

The novel by Andrea Levy called *Small Island* is rife with hybrids.

B.Mary Judy Nicoma ,Dr.T.Senthamarai

B.Mary Judy Nicoma, Research Scholar, Department of English, Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu.

Dr.T.Senthamarai, Associate Professor, Department of English, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Chennai.

Abstract

Cultural conflict is the focus of "Hybridity in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*," an academic paper that analyzes the book. In the story, a cultural clash occurs between the characters Hortense and Gilbert. It's about how the spherical characters struggle with their own sense of identity and feel alone in an alien setting. The essay delves into the ways in which Hortense and Gilbert's migration to England fell short of their expectations. It sheds light on why confronting racism and cultural marginalization is so important. In this paper, the author makes an attempt to learn about the problems immigrants face.

Keywords: hybridity, uniqueness, mobility, cultural friction, and social exclusion.

Introduction

Merriam-Webster defines a hybrid as "someone whose ancestry reflects elements of two or more cultures or traditions." A few examples of fields and issues where the concept of hybridity has been used include postcolonial studies, identity crises, anti-racism, and immigration. Hortense and Gilbert, a young immigrant couple, arrive in Great Britain hoping to start a new life free from persecution. Due to their inflated expectations, the possibility of a comfortable lifestyle was never realized. The blending of Jamaican and English customs is thus stated by Levy. after Queenie is a tolerant person and Bernard has changed after having a black child with his wife, there is hope that things may improve. This is significant because it highlights the story's central theme: how encounters with individuals of other races and cultures may alter one's own identity and perspective. In light of this, this essay will analyze how foreign-

born Jamaicans interact with natives.

Background to *Small Island*

The Empire Windrush sent thousands of British troops to Jamaica during World War II. The result was widespread job loss and unemployment in Jamaica, prompting many to enlist in the Royal Air Force (RAF) in support of the British cause. The immigrants' hope of serving England as civil servants as they traveled from Jamaica to the Mother Land was dashed when they found themselves instead working as taxi drivers and other low-skilled jobs. In a similar vein, many Jamaican women tried to find work in the new country, but were turned down because of their color, culture, accent, and place of birth. The novel's overarching goal is to demonstrate how native British citizens have mistreated Jamaican immigrants.

Types of Hybridity

Cultural blending is one definition of hybridity. However, it does not explicitly signify the variety of ways one can manifest a mixed or balanced identity, nor does it differentiate between those who have deliberately sought to achieve such an identity and those who unintentionally reflect it. In his piece "Mimicry and Hybridity in Plain English," Amardeep Singh explains the many literary hybrids that are commonplace. Racial, linguistic, literary, cultural, and religious hybridity are the five forms he identifies. What follows is a description of

The given hybridities:

1. "Clearly based on the premise that racial difference is an experimentally verifiable fact, a legacy of nineteenth-century race research, the concept of "racial hybridity" now looks uncomfortable.
2. Second, the term "linguistic hybridity" describes the incorporation of words from other languages into a native tongue. This may include the introduction of English terms into Asian or African languages, or the reverse.
3. Third, a phenomenon known as "literary hybridity," which is often associated with modern postcolonial writing that employs non-traditional forms of storytelling like "magic realism." Writing styles that combine elements of local heritage and traditional culture with experimental (postmodernist) concepts have been explored by authors such as Salman Rushdie (India) and Ben Okri (Africa).
4. Four, a blending of cultures. Hybridity may be thought of most easily and most broadly in the context of culture, which here includes art, music, fashion, food, and so on. The rise of fusion restaurants, fusion bands, and fusion music attests to the pervasiveness of cultural blending

in modern society.

5. One of the most common themes in colonial and postcolonial writing is religious fusion. Culture, religious beliefs, and social contexts all contribute to a person's sense of who they are and how they identify themselves, although some contribute more than others. (Singh)
6. The following study will focus in part on notable hybrid kinds within the aforementioned categories identified by the researcher.

Analysis

The plight of Jamaican immigrants in Britain is examined in *Small Island* by Andrea Levy. This work shines a light on the post-colonial, imperial, and post-slavery eras in England's history. Through the perspectives of the Jamaican characters Hortense and Gilbert, Levy shows the colonial side of England. English nationals Queenie and Bernard also play significant roles. The author skillfully weaves together the dream world and the actual world that these folks inhabit.

Hortense, a Jamaican lady, boards the *Empire Windrush* for her maiden trip outside of the country to teach at a university. Hortense marries her best friend's fiancé, Gilbert Joseph, so that she may go to England and help her advance in her chosen field. Since Hortense is eager to help Gilbert financially so that he may go to England, she manages to convince Gilbert to marry her. Despite the fact that he does not love her, Gilbert agrees. Hortense thinks Gilbert's leased room at Queenie's residence is too cramped and tiny. Hortense is reminded of her affluent Jamaican family's mansion in Kingstown, where she was born. She was nurtured by different relatives of her father, who hoped that she would use their wealth to make a successful life for herself.

Queenie, the landlady, would like to take Hortense shopping if Hortense is interested. Queenie is certain that Hortense has never

been to a supermarket or eaten bread. Hortense, meantime, is shocked to see that English ladies wear rumpled clothing that would make them blush in Jamaica, and that stores are frequently dirty and disorganized. As a result of this, Hortense cries out, "My mind could not believe what my eyes had seen." This is how the English would shop for bread if they could" (Small Island, 332).

Hortense helps Queenie give birth to a son at the end of the story. Hortense, on the other hand, is shocked to learn that the child is assumed to be an illegitimate black child. After learning about the hardships faced by Black people in England, Gilbert and Hortense decide to adopt the baby. Hortense tries to adjust to the new ways of life she encounters in England.

Queenie Bligh, a main character, is married to RAF officer Bernard Bligh. Her birthplace was a little town in northern England. Queenie sneaks away from the family business to join her Aunt Dorothy in London, where she opens a candy store. There, she meets Bernard Bligh, who she eventually marries because she believes he can provide a stable life for her.

Queenie helps a refugee organization and also opens her house to anyone in need. When Bernard enlists in the RAF, he is sent to a foreign country. Queenie takes care of Bernard's father, Arthur Bligh, who is nonverbal but kind and patient, while Bernard serves in the RAF. A mutual acquaintance suggests that Queenie let three RAF officers spend their holiday at her place. She fell for Michael Roberts, a soldier from Jamaica who is both attractive and nice to Arthur. A child is born illegitimately as a consequence of Queenie and Michael's relationship. Shara Jamal Shahoyi and Juan Abdulla Ibrahim provide an explanation for hybridity on Small Island. The arrival of Queenie and Michael's baby is being heralded as a representation of London's evolving multiethnic culture. The Black immigrants were given a voice via their kid. The dread was real, but the acceptance of the

youngster who represents diversity was not. After giving birth, Queenie pleads with Gilbert and Hortense to accept the kid because "the child, as multiculturalism, should be brought up without fear and prejudice in a safe environment." According to (Shahoyi, Juan Abdulla Ibrahim, & 13),

It is revealed that Hortense's husband Gilbert Joseph had a strong desire to join the Royal Air Force when he was younger. But when he settled in Virginia, he encountered racism there. After that, he'll be working as a driver and coal loader in Yorkshire. Gilbert has questions about the British knowledge of geography and culture since the British know nothing about Jamaica and mistake it for an African nation, notwithstanding the odd racist statements made by British persons. Gilbert's remarks reveal his heartbreak as his dream of joining an airplane crew is dashed. He explains, "You see, there is a list, written by the hand of the almighty in a celestial book, which details the rich and wonderful accomplishments his subjects might achieve here on earth: father of philosophy, composer of the finest music, ace pilot of the skies, paramour to lucky women now I knew: besides the name of Gilbert Joseph was written just one word—driver. It didn't matter how hard we tried, we couldn't change it. I was doomed to die at the hands of the internal combustion engine once again. Small Island, page 147

Both Hortense and Gilbert are turned down for employment because of their ethnicity and culture in the book Small Island. Queenie has a difficult decision between the well-being of her family with Bernard's fortune and that of her kid in the face of societal discrimination. Hortense, Gilbert, and Queenie were notable for their socially complex, geographically and mentally overlapping lives. M. Sonia Priyadarshni writes, "Dreams of all these characters largely tell us about the gap between the myth of the mother country and reality" in her piece The Mother Country: A Dream for the Immigrants in Andrea Levy's Small Island, emphasizing the hardship of the immigrant's mistaken aspirations. It's

widely accepted and evident that we see this vividly in the story, where the oppressed part of mankind is forced to dream yet has no choice but to be left alone in their pursuit of that ideal. (13)
Priyadharshini

Conclusion

The author raises the problem of immigrants being denied access to resources in a new country. Levy views racial and cultural marginalization in England as a threat to the country's social fabric. I'd like to wrap up this paper by mentioning Usha Mahadevan's piece, "England of Andrea Levy's *Small Island*: Dreams and Realities," which focuses on the protagonist's optimistic development. Immigration, she argues, always results in interculturalism, which Levy describes as "both a clash and an accommodation." In the short run, she says, cultural variety causes shock and conflict, but in the long run, it creates richer, intelligent civilizations (Mahadevan, 9).

In an effort to promote peace and unity among its readers, this book explores the concept of tolerance and acceptance of one another. There are still those individuals who refuse to let society pressure bring them down because of their race or culture.

Works Cited

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybridity>
2. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hybrid>
3. Levy, Andrea. *Small Island*. London: Headline Review, 2004. Print.
4. Mahadevan, Usha. "England of Andrea Levy's *Small Island*." *Indian Review of World Literature* 2 (2020).
5. Priyadharshini, M. Sonia. "The Mother Country: A Dream for the Immigrants in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*." *Electronic Research Journal of Literature* 2 (2020).
6. Shahoyi, Shara Jamal, and Juan Abdulla Ibrahim. "Identity Crisis

in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*." 2004.

7. Singh, Amardeep. "Mimicry and Hybridity in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*." *Indian Review of World Literature* 2 (2020).

Island: Dreams and Realities." *Indian Review of World Literature* 2 (2020).