emphasize that the language is there, and Ali uses similar vocabulary in her novel. Anand complicates some of these tokens by showing a more nuanced use of the words, which he can provide as a native speaker. Anand, through his use of the English language mediates a passage between the Indian and western cultures. Through including and explaining the Indian language and accents, he is enabling this passage, opening up for the possibility of a hybrid culture in the future. Forster's position as a non-native trying to explain a certain culture makes it very easy to result to stereotyping instead of a shared understanding, however the text does display signs of cultural hybridization through language.

After colonization, the Indians were able to draw on local written tradition and integrate it into their "new westernized reality." In oral cultures, however, there was a different reaction to the damage the colonizers had done to their local languages. They used different versions of English to mark difference from the culture with which they now shared a language. Smith's need for highlighting the English that has emerged as part of the culture of her background could be an explanation for the marked English. She uses this type of English in the novel, presented together with additional accents that are already accepted into British literature, to call for more variants of the English language to be accepted as part of the culture. Ali does not write grammatically incorrect in English dialogue to express a character's individuality or cultural connection, in Hasina's case it is merely incorrect. Hasina is the only character present in the narrative who lives outside of London, and this can result in the reader connecting the incorrect language to her being in Bangladesh. This broken English representing the Bengali language can be a result of stereotyping and "othering", if a sort of linguistic inferiority is what one conceives of when discussing languages of other cultures. Portraying Hasina as a vulnerable character and misrepresenting her language might be read as a form of erasure of the character's selfhood, re-inscribing her in the image of an "other."

The process of “othering” is presented in various forms and degrees throughout these novels, while attempting to represent various cultures. The issue is rooted in colonialism, and has developed through the years because of the “other” either working with, or resisting, the definitions and stereotypes that are imposed on them. Hybridization is perhaps not rooted in colonialism, but at the very least fueled by it, and the acceptance of hybrid cultures as a result of intercultural communication is a way of resisting the notion of “otherness.” As my reading of these four novels has shown, fiction may be a way of exploring the possibilities of a convivial culture consisting of hybrid cultures, as well as highlighting the resistance and obstacles.

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