THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
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THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF CHARACTERS IN ANDREA LEVY'S NOVELS *SMALL ISLAND* AND *FRUIT OF THE LEMON*

Master's Thesis

Edin Omerović

English Language and Literature

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Prof. Dr. Mine Özyurt Kılıç

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Enisa and Mirsad OMEROVIĆ.

I am truly blessed to have been raised and loved by you.

Thank you!

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ABSTRACT

THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF CHARACTERS IN ANDREA LEVY'S NOVELS *SMALL ISLAND* AND *FRUIT OF THE LEMON*

This dissertation explores the theme of immigrant disillusionment in Andrea Levy's novels *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*. Focusing on the experiences of the first and second-generation Windrush immigrant characters as they arrive in England, this study delves into the dissonance between their preconceived notions of the 'Mother Country' as a land of grand opportunities and their actual encounters with a society that challenges their expectations. Through meticulous analysis of character perspectives, interactions, and societal contexts, this dissertation sheds light on how Levy's characters grapple with the stark contrast between their idealized vision of England and the reality of a nation marred by racism and a lack of acceptance for those who defy the boundaries of traditional Englishness. Through its analysis of Levy's evocative portrayals of immigrant experiences, this dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between aspiration and disillusionment within the context of immigration. It sheds light on the emotional, psychological, and cultural conflicts faced by immigrants as they navigate a world that challenges their identities and disrupts their ideals. Ultimately, this research serves to illuminate the enduring relevance of these novels in fostering conversations about the complexities of immigration, belonging, and the disheartening discovery that the 'Mother Country' may not always live up to its promise of acceptance and opportunity.

Keywords: *disillusionment, migration literature, Windrush generation, Englishness, Andrea Levy*

August 31, 2023

ÖZET

ANDREA LEVY'NİN *KÜÇÜK ADA* VE *LİMONUN MEYVESİ* ROMANLARINDA KARAKTERLERİN GERÇEKLİĞE DÖNÜŞÜ

Bu tez, Andrea Levy'nin *Küçük Ada* ve *Limonun Meyvesi* adlı romanlarında göçmen karakterlerin deneyimlediği gerçekliğe dönüş temasını incelemektedir. Çalışmada ilk ve ikinci nesil Windrush göçmenlerinin İngiltere'ye ilk gelişlerindeki deneyimlerine odaklanılmış, ülkeye varmadan önce İngilitere'ye dair zihinlerindeki "büyük fırsatlar diyarı Ana Vatan" önyargısı ve karakterlerin beklentilerini yerle bir eden bir toplumla karşı karşıya kalmaları arasındaki uyumsuzluk irdelenmiştir. Tezde, karakterlerin bakış açılarının, hikayedeki etkileşimlerin ve sosyal bağlamların incelenmesi yoluyla Levy'nin karakterlerinin; idealleştirilmiş bir İngiltere vizyonu ve ırkçı düşüncelere gark olmuş, geleneksel anlamda İngilizlik tanımına birebir uymayanları dışlayan bir ulus arasındaki keskin zıtlıkla boğuşmaları gün yüzüne çıkartılmıştır. Levy'nin bu göçmenlerin deneyimlerine dair çağrışımlı tasvirlerini de inceleyen çalışma, göç bağlamı içerisinde iştiyak ve gerçekliğe dönüş arasındaki girift etkileşimin daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışma, göçmenlerin benliklerine meydan okuyan ve ideallerini yıkan bir dünyada tutunmaya çalışırken yüzleştikleri duygusal, psikolojik ve kültürel çatışmaları aydınlığa kavuşturmaktadır. Son olarak bu araştırma bu iki romanın göçe, aidiyete ve "Ana Vatan" kavramının her zaman sanıldığı gibi kucaklayıcı ve fırsatlarla dolu olmadığının acı farkındalığına dair fikir beyanına katkısındaki tartışmasız geçerliliğinin altını çizmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: gerçekliğe dönüş, göç edebiyatı, Windrush nesli, İngilizlik, Andrea Levy

31 Ağustos 2023

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Expectation is the root of all heartache.

-William Shakespeare

1.1. AIM OF THE STUDY

This thesis aims to investigate and analyse the theme of disillusionment among the immigrant characters in Andrea Levy's novels, *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*. Andrea Levy has been praised for her contributions to the field of migration literature and most of her literary *oeuvre* tells stories of immigrants, specifically the Caribbean immigrants in England. One of the most significant events in the history of migration in England, the Windrush generation, is Levy's primary source of inspiration for her novels, particularly the two novels to be analysed in this thesis in which the first and second-generation Windrush immigrants face the cruel reality of 'Mother Country'. The 'Mother Country,' as often cited in this study, is a term Caribbean immigrants used to refer to England. The concept of England as the 'Mother Country' held a powerful influence, ingrained in the minds of those within the British Empire through education, the Civil Service, and imperial ideology (Priyadharshni 10). This idea depicted England as a land of opportunities. Even though the colonies of the Empire were diverse and extensive, the belief in the 'Mother Country' led to a disregard for their territories in favour of England. This notion created a strong desire among people to someday live in England, painting an idealized and perfect picture of the country in their minds (Toplu 2). Despite never having met this 'Mother Country,' people in places like the Caribbean felt a deep affection for it, with stories and images of England being cherished across the colonies. Over time, this attachment led to celebrations and offerings for the 'Mother Country,' including assistance during its challenges, often at the expense of their own struggles.

First, a concise overview of the migration and postcolonial literature is given which sets the groundwork for the analysis of the two novels. The following parts provide insight into the history of migration in Britain since migration has played a significant role in shaping Britain's cultural landscape, with waves of immigrants arriving from various parts of the world over the

centuries. The Windrush generation from the Caribbean has especially contributed to the country's rich tapestry of diversity. However, these immigrants who arrived in Britain from the late 1940s to the 1970s faced pervasive everyday racism, which had profound and lasting impacts on their lives. Despite being invited to help rebuild post-war Britain, they encountered discrimination and hostility from both individuals and institutions. Many faced difficulties finding housing, securing employment, and accessing essential services, solely due to the colour of their skin, and the fact that they were immigrants. British society often subjected them to stereotypes and derogatory attitudes, leading to feelings of alienation and marginalization. These experiences have inspired a wide range of literature that explores the themes of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity. Andrea Levy is one of the authors that has skilfully depicted the experiences of immigrants and their descendants, offering poignant insights into the challenges and triumphs of navigating a new cultural terrain.

Following is a paragraph about the women writers of the Windrush generation as they have been historically overlooked. Namely, from the moment the Empire Windrush docked at Tilbury, the passenger manifest has been widely male-oriented with pictures of predominantly men descending the ship, the broadcasting of interviews featuring only the male passengers, and newspapers' reporting of their settlement in Britain. Windrush also brought along a significant number of Caribbean writers in Britain who portrayed the experiences of the Windrush generation in Britain. However, just as the pictures and videos showed only men alighting the Windrush ship, the voice and attention was mostly given to male writers. Similarly, the literary representation of the Windrush generation mostly focused on the struggles and lives of male immigrants. But what has often been overlooked and ignored is that there were also 257 female passengers on the Windrush, and 188 of them arrived in England alone ("Windrush Learning Resource"). Hence, this thesis apart, from providing a separate section on the women's writing from the Windrush generation, also focuses its primary analysis on a female Windrush generation writer.

Next, the thesis provides background information on Andrea Levy's family's immigration to England and her life growing up as a second-generation immigrant in England so as to set the groundwork for the analysis of her novels as they are semi-autobiographical. Having been introduced to Levy's background will help the reader grasp the aim of the study better. While presenting the life and career of Andrea Levy, an introduction of the term and concept of Englishness is discussed as it is an important factor when analysing the disillusionment of immigrant characters in Levy's novels. The concept of Englishness as used in this thesis is not

to be conflated with the concept of Britishness. Despite their interchangeable usage in specific contexts, it is imperative for the comprehension of this thesis to acknowledge that Britishness functions as a hypernym encompassing Englishness. Unlike Britishness, Englishness is commonly discussed within cultural discourses, including the realm of literature. This emphasis on Englishness is also evident in various academic disciplines that focus on topics such as "literature, popular culture, music, art, media, tourism, architecture, and humor" (Böhme 12). It is noteworthy that publications in these fields overwhelmingly concentrate on exploring Englishness rather than Britishness (12). When examining the notion of national identity within Britain, it becomes apparent that the distinction between Englishness and Britishness is inherently complex and difficult to define with precision. These concepts are inherently constructed and do not lend themselves to straightforward definitions. To circumvent this challenge, many writers across different genres have adopted a common approach of compiling a list of specific attributes they perceive to represent England. Namely, the question of Englishness and what it means to be English is an integral part in the identity search of second-generation immigrants in Levy's novels. Questions arise whether they will ever be 'English enough' or is it just their skin colour that stops them from attaining that ideal. Levy herself struggled with that notion and has her characters experience similar disillusionment with their identities, while the first-generation immigrants set out on a quest to be English by trying to keep their lives in their homeland of Jamaica secret. In fact, Andrea Levy occupies a unique position when it comes to the discourse on Englishness. She firmly asserts her English identity, despite having Caribbean heritage through her parents. Through her literary works, Levy exemplifies the intricate interplay of cultural identity, challenging the notion that Englishness is solely determined by ancestry. Her writings demonstrate that Englishness is a result of complex historical and societal factors.

While Levy was growing up, the general attitude towards migration and immigrants in Britain has started to be negatively amplified. It was during that time, in 1968 when Levy was 12 years old, that Enoch Powell, a Conservative Member of Parliament who served as the Shadow Defence Secretary, made his infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech. The speech was given to a small group of Conservative Party members in Birmingham, UK, and was formally titled 'To the Annual General Meeting of the West Midlands Area Conservative Political Centre'. The central theme of the speech was immigration and the integration of immigrants into British society. In the speech, Powell expressed his strong opposition to immigration, particularly from Commonwealth countries, and criticized the Race Relations Bill, which aimed to address racial

discrimination in the UK. He warned of what he believed were the potential consequences of continued immigration, stating that he foresaw "the black man holding the whip hand over the white man" (Barber et al.). The speech had a significant impact on the general attitude toward immigrants, contributing to increased xenophobia and hostility towards minority communities in the UK and “gave a fillip to popular racism that made the lives of black people hell” (Sivanandan 60). The collective impact of Powell's speech was the reshaping of a populist anti-immigration narrative that extended beyond the immediate context of its delivery. It resonated with broader segments of the population, further solidifying negative sentiments towards immigration and immigrants (Crines et al.). It greatly tapped into a certain strain of English nationalism that sought to uphold a traditional, homogeneous, and monocultural view of English society. It appealed to those who believed in a singular British identity and were apprehensive about the perceived dilution of that identity due to the influx of immigrants from Commonwealth countries (Whipple 720-730).

Levy, with her writings, helps challenge this idea of a uniform national identity and highlights the significance of diverse voices in British literature. Her exploration of Englishness in her works positions her as a legitimate British author, irrespective of her racial and ethnic background. In this manner, Levy's perspective redefines the boundaries of English literature, emphasizing the authenticity and legitimacy of her connection to England, like other black British authors that delve into themes of national belonging. However, it is not only black British authors who touch upon these topics. One such author is Magie Gee who through her works like *The White Family* (2002) portrays “the debilitating connotations of Englishness in an increasingly multicultural society,” (Kılıç, “Maggie Gee” 130;133) “problematizes both Englishness and displacement,” and criticizes the everyday racism, and “the territorial anxiety” and “the colonial past and its remnants in the present post-imperial Britain” (Kılıç, “Imagining Others’ Worlds” 112).

A couple of decades later after the infamous ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech, the political climate towards immigrants started to see a significant shift with names like Tony Blair, a British politician who served as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997 to 2007. Tony Blair's tenure witnessed notable advancements in support for immigrants within the English context. Through strategic legislative interventions and policy initiatives, his administration engendered a more inclusive and favourable environment for immigrants. This was exemplified by the implementation of migration-related Acts aimed at enhancing opportunities for immigrants seeking education and employment, thereby fostering a climate conducive to their

socio-economic integration and contribution to the host society. Over the span of a decade under Blair's leadership, the Labour administration successfully enacted four legislative Acts pertaining to migration within the Parliamentary domain, with an additional fifth Parliamentary Bill currently undergoing its conclusive stages of authorization (Somerville).

Following in 2010, a concept of 'Big Society' was introduced by David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The concept of 'Big Society' aimed to promote civic engagement and community empowerment, encouraging individuals and local organizations to take a more active role in addressing societal challenges (Balazard 507-510). Immigrants in England could have benefited from this approach through increased opportunities for community participation, social integration, and access to support networks. By fostering a sense of belonging and facilitating collaboration between diverse groups, the 'Big Society' concept potentially contributed to a more inclusive and cohesive society for immigrants, enhancing their overall well-being and social integration. While there is no direct evidence to suggest that the concept of the 'Big Society' by David Cameron was directly inspired by writers like Andrea Levy and Maggie Gee, it is plausible that their novels on migration and the struggles of immigrants may have influenced the broader societal discourse on community, identity, and inclusion. Immigrant authors, like Levy, through their literary works, have provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by immigrants in England, promoting a deeper understanding of diverse cultural experiences and fostering empathy. These narratives could have indirectly contributed to a more inclusive outlook and a greater recognition of the importance of community engagement and social cohesion. While the 'Big Society' concept itself emerged from David Cameron's vision for a smaller state and increased civic engagement, it is conceivable that the prevailing literary landscape and societal discussions on immigration and integration played a role in shaping the public's perception of the policy's objectives.

Even today, however, the situation is still far from perfect. Namely, the Windrush scandal, a deeply troubling incident that unfolded in the UK in 2018, cast a harsh spotlight on the mistreatment of the Windrush generation – immigrants from Caribbean nations who arrived between 1948 and 1971. This regrettable episode emerged due to a combination of factors including their lack of adequate documentation, the unintended consequences of the 'hostile environment' immigration policy, and the loss of crucial historical records. The repercussions of this scandal were profound, as members of the Windrush generation faced deportation threats, denied essential healthcare services, and even wrongful detention or deportation, all of

which prompted widespread public outcry and governmental action (Lammy). Judy Griffith, who arrived in the UK as a child in 1963 from Barbados, recalls being labelled an 'illegal immigrant' during her interview for the "British Library's" 'Windrush Stories'- an initiative that the "British Library" had undertaken to document and preserve the experiences, stories, and contributions of the Windrush generation and their descendants in the United Kingdom ("British Library – Windrush Stories"). She represents a group within the Windrush generation whose British citizenship status has been challenged, despite possessing indefinite leave to remain as a Commonwealth citizen (Griffith). Another case was the one of Paulette Wilson, a grandmother aged 61, who had come to the UK from Jamaica when she was ten years old in 1968. Paulette also found herself erroneously labelled as an illegal immigrant which led to her unjust confinement in the infamous immigration detention facility, Yarl's Wood, and she faced the prospect of being sent back to Jamaica—a country she had not visited for almost 50 years and where she had no surviving relatives. A significant revelation emerged from an email sent by the Refugee and Migrant Centre in Wolverhampton, indicating that the Home Office had mishandled her case. This evident blunder prompted swift action. Within a short span after the email's dispatch, Paulette was transported via a prison van to another detention centre located near Heathrow Airport. Her deportation would have transpired if the charitable organization's legal intervention had not intervened (Gentleman).

The Windrush Scandal's origin lies in the unique circumstances of the Windrush generation as their arrival preceded the imposition of stricter immigration controls, leading to a lack of proper documentation to prove their legal residency status. As the UK government implemented the 'hostile environment' policy, aimed at curbing illegal immigration, these legal immigrants found themselves entangled in a bureaucratic nightmare, as accessing essential services necessitated extensive proof of residency. The situation was exacerbated by the loss of historical records over time, creating further hurdles for the Windrush generation to establish their rightful place in the UK (Owen). However, this scandal is more than just a bureaucratic lapse as it exposed "a racist undercurrent that is as much part of Britain's present as it is of Britain's past" (Raval). April-Louise Pennant, a doctoral candidate focusing on the encounters of Black British women within the UK education system, asserts that the controversy revolves around attempts to strip individuals of their nationality or dictate their rightful place in Britain (qtd. in Raval). Also, Novlett Waugh, who migrated from Jamaica in 1960 with the aim of improving her life and aiding in the reconstruction of England, expressed her disappointment and sadness of the

fact that they are still not appreciated for their efforts and help with rebuilding the post-war England by saying:

> I thought they would treat us a bit more kindly. We spent all of our days here, we have no other home but Britain, this is the only home that we know now because if I go back to Jamaica I would be like a stranger there because all my young days and my life have been spent here. And I'm saying the government is a bit disingenuous to do this to the Windrush people and it makes me feel sad that the more you do, is the less you get (Appio 24).

In his article "Perspectives on the Windrush generation scandal", Lammy states how the consequences of the scandal were felt deeply. The threat of deportation loomed large for those who had lived in the UK for decades, while denial of critical services like healthcare and housing became distressingly common. Worse yet, some members of the Windrush generation were subjected to wrongful detention or deportation, often to countries they had little connection to. The public's outcry pushed the UK government to respond – a compensation scheme was established in 2019 to aid those who suffered due to the scandal's fallout. Additionally, commitments were made to review and reform the 'hostile environment' policy to prevent such injustices from recurring.

However, challenges persist in ensuring justice. Many victims continue to struggle to access the compensation they are entitled to, exposing flaws in the scheme's implementation. The incident underscores the need for comprehensive reforms within the UK's immigration system to prevent the recurrence of such injustices. The Windrush Scandal serves as a sobering reminder of the imperative for compassionate immigration policies and a robust support system for immigrants who have made substantial contributions to the UK's society and economy over the years (Hewitt 108-128). So, in 2018, as the 70th anniversary of the Empire Windrush's arrival, the 50th anniversary of Enoch Powell's divisive 'Rivers of Blood' speech, and the 25th anniversary of Stephen Lawrence's tragic murder, a racially motivated murder that occurred in 1993 in London that exposed deep-seated issues of institutional racism (Rollock), were observed, it became evident that the UK still faces significant challenges in improving race relations and migration dynamics. The Windrush scandal went beyond being an isolated bureaucratic error; it exposed a troubling and unresolved manifestation of deep-rooted racism fuelled by public concerns about immigration.

Starting with *Small Island* (2004), Levy's arguably most famous and acknowledged novel, the study will delve into the diverse expectations held by the immigrant characters and examine their collision with the harsh realities they encounter, leading to profound disillusionment upon arriving in the 'Mother Country'. In the novel, the characters represent the Windrush generation arriving in England in 1948 to help rebuild it after the casualties of World War II. These characters bear grand expectations of how they will be welcomed, accepted, and treated once there. In addition, they look forward to seeing the great 'Mother Country' in all its beauty they heard so much about and the vast opportunities they will find once there. This study aims to show how the reality of post-war England affects the characters' disillusionment and investigate how pivotal events and interactions within the narratives lead to the shattering of their expectations.

Next, *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) although released before *Small Island* is analysed second in this thesis. That is due to the fact that the narrative of the novel is set later than the one in *Small Island* and focuses on the second-generation Caribbean immigrant, Faith, who was born and raised in England. A brief background of the Windrush generation is also given to conclude the reasons for their migration and initial disillusionment faced, but the core of the narrative is the displacement of the second-generation immigrant that continues to struggle to fit in England. Here, the thesis also explores the emotional and psychological consequences of disillusionment on the characters' development and identity and reflects on the broader implications of the characters' disillusionment concerning race, identity, and belonging themes.

Furthermore, literary criticism and academic analyses of Levy's works will enhance the depth of understanding. This research seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature on Andrea Levy's novels by offering a comprehensive exploration of the theme of disillusionment and shattered expectations. By analysing the characters' experiences, the study will provide insights into how Andrea Levy underscores the intricacies of human emotions when confronted with harsh realities. Moreover, the research will add to the discourse on the broader themes of race, identity, and belonging in postcolonial literature, shedding light on the impact of historical contexts on individual expectations and disillusionment. Disillusionment in literature is commonly defined as a state of disenchantment or disappointment resulting from the loss of idealized beliefs, values, or expectations. It is often portrayed through narrative devices such as the deconstruction of previously held notions, the depiction of shattered dreams, or the exposure of harsh realities, leading characters and readers to confront the contrast between their initial optimistic perceptions and the harsh truth of their circumstances. Through nuanced character

development and evocative storytelling, literature presents the complexities of disillusionment, offering insights into human vulnerability, resilience, and the transformative impact of confronting disillusioned perspectives (Maher et al. 3-6).

Overall, this thesis aims to investigate and analyse the theme of disillusionment among characters in Andrea Levy's novels, *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* and claims that the disillusionment of characters in these two novels stems from their expectations that are ultimately shattered by bitter reality of a racist and inhospitable England. The study examines how characters' diverse expectations collide with harsh realities, leading to profound disillusionment in the 'Mother Country'. The analysis sheds light on the emotional and psychological consequences of disillusionment, reflecting on broader implications concerning race, identity, and belonging themes.

1.2. MIGRATION AND POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

It goes without saying that the world we know is, and for a long time has been, a world of migrations. Salman Rushdie famously stated how "mass migration and mass displacement are the distinguishing feature of our time," ("Step" 425) and one may think of it as a recent phenomenon, but migration has been an essential part of human existence for centuries. Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon that has played a pivotal role throughout human history. It involves the movement of individuals or groups from one location to another, either voluntarily or due to external circumstances (424). The motivations behind migration are diverse and can include seeking better economic opportunities, escaping conflict or persecution, reuniting with family members, or adapting to environmental changes. This movement of people transcends geographical boundaries and has far-reaching effects on both origin and destination societies. It influences cultural exchange, social dynamics, economic growth, and political landscapes. As societies continue to evolve, migration remains a complex and integral part of the global narrative, shaping the world in profound and often unforeseen ways (Ahmad xvi).

Migration has progressively assumed a substantial role in shaping fundamental societal pillars, including politics, economics, geography, and culture. The concepts of movement and migration, along with the associated notions of human restlessness and the emergence of novel identities through mobility, have significantly influenced the realm of literary creation. This

influence has given rise to a distinctive form of writing, characterized as a modern genre known as contemporary migration literature (Moslund 3). The term 'migration literature' implies a more comprehensive perspective, encompassing narratives that explore the entire spectrum of human movement across geographical boundaries compared to terms such as 'immigrant' or 'emigrant' literature. This includes stories not only of those who arrive in a new country (immigrants) or leave their home country (emigrants), but also narratives of people who move internally within a country, such as rural to urban migration or movement due to environmental factors. The term 'migration literature' reflects the fluid and complex nature of human mobility, acknowledging that people move for a variety of reasons, not limited to settling in a new land or leaving their homeland (Ahmad xv).

In *Migration and Literature*, Søren Frank outlines a series of overarching concepts and structural components that collectively establish the core of modern migration literature within the emerging realm of study. These proposed characteristics offer a foundational framework for understanding this novel genre. Among these qualities, the flexibility of personal identity in response to shifting cultural and geographical circumstances emerges as a salient focal point, reflecting the complex interplay of migration and self-exploration. The fusion of diverse backgrounds leading to cultural hybridity constitutes a noteworthy narrative thread, while the diversity of narrative viewpoints captures the varied array of experiences among migrants. At the heart of this genre lies the investigation into displacement, exile, and the yearning for belonging, all of which contribute to the intricate emotional landscape of characters' journeys. Language, serving as both a tool for communication and a marker of cultural affiliation, is often harnessed to replicate the linguistic adaptations of immigrants, thereby embodying themes of memory and wistfulness for their native land. The symbolic traversal of physical and metaphorical boundaries, coupled with the examination of societal concerns such as racism and integration, further enhances the narrative mosaic. Within this literature, global perspectives interweave with narrative experimentation, as authors employ diverse styles to portray the multifaceted nature of migration (17-20). Collectively, these suggested characteristics vividly illustrate contemporary migration literature, capturing the transformative odyssey of immigrants and its profound influence on both individuals and global communities.

Postcolonialism and its prominent theorists have significantly enriched migration literature "by discerning a comprehensive framework of features and principles" (de Haas 11), encompassing both thematic and stylistic dimensions. The intrinsic hallmark of this literary genre lies in its central concentration on the marginalized segments of societies, specifically the

migrant population, aligning it with the tenets of postcolonial theory. Moslund rationalizes this linkage through the assertion that "postcolonialism is, admittedly, an important element of the overall image of the twentieth century as the age of wandering" (qtd. in Pourjafari and Vahidpour 680).

While colonialism dates back to antiquity, it is most commonly associated with European colonial expansion, which began in the 15th century and spanned varied areas in "Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands, and South America" (Webster). In turn, postcolonialism constitutes both an academic paradigm and a temporal delineation referring to the period following the end of colonial dominance (Wiemann 1). Postcolonialism, as a historical epoch, encompasses the post-World War II period characterized by the process of decolonization. Despite the political disappearance of colonialism "the cultural values of the colonial period remained and manipulated the lives of the individuals who were celebrating their independence and freedom" (Pourjafari and Vahidpour 683).

Postcolonialism is defined as an "interdisciplinary field rooted in cultural and literary studies that focuses on the lingering impact of modern European colonization" (Vives and Mohabir 289) that emerged in the late 1980s first in the United States and made its way into Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom in the 1990s. When it first emerged, it involved studies of literature from the so-called third world or developing countries, but contemporary postcolonial studies have broadened their purview to encompass various literary manifestations. These studies now encompass not only the examination of literary works authored by citizens of present or past colonies but also those penned by writers hailing from colonizing nations, reflecting upon the colonized territories. Furthermore, postcolonial analysis extends to any literary production that bears relevance to the historical colonial empire, thereby embracing a diverse array of literary expressions. However, one must not assume that the 'post' in postcolonialism means that colonialism is a matter of the past, that it has ended, or that imperialism has ended. Therefore, the term 'postcolonialism' is imperfect.

Postcolonial literature, at first referred to as Commonwealth literature, was shaped after the former British Empire retreated from Africa, India, and the Caribbeans. However, the term postcolonial is of an American-made labelling, and this is how Jussawalla explains the coining of the term:

> At first labelled 'Commonwealth literature,' as countries gaining independence continued to stay connected to the British government via the 'Commonwealth,' this

> literature was then re-labelled ‘‘postcolonial literature’’ by American critics. Fredric Jameson’s famous 1986 conference at Duke University on Third World literature, at which he presented his talk, ‘Third World Literature in an era of multinational capitalism,’ formally subsumed literatures from the Commonwealth under the aegis of ‘postcolonial literatures.’ ‘Postcolonial,’ then, is a term that emerged from the American academy, building upon Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s plea to the US Senate to erase the debt of nations recovering from colonialism (96).

For some scholars, the concept of Commonwealth literature is highly explicit because it refers to the works of literature from former British colonies or nations under Britain’s dominance. It is possible to include some new nations who had not been colonised but still joined the Commonwealth unison. Other scholars like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a prominent postcolonial theorist, has critiqued this concept in her essay titled "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," though, regarding the matter to be more complicated than that, and considers even the idea of a Commonwealth literature to be limiting or misguiding (254). Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha, a prominent postcolonial theorist, has engaged with the concept of Commonwealth literature in his work, particularly in his influential book *The Location of Culture*. Bhabha's work encourages a more nuanced and complex understanding of postcolonial literature, moving beyond rigid categories and embracing the hybridity and diversity of cultural expressions. He advocates for a recognition of the ambivalence and in-between spaces in postcolonial narratives, which emerge from the encounter between colonial and indigenous cultures (171-179). For Salman Rushdie, for example, it is a ‘patronising’ term, and there is an uncertainty regarding the case of non-white and/or non-Briton Commonwealth writers who chose English to narrate their stories, but if they would be ‘permitted into the club’ if they switched to their own languages (62). Rushdie’s biggest criticism in his collection of essays and criticism “Imaginary Homelands” is about the segregationist aspect of the term:

> By now 'Commonwealth literature' was sounding very unlikeable indeed. Not only was it a ghetto, but it was actually an exclusive ghetto. And the effect of creating such a ghetto was, is, to change the meaning of the far broader term 'English literature'—which I'd always taken to mean simply the literature of the English language—into something far narrower, something topographical, nationalistic, possibly even racially segregationist (63).

Postcolonial literature undertakes the critical task of contesting dominant narratives surrounding colonialism and its subject populations. By offering alternative perspectives, it

humanizes characters who have historically been depicted using colonial stereotypes. Serving as a potent medium, postcolonial literature showcases the artistic prowess of former colonies and endeavours to present their cultures in ways that challenge and counter prevailing stereotypes. Through its portrayal of diverse experiences and voices, this literature seeks to dismantle misconceptions and reshape perceptions about postcolonial societies, fostering a more nuanced and accurate understanding of their complexities and contributions (Thamarana 537-541).

Considering the broad scope of postcolonial studies, a theory that has encompassed a wide range of themes and achieved prominence in modern literature, it is primarily concerned with exploring, as Shrikan states, "cultural contradictions, ambiguities, and perhaps, ambivalences" (126). Within this framework, migration literature has been recognized by critics as a subset that delves into the consequences of cultural clashes between two distinct societies. The importance postcolonial theory holds in contemporary cultural studies underscores the significance for scholars and critics to diligently examine the fundamental principles and various facets of migration literature and criticism. Doing so is essential to keep abreast of the global developments in literary theories and movements. As literature and societies continue to evolve, a meticulous and precise study of migration literature becomes imperative to gain deeper insights into the complexities of cultural interactions and the ever-changing human experience (Pourjafari and Vahidpour 682).

Postcolonialism serves as a valuable framework for examining history through diverse viewpoints. This approach is exemplified in the works of prominent figures such as Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and others, who have contributed to the field of postcolonial studies. This discipline offers an alternative perspective to comprehend the complexities of a contemporary phenomenon: migration. Applying the theoretical underpinnings of postcolonial studies to the subject of migration proves fruitful due to the marginalized positioning of migrants within society. Often, migrants find themselves subjected to the dominant claims of the majority, leading to power imbalances and hegemonic dynamics in their experiences. Consequently, postcolonial theories provide valuable insights into understanding and contextualizing the multifaceted issues surrounding migration in the present world.

1.2.1. Postcolonial Caribbean Writing

Postcolonial Caribbean writing corresponds to the literary work of writers who were mostly born in the Caribbean area after the independence of the former British colonies in this area, and these writings extensively deal with the problems having arisen from the huge waves of migration from the new sovereign nations to the British Isles mainly for the purpose of finding employment and better living conditions. Suketu Mehta's maxim "We are here because you were there" is one tragicomic way to explain the postcolonial Caribbean writers' struggles to establish their place as immigrants in a challenging diaspora atmosphere (Frankenberg and Mani 293). According to King, postcolonial literature does not mean the same thing as post-colonialism or post-colonial study (809-923). While the latter aims to scrutinize the power relationships between the colonisers and the colonised, even being against literary works blaming them for being "elitist" as they might reflect the values of the colonisers, the postcolonial literature does not have such concerns.

The analysis of the literature created by "Anglophone Caribbean" writers indicates that there is a distinction between the works created before and after 1970; the ones written before that time mostly were dominated by male authors, focusing on stories of exile in a rather conservative tone as opposed to the works created after 1970 which were extensively written by female authors who discussed bolder topics such as sexuality, identity, and other areas considered to be "taboos" (Page 15). Despite these differences, Page discusses that one common point that brings all these authors that wrote before and after 1970 together is how the characters in the stories are in a state of purgatory, experiencing a sense of "in-betweenness", belonging to neither where they came from and where they are now. Therefore, the topic of identity has always been at the centre of Caribbean writing, but contemporary authors were additionally able to merge identity with the issues of sexuality, racism, nationalism, and language (15-16).

1.3. THE HISTORY OF MIGRATION AND RELATED LITERATURE IN BRITAIN

Similar to the cases of many European countries who have a long history of imperial expansion and colonial power, Great Britain has experienced immigration in different periods of history in different forms, arousing lots of public debate and contention. Hartner and Schneider state that a considerable deal of published work concerning immigrants and their

accounts from their own perspectives were created in recent decades (413). These accounts are categorised and analysed under the body of what scholar call 'Black British Literature' or 'Black and Asian British Literature' (Nasta and Stein 2), and they often narrate cases of how the immigrants were discriminated by the society, how they struggled in between their dual identities, and how difficult it was to be raised in a multicultural context (Hartner and Schneider 413). In this respect, it is quite possible to claim that for both the immigrants and the children they raised in the new country, what they expected and what they experienced in reality were highly different from one another. Kamau Braithwaite, an influential Caribbean poet and literary scholar, is closely connected to migration literature through his exploration of the African diaspora experience and the cultural impact of migration on the Caribbean region. His works often delve into themes of displacement, identity, and the complex legacy of colonialism, making him a significant figure in the realm of migration literature, particularly within the context of the Caribbean and its diasporic communities. In *To Sir, With Love* (1959), Braithwaite, portrays this concussion caused by the gap between his expectations as an immigrant and real life perceptions as a schoolteacher:

> I had believed in an ideal for all the twenty-eight years of my life – the idea of the British Way of Life [...]. Because of it, I had never sought to acquire American citizenship, and when [...] I came to England for postgraduate study in 1939, I felt that at long last I was personally identified with the hub of fairness, tolerance and all the freedoms [...] I volunteered for service with the Royal Air Force in 1940, willing and ready to lay down my life for the preservation of the ideal which had been my lodestar. But now that self-same ideal was gall and wormwood in my mouth (35).

Additionally, racism and inequality were two major factors that shaped both their lives in England and their narratives of these experiences. Nasta and Stein mention a conscious effort to maintain British society as 'white', practicing explicit discrimination towards Black, Asian, and Irish immigrants through accommodation signs such as 'No Irish, no Blacks, no Dogs' (17). Similarly, Memmi states how "racism is the highest expression of the colonial system as the groundwork of fundamental discrimination between superior and inferior" (118). The racism directed towards the Windrush generation in England can be seen as a tragic manifestation of the historical concept known as the 'White Man's Burden'. This notion, which emerged during the era of European colonialism, portrayed white Europeans as having a moral obligation to civilize and govern non-white populations around the world. In the case of the Windrush generation, this racist attitude may have been rooted in a sense of superiority and entitlement,

where some segments of the British population believed they had the duty to judge, discriminate against, and even oppress the newcomers. The racism experienced by the Windrush generation can thus be viewed as a continuation of the harmful colonial ideologies that justified discrimination and mistreatment based on race. In addition, 'skinheads' in England have historically been associated with racist and xenophobic ideologies, and their presence is closely linked to the racism directed towards the Windrush generation. During the 1960s and 1970s, some factions of the skinhead subculture embraced far-right and white supremacist beliefs, leading to racially motivated violence and discrimination against immigrants, including those from the Windrush generation. The skinhead movement became a visible manifestation of the racial tensions and prejudices within British society, perpetuating a hostile environment for immigrants and contributing to their mistreatment and discrimination.

In fact, these immigrants in England were often a target of what has been coined as 'everyday racism', a concept "originally developed in two comparative studies between the Netherlands and the USA (Essed, 1984; 1990; 1991) and adopted and applied to the study of racism in other countries, including South Africa (Louw-Potgieter, 1989: Essed 1990), Switzerland (Shaha, 1998), Canada (das Gupta,1996), the UK (Twine, 1998), and in specific areas such as public health (Jackson et al. 1996) and private business organizations (Human & van Schalkwyck, 1998)" (Essed 205). According to Essed, everyday racism correlates to "day-to-day experiences of racial discrimination to the macrostructural context of group inequalities represented within and between nations as racial and ethnic hierarchies of competence, culture, and human progress" (203). Everyday racism is distinguished by its focus on everyday activities rather than overtly egregious incidents. In the context of immigrants in the UK, an example of such is represented in asking them what may seem as simple and innocent questions like where they come from and where they were born. These types of questions convey the message that they are not English and that they are foreigners there which makes them feel alienated in their own land. Similarly, making comments on their good command of the English language and being articulate in it, translates to again segregating them from the English society as outsiders and degrades their intelligence by being surprised that they are articulate and "a credit to their race" which stems from the preconceived notation that people of colour are not as intelligent as white people (Sue et al. 276). This distinctive attribute, however, does not imply that everyday racism exhibits a more benevolent form of racism. Despite its casual connotation, everyday racism has been demonstrated to have profound psychological ramifications, dispelling the notion of it being relatively harmless and innocuous. Namely, as shown in studies by Fulani

(1988) and Jackson et al. (1996), “psychological stress due to racism on a day-to-day basis can have chronic adverse effects on mental and physical health” (qtd in. Sue at al. 204).

Overall, the primary attributes of everyday racism can be succinctly outlined as follows: everyday racism encompasses a process whereby ingrained racist beliefs are incorporated into meanings that facilitate immediate comprehension and handling of actions. Next, practices with racist undertones become familiar and recurrent in themselves, and finally underlying racial and ethnic relations are brought into effect and reinforced through the repetition of these routines in everyday scenarios. The experience of everyday racism occurs both directly and vicariously. Due to its pervasive nature within daily life, it exerts a more deleterious impact on health compared to sporadic and overt encounters with racism. Everyday racism entails cumulative actions that are often concealed and challenging to identify precisely. Specific incidents obtain significance considering the three fundamental processes through which racism operates in ordinary existence: the marginalization of racial and ethnic groups, the problematization of presumed group traits and culture, and the suppression of potential counteractive measures (Essed 208). Many old and new accounts of immigrants in England attest to being subject to everyday racism as in the example of Sally Sullivan, a resident of Gravesend, who migrated to England from Trinidad and Tobago in 1954. She dedicated over 38 years of service to the NHS and despite her valuable contributions, she expressed feeling unwelcome and faced discrimination in what she and many others considered to be their ‘Mother Country’. Recounting her experiences, Mrs. Sullivan shared instances of verbal abuse and derogatory name-calling she endured, especially during her interactions with patients. She recalled distressing incidents where patients would refuse her care based on her race and inquire if she possessed animal-like features such as a tail (Choudhry). In addition, an unprecedented study has revealed the significant presence of racial bias experienced by black, Asian, and minority ethnic individuals in modern England. The study, conducted by surveying 1,000 people from minority ethnic backgrounds, highlighted a pronounced disparity in the treatment and daily experiences of individuals belonging to different ethnicities. The results consistently indicated that those from minority ethnic backgrounds were more susceptible to negative encounters, often linked to everyday racism, in comparison to white individuals surveyed in a separate poll. This research sheds light on the persisting challenges faced by minority communities and underscores the need for addressing and rectifying systemic racial inequalities in the country (Booth and Amna). Andrea Levy, among other postcolonial writers such as Sam

Selvon, Maggie Gee, Zadie Smith, and Toni Morrison, gives literary representation of everyday racism.

A third complication that caused those immigrants' lives to be difficult was the restriction in bringing their cultural heritage into the new country, and not being able to either practice it or pass it on to new generations. The situation was especially challenging for the generations who were born in the immigrated country as they had to carry dual heritage, stuck between the responsibility to maintain their parents' heritage, and having to adopt the heritage of the new country to blend in.

One of the reasons why Great Britain attracted so many immigrants was its colonial spread, and one of the places that got its own share of this colonialism was Jamaica, an island nation located in the Caribbean Sea. The British colonisation of this island began roughly around 1650s as the country was trying to enlarge its profit through cultivation and harvest of sugar cane, a practice that was mainly run through slavery at the time (Walvin 3-5). At first, Jamaica was a thriving economic centre in the Caribbeans, and it lured lots of white settlers from the colonies nearby or from the British Isles. As in other colonies such as America, discrimination and inequality were at their highest during these periods, and the white/European settlers were privileged in front of the law and in all other strands of the daily life while the Black people had no rights, only existing through their recognition as slaves whose labour was immensely needed (Fergus). This cruel practice ended much later, in 1834, with The Slavery Act of Abolition 1833 that banned purchase and ownership of slaves across the British Colonies, with the exception of East India. Jamaica finally gained its independence from Great Britain, after 300 years of colonisation on 6 August 1962, which is celebrated as the national Independence Day by Jamaicans today (Walvin 5-6).

From the eighteenth century through the end of the nineteenth century, different ethnic groups from different former British colonies moved into British Isles in different waves in different periods. Tidrick argues that Jamaicans began to migrate to the United Kingdom in considerable numbers around 1953, and this large-scale movement was slowed down in 1962 with the ratification of the British Commonwealth Immigration Act (22). The Commonwealth people from the former colonies who migrated into the British Isles are called the 'Windrush Generation', encompassing mostly African-Caribbean people, along with Chinese and Indian descent people having arrived in the Caribbeans to become indentured servants (del Pilar Kaladeen and Dabydeen 1). Obviously, the 1948 British Nationality Act was a great motive for these people, promising citizenship, and residency in the UK for everyone from different parts

of the former British Empire. With a detailed footnote on their introduction chapter, this is how del Pilar Kaladeen and Dabydeen describe the significance of truly understanding this generation:

> It is important to note that ships carrying Caribbean migrants arrived before this date. However, the 1948 Commonwealth Act, which reaffirmed the right to British nationality of citizens of the Commonwealth, was an attempt to foster an environment that would enable men and women from across the British Empire to live and work in the UK, fulfilling the nation's urgent need for labour and helping to rebuild cities devastated by the Second World War. The establishment of the National Health Service in the same year created a significant part of the need for a workforce who largely came from the Caribbean, India, and Pakistan (1).

It is apparent that the Commonwealth Act of 1948 and the flow of immigrants in the aftermath were expected to help the UK to recover from the wounds of the Second World War, as large-scale wars have shattered large proportions of populations and created huge deficiencies in labour force throughout history. However, the society was not as aware and knowledgeable in terms of ethnicity, colour, and human rights as it is today, so it was only inevitable that these larger groups of 'aliens' met racism and discrimination from the first day they arrived. Heidi Safia Mirza, born to an Australian mother and a Trinidadian father during the Windrush movement, says in her book titled *Race, Gender and Educational Desire* how "White women, … who married black men – those so-called 'dark strangers' – are the silent heroes of this generation". "My Mother protected her children's identity and made me understand both sides to my heritage" (8), she says, emphasising the presence of a dual heritage.

1.4. WINDRUSH GENERATION AND ITS PLACE IN MIGRATION LITERATURE

The "Windrush" generation gets its name from a ship, "His Majesty's Transport (HMT) Empire Windrush", that carried 1,027 passengers to the Tilbury dock in the east of London, Essex, in 1948 (Monrose 21) and represents "a singularly powerful symbol of how West Indians and their children came to Britain after World War II and changed British national life for the better" (Wardle and Obermuller 3). Among those 1,027 passengers that came to "fill labour gaps following the war most were black and brown men and women from the English-speaking colonies" (Gomes and Torrington 179). The travellers originated from British colonies such as

"Bermuda, British Guiana (now Guyana), British Honduras (now Belize), Jamaica, and Trinidad" (179). Although Black/African-descended individuals were prominently visible among the passengers, the group also comprised West Indians from various ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diverse demographic composition of the Caribbean. However, despite the diverse backgrounds in terms of nationality, ethnicity, race, and colour among the passengers, the British government categorized all these travellers under the collective label of 'coloured immigrants'. Additionally, the term 'Windrush Generation' is attributed to Samuel Beaver King, a former Royal Air Force serviceman from the West Indies, who employed it to designate his own contemporaneous group of West Indian men and women arriving from the colonies (Wardle and Obermuller 179).

This journey from the former colonies to the 'Mother Country' has been told in numerous works of fiction and non-fiction, including biographies, novels, poems, and songs, and all these works are gathered under the title of 'Windrush writing'. Arrival at the 'Mother Country' was a real culture shock to these immigrants in many aspects. The education they had been through in the Caribbean was firmly shaped around the Edwardian and Victorian understanding of British empire and its values, so this transition to the British Isles was also a transition to real British citizenship (Pryce 22). Pryce, additionally, argues that what this change of places meant for these people was an upward movement from the underdeveloped islands to a more civilised, advanced way of living in the 'Mother Country'. However, no British value or way of living could save these immigrants from facing the hardships of finding jobs and accommodation upon arriving in England (23).

The writings of these original immigrants and the writings by their descendants are particularly important in the canon of the British literature from many aspects. Along with being capable of portraying quite vivid pictures of pre- and post-war conditions experienced in London and other regions of England, these works well depict the new British experience of multi-races and multiculturalism, the ongoing search for a national identity. For Weiss, this immigration process always ended with a return trip as these writers had to imaginatively (or in reality) return to their homeland to publish their work and make connections with their ethnic backgrounds. A return trip or not, this change of places definitely meant a "self-transformation and a sharply changed sense of identity in relation to place" (163-164).

There is a considerable number of literary works of fiction and non-fiction produced by many authors from the Caribbean Commonwealth nations, both immigrants themselves and their descendants who were born in the British Isles after the migration. These works deal with

different aspects of the Windrush Generation. Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, born in Trinidad in 1932, is one of the postcolonial authors avoiding being classified as either a 'Caribbean' or 'black British', which seems to place his work in the correct place in the literature quite a challenging task (Jussawalla 104-106). According to Jussawalla, "Naipaul's case, like Salman Rushdie's, demonstrates the importance of archival and interview records that indicate the writer's sense of identity and belonging" (105).

Samuel Selvon is another Trinidadian author, having been born on the island in 1923 and migrated to the UK after the British Nationality Act of 1948 through British citizenship ("Britannica"). One of his well-known works, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) narrates the stories of a group of immigrants from West India who are struggling to build a life and hold onto it in London where post-war conditions are severely formidable for all, native or immigrant. What makes this novel distinguished from other postcolonial novels is its lack of a plot in the traditional sense, rather focusing on the daily accounts and lifestyles of many different characters, such as 'Captain', a Nigerian immigrant who is portrayed with his fondness of women and cigarettes although he is supposed to finish a law school. Houlden argues that the novel is criticised for its portrayal of women and the way it associates segregationist behaviour by black heterosexual males with triumphalism, emphasising that Selvon's "presentation of inter-racial sex reveals a persistent and deeply felt concern about white fetishization of the black body". However, the novel seems to be an important contribution to the postcolonial literature because it sheds light onto the affairs in the daily lives of Caribbean immigrants during the relevant times. Another interesting novel from the period that deals with the issues of gender and identity is *Escape to an Autumn Pavement* (1960) by Andrew Salkey, a Jamaican writer and poet who was born in Panama in 1928 and moved to the UK in 1952 ("Andrew Salkey: 'Too Polemic. Too Political'"). The novel tells the reader about the story of a Jamaican exile, Johnnie Sobert, who works in London. The events throughout the novel are concentrated around Johnnie's search for his true sexual orientation. According to Boxill, Johnnie is dominated by several women throughout the story and emasculated by them, which in return causes him to feel inferior and hostile. Boxill argues the matricentric nature of the slavery practices in the West Indies empowered women while they were rather weakening for the masculinity of slave men (146-149). In a sense, this weakening might have contributed to the rise of the feminist movement and the identity search of many individuals like Johnnie. It is clear from the narratives in these works and the criticism on them that they might have been successful attempts in depicting the Windrush immigrants' daily life and problems in a realistic way.

However, they were touching upon important matters of race, gender, and social status through the filters of slavery and colonialism (Boxill 148; Houlden 32), not having reached yet the postcolonial criticism filter Levy and similar contemporary authors adopted (Çal 12).

Some of the works written about the Windrush Generation are more contemporary, still depicting a very realistic picture of the period. One common feature of such contemporary works is that they are usually written by descendants of the immigrants, usually as non-fiction pieces to narrate real experiences of earlier generations, so the authors both honour their heritage and narrate their parents' and/or grandparents' stories combining their first-hand experience accounts with their own unique perspectives and style.

One of these authors is Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff, whose mother is a second-generation Caribbean-British citizen and whose father is British. Her family moved to Edinburgh when she was nine years old, and she experienced great identity crisis because of being half-black. She completed her university degrees on journalism, and she was a freelance writer for "The Guardian". Since 2015, she has been a deputy editor for 'gal-dem', an online magazine published by women and non-binary people of colour on several topics such as race, identity, and gender ("Charlie Brinkhurst Cuff – gal-dem"). She is known for her work related to her ancestors' experiences, which is titled *Mother Country: Real Stories of the Windrush Children* published in 2018. The book is made up of biographical anecdotes of real first, second, and third generations of Caribbean immigrants and their not-so-pleasant experiences concerning many topics ranging from employment to healthcare ("The Windrush Generation and the Mother Country"). Dexter argues that Brinkhurst-Cuff not only shares the accounts of the Windrush Generation, but also reflects experiences of all people with African, Chinese, and Indian heritage. Additionally, the book is significant in terms of including the female voice, giving the women of the Windrush era an opportunity to be heard. The stories, some of which are narrated by Brinkhurst-Cuff and some by others, project a constant search for identity and belonging which heavily depends on "knowing where you come from and asking before it's too late, of finding your place, of not being Black enough in communities in the UK, or not being Caribbean enough when you go back 'home'" (Dexter). In addition, Cummings, an associate professor who teaches a course titled "Windrush Writing/Writing Windrush: Empire, Race and Decolonization" at McMaster University, elaborates how authors like Brinkhurst-Cuff and others "are united by the experience of migration and they explore and write about that experience in their work — and, of course, linked to that are questions around cultural

encounters, particularly encounters with Britain in relation to the histories of colonialism in the Caribbean" (qtd. in Laux).

1.5. WOMEN'S WRITING FROM THE WINDRUSH GENERATION

As stated previously, postcolonial Caribbean writings in English literature are mostly male dominated, and women writers are mostly descendants of the original immigrants, who are the Windrush Generation. These writings could be gathered under the banner of "Black British Feminism", a critical social theory aiming to achieve social justice and empowerment of women of colour (Mirza 20). Gireesh and Indu argue that the voice of the black women heard through the Windrush Generation poetry was that of a victim's, and even the feminist movement led by white women saw them that way (1636).

Despite this male-dominant characteristic, Windrush also raised some female voices such as Una Marson, who produced BBC's 'Caribbean Voices', a radio program that aired from 1943 to 1958 ("Caribbean Voices"), featuring literary works and poetry from Caribbean writers, telling the tales of early immigrant experiences through poetry and Beryl Gilroy narrating her own experiences as a Black teacher in 1950s Britain through memoirs (Lowe 3-4). More contemporary Windrush women writers are mostly characterised by having been born in the UK between the 1970s and 1990s, and the list includes names such as Grace Nichols, Joan Riley, Merle Collins, Malorie Blackman (3). Respectively, Andrea Levy is an important name on this list of writers. Lowe states:

> The work of the writers mentioned here offers a vast and multifarious picture of the experience of being black and British, and taken together, responds to the significant political, social and cultural changes that have taken place in Britain between 1948 and 2018. It was the changed attitudes towards multiculturalism in the late 1990s, for example, that encouraged and sanctioned the inaugural celebrations of Windrush, and fostered a climate in which literary depictions of multicultural Britain – Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island* are key examples – were celebrated (4).

These influential authors hold immense significance in the examination of migration literature and Windrush writing. They have provided distinct and multifaceted perspectives on the experiences of the Caribbean diaspora in Britain, shedding light on intricate themes of identity, belonging, displacement, and cultural amalgamation. Their compelling narratives have

illuminated the challenges, resilience, and aspirations of the Windrush generation and subsequent Caribbean immigrants, effectively challenging stereotypes and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Through their literary contributions, they have not only enriched the body of migration literature but have also played a crucial role in shaping public discourse on race, heritage, and the evolving notion of home in an ever-globalizing world. By documenting the real-life experiences of the Windrush generation and its aftermath, these female writers have become indispensable pillars in comprehending the complexities of migration and promoting increased empathy and understanding across cultural boundaries.

Andrea Levy is one of these post-Windrush female authors, and she is mostly known for her two successful novels, *Small Island* (2004) and *The Long Song* (2010). Her work mostly depicts a clear picture of post-war Britain, focusing on the struggles and disillusionment of immigrants and black Britons in 'Mother Country'. The current study focuses on Levy's two novels *Small Island* (2004) and *The Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) in order to scrutinise how Levy fictionalises the Windrush experience and their disillusionments with the perspective of a Windrush descendent, both within and outside the British land where her parents' Caribbean identities and immigrant experiences lie.

1.6. ANDREA LEVY'S LIFE AND CAREER

Andrea Levy is a prize-winning British author whose parents were originally from Jamaica, and she could be recited as one of the most significant voices of the British literature in the contemporary era. All her work is both a dedication to and a search for her identity and heritage, and her most cherished works such as *Every Light in the House Burnin'* and *Small Island* carry significant references to this dedication and search ("Andrea Levy - Author"). This is the reason why having a close look at her parents' and her life stories might shed a light onto the analysis of her two novels to be dealt with in this thesis.

Born to Jamaican parents on March 7, 1956, in London, England, Andrea Levy, the youngest of four children, had envisioned herself an ordinary London girl and it was not until she reached her late twenties that she fully accepted and embraced her Jamaican roots and identity as a black person. That instilled notion was a choice inflicted on Levy by her parents, Winston and Amy Levy, who immigrated to England in 1948. Her father was a passenger on the Empire Windrush ship and approximately five months later, her mother joined him after

traveling on a Jamaica Banana Producer's boat. Upon arriving to 'Mother Country', Levy's parents, her mother in particular, had been overly adamant for all of them to be as English as they could (Levy, "Six Stories" 5-7).

1.6.1. Attaining the Englishness

'Englishness' is a construct shaped by individuals' linkages to English historical events and distinctive English traits. These factors converge to shape a shared sense of identity that resonates with emotions of unity and affiliation (Böhme 4). The origin of 'Englishness' as a construct can be traced back to the Middle Ages with the birth of an idyllic vision of England termed 'Merry England,' often spelled 'Merrie England' in historical texts, and reflects both historical realities and imaginative ideals that shaped the cultural identity of the English people. Roy Judges states how 'Merrie England' is, in fact, "a world that has actually never existed, a visionary, mythical landscape" (131). As such, this construct encompasses an idyllic vision of English society and culture, rooted in an idealized pastoral way of life purportedly present in Early Modern Britain, spanning the transition from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Revolution. This vision paints a portrait of a simpler, communal, and harmonious existence, resonating with sentiments of nostalgia and collective identity (Barber 2). Bending adds how Merry England "has a deceptively timeless air. It evokes images of rural bounty and festivity, sustained by values of community and underpinned by centuries of tradition" (94).

The origin of this notion can be traced back to the works of literature, folklore, and storytelling that proliferated during and after the early modern period. Literary works such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* contributed to the development of a shared cultural narrative, weaving together tales of chivalry, honour, and rural simplicity. These narratives were not mere reflections of historical accuracy but rather artistic interpretations that moulded perceptions of the past. The works of Shakespeare, particularly his comedies and historical plays, further cemented the image of an idyllic England where nature and humanity were in harmony, contributing to the construction of Englishness (Chesterton). However, it is important to acknowledge that this romanticized notion of Englishness was not without its drawbacks. While it spoke to a shared heritage and cultural identity, it often excluded those who did not fit into the prescribed narrative, particularly immigrants and black individuals. This exclusionary aspect underscores the

selective nature of the construction of Englishness, revealing its susceptibility to political and social influences.

The term ‘Englishness' seems to have emerged in 1805, as noted by Langford. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the first book with ‘Englishness’ in its title was published in 1956, as mentioned by Vaughan. However, it is important to emphasize, as Langford points out, that the introduction of the term does not imply "that an idea of national identification had not existed earlier" (qtd. in Böhme 8).

Literature has consistently served as a significant conduit for the intricate deliberation of a nation's collective identity, a notion persistently present throughout its history. English literature, in particular, “has a rich tapestry of narratives that grapple with the state of the nation, national character, and various identities” (Böhme 14). These narratives endure and remain impactful through their incessant retelling. In the Renaissance period, Shakespeare as one of the greatest English poets of all time, has had a major impact on the perception of Englishness. Notably, his portrayal of England as a ‘blessed plot’ in *The Life and Death of Richard the Second* has exerted a profound influence on the prevailing perceptions of the country:

> This royal throne of kings, this scepter’d isle,
>
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
>
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
>
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
>
> Against infection and the hand of war,
>
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
>
> This precious stone set in the silver sea, [...]
>
> Against the envy of less happier lands;
>
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England (60).

In addition to the significant contributions made by Shakespeare, early seminal works in English literature encompass the writings of notable authors like Chaucer and Milton. Antony Easthope, in his assessment, identifies the turn of the eighteenth century as a pivotal period that laid the groundwork for the concept of Englishness (qtd. in Böhme 15).

According to Paul Langford, Englishness is predominantly shaped and formed by the associated ideas prevalent during specific historical periods. This perspective highlights that

Englishness is not an inherent or pre-existing reality but rather a construct. Silvia Mergenthal further supports this notion by explaining that the concept of Englishness does not reflect an established objective truth about the English identity, but rather describes a discursive domain where “different groups of individuals are identified as English based on historically contingent attributions” (24).

Jeremy Paxman, a prominent British journalist and author, explores the essence of English identity in *The English: A Portrait of a People*. He posits that the English were widely recognized and distinguished from others by their unique manners, clothing, and language (qtd. in Kučerová 19). Namely, what makes a person English is the “quintessential English quality of good manners and politeness” (19); greeting people with ‘Good day!’ and nodding politely at passengers walking by (108). Next, the English are considered stylish and elegant with a sophisticated style. As for physical appearance, an Englishman is a picture of a tall, *white*, thin man with a moustache (19). He goes on to state that owning a house is another quintessential English trait. Similarly, George Orwell, a significant contributor to the 20th-century modern literature, in his essay titled “England Your England” discusses the distinct characteristics that he believes define the English people, such as their love for privacy, their sense of fair play, their attachment to traditional customs, and their strong individualism (12-24).

Additionally, Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist philosophy has been instrumental in challenging established beliefs and grand narratives, including those related to "Englishness." Derrida's approach to deconstruction, which emphasizes the instability and ambiguity of language and the way it constructs meaning, has been applied to interrogate the concept of English identity. By scrutinizing texts, discourses, and cultural representations associated with "Englishness," Derrida's influence has highlighted the multiplicity of interpretations and contradictions within these narratives, deconstructing rigid and often exclusionary notions of English identity. This deconstruction encourages a more critical and nuanced understanding of "Englishness," recognizing its fluid and contested nature and fostering a more inclusive, diverse, and self-reflective discourse on what it means to be English (Kakoliris 177-180).

In addition, Anderson argues that “colonialism was key to the creation of whiteness as a national identity as whiteness at ‘home’ was inextricably connected to blackness ‘abroad’ (qtd. in Quille 19). Namely, colonialism engendered a perception among native Britons of their leadership within a hierarchical order of nations, which was implicitly or explicitly predicated on the notion of white supremacy, attributing greater rights and resources to whiteness. According to Dinitia Smith, this construction of race carried tangible consequences (10). From

an intersectional standpoint, it becomes crucial to critically examine the specific impact of this constructed identity (qtd. in Quille 19). As a representative of the contemporary literature period, Levy reflects on this my commenting how she “was educated to be English” and how “alongside me - learning, watching, eating, and playing - were white children. But those white children would never have to grow up to question whether they were English or not” (“This is my England”).

However, following "the end of the Second World War and the break-up of the British empire" (Böhme 9), profound alterations transpired within society across multiple dimensions. The previously inflexible class structure underwent increased porosity, prompting a reassessment of deeply entrenched conceptions of English identity, particularly in relation to the middle class. The definition of Englishness, previously associated with images of "white Englishmen," underwent reconfiguration due to the influx of immigrants from former colonies. Preconceived notions that had long been regarded as emblematic of the English populace came under scrutiny, consequently fostering a pervasive sense of detachment from national allegiance and engendering apprehensions regarding the precarious state of Englishness (Böhme 9-10). Paul Gilroy in his book *Postcolonial Melancholia* characterizes the prevailing sentiment as a state of ‘postimperial melancholia’ meaning a form of collective grief and loss experienced by individuals and communities in the aftermath of colonial rule. Gilroy argues that the historical trauma of colonization continues to shape contemporary identities and consciousness, leading to a sense of nostalgia for a past that is both desired and yet unattainable. This melancholic attachment to the colonial past can inhibit the formation of new and more inclusive national identities and hinder the process of moving beyond the legacies of empire. Gilroy's work calls for recognizing and addressing this melancholic condition as part of a broader project of healing and reimagining postcolonial societies (98). Krishan Kumar in *The Making of English National Identity* offers a sardonic observation:

> Gone are the cosy assumptions of ‘Englishness’, with its sleepy villages and ancestral piles. They have gone because the empire has gone, and so has British economic power. They have gone because the English are not even safe in their homelands, challenged as they are by the rise of Celtic nationalism and by the claims of ‘multiculturalism’ within English society (16).

What remains however was the nostalgic notion of Englishness, a myth that is often covered in modern literary works. One such example is that of Maggie Gee who in her 2002 novel *The White Famil*y exposes such idealistic beliefs through the characters of Alfred and May who

"both define Englishness in terms of a historical bond with the landscape, which inevitably implies an exclusive attitude to migrants and refugees" (Kılıç 130). In addition, Julian Barnes, a contemporary British author, delves into the intricate fabric of Englishness, offering a satirical exploration of the concept in his 1998 novel *England, England*. The novel delves into this theme by presenting a theme park situated on the Isle of Wight, designed to encapsulate a distilled version of England. This controlled environment serves as a symbolic representation of the commercialization and simplification of cultural identity. The narrative follows Martha Cochrane, the central character responsible for developing the theme park. Through her experiences, Barnes skilfully examines the intricacies surrounding Englishness as Cochrane grapples with the challenge of harmonizing authenticity with mass appeal. The novel's satirical tone effectively portrays how historical landmarks, cultural symbols, and traditional practices are commodified and packaged for public consumption. An underlying theme of the novel is the notion of authenticity in the modern era. The creation of an artificial "England" within the theme park blurs the boundary between reality and simulation, urging readers to contemplate the artificiality inherent in constructing cultural identity (Yadav 67-73). This narrative element prompts critical reflection on how cultural heritage can be artificially manipulated and transformed encourages readers to contemplate the intricate layers and uncertainties that shape the very notion of Englishness.

Andrea Levy, as will be later shown in the analyses, also touches upon how the immigrants in her works struggle to fit into the category of Englishness by not fulfilling the criteria that used to be deemed quintessentially English. In addition, she recalls how her parents

> believed that in order to get on in this country they should live quietly and not make a fuss. They should assimilate and be as respectable as they possibly could. Clean the front step every week. Go to church on Sundays. Keep their children well dressed and scrubbed behind the ears (Levy “Six Stories” 6-7).

According to Levy, her parents believed that they could assimilate and succeed in England if they did not engage in any behaviour that deviated from the norm and might cause offense to the notion of Englishness. Consequently, they were adamant not to have anything to associate them with Jamaica and Jamaicans. They rarely talked about their homeland and their lives there. Her mother aspired to blend in with the English society as much as she possibly could and not stand out. All that, however, did not help her and them be seen as English by others in the society.

Levy's essay "This is my England" offers more insight into how she struggled to position herself in the English society: "Identity! Sometimes it makes my head hurt - sometimes my heart. So what am I? Where do I fit into Britain, 2000 and beyond?" ("This is My England"). Levy recalls how in the 1980s, a number of violent protests broke out in neighbourhoods where Caribbean immigrants formed a significant portion of the population. These events led to an increase in police stop-and-search incidents involving black men. Against this backdrop of racial tension, Levy was compelled to confront her own identity as a black British woman. At first, she struggled to understand how come she was not English enough when all she has ever known has been England. She was trying to comprehend why is it that her peers and friends were English, but she was not and asking herself what she must do to be English (Levy, "Six Stories" 9-10).

One such circumstance that provoked her to come to terms with her previously unembraced identity as a black person was during a racism awareness course with colleagues when she worked part-time for a sex-education project in 1989 aimed at youth in Islington. During one of the sessions, the group was requested to split into black and white groups with Levy positioning herself in the white group. However, despite feeling more comfortable with the white group due to her white friends, boyfriend, and flat mates, Levy was beckoned to join the black group by her colleagues. This experience led to a disorienting and distressing awakening for Levy, resulting in her being afraid to identify as black, as she believed she was not entitled to do so. She questioned what was necessary to be black as she was not part of a black community, she never visited Jamaica, she was not friends with any black people, and her parents did not instil any pride in her for being black, nor did they seem proud to be black themselves. As a result, Levy felt like an imposter, and this had a profound impact on her life (10). That is when "writing came to her rescue" and assisted her in dealing with this newfound cognizance (10). She understood that her ancestry and Caribbean heritage only enrich her identity as a black, second-generation immigrant, and that it does not take away her 'Englishness' and doesn't change the fact that she is English.

> I am English. Born and bred, as the saying goes. (As far as I can remember, it is born and bred and not born-and-bred-with-a-very-long-line-of-white-ancestors-directly-descended-from-Anglo-Saxons.) England is the only society I truly know and sometimes understand. I don't look as the English did in the England of the 30s or before, but being English is my birthright. England is my home. An eccentric place where sometimes I love being English ("This Is My England").

In fact, Levy's essay “This is my England” provides a continuing dialogue and a thought-provoking and distinct response to similar works that touch on Englishness and the English identity as those of George Orwell and D.H. Lawrence. To start with, George Orwell's essay “England Your England” can be seen as a contrasting response to D.H. Lawrence's essay “England, My England”. While Lawrence's essay expresses a more celebratory and romanticized view of English identity (Burn), Orwell's work takes a critical and realistic stance. He rejects the idealized image of England, presenting a more nuanced and sometimes harsh depiction of the nation's complexities, class divisions, and the impact of colonialism. In doing so, Orwell challenges the notion of a singular and static English identity, encouraging a deeper understanding of the diverse and evolving nature of the English people and their society (“Orwell’s Love of Lawrence”). Similarly, while Orwell's work offers a comprehensive examination of English culture and society on a broad scale, Levy takes a more personalized approach, sharing her own experiences as a woman of Jamaican heritage living in Britain. In doing so, she offers a unique and nuanced perspective that complements and expands upon Orwell's portrayal. Through her intimate narrative, Levy addresses certain aspects that may have been overlooked in Orwell's analysis, shedding light on the complexities faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds within the English nation. By emphasizing the importance of a more inclusive understanding of Englishness, she contributes to the essayists tradition of re-defining Englishness and the ongoing conversation on national identity, race, and belonging, thus enhancing the overall discourse initiated by Lawrence, Orwell, and other authors’ exploration of England and its people.

Another prominent name whose sentiments Levy evokes through her narratives is Paul Gilroy who explores the intersections of race, identity, and nationalism in Britain in his work *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*. He conducts a thorough analysis of cultural and political dynamics, aiming to challenge conventional perceptions of racial essentialism. Gilroy accentuates the intricate nature of racial identity within a multicultural society. The book critiques the limitations inherent in both white and black identity classifications, advocating for an intricate comprehension that transcends rudimentary racial categorizations. It seeks a broader, more comprehensive British identity that embraces diversity and confronts exclusive narratives (15-40).

The title *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* possesses profound significance, encapsulating the core themes of Gilroy's study The phrase "Union Jack" refers to the national flag of the United Kingdom, which prominently features the cross of St. George representing

England, the cross of St. Andrew representing Scotland, and the cross of St. Patrick representing Ireland (Smith). The phrase "There Ain't No Black" seems to challenge the ease with which blackness or non-white identities can meld with the conventional symbols of British nationalism represented by the Union Jack. The title conveys a critical message regarding the historical disregard and exclusion of the contributions and experiences of black individuals from the broader narrative of British national identity.

Overall, Levy's literary corpus masterfully engages with the intricate concept of Englishness, presenting a formidable challenge to conventional perceptions of national identity. Through artful character delineations and intricate narrative explorations, Levy confronts the prevalent notion of an exclusive English identity, showcasing that it transcends mere ancestral lineage and emerges as a product of dynamic historical, cultural, and social processes. Levy's protagonists deftly navigate the complexities of their dual cultural heritage, exposing the intricate interplay between their Caribbean roots and their profound sense of belonging to England. By foregrounding the experiences of these characters as they grapple with questions of identity, assimilation, and acceptance, Levy effectively challenges the monolithic representation of Englishness and prompts readers to reevaluate the diverse array of identities contributing to the rich tapestry of British society. In doing so, her literary contributions engender a deeper comprehension of the fluid and evolving nature of Englishness while emphasizing the imperative of inclusivity in shaping a more nuanced and authentic national narrative.

1.6.2. Levy's Writings

Levy was enrolled in a writing course at City Lit in London whose focal point was "writing about what you know" (Levy, "Six Stories" 11) and this pursuit forced her to re-examine her background and upbringing. That act of reflecting upon her knowledge and engaging with it through written expression led to a newfound depth of understanding and awareness, ultimately revealing that her formative experiences as a black person in England were integral to her identity. Namely, her previous disconnect from her skin colour, keeping silent about her origin, experiencing shame, and denying her identity is all part of her black experience and writing helped Levy understand that (11). Levy has discussed the theme of personal discovery through writing in several interviews, such as in an article in "The Guardian" from 2009 where she

stated: "Writing was a way for me to explore my past, to explore my parents' past, and to find out about myself" ("Small talk"). Additionally, in an interview with The Telegraph from 2014, she mentioned that she uses "writing to investigate my own past, the history that has affected my parents' lives and my own, and the difficult experiences of others" (Garry et al.). However, to achieve that meant first filling in the gaps about her ancestry and heritage which she initiated by "asking her mother to tell her everything she knew about everyone she could remember" ("This is my England") and later visiting and staying with her relatives in Jamaica for the very first time. Levy recalled that it was in those moments that she "realized for the first time that I had a background and an ancestry that was fascinating and worth exploring" (Levy, "Six Stories" 12).

In general, the primary objective of Andrea's writing is to uncover and dramatize the historical connections between Britain and the Caribbean. Her works highlight the invisible ties that enabled families like hers to immigrate to post-war Britain, which were based on a colonial past spanning century. The central theme of her literary *oeuvre* is the relationship between two seemingly disparate islands - Jamaica and England. Levy viewed this relationship as a matter of great importance to the English people, rather than a niche interest relevant only to individuals of Caribbean heritage. In essence, Levy aimed to make her readers aware of the significance of this interconnectedness and her literary works focused on illuminating the experiences of black and white individuals, with the aim of fostering a deeper understanding of the shared history of both islands. She believed that her stories would contribute significantly to the broader social discourse on race relations, highlighting the importance of acknowledging the past and its impact on the present (Levy, "Six Stories" 11-13).

Andrea Levy's career as an author lasted approximately two decades, from the mid-1990s until her passing in 2019. During this time, she published five novels, including *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994), *Never Far from Nowhere* (1996), *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), *Small Island* (2004), *The Long Song* (2010), and a collection titled *Six Stories and an Essay* (2014) ("Andrea Levy - Author"). Levy's literary works were heavily influenced by her personal experiences growing up in London during the 1960s and 70s as tasked by the writing course she attended, she wrote about what she knew best, drawing attention to the stories and characters that had been overlooked in literature until that point. Her novels, featuring for the most part Caribbean second-generation immigrants growing up in England, Windrush immigrants in post-war Britain, and slaves across the plantations of the Caribbean, shed light on the emerging demographic of Black Britons. The protagonists appearing in Levy's early

works were shaped by her own encounters with everyday racism at school and in the workplace, the disillusionment regarding her identity, as well as her feelings of fear and isolation during the rise of the National Front in Islington in the 1970s and 80s, a far-right political organization that promoted nationalist and white supremacist ideologies, often advocating for strict immigration controls (Wild 67-68). These experiences found their way into her fiction, providing a platform for her to tell a new story about Britain and challenged questions of racial identification, community, and discrimination. In relation to the main theme of this thesis, disillusionment plays an important role in most of Levy's works. The disillusionment is generally represented in the form of immigrant characters' expectations of what England is like, disillusionment regarding their identity, and disillusionment of how easily they can assimilate into the English society (Levy, "Six Stories" 15-16). By sharing her own and her family's experiences, she expressed a compelling need to bring attention to these issues.

Drawing inspiration from her parents' journey to England, challenges faced once there, and the passing of her father in 1987, Levy wrote her first novel *Every Light in the House Burnin'*. At first faced with challenges and rejections, which lasted for a year, from publishers who questioned whether there would be enough interest for such a story, Levy, supported by her literary agent David Grossman, secured a publishing deal with Headline Publishing ("Andrea Levy"). The semi-autobiographical novel was released in 1994 and received positive reviews from critics calling it a "powerful novel, a striking and promising debut" (qtd in. "Every Light House Burnin'"). The novel is a captivating portrayal of a Jamaican immigrant family residing in London, as recounted from the perspective of the youngest of four siblings, Angela. It brings to life significant moments in their lives through vivid and nuanced characterization, from their genesis to the onset of their decline, marked by their father's retirement. Later on, previously concealed aspects of their Jamaican past came to light, constituting family secrets that have been long buried and left unspoken when an aunt visits and inquiries about their life in England. Levy here has the protagonists disillusioned as they attempt to lead their lives in England as if crossing the sea meant they are, both figuratively and literally speaking, leaving Jamaica forever behind in order to attain the Englishness they very much crave for. Although the novel did not win any major literary awards, it was critically acclaimed for its vivid portrayal of the experiences of Black British individuals and families and helped to establish Levy as an important voice in contemporary British literature ("Andrea Levy - Author").

Two years later, Levy published her second novel *Never Far from Nowhere* (1996) that revisits the central themes explored in her debut novel. Through the exploration of race and

identity, the novel highlights the ongoing difficulties faced by individuals with a black colonial heritage in contemporary Britain ("British Library"). The themes of marginalization, racial prejudice and discrimination, and search for identity unfold in London during the 1960s and follow the experiences of a Jamaican immigrant family. In the story, two sisters, Vivien and Olive Charles, provide two distinct perspectives on the challenges faced by members of their family. Vivien's life, the younger of the two sisters, is a hectic life blend of friendships, youth adventures, and fun. Although her life seems great on the surface, she is disillusioned regarding her black identity and is pushed to come to terms with her Jamaican heritage which forces her to reanalyse her identity. On the other hand, Olive, who is three years older and darker skinned than Vivien, has a contrasting story to share (Levy, "Every Light in the House Burnin'"). She suffers in the white-dominated society and feels as if she will never fit in. Although the novel raises issues surrounding the racial tensions experienced by Caribbean immigrants in post-war Britain, it does not offer a conclusive resolution to these issues (Flajsarova 16). The novel was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction and received positive criticism calling the novel "passionate", "open-minded", "perceptive", and according to Scotsman it "should be read by anyone growing up in Britain today" (qtd. in "Every Light in the House Burnin'").

Levy released her third novel titled *Fruit of the Lemon* in the year 1999. The novel marks Levy's commencement of a broader venture aimed at examining the history of second-generation Jamaican immigrants in England and the implications of their intricate legacy. The novel offers an insight into how the first generations' disillusionment falls onto their children as well ("Andrea Levy - Author"). It follows the story of Faith Jackson, a young black Londoner who embarks on a journey to Jamaica following a nervous breakdown. Faith experiences a growing awareness of racism and colourism in Britain, symbolized by the novel's theme of bitter fruit. The novel's title, derived from a well-known song, "Lemon Tree" by Will Holt, alludes to the lemon tree, which is beautiful and sweet-smelling, but whose fruit is inedible. Despite this, Faith's exploration of Jamaican culture and her family's complex history enables her to regain her self-confidence and return to Britain. The novel offers a thought-provoking exploration of the challenges faced by British Jamaicans and the transformative power of embracing one's cultural heritage ("The British Library"). Reviews of the novel praised Levy for her "thoughtful comment of racism and the importance of knowing where you are from" and calling it her most powerful novel she had written until then (qtd. in "Fruit of the Lemon"). In addition, *Fruit of the Lemon* won the Arts Council Writers" Award.

Released in 2004, Levy's fourth novel *Small Island* marked a critical point in her career. Although not considered autobiographical in a strict sense, the story of *Small Island* draws inspiration from Levy's parents' migration to England and centres around questions of Englishness and Diaspora. It aims to explore the ways in which migration shapes the lives of both immigrants and the communities they join and is frequently linked to the Windrush experience in contemporary literature. The story, narrated from the perspective of two Jamaican immigrants in England and two English natives, is divided into distinct temporal sections, past and present (Levy, "SI"). Employing this symmetrical structure allowed Levy to create a framework that both highlights and undermines the differences between the cultures of the four protagonists. In addition, Levy has been praised for challenging and expanding the scope of the Windrush narratives that traditionally tended to be male focused by including the character of Hortense, a Jamaican immigrant who, like Levy's mother, came to London in the early waves of migration. As an international bestseller praised for its vivid characters, evocative descriptions, and powerful portrayal of the complex relationships between people of different races and cultures, the novel received widespread critical acclaim and despite the initial challenge to find a publisher, went on to sell over a million copies in the UK alone and has been translated in more than fifteen languages including French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Japanese, and Bosnian among others ("British Library"). Since its publication, *Small Island* was adapted as a two-episode mini television series by BBC in 2009 and has won numerous literary awards the most notable being the Orange Prize for Fiction, the Whitbread Novel Award, and the Whitbread Book of the Year in 2004, and in 2005, the Commonwealth Writer's Prize Best Book and Orange Prize "Best of the Best" award" (Procter).

Despite not wishing her next novel to primarily deal with the theme of slavery, Levy proceeded to trust her instincts believing that it was an important story worth telling. The inspiration behind Levy's final novel *The Long Song* from 2010 came after reflecting on how the sole instance in which the topic of Britain's relationship with the Caribbean was taught at her school was when her class only briefly examined the transatlantic slave trade by looking at images of slaves cramped in the holds of ships ("Andrea Levy Obituary"). That made Levy question whether people in England knew "more about slavery in the American South than in the British Caribbean" (Levy, "Six Stories" 15). Claiming that Caribbean slavery differed from the American in significant ways where the number of enslaved Caribbeans had been larger than that of their white owners and "that mix of isolation, fear and dependency" resulted in societies that diverged greatly from those of the American South, Levy urged that "America's

story will not do for us. Our legacy of slavery is unique, and we need to understand what it is" (15). In *The Long Song*, Levy had to resort to fiction to envision the experiences of slaves in the Caribbean living in the tumultuous era preceding and following liberation since no accounts or narratives had existed. Set in Jamaica during the Baptist War and written in the form of a memoir by an elderly Jamaican woman July, *The Long Song* delves into the intertwined past of the enslaved and their owners in Jamaica during the 19th century. Apart from achieving critical success for sparking the much-needed conversations about Britain's colonial past and the fraught legacy of slavery suffered by the Caribbeans, *The Long Song* also won the Walter Scott Prize for historical fiction in 2011 and was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2010 ("Andrea Levy").

Throughout her literary career, Levy wrote several short stories some of which she compiled into her final release, a collection of stories titled *Six Stories and an Essay* in 2014 ("Andrea Levy Obituary"). The autobiographical essay "Back To My Own Country" opens the collection and offers a brief history and circumstances surrounding Levy's parents' immigration to England, her early years growing up in London, the indifference and disconnect she had had with Jamaica, the events that forced her to re-examine her identity as a black British woman and a second-generation immigrant, and her views on her writings as a black British author. At the end of the essay Levy states that she is "now happy to be called a black British writer," (Levy, "Six Stories" 12) and proceeds to introduce the six stories contained in this collection. Inspired by stories her mother had told her about their lives in Jamaica and their family's past, Levy provides context to how each story came about. The stories, in the order they are included in the collection, are: "The Diary", "Deborah", "That Polite Way That English People Have", "Loose Change", "The Empty Pram", "February", and "Uriah's War". Central to these stories is the theme of identity and they touch on issues of race, class, gender, and cultural displacement, as well as historical events such as World War I and the Windrush generation (Avcı 365). In some of these stories, as exemplified by "That Polite Way That English People Have," Levy narrates the theme of disillusionment and the desire to assimilate into English society at any cost, as seen through the experiences of the main protagonist. Before traveling to England, a Jamaican woman purchased a coat from her employer, an elderly English woman. Despite the coat's significant cost, she was assured that it was the latest fashion and that coat prices are much higher in England. With pride, she wore the coat on the ship, believing herself to be poised, elegant, and seamlessly blending in with the English passengers. However, the reality was starkly different; the coat turned out to be old and heavy, a regular coat, as pointed

out by one of the Jamaican passengers. This revelation highlighted that she had been deceived into paying an exorbitant amount for a piece of clothing that did not hold the value she believed it did, as coats like that were not worn by elegant and rich women in England. In her desperate attempt to appear as English as possible, the girl placed unwavering trust in her employer solely based on her English identity. Disregarding comments from her family members who had warned her that the coat was not worth the expense, she clung to the misguided belief in her employer's expertise. This short story illustrates the high regard with which these Jamaicans held the English and their subsequent disillusionment upon realizing that being accepted as such in their new land was far from guaranteed (Levy, "Six Stories" 59-78). Throughout the collection, Levy's writing is marked by a nuanced and empathetic portrayal of her characters, as well as a deftly balanced tone that blends moments of humour with poignant and insightful observations about the experiences of her protagonists.

Andrea Levy passed away on February 14, 2019, at the age of 62. The end of her 25 years long career was marked by a few notable achievements, including her appointment as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2014 for services to literature ("Andrea Levy Obituary"). Her death was mourned by the literary community, who paid tribute to her contributions to British literature and her lasting impact on the field of postcolonial studies by calling her "one of the most important literary voices of our time" (Mosse).

1.6.3. Levy's Legacy as a Windrush Writer

Ultimately, Levy's novels hold significant importance in contemporary literature as they shed light on the experiences of second-generation Caribbean immigrants growing up in London, Windrush immigrants in post-war Britain, and the Caribbean plantation slaves. They address issues of race, class, and gender with an unflinching critique of inequality, often depicting breakdowns in communication and difficulties relating to one another resulting from colonialism and its legacies. Her writing interrogates relations to place and space, exploring council estates, London, metropolitan/colonial relations, the sugar plantation, and routes of migration. Through her textual strategies of dislocation, Levy challenges prevailing ideologies and fosters social transformation, reorienting the socio-cultural imaginary. Levy's emphasis on testimonial accounts, lived histories, everyday relations to place, and spaces of the imaginary forms part of a narrative strategy for interrogating prevailing relations to community and

identity (Knepper 4-7). Levy's literary endeavours were aimed at initiating a much-needed dialogue about Britain's colonial past and the complicated legacy of slavery. Although her primary objective was to inspire readers to approach the world with greater openness and empathy, she hoped to be regarded as more than just a writer who dealt solely with race issues (Levy and Rowell 260).

In Levy's literary works, the concept of Englishness becomes intimately entwined with themes surrounding disillusionment. Levy adeptly navigates the intricacies of identity formation amidst a multicultural Britain, offering a nuanced and ambivalent portrayal of the construction of national identity. Through the lens of her characters, she skilfully captures the challenges faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds as they navigate a society that falls short of its idealized image. Levy's narrative astutely examines the disillusionment arising from the dissonance between perceived notions of Englishness and the authentic experiences of her characters, providing insight into the intricate complexities and contradictions within contemporary English society.

Her narratives were intended to encourage people to contemplate alternative perspectives and broaden their comprehension of the human experience. Despite the weighty themes she frequently explored, Levy's storytelling approach centred on the concept of connection. Her work was meant to illuminate the complex historical threads that unite us all, and to highlight the significance of recognizing our shared humanity. Levy's writing does not just serve as a tool for conveying information or making a statement but also as a way to construct bridges and foster understanding. Her works continue to contribute to the ongoing discourse on race, identity, and cultural heritage. As David Dabydeen, a Guyanese-born British academic and writer, stated: "Her work has not only documented black British experience with empathy and insight, but it has also challenged the orthodoxies of British cultural discourse, and unravelled the interweaving of race, class and gender in ways that have changed the landscape of British fiction." By weaving together historical facts with fictional storytelling, Levy has created a literary legacy that not only informs but also transforms our understanding of the past, present, and future. This unwavering dedication to creating meaningful and resonant stories continues to establish her as a vital voice in contemporary literature.

Careful examination of Andrea Levy's quintet of novels when read closely together reveals a central thematic focus on the pursuit of self-expression as a means to empower marginalized voices. Notably, although her earlier novels seem to be closely intertwined with her personal experiences as a North Londoner, they do not solely revolve around her individual narrative.

Instead, these narratives are constructed with an inclination towards unembellished authenticity and straightforwardness, deliberately eschewing any form of self-gratification in character development. Levy adeptly employs her narrative voice to articulate the perspectives of young black females, first-generation West Indian parents in the predominantly white society they find themselves in. This dual process of honing her authorial voice and granting voice to her characters stands as a twofold journey for Levy – one that encompasses both her self-realization and perseverance as a person of colour and as a wordsmith. Moreover, this narrative enterprise concurrently encapsulates the broader narrative of survival and revelation that characterizes the experiences of the black community as a whole (Scott xi).

1.7. LITERARY RECEPTION OF WORKS BY ANDREA LEVY

Andrea Levy is acclaimed as one of the more contemporary names in literature whose works greatly deal with motifs of migration, racism, discrimination, prejudices, migrants' experiences and pursuit of belonging, heritage, and slavery. The lives of Caribbean people and their descendants dominate Levy's fictions, and she demonstrates how "their sense of place and identity is often deeply contested as a result of the dislocating effects of empire and migration" (Knepper). Although her characters' stories centre around their current lives in Britain, "Levy also shows how routes to, through, and beyond the Caribbean have contributed to the transnational experience and expanded social imaginary" (Knepper). Those recurring motifs in her work have been greatly influenced by her own life. In an interview with Charles Henry Rowell, Levy stated that: "I began to write about my family and how we lived in this country (UK), and what our experiences were."

In *Por um Lugar no Império: Inglesidade, Pertencimento Negro e Memória Nacional em Dois Contos de Andrea Levy*, Denise Almeida Silva argues that "through her writing, Levy recuperates the history of black slavery in England and in the Caribbean, thus resisting its invisibility in English official historical accounts" (17). She goes on to state that Levy's work "interrogates the concept of Englishness, bringing to the fore the experience of Caribbean immigrants in England as well as the author's own experience as a British citizen from Caribbean descent" (qtd. in Wasserman). In turn, similar to the difficulties and the inequality of race and class, and the phenomena of intermixture and cultural hybridity that the characters in her novels experience, Levy herself was no stranger to such experiences. But her difficulties

weren't just those of being a second-generation immigrant. In fact, Levy has experienced quite some difficulties when attempting to publish her early works as "publishers didn't quite know what to do with a North London working-class girl talking about an ordinary family" (Levy and Morrison 328). In an interview from 1999, Levy reflected on those difficulties regarding initial publication troubles saying: "Publishers have a herd mentality. They were worried that I'd be read only by black people - less than a million and they don't read anyway" (Allardice). That early fiction from the 1990s seemed somewhat less marketable because her stories appeared rather bleak and offered little to no hope of a better horizon to the readers. On that, Margaret Busby, a journalist and publisher recalls:

> I remember conversations with her then about the obstacles she encountered trying to find an agent and a publisher for her first book. With growing confidence in each novel, she has proved that to write about migration from the specific yet complex perspective of being a black English female is not a limitation to finding a wide and appreciative readership, but in fact the exact opposite (qtd. in Allardice).

However, her faith changed in the following decade. Namely, in 1998, Levy received the Arts Council Writers' Award for *Fruit of the Lemon* and her work started to be recognized on a wider scale. But it wasn't until 2004 that Levy became a household name in Britain and it is only recently that Levy has been receiving the kind of critical attention she is worthy of. The primary scope of contemporary scholarships "reflect Levy's efforts to represent identity politics and issues of belonging in British, postcolonial, and global contexts" (Knepper). Mark Stein in his *Novels of Transformation* argues that Levy's motifs of identity formation are not simply about the uncertain identities of individuals, but "also about the transformation of British society and cultural institutions" (622). Moreover, Weihsin Gui characterizes Levy's works as "post-heritage novels that combine thematic and formal characteristics identified by Rebecca Walkowitz in her analysis of the 'post-consensual novel," namely the microgenres of "the novel of minority culture; the novel of multiculturalism, and the novel of transnational comparison" (Gui). Looking at Levy's works from a discursive point, Wendy comments that

> her narratives move to-and-fro through time and space, shift among various voices, explore various and often differing points of view, mix genres and idioms, and incorporate other techniques of textual dislocation. Thus, stories of dislocation and dislocating narrative techniques are central to her work, enabling a strategic representation of the past from a postcolonial vantage point (qtd. in Knepper).

1.8. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite there being various studies analysing both *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* through different perspectives based on several paradigms (gender studies, postcolonial theories of migration, race and colour, etc.), there are no studies that have analysed these two novels together to reflect on what has happened between the aftermath of the second world war when first immigrants came and the more contemporary times when multiculturalism is celebrated more than ever. Just like the journey taking place in these two novels from Jamaica to England and then from England to Jamaica, it is necessary to journey through the disillusionments and the expectations the characters had had and the reality they faced at the end of their journey: the real, not so perfect face of 'Mother Country', meagre apartments, scarce employment opportunities, racism and inequality they are subjected to, and challenges to assimilate in the English society that ultimately distorts their ideals and their children's identities. Although this thesis does not analyse these two novels as such, but in a sense, *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* can be looked at as sections of a larger *bildungsroman* that narrates a story based on some trials and misfortunes. This genre refers to narratives that focus on a growth process from youth to a more mature mindset, usually involving a protagonist who struggles to stick to their individual values in the face of the social norms and limiting socio-cultural conditions (Graham 1). Frow, Hardie and Smith argue that the power of a bildungsroman lies not only in its realistic depiction of an individual's growth in a changing world and how they reconcile with this change, but also how the reader must figure out this reconciliation process together with the protagonist, thus "mapping this process of the getting of wisdom" (197). This is why shedding light onto the experiences of disillusionments of the immigrant characters in these two novels might help understand the complexities behind the Windrush generation and their experiences in their countries of origin and the new country they migrated to.

Hoagland defines *the postcolonial bildungsroman* as a distinct sub-genre that deals with "the ongoing remediation of colonialism's traumatic legacy throughout the self-maturation process" (217). The prevalent theme in narratives associated with this genre is mostly the conflict between the "ideal of self-determination" and the "demands of socialisation", and this double bind is often sharpened with the impact of colonialism, viciousness of a civil war, deprivation of certain rights and privileges, or conflicts within a family (220). The fact that postcolonial works usually portray characters who reject to change and assimilate makes bildungsroman a rather difficult genre for narrating immigrants' experiences. However,

Hoagland argues that “the depiction of a broken, or even impossible, maturation process, and an ethical critique of the society into which the protagonist seeks entrance, which typifies the anti-Bildungsroman tradition, may also be discerned in the postcolonial Bildungsroman” (219-220). This is an indication that the narrative in a postcolonial bildungsroman is not indifferent to social-historical phenomena of the period it depicts (220). Similarly, thinking of Andrea Levy’s *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* as one unified postcolonial bildungsroman is useful in terms of understanding the complexities and social parameters behind these immigrants’ disillusionments as they confront the challenges of cultural assimilation, identity negotiation, and the realities of living in a new society. These characters grapple with the disconnect between their idealized expectations of the ‘Mother Country’ and the harsher realities they encounter, including housing and employment discrimination, racism, exclusion from the English society, and a sense of alienation. It is of great importance to bring these two novels together and conduct the analysis based on the events taking place in these stories because when read together, these two books constitute a complete journey that begins in Jamaica, travels all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to London, dwells in England throughout a World War and all the developments that are brought about in its aftermath, extends to a second generation, and travels back to Jamaica to find some answers and perhaps homage. Here, disillusionment becomes a pivotal aspect of their coming-of-age journey, leading them to reevaluate their perceptions of belonging, their place in the world, and the complexities of navigating their dual cultural and national identities.

CHAPTER 2

WHOSE ENGLAND?

THE DISMANTLED IMAGE OF ENGLAND AS THE 'MOTHER COUNTRY' IN *SMALL ISLAND*

2.1. A LOOK AT *SMALL ISLAND* AS A WINDRUSH STORY

The narrative in the novel is set in different timelines, told from the point of view of different characters. All starts with Queenie's recalling of her childhood memory of seeing the British Empire Exhibition with her family. They all see black people for the first time, the fact that one of them speaks in perfect English and wants to shake Queenie's hand in a civilised way comes as a shock to the family. The story flashforwards to Hortense's arrival in England in 1948. She finds Gilbert, her husband, living in a house that belongs to a grown-up Queenie's husband who is fighting in the war. At this point the reader looks at Hortense's childhood in Jamaica and everything that happened until she ended up in England. Hortense's childhood friend, and first crush, Michael has a love affair with their British teacher Mrs. Ryder, who is a married woman. During a hurricane, Hortense catches Michael and Mrs. Ryder in an intimate manner at school, and lets the townspeople learn about this. This scandal causes Michael to leave Jamaica and join the Royal Air Force (RAF) in England.

While teaching away from home, Hortense meets a RAF airman named Gilbert, and proposes an arranged marriage so that she can travel to England as a married woman. The narrative turns to Gilbert's background. As a young RAF member, he is sent to Virginia, where he is surprised by the level of racism and discrimination towards people of colour. When he returns to England, he thinks Britons are less racist than Americans. One day, an old, mentally ill man leads Gilbert to a house where he meets Queenie. The old man, Arthur, is Queenie's father-in-law, and she is running her husband's house as a hostel to make money while her husband is away for war. They take Arthur to the movie theatre one day, and Arthur is shot dead during a conflict between American GIs and black soldiers.

The narrative then continues with Queenie's background. She is born into a poor family in a small town in Northern England, and when she grows up, arranging a convenience marriage with Bernard High, whom she is not in love with, is the only way for her to escape poverty and patriarchal oppression. Bernard also joins the RAF as their relationship is stormy, and Queenie must take care of the mentally unstable Arthur. One day, Queenie hosts three RAF soldiers who are about to leave for the front. One of them, Michael Roberts, is especially good to Queenie and Arthur, and Queenie and Michael have sexual intercourse the night before Michael leaves. Queenie never hears from him after that.

Queenie and Hortense one day go out to see the local shops and, on their return, Queenie sees that Bernard has returned from the front. Then there is a flashback to things that happened after Bernard joined the RAF. He has memories of many unpleasant and scary experiences in the army, and he is even court-martialled because of cabin fire and losing his raffle. He is put into jail for some time and sent back home after his release. During his return home, he goes to a brothel in Calcutta and has sexual intercourse with a young prostitute. He believes that he has caught syphilis and avoids seeing Queenie right away because of guilt and shame. He does it only after a doctor convinces him that he does not have syphilis.

Bernard is angry that Queenie accepted black tenants to his father's house, and he tries to throw Gilbert and Hortense's stuff away. During this quarrel, Queenie is suddenly in pain, and it is understood that she is pregnant and in labour right at that moment. Hortense helps her give birth to a black baby, which makes both Hortense and Bernard think that Gilbert is the father. Queenie explains her affair with the RAF Michael and confesses that he is the father of the baby. Although reactive at first, Bernard accepts the baby and grows fond of it. When Gilbert and Hortense decide to move to their own house later, Queenie asks them to look after the baby thinking that it will be very difficult for a black baby to be raised by white parents (Levy, "SI" 1-530).

2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF *SMALL ISLAND*

Small Island (2004) is Levy's best-known novel. In addition, it is also her most discussed and analysed novel by different scholars. There is a number of studies examining the novel from different angles arguing its linkage to different paradigms. One of these researchers, Johansen argues that Andrea Levy envisages a multicultural society built on "muscular

multiculturalism", basing her argument on David Cameron's concept of "muscular liberalism" (383-398). Johansen starts by sharing a section from the speech delivered by Cameron during the 2011 Munich Security Conference:

> under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values. […] we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism (383).

According to Johansen, *Small Island* has a similar inquiry into some complicated overlaps between bodies, space, and living with difference (383). The complications that appear due to the interactions between the immigrants and natives are not simply indicators of the obligation for the different ones to assimilate into what is considered to be the mainstream; there are negotiations of space between both parties. No matter how challenging and uncomfortable these negotiation processes could be, "in *Small Island*, even those interactions that go poorly point to ways of reconstructing public life to make it more emancipatory. Failed encounters are, in fact, shown to be moments of possibility, and instructive in ways that absolute segregation or assimilation can never be" (384). She further argues that the form of state-supported multiculturalism imagined in *Small Island* is dissonant, critical, and unresolved. Rejecting Cameron's label of 'clash of civilisations', Johansen discusses that it's not a matter of assimilating the different ones but rather learning to live with them and share the common spaces within the common grounds (the city, the nation/country, or the whole world). The reason why Johansen specifically mentions a 'muscular' multiculturalism is the liaison between Cameron's 'muscular liberalism' and the notion of 'muscular Christianity', whose "defining characteristic [is] an association between physical strength, religious certainty, and the ability to shape and control the world around oneself" (390). Tracing these traits in the novel with several characters in different parts of story, Johansen attributes the burden of building a nation to men and emphasises how Levy constantly shows the problematic process of creating a multicultural nation-state necessitating various levels and types of muscularity (393).

Another work by McMann approaches the novel through the lens of races, and discusses that in Levy's work, the term 'black' is not solely used as a racial signifier, but also as a material and geographical label (200-212). McMann examines two female characters from two different novels, Andrea Levy's *Small Island* (2004) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

(2013) and describes how these two characters who relocated into another nation perceive distinctions between different races. Here is how the two female characters' 'blackness' is described in McMann's study:

> Both Adichie's Ifemelu and Levy's Hortense are what could be called "black" in the most unsophisticated use of the term, particularly once they migrate to the United States and London. The ways in which their skin colour are interpellated, however, not only reflect specific historical conditions but also, because of their mobility, allow us to see how their "blackness" is not universal, but instead is historically situated and culturally constructed, something always imposed on them by external forces (201).

McMann emphasises that the characteristics of identity based on the races of the two characters are inflicted by their presence in British and American communities and how their blackness is received by the already existing community is a direct result of this mobility. She concludes that the awareness experienced in these two stories created chances for the connection between racial identity and national identity. Blackness in Levy's work strips the quality of being British from Hortense regardless of her birthplace, and Ifemelu in Adichie's work has to undertake a black identity that is prone to racism and hierarchy, and this is beyond Ifemelu and her connection to the society (211).

Andermahr examines Levy's *Small Island* through the lens of a traumatic postcolonial experience that reinterprets the developments after the second world war under the light of Stef Crap's Postcolonial Witnessing (555–569). According to Andermahr, the novel is a combination of storytelling and humour as the former is intended to open a window towards the past and make amendments while the latter is used to minimise traumatic impacts and transfer a resilient cultural heritage. The novel includes many symbols such as Michael and Queenie's baby who represents both a brand-new door opening to the future and the reminder of the past accounts. The explosion of the afterbirth onto Hortense's white dress is interpreted as the incarnation of all the oppression experienced by her, and the author uses the ludicrousness of the scene to reduce the tension and equalise the racial and gender-related levels (567). In Andermahr's view, *Small Island*:

> foregrounds the process of storytelling and testifies to the importance of historical and cultural memory. It functions as a self-reflexive act of remembering and forgetting, exploring the gaps, contradictions and memory frictions, in accounts of British wartime experience. It evinces a desire both to record untold or overlooked aspects of collective

> British history, and to revision that past by giving symbolic and narrative shape to previously marginalized Black, migrant and working-class experiences (567).

Another interesting reading of the novel is done by Brophy who examines the story and the characters in *Small Island* through a feminist perspective, emphasising that this centralism on a lower-middle-class white women indicates how particular and unstable the cultural norms in Britain are (100-113). Brophy calls for a "reflection on the conceptual difficulties involved in retracing white women's cosmopolitanism, cautioning against the retrospective idealization of white women's openness to racial otherness" (18). According to Brophy, stories (such as *Small Island*) that are centred on white femininity are connected to a black feminist project criticising the privileged and ambivalent nature of white femininity. Brophy concludes that "white women's contradictory affective histories, replete with fraught dynamics of class mobility and sexual shame, can be remobilized to work against the folding of wartime and post-war white femininity into a nostalgically whitened national frame" (18).

Priyadadharshni analyses the title *Small Island* in her article and concludes that it is a reference to Jamaica as well as England because it is a collapsing empire especially after the Second World War (1-9). Just like immigrants face the truth behind the 'Mother Country' with all the hatred, racism, and oppression they experience, the 'Mother Country' faces the truth behind the 'empire on which the sun never sets' having lost the colonies (9).

2.3. MYTH AND REALITY: REIMAGINING ENGLAND AS THE 'MOTHER COUNTRY' IN *SMALL ISLAND*

Andrea Levy's novel *Small Island* delves into the experiences of Caribbean characters who encountered disillusionment upon their arrival in England. Through their narratives, Levy explores the challenges and disappointments faced by these migrants as they sought a better life in the land that they often refer to as the 'Mother Country'. The portrayal of disillusionment resonates with the broader historical context of Caribbean migration to England. The migration of the Windrush generation gave rise to novel interactions between diverse populations, inciting discussions concerning citizenship, the accessibility of public spaces, housing, and employment. These developments, in turn, engendered profound transformations within British society and culture (Ellis 72). Disillusionment emerges as a salient thematic concept within Windrush literature, reflecting the intricate intersection of migration, identity, and societal

expectations. The literary narratives of the Windrush generation often depict the disheartening dissonance between their aspirations for a prosperous life in the 'Mother Country' and the harsh realities of discrimination, economic hardship, and cultural alienation they encountered. This portrayal of disillusionment serves as a profound lens through which authors explore the complexities of belonging, displacement, and the often-unfulfilled promises of a new life abroad (Acheson 176 – 191). According to a study by Smith from 2018, "Caribbean migrants arriving in England during the post-war era often faced a stark contrast between their idealized notions of the Mother Country and the harsh realities that awaited them. The initial excitement and anticipation quickly turned into disillusionment as they encountered racism, prejudice, and limited opportunities for social and economic advancement" (45). Similarly, in an article published in "The Guardian", Clarke states that the "disillusionment experienced by Caribbean migrants in England was often rooted in the stark contrast between their expectations and the harsh realities of racism and prejudice. They were confronted with a society that failed to recognize their contributions and denied them the opportunities they had hoped for." In addition, Johnson in his article titled "The Disillusionment of Caribbean Migrants in Post-War England" writes how,

> for many Caribbean migrants, England was envisioned as a promised land of opportunities, but the harsh realities they encountered shattered these dreams. They faced housing discrimination, difficulty finding employment, and an overall lack of acceptance from the local population. The disillusionment that followed profoundly impacted their sense of identity and belonging (167).

This chapter will examine and analyse the disillusionment faced by the immigrant characters in *Small Island* in regard to their vision of England as a splendid place, the vast opportunities they expected to take advantage of, the way they anticipated to be integrated and seen as equal participants in English society and their hopes of being considered 'English', and how they believe England will change for the better.

2.3.1. The Shattered Perception of 'Mother Country' as a Splendid Place

I never dreamed England would be like this.

- (Levy, "SI" 225)

England, the 'Mother Country' of the Caribbean, had been presented to the novel's characters as a great imperial power and a place where everything is better, bigger, brighter, and more beautiful. It is an alluring place, a "refined, mannerly, and cultured place" about which they learned at school, listened to "many valorous stories told of her", and its "photographs are cherished, pinned in your own family album to be admired over and over" (Levy, "SI" 139). Most of the Caribbean characters in the story bear a quixotic idea, an idealistic, impractical, and an idea often characterized by unrealistic expectations, of England and all its glory that they desperately wanted to witness and be a part of. From the very first pages, the readers are introduced to it through a relatively minor character of Celia Langley, Hortense's friend, and fellow schoolmate, telling her: "Oh, Hortense, when I am older I will be leaving Jamaica and I will be going to live in England. In England I will have a big house with a bell at the front door and I will ring the bell. I will ring the bell in this house when I am in England. That is what will happen to me when I am older" (11). Similarly, Hortense shared the same dream and thought herself lucky when she was the one who got to live it instead of Celia. "There was I in England ringing the doorbell on one of the tallest houses I had ever seen" (12). In the first instances of being introduced to England, Hortense starts to witness the perfect illusion cracking as she "pressed this doorbell I did not hear a ring. No ding-a-ling, dinga-ling. I pressed once more in case the bell was not operational. The house, I could see, was shabby" (12). Hortense had dreamt her whole life about living in England and envied the volunteers going to fight for 'Mother Country' as they got to live her dream before her. She dreamt of living in a fine house with a bell at the front door and electric lights in every room. But once she stepped into the hallway of the house where her husband Gilbert was staying, Hortense noticed that there "was hardly any light. Just one bulb so dull it was hard to tell whether it was giving out light or sucking it in" (20). Although this minor and perhaps trivial fault did not shatter her spirit and trust she held for the impeccable 'Mother Country', she soon after got a peek at the actual picture that had never been painted to her prior when she realized that they are to stay in one, small, dark room.

> Three steps would take me to one side of this room. Four steps could take me to another. There was a sink in the corner, a rusty tap stuck out from the wall above it. There was a table with two chairs – one with its back broken – pushed up against the bed. The armchair held a shopping bag, a pyjama top, and a teapot. In the fireplace the gas hissed with a blue flame (20-21).

The reality of where she is to live leaves a bitter taste in Hortense's mouth as it vastly differs from the home she had imagined she would have in England. She dreamt of living in a cozy, warm home where the smell of freshly prepared meals eases and fills her mind and heart with a sense of belonging and security. She imagined being part of a loving community where she can share pleasantries and evoke mutual respect and admiration. She expresses all these and more by stating that she did not ask and wish for much.

> A dining-table in a dining room set with four chairs. A starched tablecloth embroidered with bows. Armchairs in the sitting room placed around a small wood fire. The house is modest – nothing fancy, no show – the kitchen small but with everything I need to prepare meals. We eat rice and peas on Sunday with chicken and corn, but in my English kitchen roast meat with two vegetables and even fish and chips bubble on the stove. My husband fixes the window that sticks and the creaky board on the veranda. I sip hot tea by an open window and look on my neighbours in the adjacent and opposite dwelling (100-101).

Instead, what she came is a meagre, cold, and "pitiful" room with "jagged black lines of cracking everywhere" (225), a frail staircase she has to walk down if she is to use the kitchen, and a restroom she is to share with all the other tenants of the house. Hortense does not try to hide her disappointment with the place that Gilbert had found for them as it was far removed from the romanticized image she had held of England. The stark reality of the cramped and underwhelming accommodation shattered her expectations of a grander and more sophisticated environment. She could not accept the fact that this is where she is to live in England because the house where she grew up in Jamaica was much bigger, cleaner, better furnished, and even brighter than this room she found herself in now. She confronts Gilbert about it asking him:

> HORTENSE: Well,' I said, 'show me the rest, then, Gilbert.' The other rooms, Gilbert.
>
> GILBERT: But this is it.
>
> HORTENSE: I am sorry?
>
> GILBERT: This is it, Hortense. This is the room I am living.

HORTENSE: Just this? Just this? This is where you are living? Just this?

GILBER: Yes, this is it.

HORTENSE: Just this? Just this? You bring me all this way for just this? (20-21)

Here, we witness Hortense finding herself worse off than in Jamaica, a place she so badly tried to leave, only to find herself in a destitute, cold, and dark room. This interaction was forthwith followed by Gilbert's irritated response: "What you expect, woman? Yes, just this! What you expect? Everyone live like this. There has been a war. Houses bombed. I know plenty people live worse than this. What you want? You should stay with your mamma if you want it nice. There been a war here. Everyone live like this" (21). Thus, the lavish, warm, and bright houses that Hortense had imagined and longed to live in turned out to be just a tall tale that she will not live to see become a reality and it marks Hortense's first disillusionment that is bitterly shattered by reality. That first night she again dreamt of the fine house in England with its own doorbell and a warm fire in the grate only to be woken up by a scratching noise she thought was Gilbert but turned out to be mice: "You bring me to a house with rats?" Hortense asked him, "No, they are mice. And every house in London has mice," replied Gilbert (120-121). What Gilbert fails to mention here is that the mice are attracted to the shabby places he could afford, the places they are destined to live in as opposed to those they are not welcomed in and the ones they have no way of paying for. "The whole image of the mother country is gradually shattered as she encounters their untidy and unhygienic living and she constantly asks, "Is this the way the English live?" (qtd. in Priyadharshni 11). But it is not. Not all English people live like that. It is only the poorest and immigrants that seem to suffer those living conditions. Although Gilbert's reaction may seem somewhat harsh to Hortense and readers, it is because he had found himself in a similar predicament upon arriving in England six months before Hortense did.

Gilbert too, carried great dreams of England as described in poems and stories, the green villages and admirable nature, only to arrive to a place ruined by war. His expectations of 'Mother Country' while traveling to her aid, leaving the sunny, familiar home behind "for no sacrifice is too much to see you at Mother's needy side" (Levy, "SI" 139). Determined and hopeful to finally meet 'Mother', the glorious, warm, and safe place he had heard and learnt about so much, Gilbert, alongside a couple of his close friends, embarked on the adventure to fight for what he believed was heaven on Earth. But they were shocked at the first sight of their 'Mother Country' as it looked nothing like the photographs they admired and sang praise to. They were not greeted by bliss and beatitude as they had anticipated, but by a place that's

“ragged, old and dusty as the long dead. Mother has a blackened eye, bad breath and one lone tooth that waves in her head when she speaks. Can this be that fabled relation you heard so much of? This twisted-crooked weary woman. This stinking cantankerous hag” (139). Instantly, Gilbert is disillusioned by “the discrepancy between the legends of the glorious empire they had been taught and the realities of a war-torn small island they encounter” (Murphy 128) because instead of stepping on the ground of the grand land he had imagined, the utter ugliness of ‘Mother Country’ felt distasteful: “Why everything look so dowdy? Even the sunshine can find no colour but grey,” (Levy, "SI" 212) he thought. As shown, England's picturesque countryside, rolling hills, meandering rivers, and charming villages that have been a prominent focus in the photos, literature, and stories Caribbeans have been exposed to for decades is very different from what they arrived to. Linton Kwesi Johnson, a Jamaican-British poet who moved to London in 1963 when he was 11 years old, reclass the shock upon arriving in London and the ugliness and cold of it in his interview with Sarah O'Reilly for the ‘Windrush Stories’ from “The British Library”:

> From the books that you saw at school, you really didn’t know what England was like, but I’d have read the story of Dick Whittington, and you’d see pictures of horse drawn carriages and all that, and you’d imagine that England was something like that. Great big mansions and literally the streets of London paved with gold. It was a bit of a rude awakening when I arrived and saw these grey ugly looking buildings.

Same as in the real-life testaments as well as the comments of the characters in novel, the expectations of the beauty and tranquillity of the English landscape these Caribbean immigrants had envisioned was nowhere to be found and seen. Gilbert was not the only one who had felt the inevitable disappointment. Likewise, his friends and hundreds of other Caribbean men who travelled alongside him felt the same way. Gilbert narrates their view in the following manner:

> Some of the boys shook their heads, sucking their teeth with their first long look at England. Not disappointment – it was the squalid shambles that made them frown so. There was a pained gasp at every broken-down scene they encountered. The wreckage of this bombed and ruined place stumbled along streets like a devil’s windfall. Other boys looking to the gloomy, sunless sky, their teeth chattering uncontrolled, gooseflesh rising on their naked arms, questioned if this was the only warmth to be felt from an English summer (Levy, "SI" 140).

However aware of the fact of England being at war, these men could not have, in their wildest dreams, envision the letdown they would feel at the tawdriness of the great 'Mother Country'. Appalled by its shabbiness and scantiness, these men found themselves fighting to reason why they had abandoned the "green hills that might resemble the verdant Cockpit country, flowers that might delight as much as a dainty crowd of pink hibiscus, rivers that could fall with the same astounding spectacle of Dunn's river" for a place that resembles a "filthy tramp" (139-140). This reaction is reminiscent of the disillusionment Levy's father faced when he first arrived in England. In an interview from 2014, Levy reflected on her father's impressions of post-war Britain:

> When my dad died we were going through his things and we found this pile of diaries - little diaries, just to tell him what to do. He had a great stack of these. So we had a look at them and it would literally say gray. You know, one day gray, next day gray. Grey. He must have been so depressed. Just these diaries saying the word gray. Andrea's birthday: gray. Really sad (O'Reilly).

Hereafter, Hortense, Gilbert, and the rest of the Caribbean immigrants in England found themselves in a place that barely resembled the admirable images that were conveyed in their minds about the 'Mother Country'. It turned out not to be the splendid place where they ought to fulfil their longtime dreams of living in fine houses, eating delightful meals, walking the streets "and diamonds that appear on the ground in the rain", meeting "the King – oh, a fine man, and Shakespeare too" (Levy, "SI" 209). Instead, the great empire offered them cold and meagre rooms, "mush" (126) as food, and they walked the wreckage streets of a "bombed and ruined place" (140). Had they heard about it before, they might not have believed that 'Mother Country' could possibly be like that but having seen it all with their own eyes turned out to be quite a disappointment as they witnessed "the emerging vision of Britain as a beleaguered island race, rather than a great imperial power" (Dabydeen 436). Sadly, this is not the only disillusionment they will have to come to terms with in the 'Mother Country'.

Similarly, in many sections of the story, Levy speaks through some white characters to tell that England is not the same anymore, and it is on the verge of becoming a multinational / multicultural country, and negative things that are taking place are like labour pains for the new identities to be born. Amidst the historical context, a prevailing sentiment among segments of the English populace viewed England through a lens coloured by notions of homogeneity, associating the nation with a primarily white identity. This perspective, coupled with apprehensions fuelled by a wave of incoming immigrants, led to resistance and aversion within

certain segments of society, who expressed discomfort with the diversification of their surroundings. They were constantly exposed to everyday racism by being ignored at supermarkets or called names on the streets. As in the example of Floella Benjamin who arrived in Britain in 1960 from Trinidad. She, in in her story for the BiM2023 (Black History Month) website, reflects on those difficult times stating how each day was a struggle, and each time she stepped out of the warmth and safety of her home, she had to brace herself for the verbal assaults and mistreatment that awaited her from both adults and peers along her path, and the cashier's deliberate disregard, rendering her invisible, while attending to white customers who stood behind her in the line (Benjamin). In *Small Island*, for Mrs. Blanche's (Queenie's neighbour) husband who has just returned from fighting at the front, for example, it is unbearable to see that there are many black people living alongside white people in England now, and "now this country no longer feels his own" (Levy, "SI" 117). For Mrs. Blanche, who carries the ironic name meaning 'white', this situation could even be compared to Hitler's invasion of Europe (117). A similar remark is made by Bernard when he returns from war and finds out that Queenie rented their house to people of colour. He immediately objects to this by saying, "What with all these coloureds swamping the place. Hardly like our own country anymore" (436). His comment shows how, in his interactions with non-white British subjects, his understanding of Englishness does not broaden but, in fact, becomes narrower. After coming back from fighting against fascism in the war, he strongly believes in keeping different races separate.

2.3.2. The Vast Opportunities 'Mother Country' Offers Are in Sooth Scarce

> *He told me opportunity ripened in England as abundant as fruit on Jamaican trees. And he was going to be the man to pluck it.*
>
> - (Levy, "SI" 98)

The Caribbean immigrants of the novel that came to England in the hope of abundant and favourable opportunities found themselves struggling to even find proper accommodation. Apart from the meagre conditions of rooms they occupied for years, the actual challenge was finding a place to live as they were not genuinely welcomed by the English. With knocks on doors left unanswered, doors fiercely being shut in their faces, and possessing little money in their pockets, these immigrants were left to cram up in rundown houses of the few people

willing to accept them as tenants. Despite being promised and given assurance of settlement in the 'Mother Country' by the government, they were not secured actual accommodations in houses or flats, but only provided with a number of shelters insufficient to shelter them all. Rather than being shown appreciation for their efforts and service during WWII, many immigrants were either abandoned on the streets, separated from their families, or left to fight for an available bed in a room. Floella also reclass her shock after realizing her entire family of eight would be compelled to reside in one small room in a house that hosts numerous other tenants, and a communal exterior lavatory (Benjamin). For the same series of testimonials, the 'Windrush Stories', Verona Franceta, who migrated from Jamaica to England in 1956, adds that most of the available properties for rent during that era lacked adequate plumbing infrastructure and indoor bathroom facilities (Pettigrew).

In the novel, this struggle is mainly reflected through the character of Gilbert who came to the 'Mother Country' hoping he "would get a nice place to live in – a bath, a kitchen, a little patch of garden" (Levy, "SI" 214). Needless to say, he did not get what he had hoped for. The reality struck and he was left "to face the unwillingness of the English society" (Jašková 50). Before moving into the room where he brought his wife to, Hortense, he managed to find a place to stay thanks to an acquaintance. "These two damp cramped rooms that the friend of Winston's brother had let us use were temporary. One night, maybe two. More private than the shelter. Better than the hostel" (Levy, "SI" 214). The place, far from perfect, served its purpose of putting a roof over his head and although Gilbert thought it just a temporary solution to his housing problem, it turned out to be his home for much longer than he had anticipated: "Two months I was there! Two months, and this intimate hospitality had begun to violate my hope. I needed somewhere so I could start to live" (214). However, that was not as simple of a task as he had imagined before coming to England. In a desperate manner, he narrates: "So how many gates I swing open? How many houses I knock on? [...] Man, these English landlords and ladies could come up with excuses" (215). Here, Gilbert finds himself distressed and drained by the constant rejection he endured trying to find an adequate place to live in. All his attempts were in vain, and he came to see the real face of the English, the one he was not told about back home in Jamaica. He came to understand that he was not welcomed in their homes. The feeble excuses provided: "Well, I would give it to you only I have lots of lodgers" or "It's not me – if it was just me I'd let you," (215) make him feel disappointed in his 'Mother Country'. "Not only he is surprised by the hypocrisy, he is also disappointed and feels betrayed" (Jašková 52). Betrayed because he often encounters signs plastered on the walls of buildings stating they can

accommodate tenants, but every time he expresses interest in them has them "shut quick without even me breath managing to get inside" (Levy, "SI" 215). Brooks presents an analogous encounter in his scholarly work, wherein he references a notable aversion toward offering rental opportunities to Caribbean immigrants. He writes: "I once got a newspaper friend, who was white, to try to rent the same apartment right after I was told it was no longer vacant. Just as I thought would happen my white friend was invited in and offered the apartment for rent" (22).

Small Island, being a semi-autobiographical novel, draws a lot of inspiration from Levy's family's stories. Her parents, who came to England during the same time as the main Jamaican characters Gilbert and Hortense in the novel, also struggled with the problem of housing. Namely, they had trouble finding good housing and for a long time had to live in one room. In her essay "This is my England," Levy reflected on their struggles stating: "They suffered bad housing—by no means the plight of black people alone in those post-war days: the signs in windows read "no niggers, no dogs, no Irish." My dad faced incredible hostility when looking for somewhere to live because of the colour of his skin" ("This is my England"). Her parents were even homeless for a certain period after which they stayed in a halfway housing where the couple was not allowed to live together, so Levy's mother lived alone with her three children. At long last, they settled in a council flat, "public housing that is rented to households who are unable to afford to rent from the private sector or buy their own home" ("The History of Council Housing"), located in Highbury, London which is where Andrea was born and where she grew up (Levy, "Six Stories" 6).

After abounding rejections and failed attempts to find proper accommodation, Gilbert turns to "21 Nevern Street, SW5" (Levy, "SI" 215) where he is offered a room by an English woman named Queenie Blighwhom he had met before. She not only offers him a room to stay in but also remembers him by his full name: "Well, if it isn't Airman Gilbert Joseph. Now, what the bloody hell happened to you?" (216). Although this, what may seem like a kind act, reaffirms Gilbert's hope for a better future in England, it also actualizes the reality of the opportunities far from the disillusioned ideas he had borne about 'Mother Country'.

2.3.2.1. Ungratified employment opportunities

There is a saying in Jamaica that goes "Me no come here for cow, me for come here to drink milk" which represents the aspirations of those who migrate to England to secure good jobs and

signifies their wish to achieve more than they can in their homeland due to the lack of greater opportunities ("British Library"). However, those employment opportunities failed to present themselves in the way Gilbert and other Caribbean immigrants of the novel hoped for. In her essay, "England of Andrea Levy's Small Island: Dreams and Realities" Usha Mahadevan states that "the Jamaican immigrants sailed to England with a lot of hopes and dreams but eventually they understand the Diaspora of how they are disappointed by the experience in Great Britain" (73). The disappointment came largely in the form of lousy employment opportunities for these characters who came to England "eager to fight and/or work on behalf of the British and to start a new life there, convinced by years of colonial propaganda that they are equal citizens of the 'Mother Country' and Empire, not second-class subjects of colonial rule" (Murphy 125). Instead, of course, they were subject to constant: "There's no job for you here." (Levy, "SI" 313) responses when trying to get a white-collar job. In fact, the characters had options for work since England was in dire need of a labour force after WWII, but the issue at hand was the types of employment opportunities offered to them. In the novel, there are several implicit references to the challenges associated with the process of seeking employment, the most preeminent ones by the two main Caribbean characters Gilbert and Hortense.

In the example of Gilbert who left his homeland where he used to work as a driver for an opportunity to study law and become a lawyer (Levy, "SI" 313), 'Mother Country' has something completely different in store for him. He, like most Caribbean immigrants in England and many who stayed behind, has been brought up with the notion of the 'Mother Country' as a safe place where he is wholeheartedly welcomed and where his potential shall be nurtured. After serving as an RAF volunteer who never gets upgraded to the position of a soldier and is only given tasks of driving trucks and delivering goods, he finds himself struggling to find a proper job that would pay enough for him to earn enough money to ready himself for Hortense's arrival.

Gilbert faces rejections because of the colour of his skin and the fact that he is an immigrant. For example, he firstly applies for a position of a storeman reassured he would be offered the job: "I have the job, I comfort myself" (311). The interview bores Gilbert as it primarily focuses on the hollow stories of the employer talking about the war: "For the next hour I am having to shift delicately on my seat and pinch myself so my eyes do not close, while this man acquaint me with his time on radar" (312). And only after catching a moment of silence does Gilbert "shrewdly remind him of the job I had come to see him about" and asks him: "Was it to be mine?" does he get the all-so common reply he shall hear quite a few times in the coming weeks,

"No, sorry" (312). Requiring an explanation as to why since he is well suited for the position, he receives a ludicrous reason for there being women working in the factory. Not fully comprehending what the employer means by this, Gilbert replies that he does not mind that. Caring for women in that sense is the last thing on his mind at this moment as he is fighting to secure a better future for himself and the fact that he is married and has a wife who is to join him in England. Also, if he were to find himself in a conversation with them, he assured the man that he would be courteous and respectful. But the underlying issue appeared to be related to something else as the man continued to explain to Gilbert: "I'm afraid all hell would break loose if the men found you talking to their women. They simply wouldn't stand for that. As much as I'd like to I can't give you the job. You must see the problems it would cause?" (312). Realizing that it has to do with something he can't possibly alter or oppose and irritated for wasting time and effort, Gilbert leaves confronting the man for not telling him that "an hour before when I still had feeling in my backside" (312).

After that, Gilbert comes to the realization that he will not have the opportunity to get a proper job that pays well, offers rewarding benefits, and one that will ascend him from the bottom of the social barrel but finds content in getting a job as a driver and considers it to be "a great luck - if only luck England-style" (313). By commenting this, Gilbert seems to become aware of the true face of England and the disillusioned picture of a place of vast opportunities starts to fall apart. That particular job, however, does not come without its challenges and impediments as he "is never addressed by his name, is explained everything over and over again as if he was simpleminded and finally, and as if he does not matter" (Jašková 58). Hence, Gilbert quickly discovers that the opportunities available to him in 'Mother Country' are sorely limited, and the belief he harboured upon enlisting in the military that she, 'Mother Country', upholds a sense of responsibility towards him within its empire is shattered by cruel reality.

Hortense, on the other hand, could not as easily come to terms with the cruel reality because she came to 'Mother Country' with the disillusionment that she "will soon have employment in a good school as a teacher" (Levy, "SI" 447). She is convinced that many wide-opened doors await her to embrace her qualities as a teacher, qualities she has been honing for the chance to make a living out of it in 'Mother Country'. She attended a three-year "teacher-training college in Constant Spring, under the tutelage of Miss Morgan" (453) where she was educated by teachers who "were all white women", (63) and who commended every classroom they entered by simply being proper Englishwomen, that is to say, *white*. Even here, the emphasis on *white* shows how these colonised Jamaicans perceived everything these white English settlers do and

have of high quality and standard. Hortense considered herself to be a meticulous teacher, a "highly capable" one as declared by her school's principal Miss Morgan who attested her "teaching skills proficient" (448). With a clear goal of what she wants, deserves, and believes is destined to have, Hortense makes her way to the education authority to apply for a position of a teacher. With her experience, qualifications, distinctions, and recommendation letters from her educators, Hortense is confident that she is to make her life-long dream of working as a teacher in an English school come true. Gilbert, who has already gotten his fair share of rejections and now sees the real face of 'Mother Country' in plain sight, feels uneasy to leave her side and wants to accompany Hortense every step of the way foreseeing the inevitable adversity. "England had not yet deceived her. But soon it will. All us pitiful West Indian dreamers who sailed with heads bursting with foolishness were a joke to my clever smirking cousin now" (326). However, he only irritates her as she is yet to feel the nihility of 'Mother Country's' warmth. "He was trying my patience. So I told him politely that perchance the education authority would want to show me the school at which I would be working" (450). Her disillusionment cannot be wrecked even by Gilbert warning her that, "Hortense, this is not the way England work" (450) to which she counters "a teacher such as I was not someone to be treated in the same way as a person in a low-class job" (450-451). Assured, poised, and audacious, Hortense enters the "fine establishment [...] with all the dignity of learning" (450) and encounters three women behind their desks with puzzled looks on their faces as Hortense articulates: "I am a teacher and I understand this is the place at which I should present myself for a position in that particular profession" (452). "Did you say you are a teacher?" is the only response she gets from one of the women and ignoring the dubious looks on her face, Hortense proceeds to hand her two letters of recommendation which she barely even glances and asks Hortense only where she is from to which Hortense replies "I am from Jamaica" (453). Upon confirming that all of Hortense's teaching qualifications are from Jamaica, the woman elaborates: "You can't teach in this country. You're not qualified to teach here in England. It doesn't matter that you were a teacher in Jamaica, you will not be allowed to teach here. [...] Take these back. They're of no use" (454). Aghast by the frivolousness of her hard work, Hortense stands in front of this woman speechless and only manages to utter "But—" which only irks the woman who professes: "Miss, I'm afraid there really is no point your sitting there arguing with me. [...] It's not up to me. It's the decision of the education authority. I can do nothing to change that. And, I'm afraid, neither can you" (454). After having been rejected, she attempts to leave the room but heads into a cupboard storing a ladder, a mop, and a broom,

objects symbolizing blue colour work requiring only muscle power as if to suggest that she is destined to do such works in England (455).

Hortense experiences profound emotional distress while simultaneously struggling to grasp the significance of the recent event that transpired. The job interview represents another fragmented piece within the presently unfinished depiction of the perceptions and behaviours of white British citizens toward the immigrants that she has constructed within her mind. This persistent assumption in society, by both white and black people, Levy touches upon that is that the biggest likelihood for black people is to end up in a service that is related to muscle power, including jobs such as cleaning and porterage. Hortense recites a moment from her childhood when she asks her mother's permission to not help with the house chores anymore, and her mother tells her off by saying, "What, you think you are a white woman now – a lady of leisure?" (50), implying there is no choice for her as she is not a white woman. Here again, Levy retrieves her family's stories when presenting the experiences of her characters. Her parents also faced challenges with working in England. Her father was employed by the Post Office, but although her mother was a qualified teacher in Jamaica, she was not permitted to teach in England and had to undergo retraining. Consequently, she resorted to sewing as a means of livelihood while Andrea was growing up. The money was tight, and Levy recalls an instance where her mother had no money to buy food for dinner that day. Her mother was "worried that she might be forced into the humiliation of asking someone, a neighbour perhaps, for a loan", but she did not have to as she found a one-pound note on the street (Levy, "Six Stories" 7). This one-pound note may symbolise that they are only to get the scraps of England, like the menial jobs and meagre apartments, that the English do not feel are of worth and leave it up for grabs for those less fortunate ones.

The plight of these immigrants, marked by their constrained access to quality employment opportunities despite possessing requisite qualifications and experience, is emblematic of a deeply ingrained societal prejudice. Their exclusion from gainful positions primarily due to their racial identity, coupled with their perceived divergence from an idealized notion of Englishness, serves as a poignant testament to the persisting structural discrimination embedded in their beloved 'Mother Country'. However, the word 'mother', generally implying a nurturing and protective role, becomes starkly ironic in the context of these immigrants in England. Instead of being embraced as children arriving at their 'Mother Country,' these immigrants faced systemic marginalization, demonstrating that the very 'mother' which they came to fight for and help rebuild denied them the equitable treatment and acceptance they anticipated. So, England,

"the fabled Mother Country" (7) as Levy characterized it, a country that both her parents and the Caribbean characters of *Small Island* had fantasized about, offered them little hope of making their dreams a reality. They were poor and below the working class, sidelined to achieve goals that drove them to the island. They came to understand that regardless of their education, qualifications, and fit, they can't have the opportunities they feel they are entitled to and are forced to accept their faith because "well, there you see, not many people have a dream come true," (Levy, "SI" 464) and begin to ascertain that it is so because they are not genuinely accepted and deemed as equal to the English.

2.3.3. The Quixotic Idea of Acceptance

> *But for me I had just one question – let me ask the Mother Country just this one simple question: how come England did not know me?*
>
> - (Levy, "SI" 141)

All Caribbean characters in *Small Island* immigrate to England either during or after the war, displaying enthusiasm to actively engage in the service of the British cause and contribute to the labour force, while aspiring to establish a fresh existence in the 'Mother Country'. Their fervour stems from years of exposure to colonial propaganda, which instilled in them the belief that they were esteemed participants of the 'Mother Country' and the Empire, rather than secondary-class subjects subjected to colonial domination. However, their hopeful expectations are swiftly shattered as they confront widespread racism and brutality perpetrated by numerous individuals whom they had been taught to view as fellow citizens in an England that they had been taught to embrace as their true home (Murphy 126).

These characters came to England believing "that they would be recognized as citizens of the 'Mother Country': they saw themselves as vital to the survival of England and as part of its Empire" (qtd. in Murphy 124). However, they soon fathom that they are not as merrily embraced as they expected. This realization is reflected in the way they are no longer needed after helping defend and rebuilding 'Mother Country' after the war; how the language creates a barrier between them and the English; the abundance of racism and prejudice they are exposed to; and how even trying to leave their past behind does not integrate them in the English society as they hoped.

Historically, Caribbean men and women enthusiastically offered their services to the British armed forces in a variety of branches. A Jamaican newspaper ad providing transportation to the UK for people looking to travel or find work served as the impetus for this phenomenon. Potential immigrants were greatly enticed by this offer, which drew them to the 'Mother Country'. Notably, the ease with which these immigrants adjusted was made possible by the absence of travel limitations inside the British Empire. Additionally, the Nationality Act of 1948 swiftly bestowed British citizenship on all colonial residents, including those in the West Indies (Priyadharshni 9).

Similarly, in *Small Island*, the male Caribbean characters left everything they have known behind and answered their 'Mother Country's' call who was in trouble and needed their help. Back home, they were cheered, applauded, and sent off with gifts, tears, and pride to fight for it. They volunteer to fight for their 'mother' for whom they have great admiration and respect as evident in the way Gilbert professes:

> Let me ask you to imagine this. Living far from you is a beloved relation whom you have never met. Yet this relation is so dear a kin she is known as Mother. Your own mummy talks of Mother all the time. [...] Your daddy tells you, 'Mother thinks of you as her children; like the Lord above she takes care of you from afar.' [...] Then one day you hear Mother calling – she is troubled, she need your help. Your mummy, your daddy say go. Leave home, leave familiar, leave love. Travel seas with waves that swell about you as substantial as concrete buildings. Shiver, tire, hunger – for no sacrifice is too much to see you at Mother's needy side. This surely is adventure. After all you have heard, can you imagine, can you believe, soon, soon you will meet Mother? (Levy, "SI" 139)

Here, a notable aspect of the West Indians' anticipation upon their arrival in Britain emerges – that they would be acknowledged as citizens of the 'Mother Country.' They perceived themselves as essential for England's fight and survival and viewed their identity as integral to the Empire. However, once the war was over and the English economy started to recover, they were no longer needed and moreover, no longer desired in there. During a visit to Yorkshire, a county in the north-central part of England, when Gilbert encounters villagers, some of whom express their gratitude for his service, "We're all in this together, lad. We're glad to have you here – glad to have ya." (138) he also realizes that the English do not recognize him as one of their own. After Gilbert responds to a question of why he would "leave a nice sunny place to

come here if you didn't have to?" by saying to "fight for my country," he is met with puzzling looks and a sceptical reply: "Humph. Your country?" (138).

Another instance where the story bluntly offers a look at the way the English see these Caribbean immigrants is in Bernard's view of what is to be done after the war. Bernard himself was a British soldier in India and after returning to England comments:

> The war was fought so people might live amongst their own kind. Quite simple. Everyone had a place. England for the English and the West Indies for these coloured people. Look at India. The British knew fair play. Leave India to the Indians. That's what we did. (No matter what a hash they make of it.) Everyone was trying to get home after the war to be with kith and kin. Except these blasted coloured colonial. I've nothing against them in their place. But their place isn't here. Mr Todd thought they would only survive one British winter. I hoped he was right. These brown gadabouts were nothing but trouble (469).

It is made obvious that immigrants are not wanted in England. They are no longer protected by their uniforms and no longer needed. The 'Mother Country' holds no great appreciation for their service and is ready to send them off swiftly after the war and wave them goodbye. As it turns out, they shall bear the fate of the unsung heroes, not recognized for their efforts and everything they left behind in their homelands to come and fight for England. Thus, disillusionment forms as they realize that they will not be regarded as heroes, but, as it turns out, they are victims of society that selfishly only saw them as bodies that are there to clean up the mess and expected to return to their *small island* of Jamaica and leave only the 'English' in England. Gilbert summarizes this notion by stating:

> All we ex-RAF servicemen who, lordly in our knowledge of England, had looked to those stay-at-home boys to inform them that we knew what to expect from the Mother Country. The lion's mouth may be open, we told them, but we had counted all its teeth. But, come, let us face it, only now were we ex-servicemen starting to feel its bite (326).

2.3.4. That Is Not How the Queen Speaks

Language is another tool that the Caribbean immigrants in *Small Island* hoped would help them assimilate easily into English society. Before coming to England, they imagined everyone speaking English the way they were taught at school; the proper manner in which the King and Queen speak and they arrived in England with the preconceived notion that all English speakers there would communicate in that refined, 'Queen's English'. However, upon their arrival, they were confronted with the stark reality that this wasn't universally true. Instead, they encountered a diverse range of unfamiliar idiomatic expressions and informal language that mirrored the socioeconomic complexities of British society. This discrepancy between their initial assumptions and the linguistic variety they encountered underscored the disparity in language use among different societal segments, highlighting the intricate interplay between language, identity, and social class in their new environment.

This disillusionment is mostly present in the character of Hortense who is proud of her English and whose "vocabulary is definitely influenced by the works of British authors she has read such as Wordsworth and Tennyson" (Jašková 62). Even as a child, she commented on her maid's English by telling her that she "should learn to speak properly as the King of England does. Not in this rough country way" (Levy, "SI" 43). But she is soon tested throughout the story in terms of her English and how she perceives herself speaking the language. Immediately after arriving in England, she experiences her first language-related disillusionment when trying to get a taxi. She sees a man pushing a trolley and asks him as eloquently and politely as possible: "Could you be so kind as to point out for me the place where I might find one of these vehicles?" (16). The man, however, doesn't understand her and seems "perplexed" (16). After managing to make herself understood, Hortense finds a taxi and faces another setback when communicating in English:

> It took me several attempts at saying the address to the driver of the taxi vehicle before his face lit with recognition. 'I need to be taken to number twenty-one Nevern Street in SW five. Twenty-one Nevern Street. N-e-v-e-r-n S-t-r-e-e-t.' I put on my best accent. An accent that had taken me to the top of the class in Miss Stuart's English pronunciation competition. My recitation of 'Ode to a Nightingale' had earned me a merit star and the honour of ringing the school bell for one week. But still this taxi driver did not understand me. 'No, sorry, dear. Have you got it written down or something?

> On a piece of paper? Have you got it on a piece of paper?' I showed him the letter from my husband, which was clearly marked with the address. 'Oh, Nevern Street – twenty-one. I've got you now (16-17).

The same taxi driver later describes how to ring the bell and wait for the owner of the house for Hortense, but she remarks that he does it with a language she would rather use to communicate with children (17). Levy's description through Gilbert's narration of how Hortense speaks is both vivid and humorous: "Hortense is asking in slow deliberate English usually reserved for the deaf, 'Would you be so kind as to tell me where I might find the toilet?'" (31). After so many unsuccessful attempts at communicating herself, Hortense calls it a "silly dance of miscomprehension" (332) as she is disappointed that people do not understand what she is saying because of her pronunciation. This disappointment does not align with the pride she used to feel about her advanced language skills and the hard work she has put in acquiring the proper vocabulary and pronunciation.

When she dreams of going to England after her pact with Gilbert, she dreams of all British people speaking in the same manner: "I walk to the shop where I am greeted with manners, 'Good day', politeness, 'A fine day today,' and refinement, 'I trust you are well?'" (101). Her understanding of manner, politeness, and refinement matches with the use of Shakespearean English by common people on a regular day. According to James, her "naïve and simple, bearing the clipped preciseness and superiority of the coloured schoolmarm of better birth and breeding that she wishes to project" (53). Moments such as her misuse of the first-person pronoun "I", her use of the noun "abode" as a verb, or her confusion over the idiom Queenie uses ("Cat got your tongue?") show that she uses a rather archaic language, and her perception of signs is quite different from Queenie's and other British people in the story (McMann 206). This archaic use is repeated in Hortense's constant bewilderment reaction of "an educated woman such as I". Despite this fact, Hortense is quite certain that he speaks a more elevated English than other Jamaicans in the story, she believes that this makes her more "English" than the rest of the characters. This is what she thinks of the way Gilbert speaks and its impact on his Englishness:

> Anyone hearing Gilbert Joseph speak would know without hesitation that this man was not English. No matter that he is dressed in his best suit, his hair greased, his fingernails clean, he talked (and walked) in a rough Jamaican way. Whereas I, since arriving in this country, head determined to speak in an English manner (Levy, "SI" 449).

Similar to Hortense in *Small Island*, Levy's mother also aspired for herself and her husband to blend in with the English society as much as she possibly could and not stand out for the characteristics that they might be able to change or, as they saw it, improve. One of the ways to accomplish that was by means of language. Levy recalls: "My mum was desperate for my dad to lose his accent and stop saying 'nah man' and 'cha' in every sentence" (Levy, "Six Stories" 7) and she was strict and careful not to do the same so as not to influence her children's acquisition of the language and impose her native accent on them. She succeeded in that and Levy "spoke like a good cockney" (4), but her mother could not stay true to her wish as she would later discover that she, in fact, could not rid herself of her Jamaican accent. In her story "That Polite Way That English People Have" published in her collection of short stories titled *Six Stories and an Essay* (2014), Levy, based on one of her mother's stories about her journey from Jamaica to England, wrote about how the main protagonist, also a Jamaican immigrant, saw England dreary and unsatisfying (Levy 59-78). Having written the story in a first-person narrative and wanting to be as authentic as possible, Levy decided to perform the story at the Southbank Centre in London with a Jamaican accent that took her mother, who was in the audience, by surprise. Levy recalls the interaction they had after it: "Where you learn to speak like that?' I said, 'From you.' At which she looked at me incredulously and said, 'but I don't speak like that" (Levy, "Six Stories" 58). The issue of language and its role in perpetuating a sense of inferiority among the colonized is examined by Frantz Fanon in his 1952 book *Black Skin, White Masks*, particularly in the context of those who immigrate to the colonizer's country. Fanon argues that the desire to become white is first experienced through language, which positions the colonizer's language as superior. However, despite efforts to learn and adopt the language, individuals of colour are never fully accepted into the dominant culture. Moreover, as Fanon claims, learning the colonizer's language often means rejecting one's native community and by trying to master the colonizer's language, meaning speaking it correctly, with the correct accent, they are not just trying to assimilate into the culture they are in, but become 'white' (17-62). However, perfectly acquiring and speaking the language, as Levy's story proves, and is also shown in the example of Hortense in *Small Island*, is not enough to not be reminded that one is different or an immigrant. In addition, the English that the characters of the novel were taught occurred through institutionalized education by trained teachers. However, the reality in England was different, and the use of the language there varied according to contextual situations and the social class of the speakers. Consequently, the stark disillusionment between their expectations and their actual experiences left them, particularly Hortense, feeling disappointed both in themselves and the 'Mother Country'.

2.3.5. Can the Caribbeans Be English?

Additional to her use of elevated English, another thing Hortense refers to as something that puts her in a higher position than her fellow Jamaicans is her skin complexion. Hortense describes it as "the colour of warm honey," claiming she must have got it from her father's side, and she believes that this colour gives her advantages and chances for a better life (Levy, "SI" 38). According to Hortense, even the respect people get depends very much on skin colour. This is how she describes it when she is telling about gaining the respect of pupils as an assistant teacher:

> I hungered to make those children regard me with as high an opinion as I had for the principal and tutors at my college. Those white women whose superiority encircled them like an aureole, could quieten any raucous gathering by just placing a finger to a lip. Their formal elocution, their eminent intelligence, their imperial demeanour demanded and received obedience from all who beheld them. As I prepared my lessons ready for the next day I resolved to summon every tissue of purpose within me to command that class to look on me with respect (69).

The way Hortense describes how highly white teachers are regarded by the black pupils and the words she chooses (elocution, intelligence, imperial demeanour) are almost an allegory to how the colonizers (British people) want to be seen by the people of colour living in the colonies. Furthermore, she sees herself (because of her skin colour of warm honey) as more of a Briton than Celia Langley, one of her friends and colleagues, as she is quite dark (72). In another case, Hortense and Queenie are going to the shops, and Hortense cannot help expressing her amazement at the variety of complexions in England comparing it with the situation in Jamaica. In Jamaica, the English can be easily distinguished from the most high-class Jamaican no matter how sunburnt they are, but in England, it is impossible to make a distinction in complexion (330). It is clear from these remarks that in Hortense's view, the social classes are more distinct when the difference in skin colour is too explicit, but it is more challenging to make this distinction when skin colour varies more.

Rooted by the 300-year-long British colonial rule over the Caribbean, back in Jamaica, Levy's parents, whose complexion was fairer than the more common darker-skin tones, were, just like Hortense, raised with a sense of entitlement and the hierarchical belief that they were

of a higher class than their darker-skinned community members. Levy recalls: “My mum once told me how, back in Jamaica, her father would not let her play with children who were darker than her. She said wistfully, ‘But I had to, or I would have had no one to play with” (Levy, "Six Stories" 8).

Through the novel *Small Island*, different characters (either immigrant or native) have different perceptions of their own countries and cultures along with the perception of the other. The novel opens with Queenie’s childhood memory of a family visit to the Empire Exhibition, which is described by the “King” himself as “the whole Empire in Little” (Levy, "SI" 2). The exhibition itself, compared to a “jungle” by the narrator Queenie, seems to be representation of the British Empire with its colonies and lands all over the globe, with references to New Zealand (a sheep being sheared), India (Ceylon tea) and Africa (cocoa and mud huts). This is why the incident happening there signifies the empirical view of African people. Queenie is dared to kiss an African man, with the assumption that he doesn’t understand proper English, and the man in return attempts to help an embarrassed child saying, “perhaps we could shake hands instead” (6). Queenie’s father claims that the man could only be a noble person like a prince or chief to use such elegant English, indicating his colonial view of people of colour. Johansen also refers to this incident at the Empire Exhibition as a “clear signifier of the connection with imperial attitudes” (394). According to her:

> The explicitly global scope of Levy’s novel—from Jamaica and India to England—highlights her investment in querying histories of British multiculturalism that locate their borders with those of the English nation-state; instead, Levy draws our attention to the way England’s multicultural past and present must attend to both the corporeal and spatial (395).

Many of the behavioural patterns and habits acquired during colonization and slavery practice are still believed to be valid by many white people living in England. Queenie’s neighbour Mr. Todd talks to her to make a complaint about an incident concerning Queenie’s black tenants. He is upset that while his sister was walking on the pavement, two black women who were walking side by side on the same pavement did not give way to her with “no intention of letting her pass undisturbed” (Levy, “SI” 118). This incident clearly shows that some of the white people living in the period still regard people of colour as second-class citizens due to their slavery-oriented background, and they must show courtesy towards white people just because of this perception.

2.4. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The perception held by Jamaican immigrants, despite England's physical stature as a small island, wherein their own homeland appears comparatively diminished, underscores the allure of novel prospects, aspirations, and gratification that accompany their pursuit of a fresh existence. It is worth noting that the perspectives of other characters within the narrative, who diligently strive to realize their personal ambitions, can intermittently sway the reader's outlook. The gradual effacement of the immigrants' linguistic expression and various cultural practices, undertaken under the guise of civilizational progress, finds its origins in England's imperial subjugation of substantial portions of the West Indies and the Caribbean. The concomitant emergence of hybridized cultural forms, the prevailing ascendancy of Western norms, and the practice of ‘Othering' persist as pervasive motifs that bear testament to the enduring legacies of colonialism. Ultimately, the immigrant characters of the novel come to realize that the elusive notion of Englishness remains forever beyond their grasp because contrary to their previous belief that they are English, they are rejected as such in the place they call home.

The colonizers disseminated the notion that the cultural heritage of the colonized population paled in comparison to their own, fostering a compelling impetus for them to aspire to a more elevated standard of living within the confines of England. This may well account for the profound yearning manifested by characters such as Celia, Gilbert, and Hortense for their perceived 'homeland,' even as they simultaneously espouse Western ideals. Usha Mahadevan posits, in her insightful essay titled “England of Andrea Levy's Small Island: Dreams and Realities,” that Jamaican immigrants arrived on English shores with lofty anticipations, only to confront the bitter taste of disappointment and disillusionment that pervaded their experience (Mahadevan 73).

As depicted in the birth of the mixed-race baby at the novel's conclusion and the hope it ushers in for the future, Hortense and Gilbert opt to remain in England, imbued with the conviction that their offspring will encounter the full splendour of the 'Mother Country.' This very conviction mirrors the mindset that anchored the immigrant parents in *Fruit of the Lemon,* as well as Levy's own parents, alongside numerous other real-life instances of first-generation Caribbean immigrants in England who, despite the unfulfilled promises through which the 'Mother Country' showcased its lack of regard, persist in placing their faith in the pledges it extended to them.

CHAPTER 3

MY, YOUR, OUR ENGLAND

BETRAYERS OF HOPE: UNRAVELLING NATIONAL IDENTITY AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN *FRUIT OF THE LEMON*

3.1. A LOOK AT *FRUIT OF THE LEMON* AS A WINDRUSH STORY

The events in this novel are set at a later date than the ones in *Small Island*, and we witness the lives of second-generation Jamaicans living in England. Faith, the main character, is born to a Jamaican family who immigrated to England on a 'banana boat' after the Second World War. Her childhood and teenage years, however, are very similar to any kid growing up in the UK in that era as she and her brother Carl aren't told much by her parents about their family's roots in Jamaica. After getting her degree, she finds a job in BBC with the task of arranging costumes for actors during shootings, and she moves out to live with her flatmates. The news that her parents have decided to move back to Jamaica comes as a real shock to her, and she cannot understand why they call it home after not even mentioning it for years. This shock causes her to move away from daily tasks and question her identity, her skin colour, and how these affect the way people interact with her. After witnessing a traumatic racial attack in a bookstore, she is totally isolated from the real life surrounding her.

To help Faith, her parents arrange for her a two-week trip to Jamaica so that she can meet other members of the family and learn a few things about her ancestry. She is to stay with her mother's sister Aunt Coral, but Coral introduces her to several other members of the family. Each character narrates a story of their own, a story of an ancestor in different settings such as Cuba, Jamaica, New York, and Scotland. It is clear that each person has undergone different racial difficulties and it took different amounts of strife to develop their own black identity. At the end of the trip, Faith returns home, but it is implied that she is not the same person any more, and the connection between her current identity and her roots is restored (Levy, "Fruit" 1-394).

3.2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF *FRUIT OF THE LEMON*

Fruit of the Lemon could be considered a bildungsroman focusing on Faith's experience as a second-generation immigrant woman. Flajsarova interprets this bildungsroman as a search for identity and Levy's way of challenging the stereotypes of British identity that was greatly shaped by postcolonialism (16-27). Flajsarova emphasises how Levy establishes the relationship between diaspora and postcolonialism in connection with an identity search, drawing attention to cultural and ethnic identities (18). Faith's trip to Jamaica helps her acquire some information related to her ancestors, and she reaches a racial awareness which causes her to think that her identity is more complex than how other people see it, and racism is based merely on skin colour. Flajsarova comments on the lemon fruit metaphor by pointing to its bittersweet taste, a duality that represents Faith's different identities: "Although Faith might be officially recognised as a British citizen by law, she will never be accepted by the white public as a fully-fledged British citizen" (25).

According to Sampson-Choma, on the other hand, the experiences Faith's brother Carl goes through while becoming a grown-up black man living in London requires further analysis and a close inspection as a significant sub-plot of the work (84-94). Sampson-Choma emphasises how significant narratives belonging to a particular culture can undergo transformation while being adapted into another one. For her, the mentioning of the 1971 movies is an implication that Carl is under the influence of Blaxploitation, and he realises that he can actually be in charge of his surroundings, which is a way to survive in the British society as a black man. Sampson-Choma explains this as follows:

> Carl finds solace in Blaxploitation films because they show him that he can take control of his environment. As someone who is positioned within a community in which he is forced to live, the Black protagonist demonstrates his ability to rule his environment and assert himself as the dominant force within that community. He chooses to do so by performing Black British identity through the guise of Blaxploitation, ultimately creating a new framework for asserting himself. Enacting a film trope, Carl determines he is super hood, super high, super dude, super fly: He is Performing Black British Male Identity through the Guise of Blaxploitation (88).

Gui also examines Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*, along with Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) through the lens of Edward Said's travelling theory, pointing to the fact migrancy is not only the reason why the British society is so exclusionary but also an inseparable and convergent component of the British history (73-89). Gui states that these two novels defy the way Britain's colonial past is nostalgically depicted by the "heritage industry", and they recreate the "rubrics of heritage" to scrutinize the colonial, immigration, mixture, and hybridised events taking place in Britain's geography (74). As it is stated in the study:

> Levy does not reject migrancy outright but transforms this concept through Faith's experiences of racism and sojourns in the British and Jamaican countryside, both of which impress upon her two different versions of heritage and history. Faith's movement and journeying is a form of travelling theory that reimagines her filiative networks of relatives and ancestors into an affiliative, critical connection with Britain against the dominant atmosphere of ethnic nationalism and racial prejudice (82).

Gui discusses that narratives of this sort keep aim at redressing narratives and scenes brought from the former colonies or experienced in the migrated place to create a unique form of "postcolonial storytelling" within which all senses of segregated national identity are revealed, conceiving new forms of distress between "sojourning and settlement, displacement, and dwelling" (87).

3.3. THE SOUR TASTE OF DISILLUSIONMENT IN *FRUIT OF THE LEMON*

This following chapter delves into the intricate narrative of *Fruit of the Lemon* and its resonance with the themes explored in *Small Island*. Both novels offer poignant insights into the journeys of immigrants who, once arriving in England with a sense of hope and reverence for their 'Mother Country', are confronted with a disheartening reality. This chapter unveils how these characters' initial idealizations of England crumble as they grapple with the harsh realities of inadequate housing, employment challenges, and the pervasive struggle to be recognized as English. Through their experiences, a shared narrative of disillusionment that sheds light on the complexities of identity, belonging, and the often-harsh truths behind their dreams is uncovered.

Fruit of the Lemon, too, emphasizes how the concept of the 'Mother Country' Jamaican people had learned about at schools is different from the country they have immigrated to. Faith, the main protagonist of the novel, introduces readers to the story by providing a couple of clues as to how her parents, Mildred and Wade, imagined England prior to moving there. Faith is a child of the first generation Windrush immigrants, just as the mixed-race baby, Michael, from *Small Island*. The character's name, Faith, serves as a poignant symbol of the first generation Windrush immigrants' aspirations for their children. Just like the unwavering belief represented by her name, these parents hoped that their offspring would navigate a path to a brighter future in England, free from the bitter challenges and prejudices they themselves endured, placing their faith in the promise of a more inclusive and equitable society for the generations to come. Through the characters of Faith's parents, Levy illustrates the Windrush generation who "were keen to leave the histories of slavery and colonial subordination behind in their effort to build a new life and reinvent themselves in this new country" (qtd. in Conrod 15). They were positive that they will have an easier life in England, and they regarded England not just as a place of promise, but also as a form of home, akin to a motherland whose history, culture, and literature they were acquainted with through their education (Toplu 2). "At school Mum learnt about England, 'the Mother Country'. Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus, Buckingham Palace. She learnt the names of all the cities - London, Manchester, Birmingham - and had to know by heart what each of the cities produced. Sheffield for steel, Newcastle for ships, Nottingham for lace." (Levy, "Fruit" 4). Having been exposed to such idyllic pictures of England for many years, they "started to dream about going to England" Her mum in particular "wanted to see all those places she'd learnt about" (5) and so they immigrated to England with the hope of a better life. However, their expectations would soon be shattered by a reality that is not the picture-perfect island they had greatly dreamed about as they, like most Windrush generation immigrants, struggled with employment opportunities, housing, and acceptance. Even their mere arrival was wrapped in a veil of irony foreshadowing that 'Mother Country' may not be the dream they have longed to be a part of:

> The ship finally docked at West India dock on Guy Fawkes' night. As the ship pulled into its berth, Mildred and Wade heard the pop and whistle of crackers and saw fireworks lighting up the sky. Mum explained, at first we didn't know what it was for. In Jamaica you only get fireworks at Christmas. Your dad thought it might have been a welcome for us, having come so far and England needing us. But I didn't think he could be right. And he wasn't (7).

Their arrival, though accompanied by celebratory fireworks and a semblance of festivity, harboured an underlying irony that would later resonate with their disillusionment. Just as their rosy expectations of England proved false, the ostensible ‘welcome’ they encountered held a superficiality that masked the challenges ahead. The symbolic spectacle of fireworks on Guy Fawkes' night hinted at a more complex truth – that the anticipated embrace by the so-called ‘Mother Country’ might be as illusory as the flickering lights in the sky. This prelude of irony foreshadowed a journey where the immigrants' pursuit of belonging and acceptance would be fraught with hurdles and a realization that England's embrace was not as genuine as they had hoped for. The arrival of Mildred and Wade is very reminiscent of when Levy’s mother arrived in England on November 5. In the UK, November 5 is celebrated as ‘Guy Fawkes Day’. Guy Fawkes Day creates a new layer of history by annually commemorating the thwarting of the Gunpowder Plot, adding a distinctive cultural event to England's historical narrative. Its importance lies in its role as a unifying tradition that brings communities together around shared stories and symbols, contributing to a collective sense of identity. In discussions of Englishness, the day becomes a focal point for exploring notions of historical resilience, political freedom, and the evolution of cultural identity, intertwining the past with contemporary values. Historically, Guy Fawkes Day signifies the failure of a plot to overthrow the government and assassinate the monarch, marking a pivotal moment in England's history. By gathering on November 5th, people affirm their commitment to safeguarding their nation's democratic institutions and individual liberties, echoing the enduring message of the importance of vigilance against potential threats to the state. The day's message resonates through the generations, emphasizing the significance of unity, remembrance, and the preservation of hard-won freedoms. This annual observance acts as a historical reminder that transcends time, encouraging reflection on the fragility of power and the enduring importance of protecting the values that define a nation (“The Real Story of Bonfire Night”). It is generally accompanied by refreshments, meals, parades, bonfires, and fireworks to which Levy’s mother misinterpreted as a welcome gesture intended for her, and those dazzling, sparkling, and glowing displays of celebration aligned perfectly with the idea of the Motherland she had. However, that shine and spark lasted until she, like her husband and the characters of Levy’s novel, realized that the reality was far different from what they had envisaged (O'Reilly).

3.3.1. The Shattered Perception of 'Mother Country' as a Splendid Place

I never thought English people lived like that.

- (Levy, "Fruit" 10)

The quintessential English village is portrayed by Faith when visiting a friend's countryside house as "a model village. The village green with perfect lush grass sitting in dappled light, little thatched houses with windows and doors that looked too small, the pub, the post office, and the steepled church surrounded by yew trees and teetering grey gravestones" (Levy, "Fruit" 134). This is also what many Caribbean immigrants pictured all of England as that is what they read about reading plays by Shakespeare and other great English poets and novelists or heard about from their English teachers. But upon stepping onto this promised land of "Mother Country", they were greeted by shattered disillusionment. Faith's mother recalls upon arriving how "England looked so grey and [...] cold" (7). Soon they will also find out that they are also not to live in the big, bright homes they imagined to be welcomed in.

Back home in Jamaica, Faith's father, Wade, "lived in a big house," (2) and her grandparents "had their own business importing haberdashery" (5). They were by no means poor, but the 'Mother Country' seemed to be offering better opportunities that inspired them to dream bigger. However, upon arriving they were invited to live with Faith's uncle, Donald, until "they got themselves fixed up" (7). That Donald, whom Faith's mother, Mildred, was quite impressed by as he "had been in the RAF and was living in England" (6) lived in "one room in a large dark house" (6). Mildred's initial reaction to the house and rooms was: "I never thought I'd end up living like that in England" (8). The other rooms were occupied by "ladies of the night," (6) and that statement allows one to conjecture to the kind of a cruddy and shabby place it must be as it is certainly far from the splendid English place they thought they would be living in and worse off than they had back home in Jamaica. "One room and we had to share the kitchen and bathroom down the hall with all these women" (6). They shared this one room where Donald, Wade's brother, lived on one side and Faith's parents on the other for six months as they had no money to afford a place of their own. The room was divided by a curtain set up by Wade. Donald soon left England and returned to Jamaica because his parents promised him a good job that pays well and with him gone so did the curtain come down (8). But soon after

that Mildred got pregnant with her first child, Carl, and "the room became too small," (9) and they were asked to move out of the room as the owner was selling the place. This was the case for many of the Windrush generation immigrants upon their arrival. Catherine Browne, who came to England in 1955 from Barbados, in her interview for the 'Windrush – Stories of a Hackney Generation', a booklet comprised of stories from the Windrush generation developed as a project within Connect Hackney, Ageing Better programme, reclass about their accommodation stating: "Oh it was terrible, it was about 10 people living in one room. When one lot going out on mornings, the next lot coming in, on afternoons. And we had to share the cooker and everybody come with their pot to put on the stove and it only had three holes" (Appio 25). Race, of course, also played a part in the challenges encountered regarding proper accommodation. Eugenia Fredrick, who arrived in England a couple of years after her father had travelled on the Windrush ship, stated how many landlords "didn't want to rent a place to the black people that was coming over to England," so she and her family had to share one house: "my dad and his sisters and their husbands, we all lived in one house" (29). These cases are also reminiscent of the housing struggles the Windrush immigrants in *Small Island* faced as people would not rent them rooms and apartments because they were black which forced them to live in run-down rooms having to share bathroom and kitchen with many other tenants, just like Mildred and Wade in *Fruit of the Lemon*.

What followed next was a difficult period of separation for Faith's parents. Namely, the "council put Mildred and Carl in a halfway house with other homeless families, while Wade found himself digs in a hostel for men, where he shared a room with nine others" (9). I would argue here that this is certainly not what they could have possibly imagined their lives to be like in their 'Mother Country'. They were homeless, poor, alone, and separated from the one person they have in this, what they now must have come to realize, a foreign land. Faith was born in that council flat and Wade only got to see his children and wife at weekends. They lived like that for six months and Faith's mother tells her that those "days are best forgotten" (9).

After six months of living in those tough conditions, the council found them a flat in Stoke Newington where they lived for ten years. That flat, although arguably better considering they could at least be together, was far from a great place to live. It was small and dark. When Mildred saw the flat, she was shocked and exclaimed: "I never thought English people lived like that" (9-10). The flat was "on a small estate and inside the tiny flat every wall was painted dark brown" (10).

In the end, it seemed as if all their hardships paid off when, after 11 years, they purchased a house in Crouch End. “No more handouts for us. We make our own way now,” (10) is how Mildred reflects on that period, and after they “closed the door of their house for the first time, they both hung their heads and shut their eyes in prayer. "We finally arrive home,’ they said” (10). With this they were finally one step closer to becoming English as owning a house is one element of Englishness according to Paxman who exclaims that an “Englishman’s house is his castle” (120). In the case of Faith’s parents, their castle can’t keep them for too long there as they made a plan of “going home to Jamaica” (Levy, “Fruit” 48). Their departure is symbolized by empty boxes that they have collected over the years. The heavy trunk in *Small Island* is replaced by many empty boxes in *Fruit of the Lemon*:

> Brown cardboard boxes mostly. Fyffes boxes that used to contain bananas from the Caribbean; packets of Daz boxes; toilet-roll boxes; Wagon Wheel packet boxes; unspecified boxes; thick double-lined boxes; stapled up on the bottom boxes; small handles cut out the side boxes; supermarket boxes; greengrocers’ boxes; stationers’ boxes (Levy, “Fruit” 13).

The imagery of the empty boxes in *Fruit of the Lemon* holds significant symbolic weight, especially when considered in conjunction with the narrative of *Small Island*. This juxtaposition reveals a profound irony that underlines the characters' shared experience of disillusionment despite the varying contexts. In *Small Island*, the heavy trunk is emblematic of the anticipation and dreams brought by immigrants to England, embodying their aspirations for a better life. However, it also symbolizes the weight of unmet expectations, as the reality they encounter doesn't align with their hopes. The heavy trunk symbolizes not only the burdensome physical baggage carried by the Jamaican immigrants on their journey to England but also their hopes and dreams for a better life. Within that cumbersome trunk lay the aspirations of a brighter future, the promise of economic opportunity, and the ambition to overcome adversity. Despite its weight, the trunk embodies their resilience and determination, reflecting the optimism and determination of those who believed that England could offer them a chance at a more prosperous and fulfilling life. The contents of the trunk, often filled with cherished possessions, letters, and mementos from home, carry their hopes and dreams. These items represent a connection to their past and a tangible link to the aspirations they hold for their future in England. The trunk becomes a vessel for their optimism, signifying their belief in the possibility of a more prosperous and fulfilling life in a new land. In *Fruit of the Lemon*, the collection of

empty boxes, once used to contain various goods, serves as a stark metaphor for the characters' dashed dreams and unfulfilled promises. These boxes, once filled with potential products and optimism, have been emptied and discarded, much like the initial ideals of the characters who had hoped to find a new life in England. The boxes represent the hollowness of their experiences and the gradual realization that their aspirations were not met as they grapple with challenges such as finding employment, housing, incorporation into English society, and facing discrimination. Viewing these two works as interconnected volumes of a bildungsroman accentuates the irony of the characters' journeys. The heavy trunk and the emptied boxes, symbols of hope and disillusionment respectively, come together to illuminate the shared theme of unmet expectations. This comparison underscores the characters' collective struggle to fit in a place they consider 'Motherland'.

At first, Faith cannot understand why her parents insist on collecting these and occasionally gets the answer that it was not possible to know when these boxes would come in handy. On one occasion, her father even blushes and asks her to inquire no further (15). Later in the novel it is understood that Mildred and Wade are planning to go back to Jamaica and the boxes are a part of this preparation. The novel is somehow built on the idea that returning to Jamaica is the solution to some of the problems experienced in England. Toplu notes how the "boxes they always keep ready for moving is an explicit metaphor of the parents' immigrant selves; it reflects the paradoxical situation that while they are ready to go back 'home,' they expect their children to settle down in England" (2). As Faith's parents are packing to move back to Jamaica, she recognizes one particular object in a box during one of her visits to her parents: a ceramic horse. It is a decorative object, but Faith recalls having played with it and ridden it like a real horse. Mildred asks Faith if she remembers it by saying, "I brought that horse all the way from Jamaica. I don't remember who give it to me now but the horse been everywhere" (Levy, "Fruit"83). It is now travelling back to Jamaica with Mildred and Wade. Wade and Mildred's plans to actually return to Jamaica and Faith's both physical and spiritual journey to Jamaica are manifestations of this suggestion. However, it makes no sense to Faith when Mildred refers to Jamaica as home. "I stopped listening. Because what I meant by why, the question I wanted answering was, why Jamaica? Why is Jamaica Home?" (49). It can be assumed that Mildred and Wade suffered and selflessly accepted the bitter conditions in England for the sake and hope that their two children, Carl and Faith, might not face the same fate as they did in the blessed 'Mother Country'.

That, however, has not proven itself to be as realistic as they might have hoped, and "the parents' unwillingness to reveal their own disillusionment to their children and especially to Faith, subsequently results in Faith's identity crisis" (Toplu 2). As a second-generation immigrant, it is difficult for Faith to regard Jamaica, a place she has never seen or been properly told about, as home. Her parents made her oblivious to both the native country and the relatives they have there. What Levy proposes with these empty boxes symbolism is the contrast between the mindset they had when they first came to the 'Mother Country' (with all the expectations, dreams, plans for the future, hopes for a new life, a fresh start, etc.) and the frustration and disappointment caused by all the hardships, racism, and discrimination they face, which apparently they would not want to take back to Jamaica. When Faith tells Mildred about TV not accepting black people as dresses, she catches a look in her mother's eyes that she interprets as a plea saying *you can hate me but please love my children* (82). It can be assumed that she has experienced enough racism and discrimination as a first-generation immigrant, but she also believes that future generations do not deserve it. Although this news came as a big shock to Faith, the vast real-life examples attest to many such parents who "entertain a dream of going home" (qtd. in Conrod 7) either after initial months of living in England or after years of facing discrimination in dilapidated and run-down, overcrowded housings and diminishing employment opportunities.

3.3.2. The Innate Scarcity of Job Opportunities in the 'Mother Country'

No more handouts for us. We make our own way now.

- Andrea Levy (Levy, "Fruit" 10)

Identical to the numerous examples of Caribbean immigrants in England, Mildred and Wade also came to the 'Mother Country' to "earn money for a better living" (Toplu 2). Despite their beliefs in the great and prosperous opportunities 'Mother Country' holds for them, their employment options were limited and disheartening. Namely, upon the arrival of the Empire Windrush, the United Kingdom, under the governance of its newly implemented progressive Labor administration, experienced a dearth of laborers. The nation necessitated the presence of

both male and female workers to facilitate the restoration of its weakened economy following the adversities of the war years, particularly within pivotal sectors crucial to the reconstruction agenda. These sectors encompassed the production of fundamental raw materials like iron, steel, coal, and food. Additionally, there existed an extensive backlog of indispensable maintenance and repair undertakings, accompanied by severe shortages in the construction domain. Within the service sector, the efficient operation of public transportation and the staffing of the recently established National Health Service (NHS) mandated the employment of both male and female individuals. It was this employment opportunity that enticed numerous Windrush passengers to leave the Caribbean. In fact,

> almost half of all the men who came from the Caribbean to the UK throughout the 1950s had previously worked in skilled positions or possessed excellent employment credentials. However, many found their access restricted to jobs the local population considered undesirable, including street cleaning and general laboring, or to jobs that demanded anti-social hours such as working night shifts. Over half the men from the Caribbean initially accepted jobs with a lower status than their skills and experience qualified them for (McDowell).

Nevertheless, the initial reception towards Windrush immigrants was not cordial. In the immediate postwar era, the government prioritized recruiting displaced white Europeans to fill labour vacancies instead of considering the resources within the Empire. Although certain media headlines expressed a welcoming stance towards the Windrush passengers, the government expressed concern regarding the potential demographic alteration brought about by a visibly dissimilar population. Nonetheless, the government derived solace from the belief that the several hundred men and a few women disembarking from the ship would only be temporary visitors, rather than permanent settlers and the primary "sectors in which people from the Caribbean found jobs included, for men, manufacturing and construction, as well as public transport" (McDowell).

In *Fruit of the Lemon*, Mildred trained to be a nurse at a hospital in Kingston and she hoped to "work for the National Health Service" (Levy, "Fruit" 5). She could not fulfil her dream in the first couple of years as she had to take care of her children alone due to the living conditions they were placed under. Staying alone with two children, separated from her husband, and sharing the council flat with other homeless immigrants allowed her no time for work. She later found a job at a hospital, "but not as a nurse but an orderly" and recalls feeling disillusioned

about her fate saying: “Skivvy at home, skivvy at work. What a disappointment” (8). It took her many years to finally become a district nurse (10). Here, the hospitals and the National Health Service become a setting for exposing the irony of how these character immigrants were welcomed and accepted for the purpose of serving the English, but never fully accepted and seen as such.

Wade, on the other hand, had different battles to fight. In Jamaica, he took on bookkeeping before getting a job at an accounting firm. He left that job and worked for a while in his parents’ business (5). Although he did not complain about the work or money, he was not happy having to work for his parents due to his father being “oh… a very strict man” (5). After arriving in England, Wade accompanied his brother, Donald, and got a job as a builder, “just carrying things,” and “after a short while began to paint and hang wallpaper” (5). His work conditions were harsh, and he had to work for long hours in order to provide for his family. However, in the end, although Wade’s conditions were dissatisfactory and his skills often left unrecognized, he preserved and after a couple of years he “started to work for himself” and “bought a van with the company name on the side in blue letters: ‘Wade’s - Painting and Decorating of the Highest Quality’” (10).

Although this case alone cannot be generalized to the case of all coloured people, it becomes significant when Faith encounters some issues along her career steps. The first job she gets as a costume organiser for television camera shootings is a certain manifestation of this inequality and racism in the employment process. She is greatly overqualified for the job, and even the employers accept this fact, saying “a job like that would be beneath a woman with her qualifications” (32) as she has got a university degree in fashion and textiles. And the fact that she got this job very early on her degree show is explained by her tutor as being related to her being black: “Your work has an ethnicity which shines through. A sort of African or South American feel which is obviously part of you. Don’t you find that exciting, Faith?” (32). What she thinks (but does not say out loud) about this question is iconic:

> As I was born and bred in Haringey I could only suppose that I had some sort of collective unconscious that was coming through from my slave ancestry. Or perhaps it was that I was just better than everyone else. But whatever it was, Olivia sought me out at my degree show and offered me a job (32).

It is understood from this internal dialogue that no matter how aware Faith is of this inequality, she is also in a kind of denial, and she wants to believe that she was specifically picked for the job because she was better than all the other white students in her cohort. After some time, however, she starts to question what she does, wondering "whether the job was beneath a woman with my qualifications" (77), a sentence that almost resonates with Hortense's "a woman such as I" remark from *Small Island*. When she finally accepts this and openly expresses her wish to do a job that better suits her qualifications, she has to face the impact of racism on employment. She tells Lorraine that she could be a dresser, and Lorraine draws her attention to the fact that there are no 'black' dressers. Later, she overhears Lorraine and other colleagues saying actors would not be comfortable with a coloured person dressing them. This makes no sense to Faith as there are black actors on TV, too.

Faith's story serves as proof that although she was born and educated in England, she as a second-generation immigrant, has to face similar difficulties and rejections as her parents did when they first came to England. The 'Mother Country' Mildred and Wade hoped would cherish their children more than it did them, proved to be an unattainable dream even for Faith who is "forced to wait for weeks in the dressers 'pool'," (Baxter 85) and many other second-generation immigrants in England.

In both *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon,* the immigrant characters' quest for good jobs reflects a common struggle that underlines the challenges and disparities they face upon arriving in England. These struggles not only illustrate the economic hardships faced by immigrants but also highlight the systemic barriers and prejudices ingrained in the societies they enter. In *Small Island,* characters like Gilbert and Hortense, encounter immense difficulties securing jobs that match their skills and qualifications. Despite their hopes for better opportunities in the 'Mother Country', they are met with discrimination, racism, and a lack of recognition for their prior experiences. Their journey of seeking suitable employment becomes a microcosm of the broader racial tensions and prejudices that existed in the post-war era. Similarly, in *Fruit of the Lemon,* the characters of Mildred and Wade face obstacles to finding stable employment despite their qualifications and previous work experience. The menial jobs they end up taking highlight their marginalized status in a society that often fails to appreciate their skills and talents. Both novels illustrate how the immigrant characters' aspirations for upward mobility are hindered by systemic racism, limited recognition of their foreign qualifications, and biased perceptions of their abilities. These experiences resonate with the broader themes of identity and belonging,

as the characters' inability to secure fulfilling employment contributes to their sense of being outsiders, perpetuating feelings of alienation. Through these narratives, readers are confronted with the stark reality that, despite their hopes for a better life, immigrant characters often face uphill battles to access the same opportunities afforded to their native counterparts.

Apart from the introductory 10 pages of the novel, "Levy concentrates more on the aftermath, the second generation, rather than the hardships of their parents" (Toplu 2). As such, it does not offer readers more insight into the disillusionment of Mildred and Wade apart from the above-mentioned housing and employment disappointments faced. However, I argue that based on their decision to return to Jamaica and similar characters as those of Hortense and Gilbert from *Small Island*, it is apparent that they have never fully managed to assimilate into English society and that they were never fully accepted as equal participants of the same. They decide to leave their now grown-up children alone and return to their homeland of Jamaica. Similarly, Flajsarova states that Faith's parents "want to return to Jamaica after their disillusionment with Britain has reached its peak" (24). As for their children, and the second-generation immigrants in general, "who are born and come of age in Britain, the dislocation of empire are played out anew within contemporary Britain" (Pready 16) and their disillusionment is displayed primarily in their sense of belonging.

3.3.3. Broken Illusions: Faith's Journey Through Identity Disillusionment

If Englishness doesn't define me, then redefine Englishness.

- Andrea Levy (qtd. in Medovarski 86)

First-generation Caribbean immigrant parents in England often chose to remain reserved when it came to discussing their lives back home with their children. This decision was driven by a dual purpose: the parents' aspiration to facilitate their children's assimilation into English culture and to shield them from the challenges and hardships they, the parents, had endured. By withholding tales of their homeland, these parents aimed to offer their children a fresh start, unburdened by the weight of their past. In doing so, they hoped to encourage a seamless

integration into English society, allowing their children to become seen as ‘true English’ and sparing them from the struggles they themselves faced (Perfect 32).

Thus, in order to protect their two children from the ruthless embrace of the ‘Mother Country’, Mildred and Wade shared little to no information about their homeland of Jamaica and Faith reclass having to piece together the little scraps of their past together like a game of Consequences until she had a story that seemed to make sense (Levy, “Fruit” 3). Laursen argues that that is “because of the parent’s desire for self-invention in Britain” (59).

> My mum and dad never talked about their lives before my brother Carl and I were born. They didn’t sit us in front of the fire and tell long tales of life in Jamaica - of palm trees and yams and playing by rivers. There was no ‘oral tradition’ in our family. Most of my childhood questions to them were answered with, ‘That was a long time ago,’ or ‘What do you want to know about that for?’ And if Mum ever let something slip [...] - then I was told with a wagging finger not to go blabbing it about to my friends, not to repeat it to anyone (Levy, “Fruit” 2-3).

Toplu argues that they kept those stories to themselves so “that their children will adjust as ‘true’ British to their motherland” (3). Similarly, according to Lawrence Scott, “migrant parents wish for their children to assimilate into the host society, and believe that the silencing of their past is the way to do so” (qtd. in Conrod 17). Caryl Phillips further suggests how “the first-generation migrants often held their tongues in order that they might protect their children” (qtd. in Conrod 17). In addition, Scott explains this by stating that

> the parents of these North London girls with their first-generation West Indian parents, who, in their effort to settle in Britain, communicate to their children a kind of amnesia about where they are from. They refuse to answer their questions about the West Indies. They do this in an effort for their children to assimilate, to blend. It is in the heart of the West Indian family with this struggle, this conundrum, that Levy finds her stories. It is there that the explorations of settlement, growing up, belonging, not belonging, blending and understanding, take place (viii).

The outcome of this, however, is Faith's deficiency in self-awareness, as she actively disavows the unfavourable connotations associated with racial identity and otherness, to the extent that she becomes disconnected from all ethnic and cultural indicators. Consequently, she becomes incapable of perceiving social interactions through any of these conceptual

frameworks (Machado 4) and is rendered “unaware of her own collective cultural identity” (Laursen 60).

A salient issue that arises in *Fruit of the Lemon*, particularly evident in its first part, revolves around the manner in which it prompts us to “navigate Faith's complicity in suppressing her own black identity within her contemporary experiences,” (Baxter 83) which in due course leads to her breakdown. For instance, while residing with white, middle-class flatmates, Faith observes her brother's abrupt appearance in the living room, which depicts him “out of context” (Levy, “Fruit” 53). Similarly, her father's spontaneous visit to the house elicits significant uneasiness, particularly due to his concluding inquiry: “Faith – your friends, any of them your own kind?” (28). Faith's response to her father, in the form of a counter-question – “No. Why?” (29) - offers a twofold revelation. On one hand, it signifies Faith's awareness of her socialization within a multicultural and multiracial Britain, reflecting recurring themes fraught with tension among Levy's young, black, British protagonists. On the other hand, it unveils Faith's reluctance to perceive herself in terms of racial distinction (Baxter 83): "I didn't ask him to explain. I didn't ask him to finish what he was saying. I didn't want him to” (Levy, “Fruit” 29).

Furthermore, the novel constantly makes us witness occasions when Faith is not content with where she is and who she is, and she is in a constant search for identity. Carl, on the other hand, is the complete opposite of Faith. He makes no effort to identify as a person of colour, immigrant, second-generation, or anything else although he sometimes sounds more lost than Faith. At a phase during his childhood, he claims the name Trevor and only answers to that. After some point, he decides to be Carl again, and Faith concludes that “he had a certain Superfly, Shaft, don’t-mess-with-me-I’m-a-black-man message” (17). What Faith describes here sounds like a stereotype, and Carl chooses to identify with this stereotype rather than being his authentic self, which is Trevor in this case. This might be pointing to the fact that many people of colour would simply act in accordance with the stereotypes created for them by the white-dominant society in order not to have to fight this battle for finding their true selves.

This theme of uneasiness regarding her identity arises again when Faith, Mick, Marion, and Marion’s family go to watch *The Comedy Cabaret at the Crown and Castle Pub*. One of the acts there is presented by a black poet, which makes Faith realise that the poet and herself are the only two black people in the theatre room. She suddenly feels tense, and in a traumatic way, expects only him to excel while bearing no such expectations from the other actors:

> The poet became my dad, my brother, he was the unknown black faces in our photo album, he was the old man on the bus who called me sister, the man in the bank with the strong Trinidadian accent who could not make himself understood. He was every black man – ever (104-105).

Interestingly, Faith decides to put all immigrants' burdens onto this poet's shoulders, and she expects him to be exceptionally interesting so as to appeal to an all-white audience, but in what way exactly she expects him to be is not clear. To her relief, the poet reads some good poems in his Jamaican accent, and this makes the audience cheer, and Faith feels more secure and comfortable looking up. It is obvious that even as a second-generation immigrant, she feels the pressure to be approved and accepted.

It is clear that skin colour is still a determinant in social relations, even from the point of view of people of colour. One of the first questions her parents have regarding Faith's new flat mates is if they are of her "own kind", meaning if they are "coloured". It is also revealed later in the story that Aunt Coral's mother-in-law did not at first want her to marry her son because she was "too dark" and her son "could do better" (225). Coral accuses her husband's family of entitling themselves as of higher-class just because they have a lighter complexion (226).

In *Fruit of the Lemon*, Levy presents a few occasions and dialogues to show how people are also trying to marginalize skin colour to manipulate it for their own ideals, and Faith, although not the object of such remarks, is a passive receiver that is yet unable to shatter her disillusion of being black herself. Lorraine, one of Faith's first colleagues, boasts about having a "coloured" boyfriend, who is named Derek, claiming that he and his family are good despite other people's prejudice (41). In a way, what she displays with such comments is a form of everyday racism, as explained by Sue at. all, where using racism to prove the point that she is not racist, is, in fact, a racist remark (276). This suggests that despite later than the events in *Small Island*, a romantic relationship between a white person and a person of colour is still detested by the white-dominant society. Later, when she, Lorraine, complains about how her boyfriend's dad is angry and loud, however, she uses the reverberation 'bwuba bwuba' and describes him as a "frightening big black–coloured man", immediately apologising to Faith. Despite how open-minded she tries to sound about an interracial relationship, she cannot obliterate the stereotypes and this certain big-black-guy image in her head (Marquis 42). All these instances of everyday racism surround Fatih regardless of her not necessarily being the object of such remarks.

Marion does something similar when attending *The Comedy Cabaret* at the *Crown and Castle Pub*. Marion's father openly expresses his dislike of the black poet in one of the acts, and Marion tries to make it up to Faith as her father might have offended Faith. However, Marion bases all her arguments on culture and working-class closedness, explaining how her parents think differently of Faith, how they want to change, that it's a "cultural thing", and that working classes are fine with collaborating with black organisations (Levy, "Fruit" 106-107). It is in such cases that Faith finds herself witnessing everyday racism when in the company of a white-dominated group, often being the only black person there. It can be argued that Faith perhaps surrounds herself with the white English to try and "fit into the accepted, white English culture by affiliating herself with white people," (Marquis 22) which only further feeds into her disillusion about her own identity as a black person.

That disillusion, however, starts to be challenged more seriously when Faith visits her friends' countryside in a quintessentially English village, again being the only black person in a white-dominated surrounding. This instance showcases how she is coming to the realization that she doesn't fully belong in England as she is "aware that, to the staring eyes of the villagers, she has no place in the local tradition", the "normative, white British identity" (Gui 83). During her stay she becomes aware of how her presence attracts the views of the villagers there and how the places quieten once she enters them. Flajsarova states how these "looks of local people clearly signify that she does not belong, that white people still treat 'coloured' people with racial prejudice" and how Faith as "a member of a socially marginalized ethnic group" doesn't have a right to claim, "settlement in a predominantly white village" (22). She even is questioned about where she comes from by Bunyan, a guy she met at a bar one evening there. After stating that she is from London, that does not seem to satisfy him, and he proceeds to elaborate on his question "I meant more what country you are from" (Levy, "Fruit " 150). Now, aware of the peculiar situation she is in, Faith refrains from stating that she is English as "that was not what he wanted to hear" and specifies how her "parents are from Jamaica" (150). The guy in a perhaps, unintentionally ignorant response neglects Faith's subsequent rectification that "just [her] parents are" by commenting: "As soon as you walked in I thought I bet she's from Jamaica" (150). Marquis presents this occurrence as a manifestation of everyday racism, as Bunyan demonstrates an unwillingness to acknowledge Faith's English identity and instead portrays her as an outsider and migrant (43). Moreover, Bunyan recounts an encounter during his time in Jamaica, where he met an individual who shared his surname, which he finds comical, particularly due to the man's racial background: "black... black! [...] Darker than you,

my dear, if you'll pardon me saying" (Levy, "Fruit" 151). When Faith offers her perspective on this peculiar coincidence, suggesting that their shared surname might be a result of familial ties rooted in slavery, Bunyan vehemently rejects the notion, adamantly asserting that he has no familial connections in that part of the world (152). This interaction highlights the immediate denial and subsequent silencing Faith encounters when attempting to discuss Jamaica, as Bunyan prefers to silence her suggestion of a historical connection rather than entertain the possibility (Perfect 35). This aligns with Levy's statements in an interview, emphasizing the collective amnesia surrounding slavery in England and the significance of understanding and acknowledging this pivotal historical event (Levy and Fischer 134).

Throughout the novel, it is quite apparent that Faith is somewhat uncomfortable about knowing certain things that are related to her Caribbean heritage. This starts with her school friends' contempt of her parents having arrived in England on a 'banana boat'. Her mother knows how in her child's imagination Faith might turn it into an image that is downgrading in her friends' eyes, comforting her by saying, "What, you think we sit among the bananas?" (Levy "Fruit" 2). She also does not enjoy learning about the trade routes in the Caribbean and how slaves were transferred from Africa to the Americas, comparing it to the sheep farming business in Australia (2). This dislike is apparent to her parents, too, and they are not particularly comfortable with it. The fact that she wants to move to another house instead of living with them might be interpreted as an escape from her own past and heritage because of the symbols that occur during her father's first visit to her new living space. The mottled pink paintwork (20), the clogged sink (23), and the draught coming from the fireplace (24) all represent Wade's discomfort with Faith's new lifestyle and his efforts to problematize this as he tries to find a solution.

Her first experiences in Aunt Carol's house in Jamaica clearly show how biased the view she has about Jamaica and Jamaican people is: "The floor was not made of mud and straw – it was solid and covered with a geometric-print lino. And up on a high shelf above the kitchen cupboard was a food liquidizer. My mum didn't have a liquidizer" (213). These observations show that Faith expected Jamaicans to have more primitive lives, and for her, a liquidizer is an indication of civilization. These views are just a projection of the high expectations the first wave of immigrants had when they first came to the 'Mother Country'. "I never thought they'd have slippers like that in Jamaica" (215). She interprets the function of a net curtain in Coral's

house as a protection against mosquitoes. It is possible that Faith is minimizing the black heritage to just Africa through the netting-mosquito-malaria association (218-219).

Lastly, it is noteworthy how the novel opens with lines from the chorus of a folk song written by Will Holt:

> Lemon tree very pretty
>
> And the lemon flower is sweet
>
> But the fruit of the poor lemon
>
> Is impossible to eat

The next mention of the lemon tree is much later in the story when Faith goes to Jamaica and starts to listen to the family history from Aunt Coral and other relatives: "surrounding and overhanging the yard were trees that hung with fruit. A lemon tree with dark green leaves and a few yellow drops dangling heavy ready for picking" (234). This lemon metaphor represents Faith's current state of mind which is eager to learn more about her heritage and embrace her black identity. Just like the beauty of the tree and sweetness of the flowers, it feels good for Faith to discover her roots, but the stories she hears are bitter, dating back to slavery practices, forced separations, and lots of socioeconomic challenges. Soon after hearing some stories and spending time with various relatives, Faith starts to change. Instead of jeans, she wears a cotton blouse, a skirt, and sandals; and she makes her hair into a tight bun at the top.

> When aunt Coral saw me, she gave me that look I had wanted before – the misty-eyed tearful look. She gasped, threw her hands into the air, clapped and shouted, 'Ahh, my Faith, but now you look like a Jamaican (280).

The change in her is not only physical. She goes to a wedding with her relatives in Jamaica, and she finally feels that she is blending in, with nobody looking at her, paying attention to her, or following her moves (344). She even makes plans to visit Jamaica regularly, ultimately making a quick decision to work for Jamaican TV.

> I could even live here. Work in Jamaican television. Who, on this Caribbean island, would care how slowly I walked? In Jamaica I would be told to slow down, to take it

> nice and easy. No problem. I could be a director, a producer. In Jamaica, I could be anything. Irie (345).

This short visit has an impact even on the way she speaks. On her way back to England, she uses the word "fretting" to express her anxiety at the airport while waiting for her cousin Vincent (385). All these signs indicate that she truly embraces her Jamaican identity and returns to England with answers to some of her questions. She is not bothered by her heritage anymore, and she is going to England "to tell everyone … My mum and dad came to England on a banana boat" (397). Finally, Faith "gains a sense of a wider history, which was kept from her" and "asserts a collective, shared history of slavery, colonialism, and migration among all Britons, black and white alike," and in doing so, she "reclaims a wider history, acknowledging the hybrid nature of Jamaica [...] and is able to confront and overcome the trauma of modern racism in Britain" (Laursen 63-64). However, the "bittersweet feeling of a nice fruit that is inedible because of its sourness underneath its skin signifies the duality of identity" (Flajsarova 25). Namely, despite Faith's legal recognition as a British citizen, her complete assimilation and acceptance as a *bona fide* member of the 'Mother Country' remain unattainable.

Basically, what was often required of Jamaican immigrants in England, and immigrants from other colonized parts of the world, was to rid oneself of their native cultures. In "Jamaican Migration to the UK: A History of Post War Immigration" by John S. Saul, the author highlights the challenges faced by Jamaican immigrants in England as they tried to assimilate into the new culture. One of the major issues was the pressure to conform and assimilate into the British way of life, which often meant shedding their own cultural practices and traditions. Many Jamaican immigrants felt compelled to abandon their native language, dress, and customs in order to be accepted by British society. As Errol Lloyd, a Jamaican immigrant to England, put it, "It is the Brits who try to make us forget our culture. I used to come home from school with such a headache from trying to speak like them, dress like them and be like them" (qtd. in Saul 104).

The pressure to conform resulted in a loss of identity and cultural heritage for many Jamaican immigrants. Similarly, Linton Kwesi Johnson, a Jamaican-British poet and activist, has also spoken about the challenges faced by Jamaican immigrants in England as they tried to assimilate into British culture. Johnson has expressed his concern that many Jamaican immigrants have had to abandon their own cultural practices and traditions in order to fit in, and that this has resulted in a loss of identity and heritage (O'Hagan). In an interview with "The Guardian", Johnson said, "through no fault of their own, but through the pressure to conform,

many of my contemporaries have forgotten the beauty of their own heritage" (Aitkenhead). Johnson's comments suggest that Jamaican immigrants in England have had to make difficult choices to integrate into British society, and that this has come at a cost to their cultural identity. But, in the case of Levy, it was not directly the pressure of British society to have her become "white", meaning becoming fully and undeniably English, but her parents. They did not want her and their entire family to be associated with Jamaica and Jamaicans and to achieve that, Levy's parents did not speak to anyone about their lives in Jamaica.

Based on the example set by her parents, Levy herself was encouraged to proceed in her social life as if she were white and British. She recalls: "In my efforts to be as British as I could be, I was completely indifferent to Jamaica. None of my friends knew anything about the Caribbean" (Levy, "Six Stories" 7). But growing up she herself knew little and got the impression that her mother did not share much about it because she "had come to this country to gain a future, not to dwell on a past" ("This is my England"). Keeping her background a secret was imperative and only a few of her closest friends knew that she lived on a council estate. Levy recalls an instance of how she avoided having her classmates find out about it: "Once, when given a lift home, I got my friends to drop me at the gate of a proper house. I walked up the path waving them off. Then as soon as they were out of view I walked back to my flat" (Levy, "Six Stories" 9-10).

In an effort to assimilate and feel a sense of belonging to her surroundings, Levy attempted to distance herself from the very few items that served as reminders of her Jamaican heritage. She found these items that were sent to them on rare occasions, including a traditional Jamaican Christmas cake, a bowtie for her brother, handmade dresses for herself and her sisters, and a can of sweetcorn, to be odd ("This is my England"). Her mother, on the other hand, would also be triggered by simple situations that could publicly link her to her background as in the instances where she did not want to be seen in the same place where a black person would draw attention to themselves, it made her feel embarrassed because this, in turn, also drew attention to her, which made her feel uncomfortable (Levy, "Six Stories" 7). However, simply trying to go about their days as if they were not Jamaican and black did not work as they were often reminded that "our family was foreign and had no right to be here" (8). The racial discrimination, however, was predominantly nonviolent and subtle, but ever-present and affected Levy significantly as it led to the development of self-hatred and feelings of shame and embarrassment towards her Caribbean heritage and family. Hence Levy, being brought up in a

working-class family that distanced themselves from most of their Jamaican background and heritage and being taught to assimilate and fit in with the English suffered a similar fate to Faith's as she had to visit Jamaica in order to redefine her identity and accept that she, although being a black, second-generation immigrant in English society, is still 'English'.

3.4. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Overall, while the Windrush Generation immigrants like Mildred and Wade faced grave struggles in finding proper housing and rewarding employment, their perseverance and the sacrifice of accepting their fate were aimed at providing their children with better opportunities and improved living conditions. However, as demonstrated in Faith's experience, this aspiration has not proven feasible, as the 'Mother Country' appears to have shown little concern for second-generation Caribbean immigrants, too. Despite her ability to easily secure suitable apartments and access education, Faith encountered challenges in finding employment that matched her qualifications. Also, although initially unaware, she is a target of everyday racism, facing questions about her origin and receiving curious looks in villages less accustomed to people of colour. Her realization of her black identity enabled her to recognize past instances of racism she had encountered.

Moreover, her most significant challenge lay in a sense of non-belonging to the country of her birth – the 'Mother Country' that failed to uphold the promises made to her parents and thousands of other Caribbean immigrants of that era. This feeling of displacement in England wasn't a result of migration, but rather emerged from the "numerous rejections experienced" that marked her home as not truly home (quoted in Conrod 43). Faith's parents eventually decide to return to Jamaica once their children are grown and settled. Yet, for Faith, England remains home. Like Levy, who visited Jamaica for the first time while writing the novel, Faith learns to accept and appreciate her heritage, enriching her dual identity. She realizes that her heritage doesn't have to be exclusive; she can embrace both her Jamaican and English backgrounds.

In conclusion, although Faith's immigrant parents find the notion of "returning home" appealing as a coping mechanism in a society that marginalizes them, Faith herself faces a dual challenge. She navigates her relationship with her parents' homeland and her personal

connection to England, working towards establishing her sense of belonging. However, Jamaica will never evoke the same "home" sentiment for Faith as it does for her parents. Nevertheless, her journey provides unique benefits, allowing her to find her place within her family and her country of birth on different terms. This analysis contends that Faith's journey contributes to reshaping the concept of "Englishness" for immigrants, their descendants, and the nation as a whole. Following her journey to Jamaica, Faith must redefine her sense of home with heightened awareness and ethical consideration, marking substantial growth from her initial emotional and physical journey. As Levy aptly stated, "If Englishness doesn’t define me, then redefine Englishness" (quoted in Medovarski 86), and Faith's story does just that.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Describe snow to someone who's lived only in the desert. Depict the colour blue for a blind man. Almost impossible to fashion the words.

- Andrea Levy (Levy, "SI" 424)

This thesis has argued that the disillusionment faced by the immigrant characters of Andrea Levy's novels *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* stem from their preconceived expectations that are ultimately shattered by bitter reality that is racist and not accommodating to outsiders. Specifically, identity and the notion of Englishness for Caribbean immigrants in England has been complex and often fraught with challenges. Despite many Caribbean immigrants holding British citizenship and arriving in response to the call to rebuild post-war Britain, they faced an uphill battle in being accepted as fully English by the broader society. Their cultural differences, including language, customs, and traditions, often led to them being seen as *other* or not fully integrated into the concept of Englishness. Additionally, racial prejudice and stereotyping further perpetuated a sense of alienation and marginalization. However, it is essential to recognize that the perception of Englishness is continually evolving, and many individuals and communities in England are actively challenging these perceptions and working towards a more inclusive and diverse understanding of national identity. Levy is one such example who perseveringly challenged the traditional notion of Englishness with her novels and essays like "This Is My England", and on numerous occasions confidently stated that she is English, and that England is her home.

Andrea Levy skilfully uses first-person narration in her works to intimately convey the profound sense of disillusionment experienced by her characters. Through this narrative perspective, readers gain direct access to the inner thoughts and emotions of the characters, allowing them to witness the raw and personal impact of disappointment. This narrative choice grants a deeper understanding of the characters' struggles, making their disillusionments feel palpable and relatable, as readers are brought closer to the heart of their individual journeys and shattered dreams.

The two novels analysed in this thesis are set in different timelines and as such present two different types of immigrants: first and second-generation immigrants. Furthermore, these two novels have also been chosen for the purpose of showing that although the narratives are played out at different times, immigrant characters nevertheless suffer the same fate when it comes to coming to terms with the reality being different from what they had imagined it to be. The three key elements of disenchanted disillusionment of immigrant characters this thesis has analysed are related to the grand image they had expected England to look and be like, the profuse employment opportunities, and the sanguine embrace into the English society that will treat them equally. In addition, more elements arose dealing with immigrant characters' belief that they are needed, the language that presents a social barrier, and the role their skin colour plays in their societal assimilation that has affected their experience in the adored 'Mother Country'. With all those elements in play, this thesis has shown that the disillusionments experienced by the immigrant characters in *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* are a consequence of their expectations, empty promises made to them by the British government during the post-World War II era, a colonization practice that preaches of the glorious country that makes the colonized wish to be a part of, and a society that does not wish to see them as equal and 'proper English'.

The thesis starts with a theoretical overview of migration and postcolonial literature for it enriches the analysis of migration narratives by providing a broader framework to understand the sociopolitical contexts and cultural complexities surrounding migration experiences. Analysing migration narratives through a postcolonial lens allowed for a deeper appreciation of the nuanced struggles, identities, and perspectives of migrants within a broader global context. Moreover, what this theoretical overview also presents is how the Caribbean postcolonial writing tended to be male dominated until the latter part of the 20th century and into the 21st century when the literary scene began to witness a significant shift. Namely, women writers from the Caribbean started to gain greater visibility and recognition for their works, challenging the male-dominated narrative by shedding light on women's experiences, gender issues, and unique perspectives within the postcolonial context.

The sections ahead offer an overview of Britain's migration history, which has significantly shaped its cultural landscape by welcoming immigrants from around the world across centuries. The Windrush generation from the Caribbean, arriving between the late 1940s and the 1970s, enriched this diversity. Yet, these immigrants faced pervasive everyday racism, despite being invited to assist in post-war rebuilding, leading to struggles in housing, employment, services, and assimilation in English society, and inspiring a range of literature exploring themes of

identity and belonging, with authors like Andrea Levy providing poignant insights into their experiences.

Lastly, the thesis offered a theoretical background on Andrea Levy's life and career. Most of Levy's work is semi-autobiographical and the two novels analysed in this thesis are no exception. Many of the disillusioned experiences lived by the immigrant characters of the novels are a mirror reflection of Levy's and her parents' experiences. Hence, offering a glimpse into the challenges faced by Levy's parents, who came to England during the Windrush era, shows how the narratives are not pure fiction, but based on real-life experiences of Jamaican immigrants in England. As is shown in the thesis, the characters of Hortense and Gilbert from *Small Island* are heavily inspired by Levy's parents with uncanny similarities between them; both Hortense and Levy's mother considered themselves to be of a higher status due to their fairer skin complexion compared to their fellow Jamaicans, their pride in speaking the 'Queen's English', and their educational background in being trained as teachers who hoped to get a teaching position in England but were met with puzzling looks and were told they cannot be hired as their qualifications are worthless in England. Levy's father and the character of Gilbert came to England on the Windrush ship and struggled with finding a proper job after serving in the military, and had their wives join them six months after they had arrived. Finally, Levy may be presenting herself in the character of Faith from *Fruit of the Lemon* who both are second-generation Jamaican immigrants in England, unaware of their ancestral heritage due to their parents' disregard for sharing stories about their lives in Jamacia, reluctant to accept their identity as black immigrants, and both needed to visit their parents' homeland so as to accept who they are.

In addition, a brief overview of the reception and literary criticism of Levy's works has been given. Levy's works have received widespread acclaim from literary critics and readers alike, earning her a prominent place in contemporary British literature. Critics have praised Levy's nuanced portrayals of complex characters and her ability to interweave historical context with personal narratives (Thompson). Her novel *Small Island*, in particular, garnered significant recognition, winning the Orange Prize for Fiction and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award. Levy's works have been celebrated for shedding light on lesser-known aspects of British history and challenging prevailing notions of national identity. Additionally, her evocative storytelling has resonated with readers, fostering empathy and understanding for the struggles faced by immigrant communities. Levy's literary legacy remains an important and influential voice in exploring the multicultural dynamics of contemporary Britain (Baxter and James 2-4).

The main theme of disillusionment of immigrant characters in *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* is presented next. In these two novels, Levy delves into the trials and disillusionments experienced by Caribbean immigrants in their pursuit of a more promising existence in England, often termed the 'Mother Country'. This portrayal of disillusionment reverberates within the wider historical framework of Caribbean migration to England. The two subsequent chapters of this analysis scrutinize the disillusionment encountered by immigrant characters of the two mentioned novels, particularly concerning their initial perception of England as an illustrious land of abundant prospects, their hopeful anticipation of seamless integration and equitable recognition within English society, and the struggles of accepting their national identities.

Both *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon* present a picturesque description of 'Mother Country', England, that the immigrant characters of the novels had painted in their minds before arriving. Those images were a product of a significant colonization period of the Caribbean islands that England ruled over for centuries. They had photos of 'Mother Country' placed in their family photo albums to admire and aspire to visit or live there one day, (Levy, "SI" 102) and they had learned about it at school and were inspired to memorize the names and locations of the many beautiful cities and places that are found there (Levy, "Fruit" 4). It is with this idealistic notion that they came to England only to be disillusioned by the gloomy reality of a post-war place. In both novels, the characters' first reaction to England can be summed up with the disheartening adjectives: "gray", "dark", and "cold". Not once were they introduced to 'Mother Country' as such and they did not arrive to the bliss and beatitude as they had anticipated, but to a place that looked more like a "stinking cantankerous hag" (Levy, "SI" 102). Hence, the examples provided from the narratives and real-life testimonials of Windrush generation immigrants in England showed that it was their idealized and romanticized idea of England that caused them to be disillusioned upon arriving in England in post-war conditions.

4.1. ECLIPSING THE ILLUSION: REVEALING THE TRUE PAUCITY OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE 'MOTHER COUNTRY

The narratives shed light on the pervasive discrimination and prejudice faced by immigrant protagonists in their quest for accommodation. These characters encounter significant challenges in securing housing as their Jamaican backgrounds often evoke reluctance and bias from prospective landlords or property owners, leading to outright rejections. Because of that,

the only remaining options for them are meagre, dark, and cold rooms in run-down buildings where they share restrooms and kitchen with other tenants. In both novels, the Windrush immigrants found themselves confined to a single room due to financial constraints and limited housing options. Economic challenges and discriminatory practices made it difficult for them to secure suitable accommodation, forcing multiple generations to share limited space. This overcrowding not only highlighted the immigrants' economic struggles but also underscored the systemic inequalities they faced upon their arrival in the UK. In *Fruit of the Lemon,* Faith's parents were even separated for a certain time because they could not find an affordable place for them and their two children, and her father only managed to see her and her brother on the weekends.

The disillusionment related to the jobs immigrant characters of these two novels expected to have and the reality of the embayment opportunities that was available to them is analysed next. The distinction between the jobs the Windrush immigrants trained for and the jobs they were offered and had the chance to do in England was quite clear throughout both novels, and Levy touched upon this matter on several occasions. The point where Hortense wants to apply for a teaching position in London but ends up in a cleaning/broom cupboard by mistake is highly symbolic of how the white dominant society sees black people in terms of employability. A generation later, Faith is still suffering from the same problem, and she cannot apply for a position she trained for just because of her skin colour. When Hortense becomes a teacher in Jamaica, she can teach only black students, and has no chance of finding a job in England as a teacher. Similarly, although Faith has a degree in Fashion from a university in England, she barely finds a job as a dresser in a TV studio, and her experiences prove that aspiring for a job higher than that is not quite manageable for her. Various characters in both novels have experienced this obligation to settle for a blue-collar job or a job that rather requires muscle power. This shows that no matter how educated or qualified the Windrush immigrants were, the racial discrimination they faced disregarded their capabilities, and their aspirations were not enough for them to obtain the socio-economic status they desired for themselves and their descendants.

According to the Geraldine Connor Foundation, one of the main reasons Caribbean people were welcomed in the UK was to get additional help to rebuild the British economy, especially after World War II. It was not easy for these Windrush generation immigrants to find employment easily due to racism, and while men were able to find jobs in manufacturing, construction, and public transport, women could work in the National Health Service as nurses.

“Almost all the men who came from the Caribbean to the UK had previously worked in skilled positions and possessed excellent qualifications. However, many found it difficult to find work and initially accepted jobs that they were over-qualified for” (“Windrush Learning Resource”). Levy’s narratives show that it was not only men who faced this kind of unjust employment, and her narratives also prove the power of fiction in terms of pointing out deficiencies and contradictions in society. Almost 70 years later, the same parameter still seems to be valid in the UK, and colourism is still prevalent in many sectors from marketing to healthcare, promoting light skin as the ideal form for attraction, femininity, and social status (Shroff, Diedrichs, and Craddock 2).

4.2. THE QUIXOTIC IDEA OF ACCEPTANCE AND BEING ENGLISH

In both *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon,* Andrea Levy explores the quixotic pursuit of acceptance and the notion of being "proper English" by characters from Jamaica. This pursuit reflects their desire to fit into dominant British society while navigating the complexities of their identities. The characters' quixotic quest for acceptance can be seen as an outcome of the idealized image they have of England as the 'Mother Country' that promises equality and opportunity. Gilbert and Hortense in *Small Island* and Faith in *Fruit of the Lemon* all grapple with the expectation of conforming to a preconceived Englishness, a notion perpetuated by societal norms. This pursuit often leads them to disillusionment as they encounter everyday racism, exclusion, and a clash of cultural norms that challenge their preconceived notions of English identity. The characters' struggles to assimilate into a society that doesn't fully accept them expose the quixotic nature of their efforts – an uphill battle against deeply ingrained prejudices. Levy's portrayal of these characters' experiences sheds light on the futility of conforming to a narrow definition of ‘proper English,’ highlighting the need for a more inclusive and authentic understanding of national identity, which she herself had to redefine. The characters' journeys ultimately reflect the broader challenges faced by immigrants seeking acceptance in societies that often fail to recognize the complexities of their diverse backgrounds.

4.2.1. National Identity

Identity seems to be a significant factor that shapes the characters' aspirations in *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*. Hortense is partially unaware at the beginning of the story that she has been going through discrimination due to her skin colour and origin, whereas Faith is totally aware that whatever is happening to her and other Black people is eventually about her skin colour; a realisation she reaches at the end of the story. This process from Hortense's initial ignorance to Faith's racial awakening is referred to as the "resistance identity" by Castells, which takes place when Black people are "stigmatised by the logic of domination, thus, building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society" (89). Castells clarifies that "exclusion of excluders by the excluded" leads to building resistance identity in the face of oppression:

> Identity for resistance leads to the formation of communes or communities. It constructs forms of collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression, usually on the basis of identities that were, apparently, clearly defined by history, geography, or biology, making it easier to essentialize the boundaries of resistance (9).

It is apparent that the way leading to the construction of resistance identity is made up of several stages in Levy's two novels. The first stage is when the first Windrush immigrants arrive in UK and face difficulties in terms of finding accommodation, jobs, and acceptance as equal members of the society just because of their skin colour. The second stage is working hard and making sacrifices to make room for a life despite all the racism and discrimination, such as Hortense and Gilbert's adoption of Michael, or Mildred and Wade's efforts to provide a decent life for Faith and Carl. The third stage is Faith's embracing her blackness and Jamaican heritage, which enables her to see things clearly. The moment Faith touches a form of resistance identity after her visit to Jamaica, her aspirations change, and she immediately dreams of returning back to Jamaica and working for the Jamaican TV as a producer. This clearly shows that identity can channel a potential immigrant's aspirations.

4.2.2. The Common Language

There are constant references in both novels to the way the characters speak English, how they sound archaic, and how they switch to Jamaican Patois when they do not make an effort to sound like a different person from who they are. Hortense believes that her pronunciation and the carefully chosen phrases she uses are the fruits of her education, and that they put her in a higher status than the other Jamaicans in the eye of the British people. In Queenie's childhood memory, people are surprised when a black person speaks English like everybody else, which suggests that he is not expected to by the white people. Cases like these point to the presence of an optimism that if the Jamaican immigrants are able to speak English like the British people do, they will be welcomed into the society better. It is safe to conclude that speaking English in a certain way was one of the factors that contributed to Windrush immigrants' aspirations to be accepted as English.

Adsera and Pytlikova argue that proficiency in a language has certain advantages for migration in terms of adaptation, human capital, and job matches (343). Therefore, being able to speak a foreign language is another skill that boosts one's aspirations to migrate. According to Isobel-Anderson, the British education system has always prioritised the use of a standard, correct English, and the standard English is still associated with being professional and in a higher status than other people, although not so prevalent as in colonial times (14). This explains Hortense's archaic English and the British people's confusion when they try to understand her. The ideal English she was taught to use is no longer the language that is spoken in post-war England and her expectations to be accepted easily and quickly turn out to be in vain. A similar implication applies to Faith's bias about Jamaican Patois and how she expected to understand it right away. She was only exposed to it through her parents' use at home, but she never heard the actual language in Jamaica until that moment.

4.2.3. Function of Agency in Leaving the Past Behind

Finally, the current study aimed to establish examples and circumstances of how Andrea Levy used different symbols and images to help the characters in the story to leave their past behind and embrace their immigrant identities. In a sense, Levy is trying to save the members

of the Windrush wave from being seen as victims of a wrong decision and restore their role and mission as Windrush immigrants. The task Andrea Levy desires these characters to undertake is very similar to what de Haas describes as 'agency':

> the central problem of such historical-structural views is that they leave hardly any room for human agency. They tend to depict migrants as pawns – pushed and pulled around by global macro forces – or as victims of capitalism who have no choice but to migrate in order to survive. Views of migration as a 'desperate flight from misery', or that portray migrants as passive victims of smugglers and traffickers, do no justice to the fact that the vast majority of migrants move of their own free will. Indeed, a large body of research evidence shows that most migrants succeed in significantly improving their livelihoods through internal and international migration (8).

Levy's characters in these novels are in a search of identity as members of a purgatory belonging neither to the *smaller island* they came from, nor the slightly bigger island they are living on now. However, they are obviously not their ancestors who were once forced to move from Africa to the Caribbeans as slaves, which is classified as 'precarious migration' by de Haas (28). On the contrary, they are individuals who have deliberately chosen to live somewhere else for better lives. Andrea Levy refers to a set of aids that the characters can hold on to in this process of understanding their own agency in the Windrush wave.

It is apparent in *Small Island* that the first wave of immigrants who arrived in England on Empire Windrush were rather isolated, and they did not have a sense of community; members of a diaspora who lived far away from their motherlands. We observe that although first generation characters like Hortense, Gilbert, Wade, and Mildred are not in dire need to connect with other immigrants and Jamaica, second generation characters like Faith and Carl are rather lost as they have no connection to the Caribbean; they have no migration history, and the sense of community has not been achieved yet. The heavy trunk Hortense brought along to the new country has never been opened, and we do not know what it contains, symbolising the fact that the first immigrants were not fully aware of the cultural heritage that has travelled with them. The empty boxes collected by Mildred and Wade show that the immigrants are not ready yet to build a culture in their new home as they are not complete members of a community. Accordingly, Salman Rushdie in his book *Shame* states how all the immigrants:

> leave their pasts behind, although some try to pack it into bundles and boxes-but on the journey something seeps out of the treasured mementoes and old photographs, until

> even their owners fail to recognize them, because it is the fate of migrants to be stripped of history, to stand naked amidst the scorn of strangers upon whom they see rich clothing, the brocades of continuity and the eyebrows of belonging (61).

In *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*, the poignant sentiments expressed by Salman Rushdie resonate deeply. Rushdie eloquently captures the complex experience of immigrants as they embark on their journeys, leaving behind the cherished fragments of their pasts. Levy's narratives mirror this sentiment, portraying characters who grapple with the challenge of preserving their history while adapting to new surroundings that is not welcoming to foreign cultural heritage. Just as Rushdie aptly conveys, the process of migration often leads to a gradual erosion of the familiar, leaving individuals to confront an unsettling sense of detachment from their origins. This search for an identity and a community manifests itself in Faith's feeling of emptiness, confusion, purgatory, only to be resolved through her connection to her true Jamaican heritage after her travel to her parent's *mother country*. Similarly, this disconnection is depicted by other members of the Windrush generation, as exemplified by Trevor and Mike Phillips, the writers of the book *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain*, who state that it took time for the immigrants to accept their situation and adopt the country as homes: "The thing that has amazed me most is that many young people are celebrating the Windrush Year on their own because over the years a lot of them have been made to believe that they have no history" (Campbell). Wambu argues that the literature created by black British people also depicts this search for identity and liberty, the first ever works of fiction and non-fiction depicting this struggle "to grasp the opportunities and new freedoms represented by Britain", and the more recent literature portraying "contours of black identity become more complicated, less black and white […] gender issues and different notions of sexuality are now part and parcel of the matrix".

Two main symbols from these novels show that Levy wants these characters to accept what has happened to them and where they are right now in order to make peace with their past and present situations. The first of these manifestations is the birth of baby Michael in *Small Island*. This mixed-race illegitimate child of Queenie and the mysterious RAF soldier symbolises that the future will be not the same for neither the immigrants nor the natives, and just like it will take time and nurturing for this baby to grow up into a fine adult, it will also take time and effort to create the ideal level of multiculturality in England. Levy is sending the message that baby Michael is not the unwanted fruit of an illegitimate interracial relationship, but something positive and beautiful that naturally happens along with all the racism, discrimination, and

hatred. When the story ends with Hortense and Gilbert adopting the baby, it is obvious that Andrea Levy does not want Windrush immigrants to simply accept the role of victims and live as the white-dominant society desires them to. They are the agents of this process, and they can train the future generations to do the same.

Faith, as a member of these future generations, has to go one step further to achieve this agency: to learn about her heritage and make peace with the past. From the first moments of the story, she hates the idea of her parents having arrived in England "on a banana boat" probably because this reminds her of her ancestry who might have been slaves transported to Jamaica by white people by force. After travelling to Jamaica and finding out all the misfortune and suffering that has happened to her ancestors, Faith understands her life is shaped by parameters that have been created by neither her nor her parents, and she recognises her goal in transferring this heritage to future generations. Hortense and Gilbert's task of achieving this agency is complete with Faith's acceptance of her heritage. At the end of the novel, she feels proud that her parents came to England on a banana boat because they are not "passive victims of smugglers and traffickers" but immigrants who set out to "improve their livelihoods through migration" (de Haas 8).

4.3. REIMAGINING REALITY: NAVIGATING THE AFTERMATH OF SHATTERED ILLUSIONS

In both *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*, the immigrant characters grapple with a myriad of disillusionments stemming from their preconceived notions of England, which encompassed ideas of improved living conditions, abundant employment opportunities, seamless assimilation into English society, and acceptance by the English. These characters arrived in England with optimistic visions shaped by cultural representations, familial anecdotes, and colonial narratives that painted a picture of the country as a land of prosperity. However, upon their actual arrival, they are confronted with a stark dissonance between their idealized imaginings and the harsh realities they encounter. The scarcity of suitable housing, lack of ample job prospects, and their aspirations for a warm reception by English society are often met with prejudice and hostility. This traditional notion of Englishness, rooted in exclusionary norms, the traditional and often deeply ingrained ideas about who belongs to a certain society and who doesn't based on factors like race, ethnicity, and culture, leads to their inability to fit in, and everyday racism compounds

their struggles. Their experiences challenge their sense of belonging and lead to profound disillusionment as they confront the disparity between their anticipated dreams and the challenging truths of their new lives in England. As previously exemplified, in *Small Island*, Gilbert and Hortense's aspirations for a warm reception and harmonious assimilation are met with everyday racism and hostility, exposing the discord between their dreams and the actual challenges they face. Similarly, in *Fruit of the Lemon*, Faith's narrative serves as evidence that despite being born and having lived her entire life in England, she, as a second-generation immigrant, encounters comparable challenges and rejections akin to those her parents, numerous real-life Windrush immigrants in England, Hortense, Gilbert and other character immigrants in *Small Island* experienced upon their initial arrival. The cherished notion of the 'Mother Country' that her parents, Mildred and Wade aspired to, hoping for a better reception for their children, remains an elusive dream, proving unattainable even in Faith's case.

The resulting disillusionment not only highlights the complexities of the immigrant experience but also underscores the societal and historical factors contributing to the formation of these misguided expectations. Thus, Levy poignantly captures the emotional toll of shattered illusions, accentuating the need for critical reflection on cultural perceptions and fostering a more inclusive and empathetic dialogue between host communities and immigrants. This exploration deepens our understanding of the intricate interplay between hope, reality, and the profound impact of cultural dissonance on the lives of those seeking to establish themselves in a new land.

4.4. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

This dissertation has focused on the analysis of a single author of the Windrush literature canon, Andrea Levy. However, through the analysis of related literature, scholars, and authors, certain themes have emerged that seem to be present in the works of similar Windrush literature authors such as *Zadie Smith, Caryl Phillips, David Dabydeen, Grace Nichols, Joan Riley, Merle Collins,* and *Malorie Blackman*. The themes in question are the notion of disillusionment, expectations versus realities, displacement, and the feeling of not belonging in the countries they were born in. Thus, by studying these Windrush writers in a comparative outlook and measuring them against different forms of writing about migration, we can see some common denominators possibly turning Windrush literature into a genre that is well worth exploring.

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