

**ATILIM UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAM**

**IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN ANDREA LEVY'S *EVERY  
LIGHT IN THE HOUSE BURNIN'* AND *NEVER FAR FROM  
NOWHERE***

**Master's Thesis**

**Ecem ÇETİN**

**Ankara - 2019**



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**Supervisor**

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lerzan Gültekin**

**Ankara – 2019**

## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Immigrant Experience in Andrea Levy’s *Every Light in the House Burnin’* and *Never far from Nowhere*” and prepared by Ecem Çetin meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Master’s Thesis in the field of English Language and Literature following the successful defense of the thesis conducted in 26/09/2019.

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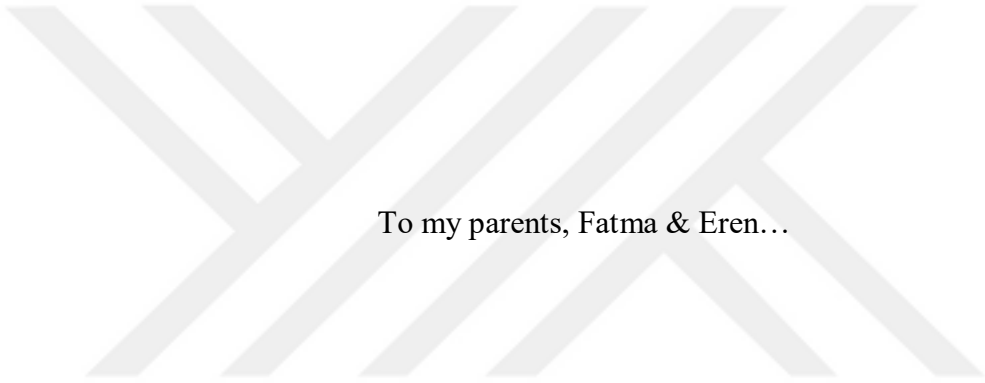
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**Ecem ÇETİN**



To my parents, Fatma & Eren...

## ÖZ

ÇETİN, Ecem. Andrea Levy'nin *Every Light in the House Burnin'* ve *Never far from Nowhere* Romanlarında Göçmen Deneyimi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2019.

Bu çalışma Birinci ve İkinci nesil göçmenlerin ırk ayrımcılığı sonucunda ortaya çıkan uyum sorunlarını, hayal kırıklıklarını ve yabancılaşmalarını ve bununla bağlantılı olarak kimlik arayışlarını postkolonyal teori çerçevesinde inceler. Söz konusu romanları incelemek için başlıca postkolonyal eleştirmenler Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha ve Frantz Fanon'un görüş ve kuramları kullanılmaktadır. Tezin ilk bölümü sömürgeci söylem ve postkolonyal anahtar kelimelerin tanımlarına odaklanacaktır. Bununla beraber, "melezlik," "üçüncü uzam" ve "taklitçilik" tez boyunca bahsedilen romanlarla örneklendirilmiştir. Britanya'daki Karayipli göçmenler ev sahibi ülkeye uyum sağlamaya çalışırken, ırk ayrımcılığına maruz kalırlar. İngiliz toplumuna uyum sorunları ve ırkçılıkla başa çıkmak için bu göçmenlerin verdikleri mücadeleler ve başarısızlıklar göç, göçmen ve göçmen yazarlara değinilerek çalışılmıştır. Buna bağlı olarak, savaş dönemi sonrasında İngiliz Hükümetinin göçmen politikaları aracılığıyla, o dönemin tarihi hakkında kapsamlı bilgiler sunulurken, Jamaika kökenli anne babaya sahip İngiliz yazar Andrea Levy'nin yaşamı ve edebiyat kariyerine de değinilmiştir.

Andrea Levy'nin *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) romanları, varlıklarını reddeden bir çevrede kimliğini kanıtlama mücadelesi veren Jamaika kökenli kadın başkarakterler Angela Jacobs, Olive Charles ve Vivien Charles'ın yaşadıklarından yola çıkarak kimlik teması üzerine odaklanır. Bu tezde, her iki romandaki karakterlerin kişisel özelliklerinin, ev ve dışarı alanlardaki hayatları boyunca karşılaştıkları güçlüklerle verdikleri tepkilerinin bir analizi yapılacaktır. Karayiplerden Britanya'ya yaptıkları göç karşısında birinci kuşak göçmenlerin karşılaştığı ırksal ayrımcılık, ve özellikle bu Karayip göçmen çocuklarının ve onların aile içi ve dışarıdaki yaşamlarıyla olan ilişkileri ve çatışmaları, ırksal nefret ve sınıf farklılıklarının sonucunda ortaya çıkan dışlanma ve yalnızlık duygusu baz alınarak göçmen deneyimleri incelenmektedir. Sonuç olarak, tezde bu göçmenlerin söz konusu romanlarda gösterildiği üzere kendi kimliklerini oluşturma mücadeleleri postkolonyal bağlam doğrultusunda sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: **Andrea Levy, göçmen edebiyatı, karayipli göçmenler, ırk ayrımcılığı.**

## ABSTRACT

ÇETİN. Ecem. Immigrant Experience in Andrea Levy's *Every Light in the House Burnin'* and *Never far from Nowhere*, M.A Thesis, Ankara, 2019.

This study aims to analyse immigrant experience as reflected in Andrea Levy's *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) in relation to the adaptation problems, the sense of disillusionment and alienation, and, accordingly, the search of identity of the first and second generation immigrants as a result of racial discrimination within the frame of postcolonial theory. In the study, postcolonial critics, such as Edward Said's, Homi K. Bhabha's and Frantz Fanon's theories are employed for the analysis of the chosen novels. The first chapter of the thesis will focus on the definitions of colonial discourse and related postcolonial key concepts. Additionally, the concepts, such as "hybridity," "third space" and "mimicry" are exemplified in the chosen novels. Caribbean immigrants in Britain have been exposed to the racial discrimination while they are trying to adapt themselves to the host land. The struggles and failures of the immigrants to cope with adaptation problems and racial discrimination in the British society are studied by referring to migration, immigrant literature and immigrant writers. The history of postwar British Government's migration policies has been examined together with Andrea Levy's literary output and her life as a British citizen born to a Jamaican family.

Andrea Levy's *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) centre upon the theme of identity as seen in the experiences of female protagonists Angela Jacobs, Olive Charles and Vivien Charles, who have Jamaican origins and who struggle for proving their identity in an environment that rejects them. The thesis will attempt to analyse personality traits and reactions of the characters in each novel and their relations within the domestic and outer spheres in the face of the hardships they have to deal with throughout their lives.

The racial discrimination the first generation immigrants were exposed to after their migration from the Caribbean to Britain, and specifically their children's conflicts and relations, both within the household and the outer world, are examined in the light of their experiences, based on the sense of loneliness and isolation as a result of racial hatred and class differences. In conclusion, their struggles to form their own identities as seen in these novels are analysed in the light of postcolonial context.

**Keywords: Andrea Levy, immigrant literature, caribbean immigrants, racial discrimination.**



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## CONTENTS

<b>ÖZ.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>

### CHAPTER ONE

<b>COLONIAL DISCOURSE AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.1. Colonialism and Postcolonialism .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.2. Race and Culture .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.3. Hybridity, Third Space, Mimicry .....</b>	<b>25</b>

### CHAPTER TWO

<b>IMMIGRATION AND BRITAIN'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.1. Immigration and Immigrant Literature .....</b>	<b>33</b>

### CHAPTER THREE

<b>BLACK BRITISH WRITER: ANDREA LEVY .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3.1. Andrea Levy's Life and Career .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3.2. Immigrant Experience in <i>Every Light in the House Burnin'</i> (1994) .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>3.3. Immigrant Experience in <i>Never far from Nowhere</i> (1996).....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>CURRICULUM VITAE.....</b>	<b>101</b>

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis will seek to develop a framework of immigrant experience, its themes and motifs in literature. It also aims to shed light on a series of identity issues, such as dissatisfaction with the socially given identity, that is, the search for identity, racial and gender discriminations, the sense of alienation in Andrea Levy's *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) in which the concerns of immigrant literature can be considered to comply with the analysis of these texts regarding to immigrant experience.

In her novels, Levy reveals the social, cultural and economic examples of two different nations and cultures, namely, England and the West Indies. The thesis seeks to analyse the chosen novels as postcolonial texts in literature in the light of immigrant experience. In this regard, the aim of this thesis is to explore the subject matters, such as culture and race, "hybridity," "third space," "mimicry" and immigration, within the scope of Black British novel written by Andrea Levy, who is of Caribbean origin. Levy deals with such issues as identity crisis, creating new spaces (colonial, postcolonial, immigrant and cultural), problems of racism and immigration. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to illustrate the significance of immigration process which leads to cultural alienation and displacement. The first chapter will be constructed through references to the critics like Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Stuart Hall and their works.

In addition to the aforementioned issues above, the aim of the

thesis is to focus on migration process; its influences on literature and its consequences within Caribbean people by focusing on race, racism, hybridity, culture. The Caribbeans are one of the colonies of the UK, and therefore, migration has always been a permanent issue during the process of colonisation, and its aftermath. The search for identity is one of the issues which will be discussed and exemplified throughout the thesis and thus the effects of immigration on the construction of new identities and spaces are reflected within the narrations of bi-cultural writers like Andrea Levy. The first chapter of the thesis will be devoted to the brief account of colonialism and postcolonial theory, referring to some critics and theorists.

In the second chapter, issues, such as racial discrimination and disillusionment resulting from immigrant experiences in the mother country, together with “immigrant” as a term and immigrant literature will be explained in detail. In addition, a historical background of the postwar migration from Jamaica to Britain is given. The chapter focuses on the disappointment of the first generation of the Caribbean settlers who try to cope with racial conflicts with the hope of living under better conditions. This chapter of the thesis reveals Caribbean culture and its development under the influence of British culture. During the postwar era, a significant number of Caribbean immigrants settled in Britain. Therefore, the main area of focus in this work is hybrid identity of the Caribbeans, constructed under the influence of British community, and racial discrimination. Furthermore, two generations will be explained and

the clashes between the first settlers and their children, as members of the second generation, will be examined in the light of the historical situation between 1950s and 1970s Britain and its policies regarding to migration.

The aim of the third chapter of the thesis will be centred around the issues starting from the writer's biography to the detailed analysis of her two novels: *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) in the light of immigrant experience.

Andrea Levy's novels are generally illustrated through its immigrant characters and their major theme is the question of race as well as broken dreams of the Caribbean immigrants in the imperial metropolis; yet the disillusionment of the immigrants paves the way for changes in their consciousness through the process of adaptation to the "mother country." Some black British writers of the later generation, namely, second generation immigrants, spent most of their lives in Britain. In this regard, their new life experiences create their new identity which is shaped in Britain. Therefore, these works should be read within the frame of the historical background of Afro-Caribbean settlement, racial and cultural conventions, and approaches toward migration as a consequence of colonialism.

The experiences of the characters especially of female ones, dealing with such issues as racial discrimination, search for identity, class differences, social norms and unfair treatments imposed by both white people and social institutions will be explicitly analysed and exemplified. The concluding chapter deals with how these characters have been

discriminated by the society where racists constitute the majority of the population. Whether their state of being discriminated is physical or psychological, it is the result of their communication with these racist people outside. Therefore, these characters, either positive or negative, always have some kind of experience which contributes to the shaping of their identity.



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### CHAPTER ONE

#### COLONIAL DISCOURSE AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

##### 1.1. Colonialism and Postcolonialism

Migration is a one-way trip.

There is no “home” to go back to.

(Hall, *Minimal Selves* 44)

The aim of this chapter is to define important key concepts, such as colonialism, postcolonialism, culture, race, “mimicry,” “hybridity,” “third space,” immigration, referring to the theories, views and approaches of Homi Bhabba, Edward Said, Ania Loomba, Bill Ashcroft, Frantz Fanon; then will give a brief background of the development of colonial and postcolonial literatures written in English. Therefore, the chapter will be devoted to the colonial and postcolonial processes.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the origin of the word “colonialism” derives from the Roman “colonia.” Ania Loomba, an Indian literary scholar, explains it as follows:

a settlement in a new country... a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parentstate; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up. (7)

Loomba, however, finds this definition inadequate because colonialism incorporates “encounter” of two specific groups: the “original

inhabitants” and the “newcomers” with the aim of “forming community” that is actually a process of “re-forming” or “un-forming” the communities (7-8). Colonialism, in its usual sense, is a form of domination in relation to the coloniser and the colonised: the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. The term “colonised” can be characterised as being the “other” individual, the ruled, under the rules of domination and exploitation. According to Ashcroft et. al, colonialism is establishing colonies on a distant territory to make use of its raw material (*Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 54). It would be better to focus on the meaning of imperialism and its relationship with colonialism. Colonialism includes its origins in enlargement and discoveries of new spaces with new nations (Loomba 9). Thus, the major features of colonialism are large-scale exploration of the target area and demolition of such indigenous cultures as African, Asian and the Caribbean. Colonial powers changed and reshaped indigenous people’s way of life by controlling of their land and goods, and thus it has resulted in such problems as identity crisis, cultural, diversity, dislocation and settlement. Likewise, different indigenous nations have been shaped under the sovereign and colonial powers. With the coloniser’s aim to assimilate the colonised and exploit their riches, it is always the coloniser that represent the colonised, thus, the colonised is always the other and the abused. While claiming superiority over any other nation, it is the British coloniser who have benefitted from colonial discourse. Considering how colonisers hide the fact that British Empire’s exploitation of other countries and ways of

living, one may notice how cruel they are. In order to understand the nature of colonialism and imperialism, colonial discourse has to be explained. In its usual sense, colonial discourse is called “an instrument of power” in Said’s words (*Orientalism* 87). At this point, in order to understand its definition, it seems to be rather important to give more information pertaining to colonial discourse:

Colonial discourse is the system of or knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place. Although it is generated within the society and cultures of the colonizers, it becomes that discourse within which the colonized may also come to see themselves.

(Aschroft et al., *Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 51)

Colonial discourse “hinges on notions of race that begin to emerge at the very advent of British imperialism” and “represents the colonized as “primitive” and the colonisers as “civilized.” Therefore, colonial discourse “constructs the colonizing subject as much as the colonized.” It produces “statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric depravity of colonized societies, and therefore the duty of the imperial power [is] to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to advance the civilisation of the colony through trade, administration, cultural and moral improvement” (51-2). Therefore, the idea is that colonisers claim to bring civilisation to those barbaric people. This shows the differences between colonial power relations and their ability to dominate over the ruled. That is, colonial discourse depends upon the West, which is an actual invader of “less developed”

people's lands, since they are regarded as the best and respectful race in the world and therefore they deserve everything for their own benefits. For the colonised, as it is not so easy to keep a nation under control and rule it through military power for a long time, they need a valid reason to justify their unjust assault. Therefore, on their way to reaching their goals, colonising forces use discourse as a way of absolving themselves of the horrible results of their cruel practices. Colonial texts, at this point, are the sources in which writers represent how colonialism hints at certain ways of seeing and understanding the world and his/her place in it by justifying the subservience of colonised to the superior colonisers. Additionally, the coloniser adopt the idea that there is nothing wrong to rule others, by exploiting the colonised's lands and their identities through the process of colonisation. In this process, language is an integral part of national or cultural identity which works by causing people, in McLeod's words, "to internalize its logic and speak its language; to perpetuate the values and assumptions of the colonisers as regards the ways they perceive and represent the world" (18). In this respect, language is not only a way of communication, but also a considerable and meaningful issue that shows us which values we regard as significant and determine how we recognise the differences between "superior and inferior qualities" (18).

As a result, colonialism employs the already-existing hierarchies within the colonised communities, such as racism, sexism and class issues and moreover it can be regarded as a number of such practices as trade,

war, negotiation, genocide, enslavements, and revolts which occur in the process of the “conquest and control” as Loomba asserts (8). Keeping the definition of colonialism and colonial discourse in mind, now, it may be more comprehensible to give a brief definition of imperialism in order to understand its similarities and differences with colonialism.

Colonialism and imperialism emerged as two similar terms that are often used interchangeably around 1880. Imperialism is represented as a policy of having colonies for economic, strategic and political benefits (Ashcroft et al., *Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 54). Although the meaning of colonialism and imperialism is the exploitation of another area and its people, Edward Said focuses on the differences between them in his *Culture and Imperialism*. Imperialism, then, is “the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory,” while colonialism is “a specific articulation of imperialism associated with territorial invasions and settlements” (Said 9). Both are the same in terms of their economic and political aspects of controlling the other because they both include political and economic control over a dependent region. In addition, as stated earlier, in spite of the fact that colonialism sometimes is used interchangeably with imperialism, in fact, they differ from each other in terms of their meaning (McLeod 7). That is, colonialism is a form of practice which stems from the ideology of imperialism and generally the settlement of one group of people in a new territory, yet imperialism is an ideological notion that

supports the legitimacy of the economic and at times military control of one nation by the other.

As for Fanon's approach, colonialism "is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" as claimed in his *The Wretched of the Earth* (149). One of the characteristics of colonialism differing from imperialism is based on their reason of existence in the sense that colonialism occurs if the ruler directly or indirectly claims his/her superiority over the ruled people, and s/he regards them as an "inferior race," upon whom one enforces s/he participate not only in the political and economic sphere, but in the social domain through a strategy of discrimination and racial differences (Mushkat 222). The colonised are those who cannot benefit from their own lands, natural resources, their own history, and identity as a result of imperialism. That is, they are neither part of their own history nor have an identity equal to that of the coloniser. Thus, Fanon defines imperialism as "a systematized negation of the other person and furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity" and states: "Colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: 'In reality, who am I?' "because indigineous people were regarded as other and processors of savagery in colonial lands and excluded from humanity (182). The reason is because of the fact that the British Empire are willing to manipulate the natives in the belief that they are subjected

either to be marginalised or subjugated without their coloniser for the justification of colonialism (Fanon 149).

Before moving onto a discussion of the postcolonialism and postcolonial theory, it might be more fitting here to point out major thinkers and critics in this field: Bill Ashcroft, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall, whose definitions and theoretical approaches are considered to be a crucial part in the development of the postcolonial theory.

There have been a great deal of uncertainty and debate about the term postcolonialism, starting from its meaning, scope and spheres to the historical period in which it emerged. Therefore, it will take this section to further dwell on its meaning and subject matter in order to understand its importance in the field of literature. As Bertens points out, all postcolonial theorists and critics support the view that “postcolonial writers are all engaged in a reassessment of the traditional relationship between the metropolis and its colonial subjects” (202). The term has been used to attribute to the experiences of people who were once colonised by the British colonisers since 1990s (Ashcroft et al., *The Key Concepts* 204). According to Bertens,

They [postcolonial theorists and scholars] agree in their focus on colonial (and neo-colonial) oppression, on resistance to colonization, on the respective identities of colonizer and colonized, on patterns of interaction between those identities, on postcolonial migration to the metropolis, on cultural exchanges between colonizer and colonized, on the ensuing hybridity of both cultures, and so

on and so forth. Central to these interests are issues of race and ethnicity, language, gender, identity, class, and, above all, power. (202)

As stated earlier, since there is not any clear-cut definition about the term postcolonialism, now, it may be more fitting to highlight the controversial issues behind it. One of them is the controversy on the prefix of the term: the “post.” It is difficult to give a definite explanation about postcolonialism because it is a controversial concept among many intellectual people in relation to that there is no consensus on how to write the word postcolonialism. According to Ashcroft et al., post-colonialism is “a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction” (*The Post-colonial Studies Reader* 2). It emerged as a result of colonialism, that is, it is the consequences of assimilation and a reaction to the internalisation of the colonial discourse by the colonised. To John McLeod, “Commonwealth” [beginning from colonisation to 1970s] is “a philanthropic spirit” because of the imperial control and suppression, and this Commonwealth literature [from ‘1970s on during decolonisation] was substituted by an another movement called postcolonialism which was to focus on “darker side of exploitation and dependence” (16). In *The Empire Writes Back* it is asserted that the use of the term postcolonial “covers all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft et al. 2). In addition, according to many critics of the field, postcolonial studies began with the publication of *Orientalism*, the influential book written by Edward Said in

1978. This work “completely changed the agenda of the study of non-Western cultures and their literatures and pushed it in the direction of what we now call postcolonial theory” (Bertens 203). That is, it is an umbrella term to be associated with literature written on or by the people of the countries which were once colonised by British nations.

Postcolonial reading is a way of rereading the texts, which helps reveal colonialist ideologies hidden behind them by means of colonial discourses. Therefore, it is “a form of deconstructive reading” (Ashcroft et al., *The Key Concepts* 209). Elleke Boehmer, in her *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, discusses how literature reflects its historical period and defines colonial literature as that produced by British colonisers for the Western public about the non-Western regions they occupy and adds that this literature makes propaganda for British superiority and the justification of imperialism (3). Additionally, English and French-speaking writers from Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean want to define themselves and their culture because of their desire for a national identity and self determination. Therefore, many scholars, critics, writers, and intellectuals begin to be involved in creating works that represent their own culture. Among them the most outstanding ones are Buchi Emecheta, Chinua Achebe, Jean Rhys, Salman Rushdie, Andrea Levy, and so on. Therefore, literature is considered to be one of the most effective ways for the exploration and examination of colonialism and postcolonialism. Additionally, through writing postcolonial voice is largely expressed in English which has become an

official language of the former British colonies. For literary productions, according to Boehmer, there are two opposing terms: the first one: “postcolonial subversion, plenitude and the single-voiced authority of colonial writing,” and the second one: literature can be thought of as “multivocal, mongrelized, and disruptive” (4). In addition, Frantz Fanon, a French West Indian psychiatrist, underlines the significance of literature in the way of liberation and its contribution to the national struggle for the freedom of the colonised. He claims that literature “informs the national consciousness, gives it shape and contours, and opens up new, unlimited horizons” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 173). For Fanon, by evoking the national consciousness among the colonised, literary arts help them repair and maintain their national respect, thus realising their national freedom and freeing their land from the coloniser’s exploitation because of the fact that “for a colonized people, the most essential value... is first and foremost the land: the land, which must provide bread and, naturally, dignity” (9). Postcolonial immigrant writers endeavor to create their characters within the borders of Western territory in order to represent their disillusionment and disappointment within the society, by referring to important terms, such as otherness, racism, multiculturalism and hybridity. Their works are identified with various cultures, nations and countries, where the postcolonial experience has been a significant point to comprehend the results of colonial cultural assimilation by means of migration. Colonial texts are the sources where the writers manifest how colonialism refers to certain ways of seeing and comprehending the

world and his/her place in it by justifying the submissiveness of colonised by the powerful colonisers. Likewise, colonial literary works have been created not only mostly by metropolitans, but also creoles and native people in association with the “colonial perceptions and experience” as a main concern in writing (Boehmer 2). Throughout the colonial period, literary works have been widely read both in Britain and in the rest of the Empire (2). Thus, colonial and postcolonial fiction and non-fiction have been produced. As a matter of fact, postcolonial writers have associated themselves with the process of rewriting the colonial discourse of the superior self and the inferior self. They have managed to analyse the effects of colonial rule on the oppressed colonised. In this regard, Kumkum Sangari defines postcolonial writer in her article “The Politics of the Possible” as “the hybrid writer,” who is regarded as being “open to two worlds and is constructed within the national and international, political and cultural systems of colonialism” (180). That is, having borne into a mixed culture, the postcolonial writer is the one who stands and overcomes the burden of questioning his/her present state and the already existing colonial notions. Therefore, the postcolonial writer’s job is to demonstrate the colonisation process by means of the eyes of the oppressed rather than the oppressor and to create a new perspective. Thus, one has to know not only about the strategies and discourses of the coloniser but also the condition of the colonised so as to indicate the oppression or colonisation process as a whole. As a result, the postcolonial writer feels the need to voice a reaction from the oppressed,

abused, excluded person by breaking the silence of the characters that are once marginalised in the colonial discourse. The writer has a duty of describing the several experiences that have created the postcolonial state through postcolonial literature. In this respect, it is important not to overlook the hybridity within the nation, its people and its history, which should be kept in the minds while approaching the postcolonial text (Hutcheon 17).

## **1.2. Race and Culture**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), race refers to “each of the major divisions of humankind, having distinct physical characteristics<sup>1</sup>.” As a biological concept, it is a genetic discrimination, which has been differentiated by inherited characteristics, based on physical appearances. Through one’s race, it is easy to identify which certain psychological and biological characteristics s/he has, since they are associated with each other. Race classification dates back to the first half of the eighteenth-century and therefore it has been evolving and constructing through centuries. The time when a Swedish botanist, Carolus Linnaeus, categorised all people as *Homo Sapiens* and then attributed to them these classifications: the *Americanus* (American Indian) is defined as “tenacious, contented, free, and ruled by custom; the *Europaeus* (European) is taken as light, inventive, and ruled by rites; the *Asiaticus* (Asian) is described as stern, haughty, stingy, and ruled by opinion. Lastly, he characterised the *Afer* (African) as cunning, slow,

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<sup>1</sup><https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/race#h47434337741100>

negligent, and ruled by caprice” (Dunn and Dobzhansky 109-10). He makes this classification according to the group’s origin. Therefore, it is easy to identify the white race’s superiority against the black one’s inferiority, while white people are given such positive qualities, all the negative ones are attributed to black people. Before the late eighteenth century, however, people had been differentiated through their physical characteristics even though the concept of race gained a new distinct category of human beings with physical characteristics carried through descent in the end of the eighteenth century. Therefore, being an important part of colonialism and postcolonialism, race is one of the most influential signifiers of one’s identity. As a result of Britain’s assumed superiority and its oppression over the submissive, the nations, such as Africans, Caribbeans or Asians have always been exposed to cultural displacement; and accordingly, the colonised have been regarded as people without culture, history, economy. Obviously, race is linked with the notion of “other,” and belonging to the British community has always been mingled with being White and superior, and thereby Caribbean immigrants’ preoccupation with Black identification has been a consequence of racial, cultural differences and discriminations. That is, being distinctive physical and racial characteristics, “blackness” plays a crucial role in the determination of privileges and obligations as a result of their oppression by the hegemonic powers. Likewise, Frantz Fanon has developed one of the most influential analysis regarding the internalised black people and privilege of white masks (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 123). In

this regard, Fanon characterise the colonial dichotomy (coloniser-colonised) as the product of a “manichean delirium” (Young 124). Manichean Delirium is based on the binary structure of imperial ideology and colonial consciousness of radical division into paired oppositions, such as good/evil, true/false, white/black that cannot be reconciled, when the first term is always privileged. His view rejects the racist stereotyping<sup>2</sup> and emphasises economic and political realities which give importance to racial differences; Fanon’s analysis rejects the terms, such as white and black, good and evil. Likewise, following Bhabha’s “oppositional stance,” Levy resists against all the binary oppositions which are employed to discriminate races in her novels. Therefore, there is always an imbalance between how whites and non-whites are treated by the society, how the whites are educated by using their privilege which they have from birth.

As an indispensable element of one’s identity, race has been examined, discussed, evaluated by theorists, intellectuals, philosophers. The most important of them, however, is the writer who is supposed to reflect his/her society, where the issue of race and racial discrimination is shaped by the members of the society. The writer, then, is the one who regards literature as his/her main tool, because through literature s/he can address a wider range of people from all over the world no matter which job they have, which class or race they belong to; s/he has to be objective

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<sup>2</sup> It is regarded as the major strategy of colonial discourse by Homi Bhabha who coins the objective of such a discourse as “to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha 70).

and critical in order to represent the real world s/he lives in. Therefore, the experience in understanding one's society and identity through the examination of race is important because it creates an impact on identity development. Black people's struggle to find a new identity is explained by Cornel West in his interview as follows:

The modern Black diaspora problematic of invisibility and namelessness can be understood as the condition of relative lack of Black power to present themselves to themselves and others as complex human beings, and thereby to contest the bombardment of negative, degrading stereotypes put forward by White supremacist ideologies.

(102)

As is seen, Black people have difficulty in representing and acknowledging themselves, since stereotyping plays an important role. Therefore, the native cultures have always been linked with two significant racial identification: "savage" and "primitive." Likewise, black people are treated unfairly, and most of them are unable to resist oppression. This oppression in many cases leads to self-hatred. They feel that all of their problems spring from their skin colour. In this respect, racism is explained by anti-colonial or postcolonial critics, such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Robert Young with their diverse views. Several dictionary definitions of racism mostly derive from a belief regarding hierarchical differences between "races" distinctions between those races in accordance with their superiorities. As for literature, however, one of the most disruptive explanations for the

concept of racism has been its (re)definition as a specifically “white phenomenon” (Miles 74). Racism, in its usual sense, can be explained with two very different things: It is a case of behavior, generally “a manifestation of hatred or contempt for individuals who have well-defined physical characteristic features different from our own; whereas, it is a case of ideology, a doctrine in relation to the human races,” which are not necessarily associated with each other (Les and Solomos 64). It is crucial to understand how the concept of race was created and what kind of role it has played in both the national identity and the individual identities of different races. In the first place, white has always been linked to everything good. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, which is Fanon’s psychological study on the effects of racism, he points out “I am white, that is to say that I possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black. I am the color of the daylight” (45). Through this brief definition of the condition of white people, speaking like a white man, he clarifies the concept of “white.” That is, it is not just a colour, but a way of living, a way of seeing, a way of classifying oneself and the others on the basis of colour. In Fanon’s definition, it can be said that white is associated with beauty, virtue and daylight. Black is the colour of the “Negro.” Therefore, everything that is associated with the blackness and darkness is also related to “Negroes.” Fanon defines the Negro image in the eyes of the whites by telling an experience he had on a “white” winter day when a little white boy, with his mother, saw Fanon:

The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it’s cold, the nigger

is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up.

*(Black Skin, White Masks 86)*

As is seen, the difficulties and obstacles that black people struggle in their lives as an "inferior" are a consequence of "the cold." Fanon here trembles due to the cold, since he may not have the necessary clothes that would keep him warm. It can be claimed that the little white boy does not chill because of the cold because his whiteness protects him from anything unpleasant including the weather. He has the clothes he needs and he wants to wear. After all even the winter belongs to him with its "whiteness." The Negro is "ugly," whereas the little white boy is represented as "handsome," yet what matters most is that the Negro is chilling with cold while the little white boy think she is trembling with rage. It seems fitting to define the image of an angry monster, who is supposed to "eat him up," as "an excluded Negro" from society; in fact, he is excluded from all human races as well. On the one hand, there is a grown-up "Negro," on the other hand, there is a little white boy. Fanon also suggests: "what is often called the black soul is a whiteman's artefact" (*Black Skin, White Masks XXVII*). Starting from his body to his identity, the black man remains "different" in the eyes of the coloniser, who makes a claim of "difference." The colonised are supposed to be

deprived of all Western values because of his skin colour, which makes him different. Therefore, the coloniser creates the black image, which is opposite of himself and justifies his superiority to the black colonised.

Taking everything into account, it is possible to notice that these are all related to the subjects of the works of Caribbean immigrant writers and have always been a subject matter for those who have been exposed to the obstacles, difficulties, and racial discrimination in their lives. Having dealt with such subjects as the issue of race/racism, and detailed description regarding the British community and its association with being the most powerful community as white and superior, those writers who have Caribbean origins have guaranteed their status as leading figures in literature. Thus, one may understand the difficulties that those who have suffered from racial, cultural, and gender discrimination, have to struggle with lots of prejudices they went through by means of literature.

Culture is defined as “a way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.”<sup>3</sup> People feel the need to be a part of a specific group and a specific culture by assimilating common beliefs and values. One needs to associate with culture in order to survive in a society. Every culture undergoes modifications as a result of trade, war and colonial encounters with other cultures, which means that none of them is self-contained and pure. According to Robert Young, culture

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<sup>3</sup><<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture>>

[N]ever stands alone but always participates in a conflictual economy acting out the tension between sameness and difference, comparison and differentiation, unity and diversity, cohesion and dispersion, containment and subversion. Culture is never liable to fall into fixity, stasis or organic totalization: the constant construction and reconstruction of cultures and cultural differences is fuelled by an unending internal dissension in the imbalances of the capitalist economies that produce them. Culture has inscribed within itself the complex and often contradictory differences through which European society has defined itself. Culture has always marked cultural difference by producing the other; it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it: the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has always been racially constructed. (54)

As is seen, culture and race are interdependent. After all, culture has an important role in the power relations between countries. Through the impact on culture, the Westerner can impose the idea of his/her superiority. Power relations can be seen as struggles for domination: struggle between individuals, between groups, between countries or between the West and the East. Culture plays an important role in its relations with colonisation, since they cannot be thought of as being separated from each other, if one admits the fact that “colonization rests at the heart of culture, or culture always involves a form of colonisation.”

That is, as an essential form of colonisation, the culture of land has affected upon the region which is coveted, occupied, cultivated, turned into plantations and made unsuitable for indigenous nomadic tribes (Young 29). Likewise, culture is defined as “a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought,” as pointed out by Matthew Arnold in the 1860s (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* XIII). As for cultural identity, Stuart Hall in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, explains it as follows:

...in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This ‘oneness’, underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of ‘Caribbeanness’, of the black experience. (223)

That is, postcolonial writers and critics have agreed that indigenous people have to liberate themselves from the notion of a single “shared history and ancestry in their search for identity.” Since cultures, which can be consisted of beliefs, customs, traditions and daily behaviours, are not permanent, they are subjected to change. Thus, no culture stands still, there is always a continuity. As a result, most of the theorists and scholars who have been studying in the field of culture admit that identity is

necessarily an active notion which always evolves and appropriates certain aspects of various cultures. Cultures are subjected to change, particularly when they are constructed in “third space” of enunciation in Bhabha’s terms. Therefore, “claims to the inherent originality or purity of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity” (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 37). Likewise, In Bhabha’s words, “cultures are never unitary themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other” (35-6).

### **1.3. Hybridity, Third Space, Mimicry**

Hybridity, coined by Homi K. Bhabha, is considered to be one of the key terms in postcolonial theory and additionally “few examples of it mostly may occur in the seventeenth century; but it was scarcely in use until the nineteenth century” as Robert Young states in his *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (5). If there is an interaction between cultures, then hybridity is obligatory. Young accentuates this situation that “there is no single or correct concept of hybridity. It changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes” (25). Therefore, hybridity can be defined in various ways: in Anjali Prabhu’s words, “it is an enticing idea in current post-colonial studies” due to its apparently limitless promise. “Hybridity can provide a way out of binary thinking, allow the inscription of the agency of the subaltern, even permit a restricting and destabilizing of power” which represents itself as a special area of postcolonialism, colonialism and culture (1). Thereby, by making use of many assumptions and definitions about hybridity,

postcolonial writers and critics investigate the indigenous peoples' search for a new identity shaped in the colonial encounter. The debates about the native identity embodied in the colonial encounter has been commenced through Edward Said's *Orientalism*:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point, Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority for the Orient. (3)

Said explores the dominant power of West and additionally analyses the way colonised identities are created. The East, for him, is defined in Western discourse as submissive and irrational, while the West defined itself as dominant and rational. The continuity of colonial power can be created through the binary oppositions in colonial discourse for Said. He argues about the opposed relations of the rational coloniser and the irrational colonised as an excuse for dominance and oppression of an invaded society. Therefore, some specific boundaries have to be revised as a result of Said's analysis on the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. In addition, Homi Bhabha admits that binary oppositions are created by the coloniser through and in colonial discourse in order to establish his/her power (71).

Although Said and Bhabha are of the opinion that colonial discourse is used as an instrument to create power, Bhabha differs at

some point when it comes to colonial identities as he suggests that unchanging forms of identities shaped by the colonisers are separated from each other by means of hybrid characters. In its usual sense, hybridity comes into being as a result of mingling of cultural signs and practices between the colonising and colonised cultures. Bhabha considers the adaptation of different cultural practices to be something positive and enriching for both coloniser and colonised. In this regard, he is different from Said and Fanon. Bhabha underlines that “hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination” (*The Location of Culture* 112). Thus, the concept of hybridity in postcolonial theory can be considered a way out of the dominant binary oppositions. The hybridity that Bhabha formulates as — “third space” not only brings the two cultures closer together, but also reveals the conflict of identities and the uncertainties that it creates. In an interview, he reiterates this point by pointing out that:

We see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge.

(qtd. in Rutherford 211)

This shows that having been an inclusive third space which enables other positions, Bhabha’s concept of hybridity challenges the knowledge

produced by dominant discourse, took place in binary oppositions which subverts the hierarchical binary oppositions. That is, “third space” is the space where two or more cultures encounter, it is the contact zone in Lousia Pratt’s words. It is the space of hybridity, cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which is the in-between space despite the imbalance and inequality of power relations between coloniser and colonised. Additionally, it is also the space where two or more cultures encounter and where cultures are hybridised. Consequently, postcolonial writers and critics embrace the idea of hybridity. Stuart Hall observes that “we cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about one experience, one identity,” underlying the reality of hybridity (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 225). Therefore, hybrid identities can exist in a continual process of becoming since cultures have an inclination to change. Accordingly, “third space” is explained by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*:

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (37)

As is seen, “third space” is a wide site which includes difference, thus analysing colonial discourse, which aims at placing nations and people in a hierarchical relationship. It is in this space where colonised can break their silence and, by creating their own stories and shaping

themselves through a new and hybrid self. As a matter of fact, hybridity is everywhere and essential in deconstructing Western hegemony. For the coloniser and the colonised, there is an incessant re-evaluation of history. Since hybridity is identified by the diversity of cultures, the formation of cultural identities becomes ambivalent. Therefore, identities are in a continuous process of revision. Likewise, Bhabha, in his interview with Jonathan Rutherford, describes hybridity as “something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (211). Therefore, according to him, a hybrid man occupies “a third space,” which is an ambiguous space to be resulted from interaction between the native culture and the colonial one. Bhabha claims that “negotiating this third space of enunciation, the hybrid subject neither becomes the colonizer nor remains the colonised, but emerges as neither the one...nor the other...but something else besides” (qtd. in Fowler 64). The colonised belongs neither to his/her native land nor to the colonial one. It means that hybridity favours the idea of the unresolved self that is not settled in a particular space and time, or that “identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting courses” (Hall, *Ethnicity: Identity and Difference* 10). Likewise, in the fiction of Andrea Levy, ambivalent and hybrid identity of both the colonial and postcolonial subjects is represented as the result of the colonial encounter between the colonised and coloniser during the colonial rule and in the aftermath of the postcolonial migrations initiated with the formal end of colonialism.

Mimicry, coined by Homi Bhabha, is “the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized” (Ashcroft et al., *Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 154-55). Bhabha discusses the concept of mimicry for the first time within the frame of postcolonialism in his essay entitled “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” in 1984, and defines mimicry as “the desire [of the colonizer] for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. That is, the act of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (86). Mimic men is someone who can “act English but do not look English nor are accepted as such” (McLeod 54). Mimicry stems from the colonised’s desire for becoming like the coloniser, and therefore s/he imitates the coloniser’s attitudes or culture in a way. According to Homi Bhabha, mimicry is a

double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of what [he has] described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object. [Mimic men are] the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as ‘inappropriate’ colonial subject. (“Of Mimicry and Man” 88)

As is seen, anything that is used in the frame of the concept of mimicry has two faces: one that is used by the coloniser by a means of power, and one that is used by the colonised by a means of subverting that

power of the coloniser. At the end of mimicry, the colonised becomes almost the same as the coloniser in appearance, but not exactly because he cannot become a white Western individual. Therefore, Bhabha claims: “Mimicry repeats rather than re-presents” (Bhabha 88). It interacts between two distinct cultures. There is always subversion. It brings its own terminology, culture, and spoken language. For instance, the majority of the Black community in England want to pretend like English people and imitate their way of life. They do not regard themselves as Indians, Africans, Caribbeans. They wish for the feeling of superiority and need to enjoy the feeling of higher status in society. Having been an increasingly important concept in the frame of postcolonial literature and theory, the act of mimicry can be considered an inevitable product of the relationship with the coloniser and the colonised. Bhabha’s mimicry is a concept that is built upon the foundations of being able to assume different gazes and adopting masks, the frames and limits of which are defined by the coloniser, as if these illusions would correspond to reality. Thus, acting is a very important part of the concept of mimicry. There is always a resistance in it. The main aim of the coloniser in colonial discourse is to show power and authority over the colonised to ensure the continuity of the hierarchy between the master and the subject. Additionally, Bhabha defines mimicry as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (“Of Mimicry and Man” 85). Therefore, Homi Bhabha’s concept of mimicry will be attempted to be applied to the chosen novels.



## CHAPTER TWO

### IMMIGRATION AND BRITAIN'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES

#### 2.1. Immigration and Immigrant Literature

Immigration has been a crucial human experience in its relation to many social, cultural and economic consequences both on individuals and societies. Therefore, one has to be aware of its definition, themes, and its place in literature. Immigration is a process of searching for a new settlement, a new identity, redefining of a new world perception, a new culture, society, ethnicity and policy. In the process of forming those circumstances, the most remarkable aspect is interaction of new ideas, consciousness, culture and their exchanges.

Immigrants from the Caribbean started to arrive in Britain with the coming of the Jamaicans in 1947-1948 (Spencer 31). These immigrants are called "Windrush Generation" who were invited to the United Kingdom the years between 1948-1971. The high rate of unemployment in Caribbean due to the collapse of their economy, and the lavish opportunities in the "mother country" attracted West Indians, because it was important for them to find a job and to earn money. Therefore, one of the main reasons for these people to migrate to Britain was because there were lots of economic problems and unemployment in their own country. These immigrants were generally skilled or semi-skilled workers who were aware of the need for manpower in Britain. Thus, employment was considered one of the major problems for these immigrants in Britain because they could not find a good job and have a respectable and appropriate social status. No matter how they found a job in accordance

with their own skills and experiences, their eagerness to find a proper job ended in failure, and they involuntarily had to take whatever was offered. Therefore, most of West Indian immigrants developed a sense of disappointment about having a good job even though “jobs were available precisely in those conurbations where housing shortage was most acute” (Hiro 22). They also experienced difficulty in finding a suitable house in addition to the problems caused by their skin colour, such as West Indians. Almost the entire population of Britain expected black people to live in ghettos, where there were other immigrants like them and where they had been deprived of a free choice to find a place to live in. Therefore, these immigrants were regarded as second-class citizens by the white people. Moreover, their discrimination by whites and a sense of alienation resulting from the attitudes of the “host society” caused the immigrants to live together in reserved areas. They were aware of their cultural differences and their unfamiliarity with the British society.

Through the rapid globalisation of the world economy, which has created a huge, extremely mobile work force from all over the world, and an enormous transfer of immigrants as a result of the increasing imbalance between the developed and the underdeveloped countries, the world became a place where full of immigrants aiming to move to other countries intentionally or unintentionally as exiles, guest workers, refugees and so on. As a result of the lack of communication with their own communities, immigrants had to struggle in their search for identity along with the reactions of the host community mostly in the form of

discrimination, racism, acculturation difficulties. In essence, immigrants did not cut off their connection with their previous lives when they migrated to a new place, but brought their native cultures and lifestyles with them. Therefore, there was a combination between the new culture and the old one. According to Bhabha, no one talks about “organic ethnic communities” (*The Location of Culture* 5). To analyse and comprehend the new world shaped remarkably by these immigrants and the newness they brought to the world, he underlines the need to “think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (1). Therefore, through the consequences of experiences immigrants undergo, depending on the encounter with many effects and peoples, difficulties and “otherness” in the “new homes,” the new representation of identity becomes inevitable in the field of literature as an immigrant literature representing immigrant experiences.

“What is immigrant literature?” is a significant question to ask before analyzing Andrea Levy’s novels and its place within the concept of immigrant literature. Considering the themes second generation immigrant writers dealt with, it is possible to notice that many immigrant writers stress the importance of issues, such as the search for identity, individual in-between two cultures, and immigrant group’s cultural identity. Thus, immigrant literary works have various forms, ranging from its classifications based on themes and styles to the characters. As a writer and researcher on immigrant literature, Søren Frank sheds light on

the nature of immigration and its literature in his book *Migration and Literature* as follows:

The main protagonist in the twentieth century turned out to be the migrant. No longer to be looked upon as anomalous, migration has actually become the norm and has resulted in a profound renegotiation of the concepts of identity, belonging and home. (1)

This indicates that it is important to take a look at the lives of these people since immigration plays an important role in their lives bringing about both advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, while there have been great changes in immigrant people's lives, moods, and mentalities, there have always been impact on host country residents who are involved in the process. These changes result mostly from the confrontation of the two individuals of different cultures, backgrounds, beliefs and mindsets, which eventually lead them to deal with such problems as identity, the sense of home and belonging. One may be aware of the fact that there is a new approach to and view of literary works as a result of the increasing number of writers with immigrant background. In this regard, it is necessary to give a detailed information about immigrant experience in literature.

Immigration has paved the way for women to create their communities in which they aim at exploring cultural aspects of immigration and social recognition. However, early studies of immigrant literature have utterly focused on male writers as women played more passive roles in society. For this reason, gender relations have influenced

the relationship between men and women as Ania Loomba draws attention towards the “subordination of women and colonial subjects” (138). She points out the hardships faced by “coloured” women living in a colonising patriarchal world. Thus, colonial regime has been an important point of discriminative treatment and women have suffered from double colonisation<sup>4</sup>. Immigrant women’s eagerness to deal with the issues of identity and women rights in their novels led them to create their own voices from various Third World countries; such writers are generally from Asian, African, and Latin American countries which are still dependent on Western neo-colonial policies. As a result of the domination of Western countries which have impact on every social sphere, there are some characteristics of the Third World, such as a low level of economy, industry and technology, and high level of birth rates. Bill Ashcroft et al. accentuates the fact that the representation of oppression of women refers not only to the image of an “average third world woman” which essentially leads to “truncated life” depending on her feminine gender with characteristics of the third world as ignorant, uneducated, suppressed, submissive, domestic, family-oriented and victimized, but also represents the European white women as educated and modern, by putting emphasis on their power in relation to their capability of controlling their own bodies and sexualities, and he also

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<sup>4</sup>It is a term referring to the status of women in the postcolonial world. Postcolonial and feminist theorists state that women are oppressed by both, patriarchy and the colonial power and that this is an ongoing process in many countries even after they achieved independence.

draws attention to the freedom that they have possessed while making their own decisions (*The Post-colonial Studies Reader* 261).

According to Stuart Hall, there are two questions to ask immigrant people: The first one is “Why are you here ?” and the second is “When are you going back home ?” This is clearly illustrated by Hall that no immigrant ever knows the answer of the second question until it is asked since; but, s/he is aware of the fact that no one will be able to go back (*Minimal Selves* 44). As a matter of fact, the works of immigrant writers give concrete insight into postcolonial issues where problems of immigration are central. Social sphere can be seen as another problem in which people would contact in spite of the geographical and historical borders, in which they would determine their cultures and find their true identities. In fact, the Second World War has paved the way for a new period that is called “a presence of immigration,” which has already become an inevitable phenomenon to create in-between or hybrid identities. Immigrants can be divided into two different generations as the first generation immigrants and the second generation immigrants. The first generation immigrants have been those who themselves moved to another country. The second generation includes children of the immigrants who were young at the time of immigration or were born in the host country. Cultural experiences of the first generation immigrants have been more complex due to significant social changes brought about by migration because the opportunities and expectations of the first generation in the country of arrival have influenced younger generations,

which will be directly referred in the chosen novels. Obviously, racial discrimination in the social strata and institutions continues to exist and this creates racial conflicts between the immigrants and the whites. As for the second generation of the immigrants, they have difficulty in understanding the discrimination because most of them were either born in Britain or had come to Britain at a very early age. They are brought up in this country like the children of the white population; however, they still suffer from discrimination as immigrants, because they have different ethnic characteristics and different skin colour. Evidently, the children do not have the sense of belonging to this country. For the children, they were brought up on “alien soil” that made them feel “rootless” and their sense of “rootlessness” made them feel “alienated” and “dislocated” (Lawrence 97). As the gap between the generations widens, the younger generations for instance, Caribbean immigrants feel more isolated, alienated and dislocated and therefore, the younger generation becomes more aggressive than their parents.

As Homi Bhabha puts forward “migrant writing enters, disturbs and destabilizes the settled and dominant categories of the larger cultural narrative and refuses marginality: “the problem of outside/inside must always itself is a process of hybridity” (*The Location of Culture* 1-4). Therefore, there have always been issues of identity, space, a sense of belonging and home in migrant writing, which stem from immigration to “mother country.” Migrant literature illustrates the full picture of adaptation and personal development, which is the issue of immigrants.

Evidently, Andrea Levy makes use of themes and motives exclusive to migrant literature since she mostly deals with the conditions of immigrants and outsiders. In *Migration and Literature*, Søren Frank claims that “migration literature refers to all literary works that are written in an age of migration – or at least to those works that can be said to reflect upon migration” (2). He defines “immigrant” as an umbrella term covering “the exile, the expatriate, the refugee, the nomad, the homeless, the wanderer and the explorer” (17). According to him, immigrant literature is expected to include biography of the author, the characters in the novel, nation and nationalism, Britain and British/English literature, and globalisation. There are a variety of reasons of immigration, such as labour movement, refugees and voluntary immigration, yet it was in search for better life that may be regarded as one of the main goals of immigrants to leave their native land. Also, people may be subjected to genocidal destruction or anarchy in their homeland.

Through immigration processes and its consequences, postcolonial migrant writers and critics try to adapt themselves to the new conditions in their new location and new space. As for the field of English literature, Black-British writers focus on the sense of displacement, racial discrimination in living and working conditions in postcolonial Britain and the question of national and cultural identity (Arana 30). In their works, these writers deal with the discrimination of coloured people while they were supposed to be accepted and treated as a part of the

nation. All these writers, as Hall notes, want to make their voices heard (qtd. in Arana 19). They want to create a “third space” in a society where their cultural and ethnic characteristics are not neglected. Through writing, the writers re-define their identities which were stolen from them by the “motherland.” They find their place with their works in what is called Black British writing. This means that this group called “black” consists of everyone who is non-white in Britain. These non-white British writers, such as Hanif Kureishi, Andrea Levy, Salman Rushdie, Zadie Smith, Jean Rhys are aware of their otherness and they want to represent their cultural and ethnic differences through their works.

Through her literary output, Andrea Levy manages to be a representative figure not only for the immigrant communities but specifically for “the black” as well due to her Caribbean origin. In her novels, she reflects the racial tension, provocation and serious civil unrest in Britain, especially until the mid-1970s. Therefore, in the light of the novels by Andrea Levy, it is possible to recognise the notion of cultural belonging and social presentation, and their relation to Caribbean and British history and cultures. In this regard, it is crucial to give a detailed information related to the historical background of Britain starting from 1950s to the 1970s and Caribbean community, all of which have been narrated within the scope of Andrea Levy’s novels.

## **2.1. Historical Background of Britain from 1950s to 1970s**

This section attempts to show the historical background of Britain from 1950s to 1970s, including the problems of Caribbean immigrants at that time.

The 1958 Notting Hill Riots were racially motivated and they became a turning point in the immigration process. In the four-year-period between the riots and enforcement of the 1962 Act, there was a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants from the new Commonwealth Countries. The 1962 Act allowed immigrants to settle in Britain permanently, although they actually came to Britain temporarily and thought of returning home after earning enough money for their families in the “homeland” (Spencer 130-3). Despite legal implementations, black immigrants still face illegal discrimination in terms of employment, housing, and education in the 1960s. Although the first settlers of Caribbean immigrants came to the “motherland” in search of better life standards and also providing a better life for their children and despite their eagerness to work and save money, they faced problems and disappointments, which will be illustrated in the analytical chapter of the chosen novels by giving direct references to the sections and characters in both novels.

Racial discrimination of any kind resulted in not only the alienation of the immigrant community from the white British society, but also deepened “hostility and discrimination” (Green 230). As a result of the stereotyped understanding of cultures and prejudice imposed by British

racism, the second and the third generations of the black immigrant were deeply disillusioned with their life in the “mother country.” The stereotypical understanding of the Caribbean immigrant was widespread among the white British, and thus, the prejudices were still there in the 1960s and 1970s, the decades when the second and the third generation of immigrants were exposed to striking discrimination as a result of being brought up in the host country (Modood 10). They grew up under pressure and difficult conditions because of their race, as Desmond Gittens, a West-Indian immigrant, points out:

I do not feel at all optimistic about the future of the young West-Indians. They've never been made to feel at home here. From the nursery onwards, they've met discrimination, this insidious, mind-boggling discrimination. Much, much more than I did. They were unprotected. I came here as a young man. I had my personality already formed and set-up. If you send a baby, a three-year old, to a nursery, where it starts meeting discrimination, and starts being to feel less than others there is no comparison for that baby to make. It cannot say, “Well, I'm being discriminated against.” It grows up with a lack of consciousness of itself. (qtd. in Green 394)

Racial discrimination significantly influences immigrants' relationships with their family and other people. In the 1970s, according to Modood's results in his research, it is observed that there were problems in the families of the black community because of the racial discrimination they faced in the outer world. Additionally, there were a lot of one parent houses and the Caribbean immigrants had to face the

problems of the new life without their partners. In this household, many men and women did not live with their parents and this situation led the children deprived of the chance to observe closely cultural and ethnical characteristics of Caribbean men and women closely (Modood 24). Growing up in such an environment in which no one could provide them with guidance, the alienation of the second generation of Caribbean immigrants became worse than the other groups who preserved their roots and ethnic characteristics when they faced the members of the white society.

Along with racism, Caribbean children had to deal with some negative stereotypical issues regarding Caribbean people in the 1970s of Britain. Although there was a little improvement recorded in the 1970s for the conditions of the Caribbean immigrants, stereotypical views about Caribbean workers were reporting that they were lazy and slow (Modood 148). The reasons of the poor situation of children include the barriers encountered at home, in the school curriculum and institutional organisations, social class and racial discrimination. It was pointed out that children were affected by psychological circumstances of their home environment. Caribbean people faced more unemployment problems than other immigrants. Moreover, compared with their parents, the unemployment rate of the young Caribbean people were higher and they achieved little progress in their income and status (Modood 64). Caribbean immigrants constituted the greatest number of those who had

manual jobs, and they worked for manufacturing industry, mining and public utilities where few education qualifications were required.

It was pointed out that “the majority of rioters who took part in these unhappy events were young, black, and of Caribbean origin” (Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State* 203). With the 1971 Immigration Act, the British government aimed at stopping any new and permanent immigration from the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean and Africa to the United Kingdom. Britain put an end to all discussions about the status of the former members of the colonies in Britain respectively “with the restrictions of the 1962 Commonwealth Act, the 1971 Immigration Act, and the 1981 Nationality Act” (Lima 51).

In the following chapters, Andrea Levy’s first two works *Every Light in the House Burnin’* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) will be studied in the light of Bhabha’s theories of “hybridity,” “third space” and “mimicry” within the frame of immigrant experience.



## CHAPTER THREE

### BLACK BRITISH WRITER: ANDREA LEVY

#### 3.1. Andrea Levy's Life and Career

I am now happy to be called a black British writer and the fiction I have written has all been about my Caribbean heritage in some way or another.

(Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 12)

Andrea Levy's fiction is regarded as postcolonial in its concern for representing the colonial and postcolonial identities marked by the traces of "hybridity," "third space" and "mimicry." As a semi-autobiographical novel, *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) will be analysed by giving a detailed information about Andrea Levy's life, experiences and career. Then, her second novel *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) will be analysed. Therefore, the section explores immigrant characters' life by focusing on their experiences through postcolonial concepts, such as stereotyping, otherness, "hybridity," "third space," "mimicry," racial discrimination and identity, cultural displacement resulting from cultural interaction, and the conflicts of family life.

Andrea Levy (1956-2019) is a British author born in London, who has Jamaican origins. As soon as Levy completed her education in grammar school, she became the student of textile design and weaving in Middle Polytechnic. Then, she worked as a woven-textile designer and assistant buyer in different shops (Fleming 17). It was her attendance to the writing course at the City Literary Institute that paves the way for her

to start her career in literature. However, it is not known that whether writing for her is a dream or not, but it seems to be quite obvious that the author has created something valuable for the literary sphere and writing is a rescue for her (Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 11). It was 1980s when so many feminist issues appeared. Andrea Levy defines that period the time when she began to read. Through feminist publishing, as she notes, she finds her true reason to read (qtd. in Fisher 361). Likewise, through her literary output she wanted to create a “visible” thing to remember what her family had gone through (362). Therefore, she is deeply occupied with the relationship between migration and writing, based on a specific culture of England with Caribbean background. Her parents came to London from Jamaica. Levy defines themselves as “immigrants and “outsiders” (Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 5). Her father, Winston Levy, was among those who sailed off England with Empire Windrush ship in order to find a better place and condition to live. In Jamaica, her father worked as an accounting clerk, whereas her mother, Amy Levy worked as a teacher. Although they were middle class in their own country and even had servants in their house, as soon as they migrated to the “mother country,” this situation changed. They came to Britain to find more working opportunities and to live under better conditions, yet no matter how high hopes these black immigrants have for this “mother country,” there were no open doors for them. After all, the reason behind their willingness to migrate to England is based on their expectations from the country. However, they had never been welcomed by the British. They

had to live in a small house for a long time. They were almost homeless and had to live in a tiny, little one room apartment, where her father was not allowed to live together with his wife. In this regard, Andrea Levy underlines the necessity and the importance of belonging to a home. This sense of belonging is important for her to be able to exist in a society, where one can shut the door on and feel safe and relieved, then s/he has got something solid (qtd. in Fisher 368). The sense of belonging, the house is representative of England because home is expected to be one of the safest places in one's life. Then, her family were provided a house in a council flat in Highbury where Levy was born and grew up. Her father managed to find a job and works at the Post Office. However, her mother was not allowed to work for any educational institutes because of her Jamaican origins. The British does not let her use her Jamaican teaching qualification to work in England. Therefore, she had to be trained and had to work for another job, yet her dream of becoming a teacher never disappeared. Her parents believed that as soon as they live in England, they have to accept what the country was eager to give, after all, they were all immigrants (Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 7). The family has to keep their children all the time well-dressed, quiet, respectable and assimilated to the country as soon as possible (6). In brief, they have to get on well with everyone around them.

Andrea Levy started to write in her mid-thirties in the 1980s. As for her writing technique and the issues she deal with, it is worth to point out that her works mainly consist of her life experiences, based on the actual

stories of her parents as a part of the postwar Windrush generations in the fiction form. In addition, she has close contact with the formerly colonised immigrants and their way of life. Most of Levy's works depict life in Britain, especially in London, that is, she uses London as the setting of her novels because, as she notes, she knows London better than other parts of Britain. Her works include many traces from her life, since she has immigrant parentages. In the earliest works/fictions, her main interest is to represent the characters who grew up under the rules of British Empire, relying on her experiences as a child of Jamaican immigrant. However, she defines herself as Londoner, as she puts it, "I grew up here and everything I know and understand is in London, and I really value that sense of belonging I feel like in London. It's really important to me, I feel like a Londoner, and I am. I love that" (qtd.in Fisher 367). That is, born and brought up in London, Levy embodies the qualities London has provided her and her family with. Therefore, she does not want to be regarded as a Caribbean writer. If she declares herself as a Caribbean writer, it would be fraud (368). She admits that she does not come from Caribbean and thus she does not know the Caribbean, she does not feel like a Caribbean writer, so she defines herself as a "Birmingham writer" (368). This, however, does not mean that she denies her origins; on the contrary, she complains about people who are not aware of their roots, and therefore, she mostly deals with the issue of migration in her works. She discovers later that she has, in fact, a background that was impressive and worth to explore. Therefore, she

accentuates the importance of her origin and being British, stating that the more she dwells on her Caribbean heritage, the more interesting and fascinating Britain's Caribbean story becomes for her (Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 12). She explores the necessity of writing for her as being British with Jamaican origins, based on racism she has faced in the "mother country" as follows:

[M]y experience of growing up in this country was part of what meant to be black...Those silences about where we had come from. The shame. The denial. In fact I came to see that every black person's life, no matter what it is, is part of the black experience. Because being black in a majority white country comes with a myriad of complications and contradictions. It was writing that helped me to understand that. (11)

Levy's writing career begins with the publication of *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994), which is a semi-autobiographical novel about a Jamaican family. Along with her second novel *Never far from Nowhere* (1996), she not only deals with the problems of the Caribbean immigrants in Britain, but also focuses on the empowerment of women, which will be exemplified as the thesis progresses by giving direct references to *Never far from Nowhere*.

Andrea Levy's familiarity with the West-Indian culture and British paradigms provide her with a multicultural perspective and awareness that reflect the social, cultural and economic dynamics of the West-Indies as well as Britain. She understands and favours the othered, that is, the

once oppressed and colonised, because she herself is a descendant of the colonised:

In the Carribean the legacy is, in one sense, everything. Not just the towns, the cities and the landscape, but the very people themselves; their origins, their ethnic mix, their hybrid cultures, all result from what the British did on those islands before they finally left them.

(Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 17)

Andrea Levy represents the feelings and resentments of the oppressed in her fiction. The British and West Indians' commitment into social and economic life, their religion, and their family structure are different from each other. Growing up in a society where these different values and cultures existed is important for Andrea Levy to compare and contrast two different cultures, though she was born in England. Her multicultural perspective thus, is illustrated in the postcolonial handling of her fictional characters, whose motivations are marked by historical facts like imperialism, which is present in the background of her characters' struggle for acknowledgement and existence against oppression and denial. Through her writing, Levy points out the challenges and issues that immigration poses to Caribbean colonials who feel cheated by the "mother country" (Duboin 27).

Most of Levy's novels which cover the period between 1950s and 1970s consist of characters who are doomed to be involved in socio-cultural spheres where the problems of racism, gender, class and identity prevail. As for her characters, it is possible to notice that all of them are

somehow associated with the immigrant experiences, ranging from their cultures to their race and ethnic origins. They all may be in-between places as a result of the experiences of immigration in the family. Accordingly, Levy does not see herself as belonging to any particular group during the process of writing books. The characters she create feel powerless to change their situation, or somehow they become aware of their achievements. The main focus of the thesis, then, will be the characters she create and the issues she deal with in her novels, which can be taken as an example of immigrant experience.

It is generally admitted that Andrea Levy has gained an important recognition after her fourth novel, *Small Island* (2004) was published. However, the main concern of the thesis is to focus on her first two novels rather than centering upon that well-known novel. *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996), both of which revolve around Caribbean immigrant characters who are trying to survive and create a new better atmosphere in London from 1950s to 1970s. Both novels deliver a severe criticism of Britain, where "blackness" constitutes the majority of the population. These characters should be considered individually due to their distinct experiences in the course of the two novels. Additionally, political decisions taken against the black immigrants in the postwar period take place in the background of both novels. Throughout her writing career, Andrea Levy centres upon the effects of these political decisions which lead to more oppression against immigrants who are already suffering from identity crisis because

of geographical dislocation, and as a result, cultural displacement occurs. The writer reflects the resulting social and psychological conflicts that build up around the major and minor characters in her novels. These characters are somehow experiencing some difficulties or achievements in their lives. Levy's novels can be analysed from a postcolonial perspective, as they reflect the existential struggle of the "repressed," the native, and formerly colonised people. Her autobiographical and fictional writings, then, carry the traces of her own struggle to exist as an individual in an alien culture. Throughout her career, Levy wrote six books, among which *Small Island* (2004) is the most popular all over the world, though the following chapters will be based on an indepth analysis of *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996), respectively.

### **3.2. Immigrant Experience in *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994)**

*Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) is the first and semi-autobiographical novel of Andrea Levy, which deals with the problems of the Caribbean immigrants, the conflicts of the family relations, and the issue of being a black immigrant in Britain. The novel focuses on the critical themes of colonialism and postcolonialism, such as immigrants' search for identity, and characters' existential struggle yearning for becoming a part of the white British society.

In the novel, through her tendency to deal with various issues, such as illness, isolation, loss of social status and the treatment of elderly black British individuals, Andrea Levy underlines the importance of the unfair

situation that the characters have to struggle against as a result of the health system and the unfair treatment of local communities (Beyer Abstract). Accordingly, Levy's aim is to explore and make a clear-cut definition about the relationship between past and present for both the individuals and the families, by using her realist narrative techniques, such as "retrospective reflections, internal monologue, first person and omniscient perspective and episodic narrative structure" (107). In *Every Light in the House Burnin'*, Levy uses first person narrator, by informing the events through Angela's point of view: "He [the doctor] stared down at me and I didn't know what to say. I was hostage to his greater knowledge. Then he started to scribble on a prescription pad. He tore off the paper." (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin'* 111). Along with first person narrator, she also uses third person narrator, by narrating a story about the characters, referring to them by name, or using the third-person pronouns "he," "she," and "they" as is seen: " 'There, you can try this – it's a little bit stronger, but ...' he said with a shrug, handing me the paper. 'Now is there anything else?' " (111)

The experiences of the Caribbean immigrants in a different cultural environment in Britain within 1950s-1960s are introduced through the experiences of the members of the Jacobs family, who get to different levels of achievement in adjusting and adapting themselves into the British society they live in, and their relationship with the other members of the society. Experiences of the Caribbean immigrant family are illustrated in their house through the voice of the protagonist; Angela

Jacobs, a second generation immigrant English daughter of first generation immigrant Jamaican parents who is brought up in North London. Therefore, the chapter also argues that *Every Light in the House Burnin'*, shows the immigrant experience of being “British” and presents the Caribbean immigrants suffering from alienation, adaptation, the quest for identity, and disillusionment.

Levy represents the Caribbean experiences through the Jacobs family and their relationship with the other people living in England and they try to cope with obstacles caused by racial discrimination against the black immigrants in Britain. Being one of the immigrants who came to the “mother country” to find better conditions for his children, Winston Jacobs is depicted as someone who “was from Jamaica – born and bred....never talked about his family or his life in Jamaica, seemed only to exist in one plane of time – the present” (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin'* 3). Being the daughter of first generation immigrants, Angela Jacobs tries hard to stand against all the difficulties which lead her to deal with racial discrimination and disillusionment. However, the novel also shows that the second generation of the Caribbean immigrants, brought up in the “motherland,” are not happy as well because of the racial discrimination and they question their blackness. Although the story in general seems to be focused on Angela’s father, Winston Jacobs, and his illness leading to his death because of insufficient health services provided by National Health Service, the protagonist is Angela Winston who tries to survive as a woman and individual in both domestic and

public life. They are the inhabitants of the council estate, where they are all forcefully settled as they are immigrants whose main concern is to build new identities in a new place rather than their homeland. In a way, they aim to form a new community where they can feel themselves free and not excluded from the society provided by the council estate, isolated from the outside world of where racism and violence exist.

The male character Winston Jacobs is both physically and mentally incapable person who is only responsible for domestic chores and home, such as ironing on Sundays. This in fact can be regarded as an empowerment of womanhood in the identity formation process in the domestic sphere. That is, father figure is normally expected to be the traditional figure. Winston Jacobs, however, is not a traditional figure, though he may seem to be that kind of person at the beginning of the novel. In this regard, female characters, such as Angela and her mother, Beryl Jacobs and Angela's sisters: Yvonne and Patricia, whose only interests are fancy things like going to the bar, or doing make-up. As the novel progresses the reader is informed that Angela's father has an identical twin brother who is not alive now: "I was twenty-five years old and for the first time I was hearing that my dad was an identical twin....someone who had grown up with him, in his image" (291). This implies lack of communication between family members, particularly between those who live in London and those left Jamaica, which causes the generation gap in the family. Accordingly, Bhabha's concept of "third space" with its emphasis on "intervention of difference" implies a kind of

leakage. Angela's father's identity is a hybrid one that is generated by the collision of multiple stories, cultures and traditions. Her father's leaking past is one of the important points representing his hybrid identity that is shaped by forces outside him. Angela's ambivalent origins continuously bring forth the question of parentage within the novel. Likewise, Angela's brother Johnny asks a question about their identity and root:

**Johnny:** What are we then?

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** Cha, child – you're just you – you born here ... You have to learn to stand up for yourself. You're not black and you're not white...Look, child...You born here. That's what matter...You're not black and you're not white. That's what we are – we're not black and we're not white.

(Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin'* 70-1)

For Bhabha, "hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (*The Location of Culture* 112). Hybridity is everywhere and essential in deconstructing Western hegemony, as in Mother's description of London, namely, "third space." This shows that there is a close relation with Levy herself and Beryl Jacobs, as both women do not want to be part of any specific group. As for Angela, she is in search of identity because of the racial and gender discriminations imposed by the society; therefore she wants to belong to the Englishness because of the abuse and shame imposed upon her by white people. In addition, she has come to believe that white people are superior because

of their colour, which she associates with Englishness. Thus, her imitation of ideal white lifestyle is the indication of her sense of inferiority in a white community as a black woman, since there is always an imbalance, such as superior and inferior as a consequence of the interaction of two cultures. Additionally, these power relations between the coloniser and the colonised are maintained through the act of mimicry, which can be regarded as a strategy deployed by the coloniser. In this respect, the coloniser is civilising the colonised, by providing him/her with a proper English lifestyle and integrates him/her thus into the society. Indeed, it is the hatred of British society that shaped Angela's life, to push her to reject her blackness; the colour of her skin and the acceptance of inferiority. Angela's mother Beryl has to be re-trained within British society so as to teach students in England, though she was a teacher in Jamaica. The education she got in Jamaica is insufficient for her to train British students. Therefore, she has to get her degree. Accordingly, it is fairly obvious that this is because British colonisers benefit from the constructive power of education. They impose their culture and education to dominate the colonised people throughout the process of colonisation of far away lands on every occasion. In this respect, Edward Said is of the opinion that: "In the system of education designed for India, students were taught not only English literature but the inherent superiority of the English race" (*Culture and Imperialism* 101). The education imposed upon Jamaican people by the British is illustrated in the novel when Angela goes to Highbury Hill High School:

“My mum and dad thought the school was wonderful – it reminded them of schools in Jamaica (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* 222), as her mother thinks that

You’ll never be able to speak properly unless you know grammar – you must know how a sentence is constructed. That’s the trouble with the kids round here, they don’t know any grammar. You must know how to conjugate a verb and that or you can’t speak properly. That’s how we were taught in Jamaica. (222)

As is seen, through the act of mimicry, there is a relapse, reverse and subversion. Therefore, the coloniser not only creates the colonised in its own image but also turns the colonised into a mimic person who would later subvert the power relations that are imposed on him. In this respect, after receiving a Western education as a result of the struggle of the coloniser to create mimic people, who would understand the superiority of the coloniser and thus start acting as the eye of the coloniser among the colonised, the mimic person can also reach a point where s/he understands that the gap between the coloniser and the colonised is limited by this education. To put in other words, British people show their superiority on every occasion in one’s life and Angela explains the way she and her friends treat their teachers: “We stood up when they entered a room and said good morning or good afternoon no matter how often they came in and out” (222). The differences between

these two communities as Jamaica and Britain are represented in the novel:

I knew this society better than my parents. My parents' strategy was to keep as quiet as possible in the hope that no one would know that they had sneaked into this country. They wanted to be no bother at all. But I had grown up in its English ways. I could confront it, rail against it, fight it, because it was mine – a birthright. But even through the years of grammar school and college education; of gradually losing my cockney twang; of eating lunch instead of dinner and supper instead of tea, learned fear of authority remained. (107)

In this sense, identity is obtained from the relationship between self and other and the novel seeks to explore the problem of indentity and displacement. It is by means of our sense of identity that we identify ourselves with our fellowmen and be part of a community as members of social classes not only through the individual's feeling of connectedness, which provide us with a sense of belonging (Gültekin 1). Angela's eagerness to be accepted by the society and the people around her; and her yearning for being English and to be part of some specific group where she can feel herself as white rather than black or "coon" is narrated by Angela herself; yet stereotypical attitudes and sorrowful situations she has to struggle lead her to experience unavoidable consequences, such as displacement, disillusionment, sense of shame, otherness, alienation from the society (68). This in fact is illustrated when her friend, Sonia comes to

Angela's house to eat meal prepared by Angela's mother, her reaction is given in the sub-chapter entitled "The Friend":

Sonia put a piece of the meat to her mouth and nibbled off some of the sauce with her lips. "Urghh, it's burning my mouth." She dropped her fork back on to the plate and grabbed for her glass of orange squash. "I don't like it," she said breathless after taking a gulp of the squash....She coughed and held her chest like she was trying to expel something from her throat. "I don't feel well now."....She pushed her plate away from her. "I'd better go home," she said, looking away from me.... "Oh don't go – don't go yet – there's cake for afters." Sonia looked at me interested. "Cake from a shop?" she asked. I didn't answer. I didn't want to tell her my mum baked it, but my silence did and her face dropped back to its sullenness. (52)

Probably Angela has never tasted such foods prepared by Sonia's mother before, neither in her own house nor in any other place, except in her school as her mother cannot cook it: "I loved school dinners. I looked forward to them everyday" (53). As is seen, Angela's willingness to eat "English" foods that have never been cooked before in her home seems to be related to her ambitious endeavour to "integrate into the mainstream of English culture" (Githire 865). "But my mum cooked different things. She boiled rice in coconut with beans. She spiced chicken and meat until it was hot. She fried bananas. Everything she made tasted different" as she notes (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin'* 54). Accordingly, she experiences search for identity. In this respect, third space meaning cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent

space, that is, in-between space where cultural interaction, despite the imbalance and inequality of power or cultural relations (Ashcroft et al., *The Key Concepts* 136). For Bhabha, “third space” is ambivalent and hybridity is empowering. Likewise, Angela tries to be integrated into the white English society. In this respect, through Angela, Andrea Levy draws attention to the hybrid identities and cultures of both colonial and postcolonial agents whose lives shaped by the effects of colonialism. In most of her works, Levy seeks to represent the interaction between Caribbean and English cultures, just as it is in *Every Light in the House Burnin’*, a novel in which hybridity is represented through the ambivalent and multiple identities. In this respect, Angela fails to achieve a complete identification with European culture. Her European friend Sonia is proud of Europe’s superiority over India that is imposed on her. To put in other words, Angela is neither European, nor Indian, but a hybrid, caught in-between two cultures leading to her identity problems. Ambivalence is “a process of identification and disavowal” in Robert Young’s words, and accordingly, Angela not only appropriates European culture but also resists against it, which corresponds to ambivalent position of what Bhabha calls “colonial mimicry...at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance” (“Of Mimicry and Man” 34). As mentioned in the previous chapter, in mimicry, which is also ambivalent, there is always subversion and resistance. Likewise, Bhabha indicates that “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (86). What Bhabha signifies with

“colonial mimicry” is that in the adaptation process of coloniser’s cultural values and traits, the colonised creates “a blurred copy of the colonizer that can be quite threatening” (Ashcroft et al., *Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 155). The traces of ambivalent situation that create in-betweenness leave Angela in a position of neither Caribbean nor English in the novel. Her narration makes it possible for the reader to capture the ambivalences and in-betweenness experienced by the older generations of her family who were exposed to the negative cultural effects of colonialism. It is for this reason that her story begins with giving an information about her family: “My dad was from Jamaica – born and bred. He came to this country in 1948 on the Empire Windrush ship. My mum joined him six months later in his one room in Earl’s Court” (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* 3). Angela’s fluid, unstable and hybrid identity can be categorised within the frame of “almost the same, but not quite.” She is hybridised and is caught up in ambivalence caused by cultural interactions of the East and the West. Likewise, her decision about becoming an artist or going to college are the indication of her modernity and her way of resistance, yet no matter how hard she tries to seem modern, she cannot be utterly modern because her origin and her parents prevent her from establishing a kind of identity:

My dad was not easily impressed. He didn’t take much interest in the details of my ‘career’. All he knew was that I had been to college and that made me knowledgeable about certain things – for example, whether milk was still good for you or not. The day

before I went off to art college my dad looked at me earnestly and said,

**Dad:** So – what are you doing at college – typing and that. (76)

Angela's teacher, Mrs Kromer impacts her identity formation regarding to the question of who will she be; she wants to be an artist, but her mother does not accept it by saying that:

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** Don't go getting above yourself with big ideas like that. She's not like us. She doesn't know! You want to get a good job. Be a teacher or do typing – you can always work. Learn proper skills. Then you can do all your fancy things in your spare time." (237)

Her mother wants Angela to have a job and a specific status in English society, where she can earn her own money, but this job should not be a challenging one. Angela resists to her mother's wish. This can be seen as a challenge and this is her way of resistance as well. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is always an imbalance and resistance in the act of mimicry. It brings subversion and creates its own terminology, spoken language, and includes its own culture in a new society. Having decided that Angela needs to get rid of her mother's view in order to be able to become an independent woman and prove to others that only she has the saying about her life and become a singer, it is obvious that this is her indication of her way of resistance because she

also wants to create her own secure place with the aim of moving to another flat:

My brother John travelled. He travelled all round Europe by himself. Then to Africa on a huge truck with others. Then he went to live on a kibbutz in Israel. He moved all the time. I went to art college and for the first year I stayed at home. I still dreamed of moving, but I wanted to leave home and get a flat of my own. (270)

These challenging situations for both Angela and her brother can be considered to be their way of resistance. Parents expect their children to live with them until children grow mature. It is not only then that they can move to their own secure place where they can find their own social status, which is a traditional way of thinking. In the case of these siblings, however, the employment of mimicry and the notion of hybridity are represented to create a way out of the dominant binary oppositions:

For a moment I was excited. A room to start from new. Not lived in before. A chance to find out what my taste was like. No boxes piled high with Yvonne and Patricia's junk, which they were going to 'collect soon'. No 'make do' carpet and curtains. Everything would be as I wanted. Except I wanted to get away. (274)

In her quest for her identity, Angela undergoes racial discrimination because of her skin colour. Additionally, the coexistence of cultures, representing different elements of the colonisation process, is

present and these features are presented in a kind of struggle to exist. This is defined, in postcolonial terms, as the clash of cultures. Therefore, it is difficult in multicultural societies to get rid of the clash of cultures as each culture struggles to keep its unity, preserve its entity and maintain its freedom in the presence of other cultures, as it is represented in the case of Angela when she is in the hairdresser:

Everyone in the salon was black and female. I had never been in the company of so many black people before. People from the Caribbean like my mum and dad, only 'real' black people with dark brown skin. There were no other black families on the estate where we lived .... I felt pale in this company, out of place, as white as I felt black among the past-faced English. My mum looked fair and white but her broad African features and Jamaican accent let you know she was among kin. (203)

Each culture aims to preserve and maintain its own existence, each one of them tries to justify its own motivations. One of the effects and differences of cultural clash between Jamaica and Britain is presented when the relatives from Jamaica visit Angela's family:

**Aunt:** Transport is bad – it's got much worse since you left, terrible, terrible. I won't use the bus.

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** You see, we have good buses and the tube here. You can go anywhere.

**Aunt:** Yes I know, you're lucky – we have to have a car.(150)

As is seen if colonialism is defined as a way of dominating and invading a particular country or area, any response of the colonised community and its culture can be regarded as an existential struggle. The coloniser justifies this clash by suggesting that his interference is enlightening and civilising, while the dominated culture is othered as “uncivilized” and “primitive.” All the characters in the novel have been affected by the cultural clashes between the two communities one way or another. Angela’s ambivalent feelings towards the black community cause her to get stuck in a state of in-betweenness, not knowing where she belongs to or what her real identity is. Likewise, Bhabha’s ambivalence presents attraction and repulsion. This dilemma is obvious in the novel. In Angela’s and her mother’s case, it is possible to notice that there is both an attraction to the White people and repulsion. In other words, Angela wants to be like the White people and admires them; but at the same time she hates them because they treat her badly. She never becomes one of those who are white, no matter how hard she tries:

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** If Mrs Simpson (their neighbor) ask you what you had for your Sunday dinner, what will you tell her ?

**Angela:** Sausages.

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** No, Ange, you can’t say sausages.

**Angela:** But that’s what we had.

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** No, Ange, you mustn’t say we had sausages. We don’t normally have sausages. It was just today.

**Angela:** What’s the matter with sausages?

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** No. You're not to say you had sausages. Say you had – chicken. Yeah, say you had chicken.

**Angela:** But we had sausages.

**Mother (Beryl Jacobs):** Look, child – you' not going up to see her if you say we had sausages. I mean, I know we had sausages but it was unusual. I don't wan' that woman thinking that we had sausages on Sunday – you hear ? I mean, before you know, everyone will think that we have sausages on Sunday, that we can't afford to eat a proper Sunday dinner. Don't say sausages – say chicken. (164)

Therefore, she is in a desperate need to find acceptance in a community that she feels she belongs to. She is drawn into a financial and emotional struggle to exist within English society. She seems to be unable to find an identity for herself because she has been displaced, and othered by people around her. This otherness that Angela suffers from is the consequence of her exclusion as an outsider from English society. She feels that she was and is still the “other.” She is deprived of the opportunity to develop a sound sense of cultural identity. Therefore, her sense of shame of being considered “black” and the fact she has Jamaican origins alienate her from the society and cause her to be regarded as a second class citizen.

Race is an indispensable element in the novel in relation to the postcolonial context. The time when Johnny and Angela are playing cricket together with their friends, they are exposed to their friends' racist

insult and they begin to quarrel with them, which is, for the readers, easy to identify the racial discrimination they are subjected to: “Take her back to the jungle”... “You’re not English...[Y]ou come over with all the other coons. You wanna go back, coming over here. You wanna go back – go back to where you came from – Blackie” (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* 68). In this regard, it was the time when the immigrant children went to school that discrimination against the immigrants started. De Souza, in his interview with Green, explains the cruel incident he experienced at school, as a young black immigrant, and he says that he began to face racism in school (Green 304). The white children were making fun of him by singing racially harassing rhymes: “Pal meat for dogs, Kit-e-Kat for wogs” as in the case of Angela and Johnny (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* 304). They are being attributed to such words as “golliwog, fuzzy, wogs, nig-nog, blackie, coon” and so on (68-9). As Weedon puts it,

In the 1950s and 1960s people of colour found themselves confronted, on the one hand, by overtly racist rejection and discrimination and on the other, by discourses of assimilation that rejected their difference, implicitly asserting the superiority of the white British ‘way of life’. In the immediate post war decades there was a climate of overt, racial discrimination in all areas of life; housing, the workplace and leisure, as well as among state institutions such as the police, education and the health service. (63)

As they are black immigrants, they are excluded from the British society and its institutions. This attitude of the white British against the black immigrants derives from the prejudices of the white people against the people from other races. The British did not want to accept to live with their subjects in the postwar era. All these coloured people are regarded as black, as immigrant, as a part of once colonised nations and as a part of an ethnic group of Britain.

Being one of the “marginalised character” in terms both of his physical and psychological deterioration in the novel, Winston Jacobs experiences some health problems, and dies without knowing of his true illness. “My dad doesn’t know he’s dying of cancer” (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* 243). In this regard, institutions have an important role throughout the novel. His daughter, Angela, endeavours for her father to be able to get the necessary cure, yet the British healthcare system also proves to be a disappointment because both Angela and her father experience racial discrimination, this time at an institutional level. There is an acceptance for Winston Jacobs being black and having Jamaican origins and that he admits his difference from the other people in the same society: “ ‘We’re not like everybody else’ ” (101). Obviously, Winston Jacobs also experiences societal taboos. These experiences with loss of his physical health lead to his loneliness and isolation. Although institutions, like National Health Service are expected to be one of the social services that people can benefit from, the novel depicts how these institutions could be affected by the issues of racism, sexism, gender

oppression, class and racial differences. Likewise, when Angela visits her father in the hospital, his loss of physical and mental health becomes clear to her:

It was hard to tell whether he was dead or alive. He didn't look at us, or say hello, or smile. He was just wheeled in like a statue, with sunken eye sockets to give the illusion of eyes and a face of grey marble that had been carefull chipped away at for every groove.

(282)

Depending on racial differences and living in a council estate provided by the English, it seems quite obvious that Angela finds herself in a complicated situation whether she is the one who is charged of being the speaker on behalf of her family, or she is the one who is the daughter of Beryl and Winston Jacobs. This paradoxical event has bothered her because of the hospice treatment that would not provide her father with a better place to get his health back again, as she meets such horrible rejection of her request for information about hospice treatment: "Useless, all these people. They don't care about us" (287). Simi Bedford, a Nigerian immigrant, explains: When I turned up to start work, the personnel officer intercepted me and said, I'm sorry, you're such a nice person but I'm afraid we cannot have you working here after all." So I asked "Why not?" He said, "the other girls gave me a petition, we can only take you on if we can provide a separate lavatory for you." This was pretty stunning. It was my first experience of this sort of thing. And I was too stunned to fight it (qtd. in Green 197). These kinds of experiences

outside home plays an important role for the solidarity of women in the household witnessing a sorrowful incident: “We looked at each other and a lifetime passed between us. Mother and baby, mother and daughter, daughter and mum, women. Alone and lonely together, with a dying man” (Levy, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* 287).

As a result, Levy’s *Every Light in the House Burnin’* (1994) can be read as a novel addressing to the issues of immigrant experience constructed on identities as hybrid and ambivalent within the frame of postcolonialism. Creating distinctions between cultures, claiming superiority over the colonised nation is presented in the novel through Levy’s representation of Caribbean and English characters. As a continual concern for this thesis, the aforementioned issues in *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) will be analysed in the following section.

### **3.3. Immigrant Experience in *Never far from Nowhere* (1996)**

*Never far from Nowhere* (1996) presents Charles family’s life and their relationship with the society they live in, written from the point of view of two sisters, Olive Charles and Vivien Charles, who have Jamaican origins. It is also observed through the relationships of the characters in the novel, and that their whole life is affected by racial discrimination, which, in the end, leads this Caribbean family to a breakdown. Accordingly, the story of the novel focuses on the generation gap turning into conflicts and quarrels between the mother and the daughters which ends with their falling apart as an immigrant family. As a consequence of racial discrimination, characters, such as Olive, Vivien,

the mother, Rose Charles, Newton Charles, are not allowed to be a part of the “mother country” and they are constantly looked down upon by the white British. These characters experience disillusionment because of the racial discrimination not only in public but also in their domestic life, namely, at home even with their family. In this novel, Levy uses both first person narrator and third person narrator: “But then one day Peter [Olive’s husband] made a comment when we were watching the news. He said, ‘The Labour party are selling the workers down the river.’ Me and Vivien took no notice but my mum said, ‘That’s right – they want to get rid of all those Communists. I’m a Conservative.’ (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 64).

The relationship between two sisters, Olive and Vivien is highly problematic because generally sisters are expected to get on well with each other. However, Olive and Vivien are completely different from each other. They do not have any resemblance not only because of their skin, but also because of their different personalities and characteristic features. Olive is the darker-skinned of the two sisters who left the school and had a baby at eighteen. The novel focuses on Olive’s struggle with social and financial problems in England, where she was born like her sister, Vivien, to Jamaican parents. Oppressed by the English society, she has to survive without spiritual or financial support. Olive finds herself in an alien and unfamiliar environment where she is constantly marginalised, mistreated and disrespected as a second class citizen. She consistently fails to get over her sense of displacement and non-

belonging. The issue of race significantly influences the immigrants' relationship with their family and other people as well, as in the case of Olive and her mother: "But my mother thought we weren't black" (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 11).

**Olive:** I'm black.

**Mother (Rose Charles):** Don't be silly, Olive, you're not coloured.

**Olive:** No, Mum, I'm black.

**Mother (Rose Charles):** No, Olive, you're not black.

**Olive:** Well I'm not white, I have to be something.

**Mother (Rose Charles):** You're not white and you're not black – you're you. (11)

Obviously, the representation of postcolonial migrant condition is marked by multiple identities and in-between positions evoked by hybridisations resulting from the encounter and interaction of different cultures in the context of migration.

Olive has grown up under the effects of English culture and values and therefore form hybrid and in-between identities. As is seen, both Rose Charles and her daughter Olive are drawn as cultural hybrids who have been affected by both Eastern and Western cultures. The fact that Olive has a double heritage signifies the idea that she is neither totally English agent nor Caribbean. The mother does not want Olive to feel ashamed of her identity. Thus, Olive's identity poses a reversal of Western representation of Eastern and Westernised identity as her ambivalent identity does not fit into a fixed category that can be presented as a typical Eastern or Western one.

Peter didn't come home for days. I was pleased. I couldn't have cared less. It was peaceful without him. I liked it. It was better. I didn't care if he was dead down some alley or smashed up in the car. So badly crushed that nobody would recognize him to find out where he lived. I didn't care. It didn't matter to me. I didn't give it a thought. (189)

As expressed in this passage, Although Olive is a “Westernized woman” adapting herself to western cultural values, the traces of her resistance against being totally westernized is illustrated through her choices that are associated with her Caribbean identity, such as her problematic relationship with her English husband that leads to their break up.

He said I was being unreasonable. But I was only thinking of Amy. It was for her sake. I didn't want her to get confused. She was only young. She might have got confused. She might have thought his new girlfriend was her mother. She might have thought anything. Because she was only young. It's easy to confuse children when they're young. (202)

Obviously, Olive does not want to be someone else, she wants to find who she is. She turns into a person who cannot love anyone except for her daughter Amy. She can never achieve a full adaptation to English culture, and ironically to her “native culture” as well. In *Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha states that stereotype mixes racist ideas and perpetuates them (75). In addition, stereotyping delivers the belief that

colonisers are “only, mainly, exclusively, white,” while the colonised are “Black, or Oriental” (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 336). The reason is that stereotypes enable colonial authority by allowing the coloniser to justify his authority over the colonised due to the coloniser’s “innate superiority” in relation to the colonised. For Said, “race, color, origin” are used as criteria to distinguish between coloniser and the colonised (*Orientalism* 120). He puts emphasis on the fact that such ideas as white people are not only the best race and have every technological facility but also are rich, which justify the colonisers’ superiority and their right to have control over the colonised, who are “othered.” As for Frantz Fanon, the skin colour determines white people’s rightfulness and the black ones’ disadvantageous way of life. Therefore, white, as the opposite of black, defines the coloniser as superior on every occasion. It is also clear that in Fanon’s thinking, whiteness and blackness signify all the qualities coloniser and the colonised have. That is why he claims that “the white man is sealed in his whiteness, while the black man in his blackness” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 3). This is illustrated in the novel through the mother’s opinion about blackness:

My mother didn’t believe in black people. Or should I say, she tried to believe that she was not black. Although she knew that she and my dad were not the only people who came over here from Jamaica,... she liked to think that because they were fair-skinned they were the only decent people who came.

(Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 10)

As is seen, Olive's mother and father use mimicry; they imitate the British through mimicry. Olive feels alienated from society and is surprised to see coloured people act classy and snobbish, as her mother does, and she seems angry and disappointed when she learns that her husband is living with a white woman who has two kids. As a consequence of all these oppressions and discriminations, Olive wants to move to Jamaica to live in better conditions for her own sake and her daughter, and moreover, she is accused of acting against her family for escaping to "another country" because her mother Rose Charles thinks that she belongs to Britain "where she was born" (371). Being a cultural hybrid character, Olive decides to migrate for herself and her daughter, but this action will also be an attempt to leave behind her native land, England. She wants to have a new life, leaving everything behind, which also means leaving her family. She wants to migrate to Jamaica because she wants to create a secure place wherein her daughter can settle, have education, earn money, benefit from the opportunities of the country and lead a comfortable life. Being aware of her difference from the white people in London, Olive desperately wants to create herself a new identity. After all, she is excluded not only from her family but also from the society, because of her race and her choice of moving to a new place to bring up her daughter. In other words, she does not only experience exclusion, but also lack of a sense of belonging to somewhere else as well. She cannot manage to keep her daughter away from the racial conflicts with her own endeavours. Experiencing the racism that was applied by the British

people, Olive cannot see England as her own country and wants to escape her shameful childhood on the island and the shame that has left deep imprints on her life. In England, she loses her sense of belonging: she can never be fully happy there. Therefore, she leaves everything behind including her family and her native country and moves to Jamaica because of the racial discrimination that utterly disturbs her:

But I've decided – I'm going to live in Jamaica. Live in the sun and watch Amy playing on beaches. I'm going to live somewhere where being black doesn't make you different. Where being black means you belong. In Jamaica people will be proud of me. I've had enough of this country. What has it ever done for me except make me its villain. Well, I won't take it any more. (362)

Bearing this quotation in mind, Robert Young signifies the importance of “hybridity” in “imperial and colonial discourse in negative accounts of the union of disparate races – accounts that implied that unless actively and persistently cultivated, such hybrids would inevitably revert to their ‘primitive’ stock.” (Ashcroft et al., *Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 137). As is seen, Olive gives up everything in England, where she cannot exist because she thinks that she can exist in Jamaica, where her origins come from. Likewise, it is acknowledged that in the the situation of immigrant families and their disillusionment in the 1960s-1970s, there were problems in the families of the black community because of the racial discrimination they faced in the outer world. Therefore, having been decisive to start a new life by leaving her familiar

landscape and circumstances in England, her aim is to find, as she contends, a place where people will be proud of her (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 362). Evidently, nobody tries to understand her decision to leave England. In terms of the identity problems of the second generation, Olive does not identify herself as British. The problems experienced by the immigrants evidently alienate this younger immigrant. She is trapped in the darkness of her English existence in a way which ironically reverses the images of “black and white.” To put in other words, her struggle for existence as an individual and woman in London makes it impossible for this character to be part of “mother country.” Thereby, she thinks she would find her true identity in Jamaica. In her efforts to find her identity therefore, there is the hidden message that nobody can dominate in her world anymore – not culture, not parents, not racial discriminations, not prejudices that were set by British people. Olive shows her determination in becoming an independent woman, freed from any prejudices about how to live her life as a woman and an individual.

In Vivien’s case, the reader gets the idea that her story seems to be more sophisticated and fascinating when compared with Olive’s. Her world seems to be a place full of achievements. To her, however, she is the one who has always been neglected by her mother, even when she is in the hospital while she is telling her childhood memories of the selected part in the novel: “She never stayed home with me when I was sick. She’d get Olive to take the day off school or she’d just leave me with two Disprins...” (318), or she says:

You don't sound very pleased that I've got into college. I thought you'd be pleased that one of your daughters is doing something with her life. Of course I'm pleased, child, I'm your mother. I'm just saying that you'll have to learn to take care of yourself properly when you leave home. (306)

No matter how successful she is, she has always been neglected by her mother and her sister. After she has passed her exam in order to get an education in college, Vivien clearly understands that adaptation to the new place in Britain is not easy. However, as it is fit with a mimic person, Vivien complies with the cultural habits and morals of the Western country in which she lives. Therefore, she has to face several problems ranging from accommodation to become successful, and all these are important problems she has experienced because of the prejudice and the hostile attitude of the white people towards her, just as it is to Olive. However, the clubs she attend and her entrance into Western society indicate that she gets on well with that society. In the clubs she does not have any difficulty in acting, dancing and drinking in a Western style.

On account of the fact that mimicry results in the colonised losing self-esteem and admitting the superiority of colonisers over them, the mother Rose Charles may be regarded as the best example of this "mockery," the term as recounted by Ashcroft et al. According to him, "Mimicry is never very far from mockery" (Ashcroft et al., *Post-colonial studies: The Key Concepts* 13). This can be illustrated through Olive's expressions:

I didn't really care whether I got into the grammar school or not. It was my mum's idea, she said it was a 'respectable school', with 'decent girls'....You'd see the girls in their hats, not a hair out of place. And no black girls. All white....I told Mum that there were no black girls, but she just smiled and said that that was good. And when I said that I'd be the only one, she sucked her teeth and changed the subject.

(Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 34)

Considering the situation as a whole, by imitating colonisers' attitudes, the way they dress and live, the colonised are wearing camouflage in order not to be defined as the ones who have been colonised. Their internalised feeling of inferiority makes them different from the coloniser. Accordingly, they wear white masks, but their skin maintains its blackness, as stated by Fanon in his work *Black Skin, White Masks*. Likewise, Vivien wears white mask because she pretends to be a part of different culture which is whiteness, as Levy expresses and goes through a painful transition as a result of leaving everything behind and starting to feel frustrated with the life that you are familiar with (Fischer 366). She not only internalises the British attitudes, but also gives up her Caribben identity altogether. Knowing the fact that she would be discarded if she attempted to declare her real origin, she prefers to hide it saying that "My family are from Mauritius" when her boyfriend asks her where she actually comes from, and the time when Olive learns this incident, her response is:

**Olive:** She's not from Mauritius, she's from Jamaica, and so's our dad for that matter. She's ashamed – she's ashamed we're from Jamaica.

**Vivien:** I am not.

**Olive:** You are. Why did you say they were from Mauritius then, wherever that is ?....She don't want anyone to know we're black.

**Vivien:** Shut up, Olive....I'd never heard her use that word before. I mean I knew we weren't wogs or coons but I never thought we were black.

(Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 233-34)

The reason behind Vivien's attempt to hide her true origin can be associated with Andrea Levy's own experiences as she has also been subjected to racial discrimination throughout her life in one way or another. Racism was, as she states, "insidious and ever present...I hated myself. I was ashamed of my family, and embarrassed that they came from the Caribbean" (Levy, *Six Stories and an Essay* 9). The difference between the attitudes of Olive and Vivien against the racial conflicts comes from the change in Vivien's beliefs and attitudes so as to adapt to the dominant culture. While Olive tries to maintain her cultural identity which was constructed in the Caribbean, as she thinks, Vivien is observed to have gone through a transformation in her attitudes and beliefs. As she gets a chance to study at the college in another part of England, and has to interact with the outside world, except for her family, more often she notices that she has to remain indifferent to the racial attacks and to hide her true origin in order to adapt to the "host society." In fact, the

difference in the views of Olive and Vivien is the result of racial discrimination in Britain. While Olive seems to be a woman with a typical Jamaican identity, this identity is fragmented because of the influence of the racial and gender discrimination she has been subjected to throughout her life. On the other hand, Vivien is an ambitious woman with a strong self-image, which stimulates her to achieve her life goals.

Calling a black in Britain as “different” is the worst way of naming her since all these blacks suffer from being named “the other.” In fact, being “the other,” “alien,” and “strange,” is the representation of difference (Goldberg and Solomos 4). Therefore, Olive’s situation is worse than the other members in the family because her own mother does not regard black people as different, “but nothing good” signifying her doubly as the other, when her mother talks to Olive about what she thinks of the black people in England (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 11). In other words, she thinks that she is not black. This means that Olive is the only character in the novel that experiences double exclusion: one of them caused by the exclusion of the whites in the society and the other caused by her mother’s accusation, though she is explicitly expressing her ideas about being black considering her daughter. She is alienated and rejected by the English colonising community because of being black, which is a matter of antipathy for the English community. She suffers from a sense of not belonging anywhere; she does not know which group of people she belongs to, until the end of the novel. Every day in her life, Olive, thus, feels more and more alienated from her mother and this

creates a conflict between the generations in the Jacobs family. Furthermore, her mother compares Vivien with Olive, which leads to the separation of two sisters:

**Mother (Rose Charles):** You have a good head on your shoulders, Vivien. Not like that sister of yours. You want to get a good job – a teacher or a nurse. They're good good jobs. You'll always have work. You should work and earn your own money. You want to be a teacher or a nurse?

**Vivien:** No, a film director. (133)

Vivien's decision about becoming a film director is not an obstacle for her to become an independent woman, yet her identity is being constructed on her mother's idealization which leads to her disillusionment because she wants Vivien to choose a job which is not challenging. In this regard, it is a fact that Vivien is influenced by the people, who get to be important figures in her life during her education, such as her teacher in the college. Through the act of mimicry, there is always subversion. Vivien's way of resistance is represented in the quotation above. For Vivien, her decision about becoming a film director is the symbol of her independence, for the truth that she has managed to stand on her own feet in England. Therefore, she proves it to herself that she has matured and has become a woman. She wants to recreate herself under gaze of the coloniser, and therefore she becomes a mimic person, by internalising the ideals and morals of the coloniser, which indicates her way of resistance. She is ready for a challenging life.

In Bhabha's ambivalence, there is an attraction to the White British society for Vivien:

Sunday dinner at Eddie's house made up for everything. Roast beef, roast pork, roast potatoes, boiled potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, Brussels sprouts – for those that likes them – all covered in rich gravy. It was wonderful. We ate it on our laps, watching football on the telly. And nobody spoke as we slurped, crunched and chewed our way through the heaped platefuls of food. One by one as people finished they'd comment.

(Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 251)

Being a part of identity, rather than one's personality traits, "cultural identity" means "one, shared culture, a sort of collective one true self" as mentioned in the theoretical section (Hall, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 393). Therefore, "cultural identity" formulates people as "one" with common historical encounters and shared cultural codes. Hall describes "cultural identity" not only as a matter of "being" but also of "becoming", and something which belongs both to the past and to the future (394). In this respect, Vivien's cultural identity in the novel also goes through a slight transformation under the influence of the dominant white culture. She prefers to change her cultural identity in a sense to adapt to the dominant culture. Her ideas regarding a white and a black seem to have changed as represented at the end of the novel: " 'My family are from Jamaica, I told her. But I am English' " showing that she is a cultural hybrid character just as Andrea Levy defines herself as the way Vivien does (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 373).

As for Vivien, her inclusion by her friends at college increases her desire to be more English. In forcing Vivien to behave like an English, the issue of putting on mask makes it possible for the reader to understand how England is illustrated as a country that cannot tolerate diversities and thereby hybrid identities. Likewise, she does not show her identity in order to make her Caribbean identity invisible and Englishness visible and also to gain acceptance by the British. In her attempt to recreate a new home and identity in which she would feel herself more secure, Vivien herself attached to imitate the English by thinking and speaking like them as she notes “I wanted better things for me” (134). For her, it is necessary to embrace British ways of living as follows:

Why should Olive, my sister who had a child on her own, in a flat with nothing in it except the dream of where things would go once she could, in some mythical far-off time, afford them; Olive, who had no friends who phoned her or called to take her out and nowhere to go except to my mum’s, to spend her time putting cups in a cupboard; Olive, who had to spend her days answering questions from people who needed to have questions answered before they would help her – why should she feel sorry for me ? Me, I was getting on with my life. I was at college with certificates for exams passed and merits for jobs well done. I had prospects. I had decided. I was going to get a degree. I was going to get a good job. I was going to earn money and have a big house where the furniture was all of my choosing and every carpet fitted snugly against a wall. (366)

Obviously, throughout the novel, it can be observed that Vivien evolves from a girl into a young woman, who has a close interaction with preserving her values and who insistently and permanently tries to create moments, where she can improve herself. To put in other words, Vivien wants to have her own life both as a woman and an individual and to hold the reigns of her life. This can be interpreted in the sense that she tries to create self-confidence for herself, by showing to the world that only she can exist in this society if she separates herself from her sister and become an individual, coming closer to the coloniser as a mimic person. After all both daughters have been ignored by their mother, which can be taken as a reference to the disillusionment and devastating situation. Accordingly, there is no father figure to teach them how the world works and what is right or wrong. In this regard, Vivien and Olive experience something disruptive for their personalities, but most importantly these are the things that make them evolve throughout the time. Though, on the surface, these conflicts between Olive and Vivien may seem to be an ordinary incident that may happen between the sisters as displayed in the novel, in fact, these conflicts are the result of rather different points of view towards the racial conflicts. The characters are unaware of what they have gone through since there is no information in relation to their roots, except for knowing that their family came from Jamaica in 1950s.

The 1970s of Britain witnessed serious conflicts and attacks between the black youth and the police. Sometimes racial hatred appears directly in public places. For example, when Olive is driving, the

policeman has stopped her and she is subjected to racial insults uttered by the policeman: "...keep you dirty black mouth shut" (343). Especially Olive is exposed to unjust treatments even in her own family. The mother is expected to be a woman who is warm and consoling to her own children, yet she does not treat her daughters all the same. The oppressive white society believes that the blacks lack good traits decent people should have. They are doomed to be inferior before there were born. They do not deserve a high standard of living as whites do. They want blacks to be deprived of self-confidence in order not to fight for their rights and to consent to everything already decided for them. Despite the belief that the blacks lack emotions and ideas, they are no different than whites. They want to have all colours in their life. They need to feel the joy to be valued by others as human beings. They need to get away from the feeling of being the other. Being black is distasteful in the white eyes as reflected in the novel. As a matter of fact, the "big fat white man" in the council, and the way he treats Olive, her daughter and black people in general, represents the dominance of one culture over the other in a parallel way to the imperialistic paradigm, in a way, of the colonisers' attitude towards the colonised:

We're always queuing up 'cause of those fucking wogs over there"...He pointed to two black people who were serving behind the counter... "What's a matter with everyone ? People are fucking scared of 'em. Fucking coons. I wouldn't be in here if it weren't for those fucking wogs, and nobody does anything – they're fucking scared of 'em. (242)

In postcolonial terms, it is possible to argue that such characters as the man in the council service, except for Olive, represent Britain, which maintained a distance from the native culture of her colonies, by either not caring for them properly or not setting them free completely. Both Britain and such characters like the big fat man care about Olive as long as they are able to abuse her roots on every occasion. Olive as both woman and individual cannot achieve self-realization, as she is under the influence and dominance of the feeling of being “the other.” Therefore, she decides to go to Jamaica, where she cannot be excluded from, as she thinks, where “being black does not make you different” (362). The more she is involved in British social life, the more everything about England suffocates her both physically and mentally. That is, the more she feels uncomfortable and alienated, the more she is distanced from everything English. Her colour signifies something dissatisfying for white people and Olive expresses her deep disillusionment with English society as a response to what the solicitor has said to her in the court as a result of the fact that she was mistakenly being charged of drug dealing:

Her England is a nice place where people are polite to her, smile at her – ask her for directions in the street, sit next to her on buses and trains and comment about the weather. But my England shakes underneath me with every step I take...Oh no. I was born a criminal in this country and everyone can see my crime. I can't hide it no matter what I do....I'm black. (361)

The reader gets the idea of Olive's own discontent and dissatisfaction with English environment. Her feeling of struggle in England derives from her great efforts to maintain her existence in a place that is completely alien to her, though she was born and brought up there. That is to say, in spite of her strong feelings about her West Indian culture, Olive's self alienation does not only stem from her cultural displacement, but also emerges with her gradual realisation of the discriminatory attitude introduced by the English, to whose culture she is expected to adapt. In this respect, the policeman acts like the oppressive whites and discriminates Olive and insults her by uttering racist words "...keep you dirty black mouth shut" (343). This example reflects the horrible results of racial discrimination between two communities.

The constant quarrel with Olive and Vivien can be explained by referring to the results of Modood's survey, in which he writes that children of the Caribbean immigrants, experience deeper psychological breakdowns because they are rejected by the outer world in addition to their suffering from their one-parent houses. That is, because of the disruptive relationship between the mother and the daughters, also the sisters with each other, the feeling of the fact that people do not want them there anymore becomes unavoidable. Additionally, the sense of home is a very important signifier of one's way of life, as Levy notes,

I grew up with a sense of insecurity about home because I was always in council housing and they can always chuck you out and so the sense of somewhere that is in your control in the middle of London, to have

a house – to have control over where you can stay –.

(qtd. in Fisher 369)

In the light of this quotation, it is obvious that the identities of both daughters have been fragmented because there is neither real mother nor father figure, and, accordingly, there is no real place in which they can feel themselves as protected, secured, and free from the outer world's disadvantages. Therefore, both sisters experience a strong sense of disillusionment with the environment they live in. Accordingly, their identities are fragmented due to their traumatic personal experiences as a result of racism, and family conflicts, in the alien landscape and culture as well as at home. However, having spent several years in London, Vivien clearly experiences a transformation in her attitude and becomes more flexible about having a relationship with the whites. In contrast to Vivien, Olive still seems to be more attached to her West Indian culture even though she is not familiar with it. At the end of the novel, however, there is an acceptance rather than a denial: “ ‘My family are from Jamaica,’ I told her. ‘But I am English,’ ” just as Andrea Levy feels herself (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 373). In Olive's case, her disillusionment with the world becomes apparent to her. She states that “the world seemed such a big place but with no room in it for me” (283).

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, immigrant experience, as it is portrayed in the two novels *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994) and *Never far from Nowhere* (1996) by Andrea Levy has been analysed. The conclusion drawn in the analysis is that almost all characters who were born in Britain to Jamaican parents, face with the harsh realities of the “mother country” that they cannot escape the racial prejudices as black in the white British society. They are restricted by limiting social rules and norms within the community they live which lead to their deep disillusionment with “the mother country.” They all try to overcome similar problems even though they have different personalities.

When fragments are put together, the overall picture makes it possible for the reader to infer the fact that Andrea Levy reflects her own experiences through her characters in England, especially in London. In this respect, postcolonial reading of the novels has facilitated to make an analysis on the discriminations imposed by the British. In conjunction with the theoretical framework of the thesis, immigrant experience in the light of Said's, Bhabha's and Fanon's concepts have been discussed. Characters' search for identity and the hardships they encounter in Britain have been explored with regard to the postcolonial context. Throughout the analysis, it is explored that immigrants have to deal with the quest for identity as a result of their racial differences within the community. When the reasons of the identity crisis the immigrants struggle with are examined in detail, it is also observed that besides the cultural

differences, the uncertainty of their status in the British society, the racist prejudices that they continually experience and the feeling of displacement and disillusionment in the British society, lead them to both physical, but most importantly to psychological breakdown. However, no matter how they suffer, the characters do not give in and they struggle to exist as individuals on every occasion.

In *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994), British born to Caribbean parents, Angela finds her own way to deal with her identity crisis as a cultural hybrid character. To that extent, Homi Bhabha's theory on "mimicry" is a concept, which is created to analyse colonised people like Africans, Caribbeans and Indians in the context of colonialism. Angela's and her mother's attempt to create a camouflage with the usage of the English, putting on a mask of English way of thinking with aim to act like English people creates her identity that developed over time.

In *Never far from Nowhere* (1996), while Vivien tries to overcome her identity crisis and prefers to be silent against racial discrimination at the cost of losing her own indigenous identity for the sake of becoming a part of the "host society" she also admits her true identity at the end of the novel saying that "My family are from Jamaica....but I am English." On the other hand her sister Olive is attached to her traditions and culture, and is eager to admit her race (Levy, *Never far from Nowhere* 373). As a dislocated, alienated, and a marginalised character who cannot see herself in the picture of Britain, and rather than living as an outsider in the "mother country," Olive decides to go to Jamaica by leaving her family

behind, except for her daughter Amy. Unlike Olive, despite the racial discriminations and difficulties that she faces, Vivien is determined and eager to accomplish her dreams and wishes, by admitting her true identity. She adjusts herself to the requirements and lifestyle of British society and culture so as to be successful, which is “mimicry” in Bhabha’s terms. As it was discussed in the previous chapters, she turns into a woman who wants to prove her independence and secure the start of a new life. As for Olive, the sense of alienation leads her find a place she thinks she would belong to, that is, her root. Andrea Levy emphasises that some of the younger generations in the novel, such as Olive, has no future in Britain because she is not and accepted and integrated into “the mother country” as a woman and individual. Likewise, Levy focuses on the fact that the characters’ identities are fragmented. These characters deal with some problems in order to be able to prove their independence and reveal the sense of freedom that they have obtained during their residence in the Western countries. The situation of the second generation proves that disillusionment, discontent and alienation create a huge gap between two generations and cause the breakdown of both individuals and families. In both of her novels, through her observations in Britain, Levy represents the characters who have experienced a hard life either by searching for their identities, or become outsider/alien in the “the mother country” by preserving their ethnic identities, or leave “the mother country” to find freedom in their origins.

Considering all the points mentioned above, the study concludes that almost all characters have been subjected to the racial attacks and exclusion of the “mother country” that end with their alienation, and dislocation in the “mother country” by means of an amplified picture of their experiences. Levy’s fiction depict her intention to evoke immigrant’s problems concerning identity and culture by raising arguments whose major concerns become “third space,” “hybridity” and “mimicry.” As it was discussed in the previous chapters, in relation to “hybridity,” “third space” is handled in both novels. The importance of this hybridisation has been analysed through characters. Consequently, the characters like Vivien not only emphasise the possibility of triumph over binary thinking, but also challenge cultural hegemony with a positive force.

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