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UNIVERSITE
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis
MOSTAGANEM

Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University – Mostaganem

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English

**Exploring Meta-Crisis in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000):
a Metamodernist study**

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requirements for Master's degree in
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Submitted by:

CHOUK BRAHAM Sabria

Board of Examiners

Chair: Dr. MIREN Houari

Supervisor: Dr. DJAFRI Yasmina

Examiner: Dr. FETNACI Hakim

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Dedication

To my family and friends.

To the reader.

To future self.

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Abstract

This research surveys the established issue of meta-crisis in *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith through a metamodernist lens. It employs metamodernist features revealing their connection to meta-crisis. It addresses the underlying phenomena, which result and produce other crises within multicultural Britain. The sense of oscillation, which refers to a sort of sway between modernism and postmodernism, highlights the importance of the investigation of the novel, as it contributes to understanding and extracting potential solutions in the characters' daily and occasional interactions. The research reveals the reincarnation of colonialism as a pervading ideology and its long-lasting impact on immigrants, natives, and the second generation, i.e. a racial and generational effect. The aftermath of this issue encompasses all facets of British society, whether personal, social, or global. It also suggests a metamodernist solution to the multidimensional overarching crisis such as colonialism and fragmented communities.

Keywords: British society, colonialism, immigrants, metamodernism, meta-crisis, multiculturalism.

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General Introduction

The world we live in could be seen as a “meta”, an overlooked perception, in various aspects of our lives. The term dates all the way back to the Greeks with metaphysics; it reflects on various aspects of reality which are beyond nature, thus it provides this research a doorway to the contemporary movement. In the preceding century, Jean Francois Lyotard coined the term metanarratives to characterize the postmodern distrust towards grand disciplines based on certain regulations and scriptures. Lately, Zuckerberg named his social media company Meta to mirror the growing capability of the company to go beyond social media. Thus, the concept “meta” influenced the contemporary era at the cultural level more, and it resulted in a cultural, architectural, and literary movement called metamodernism.

Metamodernism reflects the current interdisciplinary phenomena of the twenty-first century. It emerged after, between, and beyond modernism and postmodernism. The movement witnesses the effect of Eastern religions on Western secularization. It created a notion of ‘spiritual but not religious’ implementing the pragmatic aspect of theology in the contemporary world. In addition, it revived the return of grand narratives. Metamodernism embraces a number of movements under its umbrella, and this research attempts to cover a few examples of it. The movement has been approached widely at the geographical level, which places it among a number of the paramount explanations which describe the post-postmodernist world.

White Teeth is the debut novel of the British Jamaican author Zadie Smith. It depicts the lives of multi-generational families of different backgrounds. It begins with the marriages of the wartime friends Samad and Archie and their interactions in the multicultural land of Britain, and then it evolves to the second generation which results in a clash of cultures. The latter leads

to new concerns for both generations to handle. However, it ends with a comforting post-apocalyptic resolution initiating either a solution or crisis beyond the imaginary.

David James and Urmela Seshagiri (2014) approach metamodernism through a modernist façade in contemporary literary theory. Most of the works that they utilized fall within the scope of modernism; thus, they considered Zadie Smith to be one of the writers who fall within the scopes of their theory using her 2012 novel *North West NorthWest*. This deduction lacks clarity as it classified Smith according to only NW. This dissertation, however, aims to analyze her debut novel using metamodernism taking into account both modernist and postmodernist elements at the same time.

White Teeth, I believe, offers thorough insights into the situation of immigrants and natives in multicultural Britain. It dives into the core issues of the British society. The novel is so rich that it is unfair to address one aspect of it only. This dissertation includes metamodernism as a theoretical framework to investigate the issue and to provide a solution that coexists with the meta-crisis.

Thus, the research at stake attempts to answer the following questions:

- How to rationalize between postmodernism and grand narratives in the novel?
- What sort of oscillation does this novel unleash?
- What did lead to the multiple crises throughout the decades in *White Teeth*?
- Which aspects does the plot expose? And which ones does it hide?

These questions require a systematic emphasis to reach an answer; however, a suggested answer functions as a guide to the actual finding of this investigation. My assumption, then, is immigration. It appears to be the predominant meta-crisis that assembles all of the events in the novel.

This research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents the theoretical framework of the analysis. As a new theory, it highlights the underlying motives, which necessitated its disclosure. The stated motives did not lead directly to metamodernism as different scholars attempted to describe the current sensibility distinctively. Then, it sways to its connotation accompanied by its most representative concept. Through that concept, other qualities transpire. The chapter closes with the significance of the movement culturally, methodologically, and relationally.

The second chapter is subdivided into three related elements. As a practical chapter, it illustrates contemporary theoretical examples and their relationship with metamodernism in poetry, filmmaking, and literature. Through the latter, it introduces Zadie Smith as a metamodernist author through her novel *White Teeth* paving the way to the novel's literature review. Lastly, the examples provided in the first two sections treat the issue of this analysis, which is meta-crisis. This issue is explored through various angles, which links it to the other sections.

The third chapter blends the previous chapters within the context of the novel. It extracts the crises resulting from miscalculation, ambiguity, vulnerability, and history. These issues are categorized within the spectrum of meta-crisis. As the issue is closely interconnected with the theory, they provide a sense of embodiment in the process. The use of scattered themes and titles is not employed haphazardly, but rather to visualize the oscillation between the meta-crisis and metamodernism

Chapter One

Metamodernism: A New Way to
Understand the Twenty-First Century

Before perceiving metamodernism as a contemporary cultural and literary theory, one needs to delve onto the genuine reasons that absorbed the glory of postmodernism and highlight the differences between the two movements. Postmodernist elements of deconstruction, rejection of metanarratives, relativity, and irony were challenged and exposed to many circumstances, which shook their existence in the contemporary world. Just as Linda Hutcheon emphasized the theory being politically inclusive and prospectively pluralistic, she also doubted its future as she argued, “post-postmodernism needs a new label of its own, and I conclude, therefore, with the challenge to readers to find it—and name it for the twenty-first century” (181, 2003). The “post-postmodern” world has undergone several changes. “I used to have a formula for my undergraduates,” said John Barth, “that Enlightenment plus industrialism generates Romanticism, and that Romanticism plus catastrophe or revolution generates modernism and that modernism plus the threat of apocalypse may generate postmodernism” (15). Barth used an interesting pattern that introduces metamodernism as a reaction to the current crises introducing. This chapter investigates different dimensions of metamodernism acknowledging the necessity of other views towards its process.

1. Factors of Emergence

Numerous scholars mark the events of 9 September 2001 as a trigger for metamodernism to emerge, yet its roots grew before the beginning of the twenty-first century. Even the American conservative’s decision to declare war on the individuals who performed the terrorist acts in New York may reinforce the postmodern beliefs even more (van den Akker and Vermeulen, 05). One of the reasons that led to the dawn of the post-postmodernist movement is stated in the famous work of Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen :

...the disintegration of the political centre on both a geopolitical level (as a result of the rise to prominence of the Eastern economies) and a national level (due to the failure of the “third way”, the polarization of localities, ethnicities, classes, and the influence of the Internet blogosphere) has required a restructuring of the political discourse. (van den Akker and Vermeulen, 04-05)

They demonstrated the need for reconstruction through observing economic growth in the Middle East which was in finance and renewable energy, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia through manufacturing, and even the development of the East-European economy after the fall of communism. Conversely, they highlighted the economic failure of Blair’s and Clinton’s governments.

Francis Fukuyama, in his turn, questioned the continuity of the big historical events by the end of the twentieth century, as they all occurred and brought change to our planet. (Fukuyama, 1989. 1992) Yet, his assumption was still a raw idea that could not evolve to the level of a factual observation of the period. The world had just started to witness a new sense of globalization led by technology and politics, which act as a barrier to his idea to proceed.

In response to what Fukuyama stated, Luke Turner revealed: “In the wake of the myriad crises of the past two decades—of climate change, financial meltdown, and the escalation of global conflicts—we have witnessed the emergence of a palpable collective desire for change, for something beyond the prematurely proclaimed ‘End of History.’”(Turner a, par.01) Moreover, Eshelman argued that by adopting a monist perspective¹, whether deliberately or subconsciously, writers, architects, painters, and filmmakers are actively pumping energy into history. They are using frameworks and explicitness to create a new temporal aesthetic that

¹ Monism encompasses various philosophical, metaphysical, and religious interpretations that highlight the interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena. It dismisses the idea of fundamental dualities or divisions between mind and body, spirit and matter, and other binary distinctions. Instead, it asserts a unified perspective that emphasizes the underlying unity of reality.

breaks from the postmodern sensibility (Eshelman, 29). The overarching manner in which the various senses of a bend are prominent in today's political discourses, cultural mediations, and artistic representations.

In addition to Turner's exclamation of beyond the end of history, John Arquilla showed what was called the *(B)end of History* (2011) augmenting the fall of empires that have not created an end but rather new nations and new rules. Similarly, Van Den Akker and Vermeulen negated this idea claiming, "History is moving beyond its much-proclaimed end. To be sure, history never ended. When postmodernist thinkers declared it to have concluded, they were referring to a very particular conception of history Hegel's "positive" idealism" (van den Akker and Vermeulen, 05).

Greg Demper expressed that his view towards the emergence of the movement is the exhaustion of artists and their audiences with "unacknowledged points of view" and the "playful play with referentiality". Postmodernism became more and more irrelevant, as people have revived the sense of meaning while still acknowledging the pillars that the latter set. Metamodern scholars have discussed various factors of the need for a new sensibility that ranges from politics and economy to religion, therefore the need for sincerity was highly expected. (Talking, 37:00)

2. Movements in Between

Many scholars attempted to give a name to the future movement. First, Lipovetsky *Hypermodernism* where he concluded the merge of hedonism with existentialism in contemporary societies. Then, it moved to Alan Kirby's *Digimodernism* where he describes the concept as "a new form of textuality characterized in its purest instances by onwardness, haphazardness, evanescence, and anonymous, social and multiple-authorship". Lastly, Nicholas

Bourriaud proposed the second famous movement *Altermodernism*. He defined it as a “synthesis between modernism and post-colonialism”. (van den Akker and Vermeulen 03)

More prominently, the restoration of the modernist legacy occurred in 2000 in art. The speculation with the utopian period of the first decades of the previous century resulted in what was named *Remodernism*. This movement is characterized by characteristics which lean ‘towards a new spirituality in art’, its founders, Billy Childish and Charles Thomson, attempt to restore authenticity and overthrow postmodernist formalism. This meaning is not of a fantastic or a theological base. An example of it is the very first Remodernist art group called Stuckism, in which the scholars explain, “Spiritual art is not religion. Spirituality is humanity’s quest to understand itself and finds its symbology through the clarity and integrity of its artists”(Childish and Thomson, pt.09). This manifesto identifies itself as inclusive and denounces the postmodern “meaningless ambiguity” ignoring the fact that one of the pillars of postmodernism is hybridity.

Lastly, performatism concerned the rejection of postmodern principles, yet it included a wide range, which extended to literature and architecture. This historical concept attempts to get away from the orthodox nomenclature of adding prefixes to the term modernism. It negated the fact that history is a series of cycles, thus, it rejected the modernist beliefs as well. Raoul Eshelman argued: “A good formal definition of the ‘performance’ in performatism is that it demonstrates with aesthetic means the possibility of transcending the condition of a given frame” (Eshelman 12). The frame in the quote refers to the skeptical reason which is not entirely abandoned but bracketed for a time. Although this movement has somehow criticized metamodernism, it has become one of its characteristics.

3. Metamodernism: The Sensibility

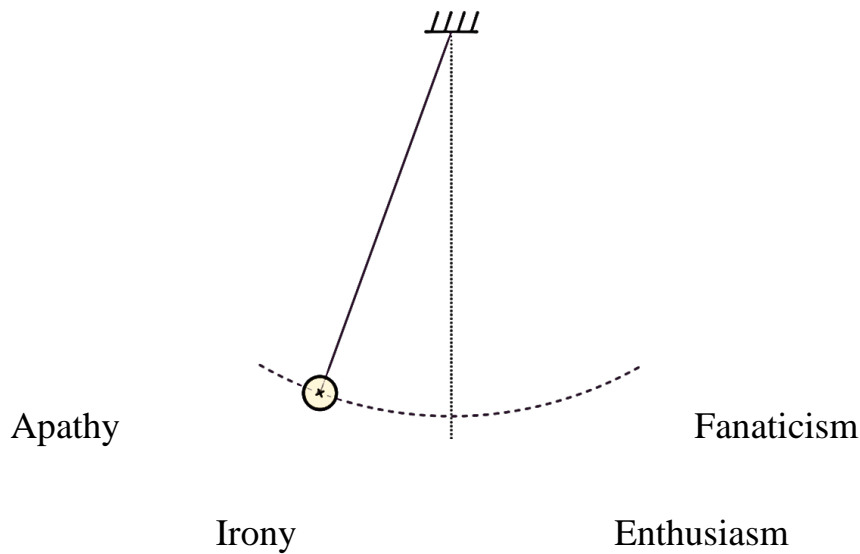
Metamodernism is a philosophically oriented cultural movement that emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century. Mas'ud Zavarzade coined the term in 1975 where it gained its cultural aspect. Voegelin emphasized that the prefix is derived from Plato's metaxis on existence and consciousness. He describes metaxis as follows:

Existence has the structure of the In Between, of the Platonic metaxy, and if anything is constant in the history of mankind it is the language of tension between life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time and timelessness, between order and disorder, truth and untruth, sense and senselessness of existence; between amor Dei and amor sui, l'a[^]me ouverte and l'ame close; (qtd. In Notes on Metamodernism, 06)

Ontologically, it is described as a pendulum which represents the main concept of oscillation between modernism and postmodernism. van den Akker and Vermeulen argue:

One should be careful not to think of this oscillation as a balance however; rather, it is a pendulum swinging between 2, 3, 5, 10, innumerable poles. Each time the metamodern enthusiasm swings toward fanaticism, gravity pulls it back toward irony; the moment its irony sways toward apathy, gravity pulls it back toward enthusiasm. (van den Akker and Vermeulen, 06)

Figure 01: *Swinging Between Modernism and Postmodernism*



Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamodernism>

Opposing the modern and postmodern “positive” idealism of Hegel², metamodernism is inspired by Kantian’s “negative” idealism at the epistemological level. It does not work under the method of merging between the two movements but rather considers the other a potential alteration when using one movement. The use of the pretentious example supports Kant’s “as if” mentality. To him, history is to be considered as if it were the story of mankind’s evolution (Peters 148). Thus, the two scholars argue that history has no purpose for “positive” idealism to fulfill so it tries to find an unexpected truth through a pretentious moral and political route (van den Akker and Vermeulen, 05). This hypothesis proves to be a descendant of modernism and postmodernism, as it shows a great deal of absurdism merged with earnestness in the making of this new notion. It explores a desire which is never fulfilled that is very representative of the Greek myth of Tantalus’s consequence to his action, which ultimately leads us to the transcendent aspect of the movement.

² Hegel's positive idealism posits that human thought and reason are essential for the advancement and evolution of individual and collective consciousness, and that ideas and concepts actively shape and alter reality.

Vermeulen and Akker (2010) acknowledge that metamodernism should be epistemologically situated with (post) modernism, ontologically between (post) modernism, and historically beyond (post) modernism (02). In their chapter *Periodising the 2000s, or, the Emergence of Metamodernism*, the scholars used other terms to describe the movement as “with or among older and newer structures of feeling”, “between” as oscillation, and “after” since it displaces postmodernism as the dominant cultural logic of Western capitalist societies. Regarding the descriptions of this movement, this research offers another interpretation. Metamodernism occupies the dimensions “to and fro”, “above”, and “beyond”. Modernism and postmodernism both had an impact on the contemporary sensibility, which places it somewhere in between yet not statically. It is obvious that metamodernism occurred after the stated movements, so “to and fro” becomes more accurate encompassing this trend. The study of what is beyond nature is known as metaphysics, and since metamodernism has a strong interest in transcendence, it has a "beyond" sensibility. Finally, the movement witnessed the resurgence of the grand narratives, commonly referred to as meta-narratives. The notion senses the “above” orientation as it sorts out the grand disciplines after their rejection in the twentieth century.

Different scholars used different terms to describe metamodernism as a cultural movement. Firstly, Van Den Akker, Vermeulen, and Dempsey defined it as a structure of feeling³. The use of the term in metamodernism is for the reason that the world has witnessed a drastic change and abrupt events, which did not elongate the sense of cynicism and irony but rather resulted in a sort of awakening and a call for action. They define it as “a structure of feeling is a sentiment, or rather still a sensibility that everyone shares, that everyone is aware of, but which cannot easily, if at all, be pinned down” (Structure, 2017). Secondly, Ceriello and Demper preferred

³ A structure of feeling is a term that Raymond Williams used to refer to the notion that “refers to the different ways of thinking vying to emerge at any one time in history. It appears in the gap between the official discourse of policy and regulations, the popular response to official discourse, and its appropriation in literary and other cultural texts.” (Oxford) Williams argued that there must always be an inner dynamic, which leads new formations of thought to emerge.

the term episteme. The term was first coined by Michel Foucault, which highlights its importance in allowing us to tackle the unexamined hypotheses that both influence and limit Linda Ceriello argues, is the general category that all of these periods belong. Lastly, Demitrescu, James, and Seshagiri (2014) describe metamodernism as a paradigm. Popularized by philosopher Thomas Kuhn, the appellation is a broad framework that includes the prevailing theories, methodologies, and beliefs within a specific field. It serves as a shared worldview and sets the boundaries for knowledge, research, and inquiry in that field. Paradigm shifts happen when new theories, concepts, or approaches emerge and replace the previously dominant paradigm.

To summarize, the "structure of feeling" pertains to the emotional and affective patterns in society, while a "paradigm" represents the dominant framework within a field or intellectual community. On the other hand, an "episteme" relates to the historical and social structures of knowledge and understanding during a specific era. These concepts offer different perspectives to analyze various facets of cultural, intellectual, and societal dynamics. Some scholars use these terms interchangeably, yet it is important to highlight the difference to make it clear for further research to conduct.

This research uses the terms structure of feeling and sensibility for several reasons. The final departure of postmodernism occurred with the 9/11 incident. The latter marked the prominence of the new movement, and the hesitation about the continuance of the previous one had ceased. It has been stated above that the reasons were more than this one event; however, it does not consider it an inconsequential action as it traded the rage against a certain minority which the West labeled as responsible, with a sensation for positive change placing sincerity as one of its foundations. This sentiment affected visual arts at the turn of the millennium; in contrast, it was documented in literature for the first time. Abramson (2015) identified some of its earlier use, including Zavarzadeh's usage of the term in the 1970s to characterize a literary trend to "move

beyond the interpretive modernist novel" as its initial articulation. Literature is an artistic expression, which acts as a reflection of the author's and said society's sentiments. Accompanied by other creative fields of humanities, a new approach emerged to highlight further the humane feature. Knowing the field emerged by the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, Affect studies⁴ gained much recognition and investigation especially as it coexisted with metamodernism. In relation to my topic, critics describe Zadie Smith's best quality in writing as empathy. Throughout her novels, she expresses empathy differently by treating issues like immigration and in relation to identity, race, and class. The ultimate objective for her to use this quality is to tackle the complexities of human relationships and to build a more inclusive and compassionate society. *White Teeth* and *On Beauty* are some examples that invite readers to understand and relate to the characters, thus it makes the novel I am going to analyze rather a realistic depiction of life opposing the critics who interpreted it as too optimistic for multiculturalism.

4. A Movement of Recycling and 'Upcycling'

It redesigned all of the terms with the prefix "meta" as its characteristics. The transcendence in metaphysics is applied as the movement has given a great deal to theology and spirituality. The metaphysical aspect of metamodernism is observed in the popular culture of the twenty-first century where Eastern philosophy has taken over giving a new sense of globalization. However, the post-postmodernist movement did not witness the comeback of religion as it is, but a pragmatic use of its foundations. For example, the use of 'karma' by people of different religions and philosophies marks a catalyst for the notion. This notion of the "spiritual but not religious" is not new of any sort, Ceriello argues, but rather "a horizontal move of sorts, one

⁴It is an interdisciplinary field that acknowledges and investigate the role of affect and reaction of the human experience in different contexts. It encompasses different sectors such as psychology, cultural studies, sociology, neuroscience and philosophy. Affect scholars tend to analyse the various facets of identity formation, power relations, incarnations, media and popular culture, social movements and quotidian life.

that reflects a position *between*: between the New Age's modernist grand narratives and notions of progress, on one hand, and the overtly constructed, postmodernist stance, on the other.” (Ceriello c, 204).

Then, metamodernism embraced the grand narratives as they offer a basis for shaping the world we live in. Due to the re-establishment of sincerity and authenticity in the wake of the twenty-first century, and the emergence of a new sense of informed naivety, the world has witnessed the need for the grand narratives to come back. In an interview with DER SPIEGEL, French president Emmanuel Macron criticised the way postmodernism rejected them and required their resurgence in the contemporary world highlighting the fact that “Since then, trust has evaporated in everything and everyone”⁵

According to Jean François Lyotard, the universal truth is unfair to the local narratives to assert their existence as it does. They tend to exert the absolute truth in their fundamental basis as an attempt to restore tradition and its passive way of transmitting unverified knowledge from one generation to the other. Yet, in a world where informed naivety is a concept and authenticity is highly regarded by the common and intellectuals, grand narratives are reconsidered and their foundation has resurged pragmatically.

The viewpoints presented by Cooper (2017), Abramson (2017), and Dember (2020) provide different perspectives on metamodernism and its relationship to grand narratives. Cooper sees metamodernism itself as a grand narrative, while Abramson argues that it allows for the belief in larger meta-narratives that organize smaller narratives. On the other hand, Dember suggests that metamodernism is not a grand narrative but creates a space that permits beliefs in grand narratives without requiring them. Like postmodernism, the current movement tends to be apolitical but at a certain level leaves a gap for the route to the political agenda. Dempsey

⁵ DER SPIEGEL, interview with Emmanuel Macron, 'We Need to Develop Political Heroism' with Klaus Brinkbäumer, Julia Amalia Heyer und Britta Sandberg, 13.10.2017

highlights that metamodernism guides people to orient themselves toward ideological outlooks such as those legislative agendas. (Dempsey)

Resulted of the oscillation (Turner 2011; van den Akker and Vermeulen 2010), metamodernism attempts to result in a middle ground between the key concepts of modernism and postmodernism. "It oscillates between a modern enthusiasm and a postmodern irony, between hope and melancholy, between naivete' and knowingness, empathy and apathy, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity" (van den Akker and Vermeulen, 05). They "manifest as a kind of informed naivety, a pragmatic idealism, a moderate fanaticism". The utopian promise of the metamodern era, according to Hanzian metamodernists, is still present, but idealism has returned in a hyper-integrative and pragmatic form. When postmodernist group tensions are resolved, humanity will join and realize its full potential (Political, par.09). Oscillation is helpful in the humanities because it opens up a critical conceptual space between deconstruction and reconstruction, pessimism and optimism, and a future that maintains a constant commitment to be present with all possibilities (Ceriello a, 92). This notion of the duo modernism and postmodernism did not make complete sense to other scholars, Ceriello and Demper brought about the use of tradition in identifying the concepts of metamodernism (Ceriello and Demper, 44). They negotiated the term oscillation for braiding and there appear three eras to discuss adding tradition. Yet, this work uses oscillation for it suits my approach most. David James and Urmila Seshagiri (Revolution) insist on relating metamodernism and its attribute to sincerity entirely. However, Eshelman (2008) and Bourriaud (2009) suggest that contemporary texts adopt both modernist and postmodernist practices.

5. Metamodernism: how Important

It is crucial to use a theory, which adapts to contemporary life and links the various cultures and trends. It is the most researched and adopted theory among the previously mentioned ones.

Between 2010 and 2018, the number of scholarly references to the word metamodernism grew by fourteen times (Demper c). In *Notes on Metamodernism* (2010) van den Akker and Vermeulen noticed that postmodernism became obsolete to describe the current world, thus the current sensibility needed a better name. Metamodernism ascended the throne of post-postmodernist movements for its oscillation of the dichotomies. In her review of MacDowell's *The Metamodern, the Quirky, and Film Criticism* and Konstantinou's *Four Faces of Postirony*, Cerriello concluded that this world necessitates oscillation and the whole theory of metamodernism, as "the current post-postmodern milieu is best named and described" (Cerriello b, 05). It has been employed in a variety of geographical settings, including South America, Asia, and Western Europe, and in a variety of academic fields, including experimental poetry, technology studies, physics, economics, and Eastern spirituality (Vermeulen et al. 23).

Proof that the postmodern theory was no longer relevant in the making of the contemporary sensibility shows in Vermeulen and van den Akker's

'new', often overlapping, aesthetic phenomena such as the New Romanticism in the arts (Vermeulen and van den Akker 2010), the New Mannerism in crafts (van Tuinen, this volume), the New Aesthetic in design (Sterling 2012), the New Sincerity in literature (Konstantinou 2009, 2016a), the New Weird or Nu-Folk in music (Poecke 2014), Quirky Cinema and Quality Television (MacDowell 2012; Vermeulen and Rustad 2013), as well as the discovery of new terrain for architecture (Allen and McQuade 2011), each of them characterized by an attempt to incorporate postmodern stylistic and formal conventions while moving beyond them. Meanwhile, we witness the return of realist and modernist forms, techniques, and aspirations (to which the metamodern has a decidedly different relation than the postmodern). (Vermeulen et al., 20)

As a cultural and creative movement, metamodernism has been practiced in a variety of geographical contexts, including South America, Asia, and Western Europe. Additionally, it

has discovered significance in experimental poetry, technological studies, physics, economics, mathematics, and Eastern spirituality. The influence of metamodernism extends beyond countries and academic fields, demonstrating its interdisciplinary character and potential to offer new views on contemporary culture and the human experience.

Conclusion

The aftermath of different conditions resulted in an unusual shift in society and science. With the emergence of metamodernism as a rational offspring of modernism and postmodernism, scholars succeeded to rationalize the current sensibility and observed the bloom of new notions and issues for similar theories along with the one this research adopts to resolve. Furthermore, metamodernism gained wide recognition in many fields and regions so far; therefore, one must replace the ‘unestablished’ with the adjective ‘establishing’ as it is currently the most applied and assessed. The movement resulted from geopolitical, economic, and cultural issues which helped inspect its various facets. At the end, metamodernism is a movement of prefixes and prepositions, as it joined between, with and beyond distinct disciplines.

Chapter Two

The Parallels of Metamodernism and
Meta-Crisis

Introduction

The examples I am going to utilize offer a deeper understanding of how this movement was shaped, exceeding the famous connotation of oscillating between modernism and postmodernism. Most of the following schools and movements do not necessarily belong to the metamodernist spectrum, but rather the contemporary period. However, they share numerous aspects which fall with the three main characteristics of the movement that this analysis explores. Then, the following trends unbox the emergence of Zadie Smith as a metamodernist writer. This claim is followed by a literature review of her novel *White Teeth*. The issue in the last section is linked to meta-crisis depicting crisis at a more complex level. The three divisions are interlinked separately through the issue this research discusses.

1. Metamodernism: Analogues

1.1. Metamodernist poetry

Despite the fact that metamodernist poetry is not widely recognized as an artistic orientation, contemporary poetry derives a considerable amount of the metamodernist aspects. In *Metamodernism and Contemporary British Poetry*, a number of contemporary British poets such as Geoffrey Hill, J. H. Prynne, Geraldine Monk, and Sandeep Parmar are considered metamodernist for their reaction to the famous modernist poets. Professor Antony Rowland investigates the different views these poets preferred as a way to give a new sense of the current poetic phenomena. (2021)

1.1.1. Ecopoetry

Ecopoetry explores themes of nature, ecology, and the relationship between humans and the environment. It embodies art and science as long as they suit its precise purpose. The movement opposes sciences that neglect today's meta-crisis, which is climate change, and it encourages every move for research in the field of ecology. In *Ecopoetry*, "A Critical Introduction", Scott

Bryson dissented from the overt use and estimation of technology, rationality, and the human species where he argues:

Related to this humility is the third attribute of ecopoetry: an intense skepticism concerning hyperrationality, a skepticism that usually leads to an indictment of an overtechnologized modern world and a warning concerning the very real potential for ecological catastrophe. (qtd. in *An Introduction to Ecopoetics*)

Nasrullah Mambrol insists on the difference between ecopoetry and romanticism; the current trend tends to be less utopian than romantic poetry and more radical than simply “nature poetry” (2021). The gap of a hundred and fifty years explains a great deal of the difference between the two movements. Moreover, I assume that the distinct aspects between naturalism and ecopoetry are more crucial to inform of, as the designations may blur it for one to distinguish. Manifestly, the two movements share various aspects of nature and rejection of romantic concepts such as placing nature as the objective prospect of the world. Uncooperatively, naturalism discusses social Darwinism and determinism which introduce a highly pessimistic vision of the world. Additionally, it concerns the nature of the human being more than nature itself. Opposing the already stated basics of Ecopoetry.

This research assumes that this variation converges on metamodernism as it implies the use of between, beyond, and after. Ecopoetry uses a rich natural emphasis on romanticism and objectivity of naturalism. Its advocacy lies beyond the immense gratification of the current technological and scientific development, as it urges humanity to stand for a planet that has survived for millions of years from the current decadence and threat. Lastly, this sincere notion emerged in 1980, precisely when the throne of postmodernism started to crumble; thus, it was termed after the witnessed skepticism into an era of hope and action.

The prime example of this school is Joy Harjo. She is renowned for her inspirational and affectionate poetry that combines elements of personal reflections, Native American spirituality, and social critique. She has bloomed as a significant figure in contemporary Native American literature and has merited recognition through various prestigious accolades. Notably, Harjo made history as the first Native American to assume the esteemed role of the 23rd Poet Laureate of the United States. Her collection *An American Sunrise* (2019) addresses the legacy of colonization head-on, while also honoring the enduring strength and indomitable spirit of Indigenous communities. Through her verses, Harjo offers a renewed sense of optimism, healing, and a celebration of Native cultures, inviting readers to confront historical injustices and embrace a path toward reconciliation.

1.2. The Quirky Cinema

This theme is not as neglected as poetry in the realm of metamodernism, as it is described in the most scholarly assembled piece of the contemporary structure of feeling *Metamodernism – Historicity, Affect, and Depth after Postmodernism* (2017). The film critic James MacDowell expresses the idea of neglect towards artistic genres covering an aspect of it, the ‘Quirky’. He identifies it as a recent tendency in Indie cinema. As opposed to the postmodern “‘smart’” cinema of the last decade of the twentieth century, which was characterized by sarcasm and indifference, this cinema is typified by the attempt to restore the cynical reality of adults, a childlike naivety (Akker. Vermeulen, 07). The quirky is not bound solely to filmmaking, MacDowell argues, but it is noticed in other artistic forms such as:

In television (Pushing Daisies, New Girl and Flight of the Conchords, etc.), indie music (e.g. Sufjan Stevens, Jeffrey Lewis, Moldy Peaches, Jon Brion), ‘alternative’ stand-up comedy (Demitri Martin, Josie Long, etc.), aspects of contemporary fiction (especially clustered around the McSweeney’s publishing house), public radio/podcasts (This

American Life, the Maximum Fun network, etc.) and so on (see MacDowell 2016). (MacDowell b, 53)

The critic acknowledges the fact that the quirky is not the lone cinematic representative of the sensibility which is described by sincerity. He provides the reader with a vital example that stirs between sincerity and irony which is ‘New Punk Cinema’ (b. 57). The chapter recognizes all of the following filmmakers as metamodern, for he argued:

But it is in the realm of contemporary filmmaking that the quirky sensibility is represented most clearly, especially in the kinds of millennial and post-millennial American indie comedies and comedy dramas brought to mind by names and titles such as Wes Anderson, Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, Miranda July, Charlie Kaufman, Jared Hess, Mike Mills, *Buffalo '66* (1998), *Punch-Drunk Love* (2002), *I Heart Huckabees* (2004), *Lars and the Real Girl* (2007), *Paper Heart* (2009), *Safety Not Guaranteed* (2012), *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (2013), or *Welcome to Me* (2015). (MacDowell b, 53)

As stated, this paper addresses the point where MacDowell mentioned, “the quirky sensibility is represented most clearly” (MacDowell b 53). which brings one to reflect on the emergence of the quirky cinema. The latter dates back to the classic era (1930s-1960s) when it utilized aspects of unorthodox eccentric noticeable and abnormal to a said social context (About Quirky). In *Quirky, Not Weird*, Gregory Smalley moved forward in time and claimed that “serious” indie films had invaded American cinema from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, in which one may notice the beginning of the metamodernist notion. The first quirky comedy was *Raising Arizona* (1987). It explores the homeless eccentric life of Ed and Hi with a sprinkle of Shakespearean language and mysticism. (Smalley, 2023)

Most importantly, we cannot close this section without mentioning the reigning king of quirk Wes Anderson, as Smalley labels him. MacDowell clarifies that “the work of Wes Anderson as a whole would seem to provide us with the most consistent, as well as probably the most extreme, embodiment of the quirky sensibility”(MacDowell a, 04). Greg Demper provides an interesting example of *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001) as “a self-absorbed, irresponsible father seeks reconciliation with his estranged wife and adult children, each of whom has their own remarkable personality defects” (Demper a, 2018). My humble observation of the film defines it as symmetrical, tidy as minimal maximalism, and aesthetically pleasing through framing the right angles, just like his other works. The aesthetic approach is explained by the return of romanticism in a new shape accompanying the transcendental (van den Akker and Vermeulen).

1.3. Metamodernist Literature and its Variation

This movement has divided scholars into two orientations. First, Vermeulen and van den Akker suggested that authors like Robbe-Grillet, Barth, Barthelme, Wolfe belong to a ‘metamodern’ which indicates that it is generally considered (a variant of) postmodernism today (Akker et al. 23). Nevertheless, Seshagiri and James consider Julian Barnes, J. M. Coetzee, Ian McEwan, Cynthia Ozick, Will Self, and Zadie Smith as key representatives of modernism implicitly, styling their contemporary literary innovations as explicit reconciliations with the innovations of early-twentieth-century writing (Seshagiri and James 87). Conversely, the following examples are movements that share the same approach as metamodernism and are still characterized as postmodernist.

David Foster Wallace’s long-standing ambition was to move beyond the postmodern irony and cynicism to a time when sincerity is the main concept that culture and literature adopt to proceed. He became a literary phenomenon through his 1996 novel *Infinity Jest*. His

incorporation of authenticity marked a shift in the current art and sensibility. Wallace has become the landmark of metamodernism followed by Zadie Smith.

1.3.1. Magical Realism

It is a literary movement that includes fantasy in fiction. It is famously known for its Latin adaptation in the late twentieth century, however, most researchers claim that it originated in Germany. The art critic Franz Roh first coined the term in 1925 in visual art. This research specifies that Roh first noticed it academically, but the existence dates further than his observation. For instance, Nickolay Gogol's short story *The Nose* (1836) tackles such magical realist elements (Hardy and Stanton). Masood Raja highlights the element that distinguishes the movement is that the fantastical part is normal just like everyday life, (3:58) which brings us to the conclusion that the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* saga do not fall into it. The ultimate use of unquestioned magic in reality here is not necessarily an escapist means from reality, but rather it reflects on certain social phenomena which assert its presence among other movements. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez is the novel that introduced the movement to Latin America which the term became highly associated by it. Nowadays, the movement expanded geographically and characteristically. Magical realism is present in Latin, British, Bengali, Polish, Chinese, and Japanese literature. Stephen Benson described the notion as the 'fairy tale generation', introducing authors like Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood, Robert Coover, A. S. Byatt, and Salman Rushdie (Benson and Ebrary 02).

Different critics still relate magical realism to postmodernism for a number of reasons. Both movements are skeptical of objective reality, thus they provide alternatives. Magical realism offers an imaginary reality, which overlaps the ordinary one for the audience to explore layered perspectivism, i.e. multiple perspectives. Then, postmodernism rejects the grand narratives and implores subjectivity as the movement is marked by relativity. The binding of alternatives leads

to blurred boundaries in both of them, which affirm hybridity. Magical realism and postmodernism coincide in hybridity; the latter is the anchor of post-colonialism. Magical realism is famously known in Latin American literature, one of the regions where it witnessed a series of colonization throughout time. Post-colonialism is also one of the most prominent movements of postmodernism. Therefore, the relation between the two movements is intertwined, but not for long.

The same features that made both movements similar differentiate them. To begin with, reality is perceived differently. Magical realism merges between the fantastic and the real acknowledging the basis that they are both real. However, postmodernism feeds on subjectivity; thus, it deconstructs the absolute into fragments. The first is not ashamed of discussing history and applying myths, whereas the second insists on detachment and irony. Their aim is entirely different in that magical realism offers new ways to understand the world; we may phrase it as positive perspectivism⁶. Conversely, postmodernism renounces any facet of Truth with a capital t, and it is considered as negative perspectivism⁷ for its dystopian view.

Positive perspectivism leads to its strong relation to metamodernism. Although they do not intersect in challenging the binary, as magical realism uses juxtaposition and metamodernism prefers oscillation, they are similar in a sort of mosaic way. Metamodernism imports postmodernism in its foundation, thus it brings blurring boundaries into the scene. Both movements explore the ambiguity of the playful and the serious in their narrative, which leads to the layered facets of reality. Then, both movements interact with social and political issues as they are taken seriously in the present sensibility by adopting self-reflexivity. Lastly, magical realism includes myths and spiritual thinking which are seriously present in metamodernism.

⁶ Perspectivism reflects relativity and the alternative realities of the of a said movement. Here, I introduced the positive perspectivism to merge between the utopian view of modernism and the postmodern relativity for the sole purpose to prove that the movement fits within metamodernism.

⁷ The postmodern dystopian view intertwining with the postmodern relative truth.

The latter embraced the grand narratives pragmatically leading to a sense of hybridity in absolutism.

Some critics argue that Haruki Murakami is a metamodernist writer (Vermeulen). The novel *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) intertwines magical realism, mythological references, and a blend of innocence and darkness. The blending of the transcendental with the real radiates a feeling of a fever dream. The blurred boundaries between the two elements act as the basis of the metamodern phenomena.

1.3.2. Zadie Smith: The Metamodernist

Zadie Smith has been one of the mostly prominent authors of literary metamodernism (Camplin). She gained her name mostly for the adoption of the post-postmodernist theory new romanticism. Smith has magnified the reader with various literary techniques. The 2013 issue of the *American Book Review* claims that Zadie Smith is one of the most prominent authors in the metamodernist context (nina). Her debut novel earned many prizes and good reviews. The Guardian praised it and hailed the author as “the new Salman Rushdie”. Moreover, Melissa Denes explored 'the myth, the wicked lie, that the past is always tense and the future, perfect' in the novel (Moss). Furthermore, Chubbuck explained the capacity of the novel “which can jolt from brilliance to bathos (and back) on a single page.” This perfectly illustrates the title of the review '*White Teeth*' -- *Rushdie on crack* (Chubbuck).

2. Literature Review

Many researchers consider *White Teeth* a metamodernist work, yet very few analyses show how it is referred to in this movement. None of the works to be mentioned later recognizes the novel as a metamodernist work, but they reflect contemporary life's main aspects, which places it in the frame of metamodernism. Firstly, numerous findings still consider *White Teeth* a postmodernist work, yet explore the different particularities of the current movement,

metamodernism, as a sign of the author's uniqueness among others. Pavlovà affirms that the novel is postmodernist while including "flirting with disaster", "combining the incompatible" and "blending the anomalies" describing the author's "original and witty" manners "guarantee(s) Smith to indeed shine as a postmodern author". (07-10) The scholar succeeded to derive metamodernism yet failed for considering the novel postmodernist. Moreover, Meyer recognizes the notion of oscillation as he described the novel as a "mix of realism and comedy" illustrating the major issues and not irony (492). And, Proojie illustrates that the work is built on the ironic tone since the narrator mocks the characters repeatedly and cyclically, yet the same narrator empathizes with the characters (13) which is quite inexistent in the postmodernist sense. At last, Ermens considers *White Teeth* as a "returning to modernism" work (05), as this would be associated with Eshelman's performatism, which rejects postmodern beliefs. His adoption of James's and Seshagiri's take on metamodernism negates all the different findings that prove the existence of postmodernism. (2014)

Other scholars converged postcolonialism with postmodernism to justify the sincere and meaningful implications, history, and transcendence in the novel. Religion is a fundamental aspect of *White Teeth*, and scholars approached it similarly. Parodising theology has become a fashionable statement in various works (Proojie, Panta and Bergholz). Essentially, history and its effect are present in all works as they form a pillar of the novel. Meyer emphasizes that the recurrence of history has not been expelled haphazardly, which means that the novel's concept of history, war, and terror is ironic rather than naïve (485). Bastan argued that the structure of the novels highlights the significance of history (139), and Maruzzo implies the reconstruction of history in the novel (34-36), whereas Proojie focuses on the subjectivity of it only (24). Howland explores the reconstruction of history through the second-generation character Irie (15). In *What's Past is a Prologue*, Cechova explained the effect of the host land on the characters who were born in England (02-05).

Finally yet most importantly, crisis has been the main concern in relation to identity in any work which is approached through a postcolonial perspective. Khaan, Winmavil and Nilavu, and Maruzzo explored the tragic effects of colonization on the characters' identity formation. Panta, Pavlovà, Maruzzo, and Svanstrom discuss the feeling of being estranged from the country the characters were born in. The dilemma is always expressed in Samad's hypocritical attachment to religion. The crises developed through old events affected the immigrants negatively, and thus the first generation's frustration made the second separate gradually.

3. A Multi-layered Meta-Crisis

Etymologically, meta-crisis is constituted from meta- and crisis. *Cambridge dictionary* defines meta as "referring to itself or to something of its own type", thus it refers to a crisis of/about the crisis. Different scholars demonstrate the term quite differently. Zac Stein differentiates between the global crises that we are facing, whether ecological, economic, immigration, geopolitical, or energy crises; and the invisible crisis, which is the meta-crisis, i.e. the psychological and cultural crisis which revolves around how humans understand themselves and the world. Alternatively, Jonathan Rowson identifies meta-crisis as the underlying crisis from which other crises derive. It is diverse and interdisciplinary, so climate change is not the sole meta-crisis, but also biodiversity loss, immigration, lack of meaning, democratic breakdown, cultural polarization, fragility of economy, etc... (qtd. in *A Crisis of Crises*)

Inspired by Varvaeke's 4P/3R⁸ model of the metatheory of cognition, Rowson introduces how the scholars approach meta-crisis through several routes. Propositionally, Schmachtenberger argues that the term portrays the global problem that emerges from an underlying pattern of generator functions. These functions are operated by three main patterns.

⁸ The model distinguishes between cognition as "knowing" and cognition as "functional information processing." Varvaeke offers us a taxonomy of the different kinds of knowing; participatory, perspectival, procedural, and propositional. The 3R's represent the meaning of cognition that are "recursive relevance realization." (Henriques)

Firstly, rivalrous dynamics signify the globally harmful competition toward a certain advantage such as the arms race. Secondly, the subsuming of the ecological substrate is undermining the ecological richness by a degenerative production, in other words, it is humanity's selfish attitude towards nature. Lastly, exponential technology affirms that destroying a city has become as simple as water intake. (Rowson a 2:06)

Perspectivally, it is the inclusive element in meta- that answers the interrogation of what is the problem about, and how we can change the world considering the ongoing context, as time sensitivity as emergency and crisis. Related to metamodernism, meta-crisis encompasses after, within, and beyond in addition to metaxy, which implores oscillation. Rowson answers the concern with the need for the transformation of the pattern and change of system, a regeneration. Such change cannot occur systematically as we live in a real world with complex sociological phenomena, thus human beings ought to survey meta-crisis at the broad level and deconstruct its several meanings to link them back to emergency and crisis. (Rowson a, 5:25)

With Jonathan Rowson and Mark Vernon, Zac Stein tends to explore it procedurally. It concerns the manner of exerting to the meta-crisis. There are five aspects to consider in the attempt to handle this issue. Intelligibility, capability, legitimacy, meaning, and imagination conquer this way of knowing. One must know the reason, tools, agents, manner, purpose, and future expectations in order to act upon it. The answer to these questions is not easy as the world is quite complex. (Rowson a, 8:39)

The participatory notion of meta-crisis is demonstrated practically. It transpires with the experience of communities when they face reality. When the previous aspects are blurred, this tends to answer how to act while being aware of the state of confusion and flow. Thus, the only and the most powerful equipment left in hand is the shared feeling. Emotional participation inspires other shared aspects. Here is where metamodernism is applied, as it insists on authenticity. (Rowson a, 10:53)

An elaborate exploitation of the previous concepts is stated in Rowson's *Tasting the Pickle: Ten Flavours of Meta-Crisis and the Appetite for a New Civilization* (2021), where it tackles reckoning, emergency, and crisis as a pathway to the various faces of meta-crisis. The philosopher provides the example of COVID-19 and its effect for a crystalline reckoning of the stream of events and the complexity of the world quoting John Keats's 'Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced'. Then, he differentiates between crisis and emergency denotatively, and meta-crisis connotatively. An emergency is a call for action only, whereas a crisis requires a multi-layered insightful analysis that resolves through transformation or change of system (Rowson b). It is alive since it lives within us, between us, and beyond us.

Kowalski classifies the ten "flavours" into four patterns, socio-emotional, educational, epistemic, and spiritual. The socio-emotional meta-crisis explores the lack of a meaningful global 'We', widespread learning needs, self-subverting political logic, and disenchanted worldviews (Rowson c, 07). Then, historiographically, the meta-crisis of education refers to the struggle of modernism and postmodernism to procreate metamodernism, our failure to learn how to learn, as Stein puts it 'autopoietic process of societal renewal in which one generation teaches the next how to live, is arguably breaking down.', and our inability to link the dots. The epistemic meta-crisis is emphasized in 'Our underlying mechanisms subvert their own logics', Rowan Williams argues; it is illustrated as "too much liberty may kill liberalism" (Rowson c, 39). Also, it refers to the epistemological connotation of it, as David Rook expressed it 'The reason the map is not the territory is because the territory is full of maps.' The last epistemic illustration is the meta-crisis in design, Schmachtenberger and Hall assume that the world's design is in collapse, thus it is high time we redesigned it. Ultimately, the spiritual dominates the meta-crisis of consciousness, i.e. we are increasingly disabled by dissonance; one in arts

and humanities where we struggle to imagine the future as the present is already imaginary; and finally in cosmovision which implies a weakness for one of two kinds of spiritual bypassing⁹.

Piipere and Martinsone emphasise:

The highly generalized ideas of metacrisis, depicted in the introduction of this article (crises of meaning, mental health, techno-environmental, and digital globalization crises) can be rephrased as more focused questions based on metamodernist discourse and related to some complex problems to be dealt with by social sciences. In this way, the ideas inherent in metamodernism could serve as theoretical guidelines for the survival and further development of society, individuals, and science. (Piipere and Martinsone, 13)

They illustrate the constructive relationship between meta-crisis and metamodernism. They reflect on the use of metamodernism for a potential developing option in social sciences and their surveys on the current crises and emergencies.

Conclusion

The separate sections fit accordingly as they all demonstrate a unique interrelated connection with the novel. Ecological poetry treats issues that are implemented in the diverse layers of meta-crisis. The latter discusses metamodernism and its functions in various fields. Metamodernism embraces postcolonialism through certain elements. Even the quirky cinema highlights certain aesthetic and psychological inclinations toward metamodernism. Implicit similarities are exposed in this section explaining the purpose of each subdivision.

⁹ "Spiritual bypassing is classically conceived of as the tendency to look for spiritual answers to psychological problems at a personal level and, less often perhaps, political problems at a societal level." (Tasting the Pickle, 47)

Chapter Three

Meta-Crisis and Metamodernism:

Contingency and Moderation in the Novel

Introduction:

White Teeth is a novel about crises. It emulsifies absolutism with relativity and acts upon them. The blend of the quirky with realism led to an intersection of conclusions, which explains its exposure. It is not necessarily controversial as it is formally multidimensional. This analysis explores a schematic lens of the events and the mental state of the characters.

1. The Effect of Postmodernity on the Characters' Identity

As individuals whose identity was shaped by the dawn of postmodernism, Samad and Archie were exposed to a serious ideological peril throughout the course of their life. Their embodiment of the fake reality of the lieutenant and the captain seemed more of a prologue to their children's experience. (Smith, pp. 107-112)

Samad's feeling of being unwelcomed does not solely adhere to the British reckoning toward him, but rather his personal struggle of assimilation as well, where he attempts to incorporate his spiritual background within the secular influence simultaneously. This attempt results in what Stein calls the invisible meta-crisis. The psychological effect of isolation and estrangement leads other crises to occur. The existential obstacle made him a perturbed British. Historically, Britain is one of the first countries to manifest the Industrial Revolution. Since then, the main impression of the Brits became stereotypically known as egocentrism. Thus, Samad applied for the most conventional feature of British society. This egocentric attitude blended with the stiff patriotism of the immigrants, therefore, it resulted in varied crises across generations. His irresponsibility made it harder for his future self to maintain stability in his household, including his mental state.

The second generation experiences another type of meta-crisis in the multicultural nation. Magid, Millat, and Irie do not know anything about their ethnic background, for they were born in England and to assimilated parents. The moment these children opened their eyes, they found

answers in the British context only. Furthermore, in the earliest stages of human life, actions stimulate the brain better and faster than utterances, which is why the second generation assimilated more accurately than their parents did.

Magid's assimilation started with his intellectual compatibility with the current development in the country. Although his father is highly intellectual, he is still restricted and traditional. Magid has just started to learn about status and liberty while being surrounded by white non-Muslim friends.

On Magid's ninth birthday, a group of very nice-looking white boys with meticulous manners had turned up on the doorstep and asked for Mark Smith. 'Mark? No Mark here,' Alsana had said, bending down to their level with a genial smile. 'Only the family Iqbal in here. You have the wrong house.' Nevertheless, before she had finished the sentence, Magid had dashed to the door, ushering his mother out of view. 'Hi, guys'" (Smith, 151).

Here is where he adopted a fake reality just to be socially accepted. His version of authenticity, as a British citizen did not go hand in hand with his actual name and culture. Eventually, it created a meta-crisis in design; the Iqbal within him is suicidal, so he had to redesign it into Smith, which also resulted in other crises. In addition to this reason, Samad considered his Englishness an emergency, so he sent him to Bangladesh to be raised well. His situation required a systematic analysis and deep search of the root, as it is a crisis. The decision of Samad gave Magid another perspective on life where he felt most comfortable being an atheist, which becomes a meta-crisis. The older son of Mr. Iqbal initiated an ideological movement of Westernization, thus he results in a bigger crisis at the imperial level.

Similarly, Clara chose to trade her cult-like adolescence for a merry purposeless life. She finds it easy to accommodate, as she falls into the English beauty in a way she rarely feels

insecure about her earthly nature. Teeth are present everywhere in the novel, whether explicitly or implicitly. In this analysis, they represent morals and tradition. The moment they decay, they cannot turn back to their original state, to be whole. The moment Clara leaves her parents' house she loses her teeth, thus she loses her Jamaican roots by choosing atheism and "liberty" since they became the prime features of a European postmodern individual. It is present in "she recognized the black lady who was leaning over a garden fence, looking dreamily into the air towards the library (half dressed, though! A lurid purple vest, underwear almost), as if her future lay in that direction." (Smith, 65). Although she assimilates, she still uses certain ethnic habits on her daughter, which lead Irie to leave the house.

Fundamentally, Irie's fake reality is legalized in Britain ideologically and banned romantically. Spanning from her childhood, Irie is severely self-conscious about her appearance and way of thinking. Her Jamaican body made her unsure about the normality of her existence among the slim white blonde girls. These female features are what Millat searches for the most in relationships. Since Irie has a huge crush on him, she attempts to become one of the girls so he becomes attracted to her. The fake reality she carved for him is fruitless as he despises her for becoming typical. This whole process leaves her unsure of what to do to be accepted. Her longing for acceptability and purity is still present when she first enters the Chalfens' house. The Chalfens represent the pure European race according to "a small slice of the Chalfen family tree, an elaborate illustrated oak that stretched back into the 1600s and forward into the present day." (Smith, 337). Additionally, their way of displaying harmony and communication serves Irie a diversion in the stream of thought. The clarity and order she witnesses in the house of the Caucasian family stir her curiosity about bigger notions in the world. She starts to notice the huge difference between her part-colored household and this neat environment and realizes how Clara and Archie did not educate her on fundamental explorations, and most importantly they

don't have an opinion, which would have shaped her personality more effectively. The Chalfens provide her with a queer sort of enlightenment that changed the course of her life.

The Chalfens were accepted by the English society, as they were the closest to the standard norms. Their smart tactics of isolation and careful integration with the rest granted them a prestigious status within the multicultural context. They enforce their existence through their academic research and Jewish origins. The Chalfens are very proud of their upbringing to the point where they describe their quirkiness using their own surname, which is a highly Jewish feature. The use of the concept of hybridity lies in their experimentations (FutureMouse, cross-pollination). They tend to create their own reality and experience through miniature representations. Joyce develops a god complex when she controls Millat the misfit.

Millat is no different from the others. He personifies the impact postmodernity imposed on Western society. He feels like it became a responsibility to be cool to every minority, and he has to please every person he meets. Postmodern relativity erased the ontological sense of everything. This sense of applying to everyone's wants and needs made him a lost puppy, "And underneath it all, there remained an ever present anger and hurt, the feeling of belonging nowhere that comes to people who belong everywhere." (Smith, 269).

2. Colonialism as Meta-Crisis

The core issue the colored characters subconsciously encounter is colonization. The white race's hunger to carry the White Man's Burden is ridiculously remarkable in Durham's usurpation in Jamaica. "For it had not been enough for Captain Charlie Durham — recently posted to Jamaica — to impregnate his landlady's adolescent daughter one drunken evening in the Bowden larder, May 1906. He was not satisfied with simply taking her maidenhood. He had to teach her something as well." (Smith, 356). Durham represents the "guardian angel" of immigration. He gives hope to Ambrosia and their daughter of a secure future in the Promised

Land. He becomes the first to introduce the concept of hybridity in the novel in the chronological sense. Meta-crisis is stated through Alsana's "'The English are the only people,' she would say with distaste, 'who want to teach you and steal from you at the same time.'" (Smith, 356). which leads us to the very first expression "What is past is prologue", as the Chalfens have started to behave just like Durham. They are educating her Millat and stealing him away from her simultaneously.

Colonization does not end with military force when ideologies have become popular and significant. Ideological colonialism survived to the twenty-first century in order to create a melting pot in the colonizer's qualities. In this context, it becomes the British melting pot. This notion is evident in the educational system in the novel, as it is the most dangerous weapon used against divergent immigrants. The ingrained ideas that serve one sole party lead to various meta-crises. Irie felt a literal stomachache when her classmate read the following, "' In the old age black was not counted fair,' continued Francis Stone in the catatonic drone with which students read Elizabethan verse. 'Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name.'" (Smith, 268). The moment she asked about the blackness of the Dark Lady, Mrs. Owens immediately emphasized the difference between black and dark, ignoring the existence of black people in Elizabethan Britain. Furthermore, she explained the impossibility of addressing slaves in works of art when providing the possibility of their existence. Matz recognizes the distinction between the transcendental affection for the Fair Youth and the sexual love for the Dark Lady (111). This example supports the idea of sexualizing women of color by the white race, which will include a more elaborate analysis later in this chapter. Most evidently in the novel, Captain Durham engages in sexual intercourse with adolescent Ambrosia, Clara's grandmother, endorsing the potentiality of the blackness of the dark lady.

3. The Western Manipulation

Even if Samad's claim of Pande's case is false, it does not make the British control history. Mrs. Owens is the representative of Western manipulation. The education meta-crisis occurs when Samad exposes the dominance of Christian beliefs in the yearly festivals of multicultural schools. She mentions that religious diversity has been more elaborate to fit within the British considerate attitude towards immigrants. Samad responded by revealing that most of the Christian holidays are of pagan roots. Her later argument considers the Harvest Festival rather a benevolent festival than a religious one in which she manipulates her audience, primarily Samad, into thinking that the entire journey of festivals tends to be more practical and beneficial, which places Christianity on the top for including most of its holidays. Samad strives to change the order of white supremacy by removing the Harvest Festival from the yearly schedule, most of the attendees vote against his idea, and most of the ones who voted for it were somehow forced to do it. This did not result in a solution but rather the most serious meta-crisis in the world, which is the socio-emotional meta-crisis. The lack of harmony and collectivity through the obviously logical arguments of Samad added more value to the sense of Westernization and Englishness. Later, Mrs. Poppy Burt-Jones attempts to solve the crisis by providing an alternative, ““ In the meeting. The Harvest Festival always seemed so ridiculous to me. I mean, if you want to help old people, you know, well, vote for a different government, don't send them cans of Heinz spaghetti.”” (Smith, 132). Irony plays a huge role in addressing the race which considers other races naïve and scattered, and celebrates some festivals that are not even indicative of their cultural background.

4. Millat's “As if” Orientation

Millat has always been the cool boy of London. The most accepted individual among different ethnicities. His picture starts to enlarge and be idolized, so he tends to incline toward

new quirky phenomena. This time, it concerns joining the Islamist group KEVIN (Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation) to avenge the Muslim community in England. He aims to find a solution to his meta-crisis after being aware of his value as a colored immigrant. His reasons are not entirely religious, as he has always had gangster movies' influence on him. This situation is analogically illustrated through Kantian's negative idealism. Millat considers religion a potential alternative to his cool appearance as a part of KEVIN. He realizes that he finally belongs somewhere:

He was in a cold sweat from trying to recall all that was halal or haraam, fard or sunnat, makruh-tahrima (prohibited with much stress) or makruh-tanzihi (prohibited, but to a lesser degree). At a loss, he had ripped off his t-shirt, tied a series of belts at angles over his spectacular upper body, stood in the mirror and practised a different, easier routine, one he knew in intimate detail: You lookin' at me? You lookin' at me? Well, who the fuck else are you looking at, huh? I can't see anybody else in here. You lookin' at me? (Smith, 460)

Although he resembles his father in the conflict of the superego and id, he earns himself a sense of belonging; belonging to a fundamentalist group of purification.

to look Havelock in his stony eye. *It means you're nothing and he's something.* And that's it. That's why Pande hung from a tree while Havelock the executioner sat on a chaise longue in Delhi. Pande was no one and Havelock was someone. No need for library books and debates and reconstructions. *Don't you see, Abba?* whispered Millat. *That's it. That's the long, long history of us and them. That's how it was. But no more.* (White Teeth, 506)

The Islamist womanizer challenges Marcus Chalfen on who reconstructs history better, and on who writes his name bigger. Millat's attempt to turn history against the Britons is concerned

with the meta-crisis in philosophy of education. He failed to learn how to learn to restore the legacy of the Bangladeshis, which inflicted other crises at the broad level. His involvement with KEVIN made Joyce's attempt to colonize him lose her own son physically and ideologically.

5. (B)end of History: Reconstruction

Samad catalyzes the reconstruction of the conventional history of Britain. His way of inserting doubt in the dogmatic certainty in the English and Englishified communities plays a huge role in introducing postmodernism, thus metamodernism; and reversing the roles of which party corrects the other. He became the new face of the return of grand narratives, thus he reconstructs history on Pande being the traitor although almost everyone is against him. "... I concede matters did not go quite according to plan. But traitor? Coward? The dictionary you show me is old — these definitions are now out of currency. Pande was no traitor and no coward." (Smith, 251). Samad clarifies that his sources are not obsolete and that this historical figure is more than a "traitor", as the English prefer to name him. His resistance towards alternative realities about Pande's case marks a shift in the postmodern world. He introduces the neo-Marxist sense of analysis in the Harvest Festival and exemplifies the hierarchy imposed in the multicultural land. Neo-Marxism is an extended revived form of Marxism through race and existentialism. Nevertheless, his firm assets about his personal history oscillated to deconstruction after he discovers that Archie did not end the Nazi doctor's life and their armed contribution in war simply was a delusion. Archie hinted at this fact when he and Samad were discussing Pande's case, "Do you really believe there is a type of man who kills and a type of man who doesn't?" "Maybe Sam, maybe not." (Smith, 261). Archie's empathy led to a lifelong lie and meta-crisis in epistemology. He could not envision the hidden maps within the one concerned with killing the scientist. It would have shifted their lives entirely.

Irie penalizes the Iqbal offspring and science in a way that never leads to certainty. She grows interested in Magid as he falls to her liking, but she does not fall for him as her heart is always with Millat. After she copulates with Millat, she regrets it after she witnesses his immediate repentance. The firm belief that Millat was unable to love her encourages her to compensate for him. She blames Magid for Millat's unwillingness to love her. Therefore, she makes him the second one for once. Her victory impregnates her. The ambiguity of metamodernism occurs in the inability to identify who is the father of her child due to the twins' identical DNA. Obviously, Irie defies science and usurps Marcus's attempt to be a creator. The child marks a new sense of hybridity in England as the blending of Bangladeshi, Jamaican, and European biology and upbringing break the cyclic events of history, thus it creates a bend. The whole notion exhibits a potential solution to the meta-crises as Irie embraces her Jamaican heritage and is aware of the English surrounding.

6. Informed Naivety: Alsana and the Whites

Alsana becomes the landmark of informed naivety in the novel. Unlike her husband Samad, she intends to disregard various aspects of her surroundings for a calmer life in England. As an eccentric traditional housewife, she overlooks her client being a sex shop just to provide the house with necessities. Moreover, she ignores the fact her son Magid has become more English than the English every day, for his own sake. Alsana welcomes her niece into her house although she considers her "Niece-of-Shame" for Neena's unconventional sexuality. Her liberal attitude comes in oscillation between her conservative morals and her secular surrounding. As a young woman who spent only adolescence in an ethnic household and the rest of her life in a drastically different environment, she tends to be closer to her children ideologically. She allows her children to live the life that suits their upbringing. This does not cause stability in her family's life but rather a meta-crisis in world system dynamics. Her poor skills of testing the odds led her to lose both of her sons; Magid became a stranger to her in "Off to the chess

club, Mum.’ ‘Yes, M — M — Mark,’ said Alsana, close to tears at this final snub, the replacement of ‘Mum’ for ‘Amma’. ‘Do not be late, now.’” (Smith, 151). Her pain oscillates with the forced acceptance of her British offspring as a white sheet with no background.

The whites’ ignorance towards elements of colored history is widely present in the story. First, it occurs when Magid and Millat mention the fight of their father with the British army. In return, they receive a weirdly disrespectful answer from Mr. Hamilton that falsifies the truth. Second, when Archie figures that Samad is a descendant of the one who started the Indian mutiny, he keeps mistaking the fact that Mangal Pande was Samad’s great-grandfather, as well as Samad’s origin which is not Indian but rather Bengali. “‘Your real, blood grandfather?’ ‘Great-grandfather.’ ‘Well (...) Pande was the rebel, didn’t like the English, shot the first bullet of the Mutiny. I remember it now, clear as a bell. And that was your grandfather!’ ‘Great-grandfather.’” (Smith, 99). The implication of England’s ignorance towards the colored history is to whitewash and appropriate certain historical contributions of the minorities.

7. Archie and Samad as Oscillation

Samad represents the return of religion in the metamodernist sense as well. He embodies the notion of “spiritual but not religious”. Samad the Muslim uses oscillation throughout his lifetime. He oscillates between the religious and the sexual. Whenever he swings toward addictive intercourse, his guilt swings his desires back to repentance and religious reasoning. However, he cannot commit to religion thus he moves toward masturbation. After he discovers that the latter is forbidden, he swings back to heavy drinking, as it is a lesser sin. This oscillation results in the invisible meta-crisis, as illustrated above.

Archie explores oscillation differently. He embraces multiculturalism genuinely, opposing other white people, yet he is not very influenced by their culture, thus rejecting the melting pot of England. As an atheist individual, he does not seek any theological guidance. His situation

swing between integrating with the colored minorities and dependence on luck. When he finds that he engaged too deeply in an ethnic issue, he sways back to a middle ground, a disinterested option, keeping his firm ideals to himself.

Both men represent the oscillation of modernism and postmodernism. Samad represents the grand narratives, spirituality, and conservatism; whereas Archie embodies absurdism, fragmentation, and liberalism, and they coordinate well. Their friendship is the outcome of the opposing poles, metamodernism. The sincere emotions applied in their interaction provide a healthy basis and comfort. Their negotiation and pragmatic use of their principles prevent crises of any sort to happen.

8. From Discrimination to Fetishization

The whites' racist attitude toward colored immigrants turned into fetishizing them. The fetishization of colored people appeared in the colonial period. Holmes argues that "The perception of black people as hyper-sexualized and uncivilized paved the road for the dehumanization and sexual exploitation imposed upon black men and women brought to the New World." (Holmes, 02). In the novel, the term is first perceived through Durham's intimacy with Ambrosia when he was unconscious. It stimulates the colonizers' impression of the "virgin land" and the submissiveness of nature in relation to the innocence and naivety of the colonized. Durham gained sexual and racial satisfaction by educating the young Ambrosia in return for sexual intercourse. After his departure, he leaves her with his friend Sir Edmund Flecker Glenard, who uses her to satisfy his needs. The mere difference between the two is that Ambrosia loved the first, and he loved her back.

The perception does not end with the independence of Jamaica, it extended to the contemporary society through the Chalfens against the Jonses and the Iqbals. The moment the headmaster sends Irie and Millat to the Chalfens to be educated; Joyce and Marcus grow

interested in the opposite sex. Marcus shows an explicit interest in Irie's body, his way of sexualizing her is quite symbolic of Alsana's 'who want to teach you and steal from you at the same time' mentality. His erotic fantasy is present in, "Marcus was standing on the garden steps, quite openly admiring Irie's breasts" (Smith, 317). He is not ashamed of exposing his bad image, as it would not affect his long-established reputation. Correspondingly, Joyce becomes immediately attached to Millat's vicious deeds. Her fetishization lies in what one expects from a colored person, a barbarian who needs to be tamed. She keeps him under her control by providing him with whatever he wants. Her interest in Irie fades away as soon as she starts to assimilate, but Millat has always been out of her league. She loses her sanity when he disappeared for KEVIN, and realizes that the time of crisis has come. 'It's time because they need each other.' (Smith, 434). she attempts to solve this problem by digging into the source, which is the reconciliation with his parents. Although he returns a radical Islamist, she encourages him, neglecting her own child Josh and his involvement.

9. Extremism After Neglect

Joshua is highly affected by hybridity. The moment he engages with Irie and Millat, he falls into trouble. Yet, as a white person, his punishment is to educate the uneducated. Since then, his life changed. The core element of the Chalfens has been erased. Their purity is 'stained', and the roots of their family tree have started to grow another hybrid tree. Josh envies the Iqbal children for the freedom their parents granted them. However, he started to taste that sense of freedom which was in a matter of fact a parental neglect. He challenges this notion by joining a radical environmentalist group called FATE (Fighting Animal Torture and Exploitation) when his mother was mad about losing Millat. The aim of this cult is to destroy Marcus's FutureMouse. Marcus mentions this detail when Irie and Millat join their family not expecting his enemy to be his own son "...If the animal-rights lot saw these, I'd have a contract out on my life. One by one now. Don't grab." (Smith, 339). Joshua uses green extremism to fight

genetic extremism. He lost all of his Chalfenist thinking when he joined the group. The lack of guidance and supervision led to a drastic change in the Chalfen house, a crisis.

10.Ironesty: the Characters' Ironic Honesty

Irony and sincerity represent the backbone of *White Teeth* in all of its analyses. In this vein, *ironesty*, a concept employed by Demper which stands for the braiding of earnestness and irony to use irony for an earnest purpose (Demper a). Archie possesses a remarkable rank in this feature as one of the protagonists of the novel. Flipping the coin is an ironic method to determine life-or-death situations. He uses it in the murder attempt of Dr Perret, his own suicide attempt, keeping a coat stand, and sending one of the boys to Bangladesh. His earnestness in such situations shows which approach he follows, absurdism. His calm response to the bullet he received from Perret highlights how lost and dead he is. Although he is the face of individualism and fragmentation, his friendship with Samad is real and sincere. Then, Samad's inability to fix himself and strive for helping his children is not hypocritical but rather ironic. The metamodernist element is that the irony is underlined by sincerity, as he is aware of his vulnerability and his children's freshness of mind. The notion is present within the scientific community in the novel. The Nazi scientist is the mentor of Marcus a scientist of Jewish origins. They disregard origins for the enthusiastic purpose of scientific development. The novel is full of instances of this element making it a model metamodernist literary work.

11.A Metamodernist Solution

A metamodernist solution is presented through Irie. When she realizes that the ambiguity, engaging in sexual intercourse with twin brothers and becoming pregnant as a result, she had caused will never clarify, she chooses to embrace it. She cleverly considers Josh to raise with her the child she is carrying and makes the biological parent(s) close to their daughter, but with no authority over her. Along with that, Irie achieves her own historical certainty with the right

guidance and tools. She searches for her own origins through her grandmother since her parents are of no use. Jamaica has become now a paradise, reversing Durham's words which claim that Britain is one. She applies sincere emotions to a reckless act. She matures perfectly and steadily.

Conclusion

This chapter unleashed various dichotomies and meta-crises. Assimilation, fundamentalism, and existentialism are mere examples of what the novel tackles, as it encompasses demography, politics, and science in the making. *White Teeth* acts as an example of the contemporary phenomena with its complexities and their suggested solutions. The flow of oscillation is an example of potential solutions. It advocates neither certainty nor relativity, as it provides the necessity of both, yet not simultaneously. This analysis explores different angles of observing multiculturalism, whether spatially or temporal.

General Conclusion

This research succeeded to tackle the interconnectedness of metamodernism and meta-crisis in the novel. The harmonious relationship between the first two chapters has assisted to implement the contextualization of the novel. The theoretical chapter provides a basis for the second to bloom and reflect it. Some of the reasons that gave the movement its emergence are exemplified in the second chapter advocating for a change at the fundamental level. The issue this study explores is defined by the ideological perception of the first chapter. The literature review of the novel is placed strategically to harmonize the elements of both divisions. It bridges the gap between the examples of the movement and the issue of the work.

The analysis extracted the metamodernist elements of oscillation, return of the grand narratives, and pragmatic spirituality. It attempted to fathom meta-crisis using oscillation (between, beyond, and after modernism and postmodernism) as both a solution and a bigger issue. The first section of the last chapter introduced the impact of postmodernism which led to various meta-crises. Being associated with Kant's negative idealism, the use of oscillation illustrated the characters' embrace of falsehood to live peacefully. Besides, the grand narratives added more complexity and meaning to the novel's stream of actions. Different philosophies and controversies contributed to resulting in the stated meta-crises. Eventually, religion became as compromised as Britain's conservatism. The characters' perceptions of transcendentalism range from "as if" fundamentalism to atheism. The solid presence of metamodernism in the novel supports my claim on the association of the novel to the movement.

The dissertation resulted in addressing a number of meta-crises. Furthermore, it uncovered a deeper crisis than the first assumed which was immigration. Colonialism became the meta-crisis that led to immigration. This research does not regard the latter as a menace but rather the reason behind it which was the lack of reason and morals. Immigrants did not decode the dream

that was uttered by the colonizer so it resulted in a revival of colonialism. The latter did not leave but rather morphed ideologically. After the colonizers became the host in Britain, they imposed certain implicit rules to accept immigrants (the British community did not accept, only tolerated the immigrants). Another example of meta-crisis is the socio-emotional meta-crisis, i.e. the meta-crisis of the lack of the notion of “We”. This individualistic implication operates as a meta-crisis related to cosmopolitanism. Immigrants did not share a sense of collectivity which affected them negatively and led ideological colonialism to being established as the overpowering notion in multicultural Britain. The resolution was not among the initial interests while conducting on this topic, as the analysis implied metamodernism as both a methodology to meta-crisis and a solution to it.

This dissertation has been conducted cunningly for a number of factors. The work progressed regarding the shortage of reliable sources, and the lack of prior works on this topic. Time plays a significant role in delivering virtuous research, and mine seems heavy as a ton of bricks for the lack of time and the different views on the metamodernist concepts, as the movement is not widely established to describe the contemporary era. This analysis succeeded to cover different areas concerning the content of the novel. Thus, I urge scholars to investigate the form through a metamodernist lens. Regardless my topic, numerous movements have been attributed to postmodernism, including magical realism and ecopoetry, though they contradict some postmodernist principles. Thus, this research attempted to unleash a potential relatedness to metamodernism for further inspection.

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