A Comparative Analysis of *The Lonely Londoners* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* within the Context of Multiculturalism

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ABSTRACT

The author Jean Rhys explored the concept of multiculturalism in her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (*WSS*) (1966), which presented a narrative of the protagonist's life in Jamaica and England. In contrast, Samuel Selvon depicted Caribbean immigrants' lives in England by integrating multicultural items into his novel, *The Lonely Londoners* (*TLL*) (1956). This study addresses the theme of multiculturalism in both *WSS* and *TLL* and reflects on the lifestyles and relationships of the characters within the context of multiculturalism in the Caribbean and England. To achieve this goal, a detailed analysis was conducted using a multiculturalist approach, grounded in selected examples extracted from both *WSS* and *TLL*. Both works of literature analyzed the influence of the dominant culture on an individuals' cultural facets, highlighting their ability or inability to adapt to the constraints of the host culture. In her work, Rhys highlighted the adaptation process and the discrimination experienced by white and black Creoles. Conversely, Selvon's narrative focused on class-based discrimination within a culture with undefined or shifting boundaries. This article provides an analysis of how the literary works reflect the difficulties faced by an individual when living in heterogeneous cultures, specifically cultural integration and discrimination. First, the definition of terms and a theoretical and literary framework are presented, then, a comparative analysis with selected examples from *WSS* and *TLL* is given in the study. Finally, the article argues that both works offer valuable insights into the struggles that individuals and communities in multicultural societies face as they negotiate the conflicts between cultural diversity and social cohesion.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Acculturation, Discrimination, *The Lonely Londoners, Wide Sargasso Sea*

Introduction

When writing a novel that aims to reflect multiculturalism, it is crucial to depict a wide variety of cultures, traditions, and values within the narrative. One of the most important things that must be done to achieve this goal is to ensure that characters coming from various cultural traditions are presented in a manner that is accurate to their experiences rather than one that relies on generalizations or stereotypes. The novel should also investigate cultural conflicts, such as misunderstandings or confrontations arising from cultural differences. This can help readers gain insight into how cultural dimensions shape people's lives and interactions with one another. Thus, examples of cultural conflicts include misunderstandings and confrontations. Hence, celebrating cultural customs and traditions, such as those related to food, dress, music, and language, are also crucial in guiding readers in understanding the wide range of cultural items and comprehending the value of engaging in them. Furthermore, supporting intercultural exchange and interaction by creating flexibility for characters from different cultures to engage with and learn from is a strategy that assists in developing empathy and understanding among diverse cultures.

The literature concerning multiculturalism broadly encompasses themes such as acculturation, alienation, and identity crises, without delving into each topic sequentially or individually. For instance, acculturation occurs when members of society from different cultural backgrounds adapt to and accept aspects of the culture in which they are living. Multiculturalist literature reflects the challenges and complexities of acculturation, such as overcoming the difficulties that arise from attempting to keep one's cultural identity while also integrating into the culture of the dominant society. The sense of feeling alienated or detached from one's own culture or general society because of cultural diversity is referred to as "alienation." Furthermore, multicultural literature addresses this sense of alienation, including feelings of not belonging, exclusion from the dominant culture or society, or rejection by the culture or society. These feelings lead to a sense of alienation and isolation. A person has an identity crisis when they have difficulty developing a sense of who they are. This crisis often manifests as a quest to find this sense of self within their cultural identities. Multicultural literature explores the challenges individuals face when merging different cultural identities and values. It also delves into how these struggles influence an individual's perception of self and their place in society.

Prejudice is the discrimination of individuals or groups based on their cultural background or identity. This can be either intentional or unintentional. Multicultural literature should reflect the experiences of individuals subjected to discrimination and prejudice, as well as the effect these encounters have on the characters' sense of identity and where they belong.

This study delved into the themes of acculturation, alienation, discrimination, and identity crisis within multicultural literature, by examining Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (*TLL*) and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (*WSS*). These novels skillfully portrayed the trials individuals face when navigating diverse cultural identities, offering keen insight into the multifaceted challenges of multicultural encounters.

Acculturation is a prominent issue in both novels, as the characters manage the complications of living in a new culture while preserving their cultural customs and values. This contrast created a challenging environment for the characters. The concerns and challenges faced by individuals who wish to adapt to a social culture while preserving their own cultural identities were brought to light in Selvon's description of West Indian immigrants living in London in the 1950s, which appears in *TLL*. In addition, Rhys's portrayal of Antoinette Cosway's struggle to reconcile her mixed-race identity with the cultural norms of Jamaica and England in *WSS* highlighted the difficulties of acculturation and how cultural identity could be both a source of conflict and strength. Both novels explored the concept of alienation as a primary focus, as the characters frequently experienced feelings of alienation from their own cultural backgrounds and mainstream culture due to the cultural differences between the two. Selvon's portrayal of Moses in *TLL* emphasized the isolation and alienation immigrants felt in London. Many immigrants felt like outsiders not only in their native country but also in the place they chose to make their new home. This was Antoinette's experience in *WSS* when she felt split between two cultures and not belonging to either of them exemplifies the sense of alienation that results from her challenges with cultural identity.

Multiple cultural identities caused the characters in both novels to struggle to determine who they were, which brings up another key theme: identity crisis. Selvon's character Galahad in *TLL* struggled to reconcile the demands of his West Indian culture with the opportunities and difficulties of living in London. Selvon's portrayal of Galahad brings attention to this struggle. Antoinette's struggle in *WSS* to embrace her mixed-race identity with the cultural norms of both Jamaica and England emphasized the

challenges of identity in the face of conflicting cultural expectations. The character Antoinette is ethnically mixed, of Jamaican and English descent. As a result of their cultural identities, the protagonists in both novels were subjected to prejudice and discrimination, not just from their communities but also from mainstream society. This made the theme of discrimination a prominent focus in both novels. The complexities of navigating a society that favors the dominant culture are vividly depicted in *TLL* by Selvon. The narrative keenly portrays the prejudice and discrimination that immigrants in London encounter. In *WSS* Antoinette experienced discrimination by the black and white communities in Jamaica which exemplifies how cultural identity is used to exclude and alienate individuals.

In conclusion, this study establishes a robust foundation for examining the multicultural narratives presented in *TLL* by Sam Selvon and *WSS* by Jean Rhys. Our analysis delves deeply into the central themes such as acculturation, alienation, and identity crises, and we acknowledge that the breadth of our multicultural approach imposes certain limitations on the depth of analysis. Nevertheless, we have carefully selected compelling narrative samples from both works to highlight a rich and nuanced exploration of these themes in the context of multicultural literature.

Literature Review

The intricate dynamics of multiculturalism and its tangible impact on an individual and a community are poignantly portrayed in the novels *TLL* and *WSS*. These novels, situated within diverse cultural contexts, offer rich grounds to explore themes such as identity crisis, acculturation, and the clash of cultural paradigms. A critical examination of multiculturalism in these narratives not only highlights the personal experiences of the characters but also casts light on larger societal trends and paradigms. Through a comparative analysis, this study sought to gain insights into the multifaceted and complex interplays of multiculturalism as depicted in these literary works. In order to provide a sound theoretical basis for an analysis, the researchers delved into various scholarly literature discourses that framed multicultural narratives and dynamics within a broader socio-psychological and philosophical context.

The concept of multiculturalism, complex and multi-faceted, has been the focal point of many scholarly analyses. Berry (1997) explored the nuanced processes of immigration, acculturation, and adaptation which offered an analytical lens through

which the character dynamics in *TLL* and *WSS* could be scrutinized. In Berry's theories, the characters' journeys were seen as attempts to negotiate and adapt to the diverse cultural spaces they inhabited. Understanding the shifts and transformations in multicultural discourses is vital. Gozdecka, Ercan, and Kmak (2014) delineated the trends and paradoxes moving from multiculturalism to post-multiculturalism, offering a critical framework that was employed to analyze the changing cultural dynamics portrayed in both novels, particularly focusing on the nuances of the characters' identity crisis as depicted. Scholarly discourse on multiculturalism is rich and varied. Bhabha (2003) presented a compelling analysis of post-colonial narratives, which are instrumental in understanding the underlying power dynamics and cultural negotiations portrayed in *WSS*. In a similar vein, studies like those by Şenduran (2021) and Şentürk (2020) delved deeply into the multicultural aspects of these novels, providing specific insights into the cultural dialogues and conflicts presented in them.

Analyzing the psychological underpinnings of multicultural experiences is equally significant. Works by Dovidio et al. (2010) and Schwartz et al. (2010) dissected the roles of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination in multicultural settings, offering a lens to analyze the complex interpersonal dynamics and internal conflicts that characters in both novels experienced. The discussion of acculturation measurement by Kim & Abreu (2001) presented pathways to understanding the acculturative processes that the characters underwent, like Antoinette's strive for assimilation in *WSS*. Furthermore, *the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2020) offered a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy underlying multiculturalism, which provided a foundational backbone to any discussion pertaining to multicultural narratives. This resource, along with a meticulous analysis of Jean Rhys's work by Savory (2009), formed a robust scaffold to construct a nuanced literary analysis that intersected with multicultural theories. In synthesizing these resources, this literature review crafted a nuanced and holistic analysis of multicultural dynamics in *TLL* and *WSS*, bridging literary insights with scholarly discourse in the field of multicultural studies.

Theoretical Framework

Although multicultural demands entail a wide range of assertions about religion, language, ethnicity, nationality, and race, proponents of multiculturalism assume that "culture" and "cultural groups" should be acknowledged and accommodated. These categories are combined with or equated with the idea of acculturation due to the

fluidity and flexibility of the definition of culture. Differentiating and identifying different kinds of claims was crucial for better understanding the challenges at hand (Song, 2009, p. 177). Language and religious beliefs are commonly highlighted by marginalized groups in their appeals for enhanced cultural awareness. Minority groups consistently demand the freedom for self-government. Discussions of multiculturalism minimize the importance of race. While both antiracism and multiculturalism concentrate on the experiences of marginalization and opposition, antiracism places a greater emphasis on these aspects. In contrast, multiculturalism emphasizes success, a rich cultural life, and creative expression (Blum, 1992, p. 14).

The concept of multiculturalism is interpreted from multiple perspectives, highlighting its complex and multifaceted nature. Meer and Modood (2016) argued that many interpretations of "multiculturalism" contributed to further societal divides and deepened existing divisions. These interpretations varied, with some positing that it fostered moral hesitancy among the indigenous community, while others believed it detracted from addressing socioeconomic imbalances (Meer and Modood, 2016, p. 5). In this study, we navigated these complex discussions, focusing specifically on how these dynamics are represented and addressed in *TLL* and *WSS*, providing a nuanced exploration of multiculturalism in literary works.

Selvon's *TLL* and Rhys's *WSS* are analyzed from the perspective of multiculturalism since they both deal with the difficulties multiethnic communities have in establishing a sense of identity. In countries like England, Jamaica, and the West Indies, minorities that fail to assimilate and comprehend the values of their host society are more likely to resist and oppose those values than adapt to them. *TLL* depicts the conflict of ideals surrounding freedom and diversity problems in England. The narratives of Moses and other characters are influenced by the author's experiences of alienation and persecution as immigrants in England. While *WSS* used various perspectives presented by more than one narrator, including Antoinette and Rochester, to illuminate the complexities of culture. These complexities are based on various experiences and perspectives embodied by the characters of the novel. It is important to state that the multi-faceted problems of versatile multiculturalism depicted in these works cannot be simplified in bilateral categories such as "high class" vs "low class" or "rational" vs "irrational."

This is particularly evident in the interactions between Rochester and Antoinette in *WSS*. In a contemporary context, modernization, with an emphasis on individual

freedom and the influence of globalization, encouraged the unification of cultural boundaries. This phenomenon, in both novels, allowed central figures such as Antoinette and Rochester to achieve wider world views, facilitating encounters between the groups. However, this worsened feelings of alienation, identity crisis and rootlessness.

Methodology

This article argues that *TLL* and *WSS* presented distinct fictional worlds that depicted the transformation of relationships among culturally diverse individuals and groups as they underwent acculturation. Both novels include characters who decide to move to another country to try to better their lives through economic independence and individual freedoms. Acculturation, whether in England or the Caribbean, is crucial to prevent discrimination among people because of the prejudices against those facing identity crises. This contention is made both in England and in the Caribbean. Because of this, completely integrating into the host culture depends on one's ability to adapt to that culture. This study also addressed how efficient the procedures for acculturation were in promoting equality within the fictional worlds of these two novels.

Furthermore, this study centextualizes these themes within the framework of the novels. In the books, feelings of alienation and inequality experienced by individuals and groups are intricately intertwined with their socioeconomic conditions. The protagonists in *TLL* and Antoinette in *WSS* undergo profound transformations in their ethical perspectives. They grapple with regret over their choices, experience alienation from their respective cultures, wrestle with identity issues, and sense a disconnection from their roots. This study examines the role of acculturation and discrimination in shaping the portrayal of multiculturalism within the narratives of *TLL* and *WSS*.

Comparative Analysis of *TLL* and *WSS* within the context of Multiculturalism

This study looks at the various individuals and groups in *TLL* and the interconnection between Antoinette and other characters in *WSS* through the perspective of acculturation, alienation, identity crisis, and discrimination from a multicultural point of view. The characters in Selvon's and Rhys's novels grapple with the complexities of their mixed cultural identities, which subsequently lead to a profound sense of disconnection. Antoinette, as a white Creole woman, confronts enslavement and discrimination from

both the white and Black communities in Jamaica. This experience constituted a critical aspect of her challenge in assimilating into the dominant culture, which resulted in her tragic decline. The impact of Antoinette's hybrid Creole identity and her experiences of racial rejection from Black society in post-Emancipation Jamaica on her identity and the discrimination she encountered were analyzed.

At the novel's onset, Selvon depicted London as a lonely and secluded environment by employing specific vocabulary to draw the reader's attention. For instance, he used "One grim winter evening" to set the narrative's tone. Furthermore, he described the city as having an "unrealness" to it, with a fog that appeared to be in a state of unrest, and lights that were visible in an unclear manner, nearly as if the city was not London at all, but rather an unfamiliar location on a different planet (Selvon, 2006, p. 36). London is described in the following passage: "The houses around Harrow Road exhibit signs of age and weathering, with their old and grey exteriors and cracked walls like the final day of Pompeii. Notably, these houses do not have hot water and bath facilities" (Selvon, 2006, p. 73). The cited quotations, including the title *The Lonely Londoners*, suggest that readers are poised to encounter a narrative that portrayed a marginalized immigrant community struggling to reconcile reality with their aspirational desires initially manifested in the story. The narrative unfolds with an introductory sequence where Moses, the central figure, waits at the Waterloo train station, eager to greet a newcomer. A recurring theme in multicultural literature, evidenced here, is the protagonist's limited understanding of the experiences awaiting those who are newly arriving in London. Moses is portrayed as a prophetic figure in the novel, who assisted newly arrived immigrants in their transition to life in London. The narrative suggests that Moses is frequently approached by individuals seeking his guidance and assistance, particularly those from the West Indies. The character is depicted as preoccupied with financial matters, believing that money can resolve problems. This depiction of Moses highlights his role as a supportive and resourceful figure for those navigating the challenges of immigration. Despite expressing discontent with the current circumstances, Moses mitigated his sense of isolation by sustaining regular communication with fellow immigrants and staying informed about events in his country of origin.

Henry Oliver Esquire, Sir Galahad, was the first immigrant. He astonished Moses by presenting summer attire he carried with him. The contradiction of Galahad's experience of warmth in winter and cold in summer is a poignant and astute choice. It served as an image of the cultural disorientation and potential psychological distress commonly experienced by immigrants upon their initial arrival. The character Tolroy's family,

including the elderly Tanty, arrived and declared, "We have all come, Tolroy, as per Ma's request" (Selvon, 2006, p. 29). "Oh God, I am departing for England tomorrow" (Selvon, 2006, p. 29), demonstrated the character Lewis' desire to visit England after learning that the author received a weekly allowance of five pounds.

Selvon portrayed three discrete factions in his novel that embody diverse facets of the immigrant community. The initial cohort encompasses personages such as Tanty and Galahad, who try to navigate cultural customs and personal identity to sustain ties with their ethnic community while simultaneously assimilating into British society. The conduct of this group is visible in different situations throughout the novel. A reporter questioned Tanty about her first day in England to find out if she had previously been there. In response, Tolroy avoided a direct answer and posed a rhetorical question instead, "The gentleman asks me a good question, why I should not answer?" (Selvon, 2006, p. 31). Tanty was responsible for persuading shopkeepers to extend credit to customers, and she adeptly brought her cultural traditions to England. She asserted her authority by informing bakery staff that they were not providing bread in the manner she was accustomed to back home. "Kindly package it in a paper bag for me, please." (Selvon, 2006, p. 78-80). The statement posits that specific immigrant groups maintained their customs while concurrently seeking to assimilate into the dominant culture.

Another group of characters is introduced through the character known as Big City, who protested discriminatory comments made by white individuals, such as: "keep the Water White" (Selvon, 2006, p. 89). Big City represented a faction of immigrants who actively resisted racism in a similar fashion. They echoed the humorous and provocative slogan: "Keep the Water Coloured, No Rooms for Whites,' forming an anti-discourse against racism" (Selvon, 2006, p. 97). Selvon suggested that Caribbean people experienced racial discrimination in numerous ways, both overtly and covertly, which deprived them of fundamental rights such as employment, housing, marriage, and communication. One example is shown in the novel when Galahad was not allowed to communicate with a child because of his skin color, which illustrated the severity of racial discrimination that Black individuals faced in their British homeland:

> Mummy, look at that black man! A little child, holding on to the mother hand, look up at Sir Galahad. 'You mustn't say that, dear!' The mother chide the child. What a sweet child!' Galahad say, putting on the old English accent, 'What's your name? But the child's mother felt uneasy as they stand

> up there on the pavement with so many white people around: "if they were alone she might have talked a little, ask Galahad what part of the world he come from, but instead she pull the child along and she look at Galahad and give a sickly sort of simile, and the old Galahad, knowing how it is, smile back and walk on. What it is we want that the white people and they find it so hard to give? (Selvon, 2006, p. 87)

According to Selvon, Galahad was aware that the challenges faced by his community were not due to their behavior or language, but rather due to their skin color. Selvon implied that immigrants try to assimilate into society by changing aspects of themselves, but they cannot change the color of their skin.

In *TLL*, certain Black characters felt a sense of resentment towards racist white individuals due to their exclusion from mainstream society. The male characters experienced a sense of ease and relative equality when they dated white women, as this provided an opportunity to feel accepted by a member of the white community, far from the racial discrimination they typically experienced, as seen in the following quotation:

> that evening people in the tube station must be bawl to see black man so familiar with white girl [...] Galahad feeling good with this piece of skin walking with him." [...] By loving me (the white woman) proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man. Her love takes me onto noble road that leads to total realization. I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine. (Selvon, 2006, pp. 29, 30, 31)

The last part of the quotation implies that being in a relationship with a white woman gave a sense of triumph and possession to the Black man. Selvon vividly portrayed scenarios where Black men engaged in relationships with white women. He emphasized the compassion these women showed towards the Black community. These compassionate figures include the English girl that Bart intended to marry, her understanding mother, and the mother of the child with whom Galahad sought to form a connection.

In Jean Rhys's novel, the protagonist, Antoinette, grappled with the complex and harrowing intersection of race, history, and identity in 19th century Jamaica. Antoinette

encountered challenges throughout the novel due to her racial and social background. She was marginalized and expelled from Jamaican society. Despite self-identifying as a Creole, a cultural integration of African, European, and Caribbean influences, she experienced a lack of acceptance from both the black and white communities. The historical milieu of Jamaica influenced Antoinette's experiences in the 19th century. The elimination of slavery brought about new power dynamics and tensions between former slaves and their enslavers. During these changes, Antoinette's family found themselves navigating through a chaotic period, struggling to adapt to the evolving social and economic landscape in Jamaica. Antoinette's challenges are interrelated with her parental psychological affliction and distressed background. Annette, Antoinette's mother, endured a history of colonial violence and abuse. This past left her grappling with deep emotional trauma and instability. The distressing memories of Annette's upbringing continued to haunt both her and Antoinette. Consequently, they both face ongoing struggles with their identities and a diminished sense of belonging. In Jean Rhys's novel, the character of Antoinette reflected the themes of slavery, gender dynamics, mental health issues, and racial tension as she lived her life in Jamaica. This vivid portrayal revealed her struggles with an identity crisis, which was a direct result of her complex position within the societal and cultural hierarchies of that time.

Inside Jamaica's complex racial landscape, the novel scrutinized the shifting dynamics and perspectives surrounding identity and socioeconomic status, as encapsulated by the derogatory term "white nigger." Black individuals referred to Antoinette as a "white cockroach," while British colonizers perceived her as a "white nigger." The protagonist, Antoinette, identified herself with the expression, "That is me," as conveyed through her voice. "Separately, it has come to my attention that some English women refer to us as "white nigger" (Rhys, 2001, p. 93). The phrase "pre-colonial Africans" was often used to describe individuals who resided in Africa before being enslaved by slave traders. The author reflected on identity, national affiliation, sense of belonging, and existential purpose. The author noted a significant presence of white individuals in Jamaica. People who identified as Caucasian and held a high socioeconomic status were often perceived to have substantial financial assets, potentially in the form of monetary reserves. Despite this apparent wealth, these individuals seemed not to acknowledge or notice the presence, attitudes, or behaviors toward Black people. The statement under discussion hints at a significant shift in societal perspectives. It suggests that the status historically ascribed to individuals of Caucasian descent has now become comparable to that of individuals

of African descent who were historically referred to as "niggers." This argument extends further to imply a potential reversal of established social hierarchies, with individuals of African descent now being perceived as superior to those Caucasians classified as "niggers" (Rhys, 2001, p. 22). The lines above brought to attention the persistent problem of economic and racial disparity in Jamaica. The depiction of white individuals in the novel as possessing "gold money" implied that they belonged to a privileged social stratum with access to abundant resources and influence, in contrast to the African American community, which lacked such advantages. This affirms that economic disparity constituted a concern in 19th century Jamaica and the allocation of riches was frequently disproportionate across racial boundaries. Furthermore, the assertion that the phrase "white nigger" could be regarded as a problematic oversimplification of the complex dynamics of race relations in Jamaica. The expression in question was traditionally used to denigrate individuals of African descent.

The negative language once used to insult individuals of African descent was now being aimed at those of Caucasian descent, which illustrated a concerning shift in racial dialogue; within this context, the novel examined the impact on the character of Mrs. Cosway, who found herself caught in the crosshairs of these evolving stereotypes. This development, despite its growing prevalence, threatened to perpetuate harmful racial stereotypes and fuel interpersonal conflicts. The author, Jean Rhys, ventured into an analytical exploration of topics such as alienation, cultural identity, and liminality. A focal point of this investigation was the character of Mrs. Cosway, a young woman perceived as having minimal societal value. She was depicted as indulgent and devoid of independence, characteristics believed to be widespread among individuals of European descent born in the Caribbean, and allegedly predisposed to insanity. Foreseeing the manifestation of this presumed inherent insanity, Mrs. Cosway opted for isolation, exhibiting reserved behavior, and abstaining from engaging in conversations, as corroborated by numerous accounts (Rhys, 2001, p. 57).

Antoinette's attempt to fit in with her local community was vividly portrayed through her symbolic clothing exchange with her friend Tia. Antoinette tried to overcome her status as a marginalized individual, striving to find a place in society where she could gain full acceptance from her peers. The struggle highlights the protagonist's efforts to assimilate into the cultural norms of the Black Caribbean population, exemplified through her relationship with Tia, a close childhood friend of Antoinette. One of the events in the novel involved Tia purloining Antoinette's clothes and their connection

to a swimming activity in a nearby lake. Tia discarded her tattered, soiled, worn-out dress in exchange for Antoinette's garments. According to Mary Lou Emery (1990), when Antoinette wore Tia's dress, she assumed the role as Tia's double, symbolically embodying Tia's identity (Rhys, 2001, pp. 52–53). The dress stood as a symbol of Antoinette's hidden longing to emulate Tia or embrace a Black identity. This representation aligned with Sue Thomas's concept of "cultural cross-dressing" in literature, a phrase denoting a conscious effort to navigate beyond the established boundaries of diversity (Thomas, 1994, p. 53). Wearing attire belonging to a different person could potentially facilitate detachment from one's cultural background. Antoinette's aspiration to imitate Tia and adopt her traditions through the act of "re-dressing" is interpreted as an endeavor to liberate herself from her wretched state of discrimination, which is attributable to the lack of a distinct identity. Antoinette's aspiration remained unfulfilled upon her return home. She met the disapproving gazes of English visitors in her abode, and her attire became damaged. Antoinette's current persona was no longer congruent with this revised sense of self. Antoinette faced a wardrobe predicament when her initial attire was purloined, and her replacement clothes were dirty and torn. According to Kadhim (2011), Antoinette struggled to find her ideal identity, which extended to her inability to conform to Caribbean culture (p. 592).

The occurrence of violence between Antoinette and Tia disrupted the notion of likeness between the two females. It emphasized the racial and cultural disparities that separated them. The symbol of Tia as a young Black girl exacerbates Antoinette's sense of being an outsider, and her affiliation with Jamaica further disintegrates as Tia hurls a stone at her. This symbolic shattering of the "looking glass" implies that Antoinette's endeavor to comprehend her identity through the mirror are futile. This character is required to explore alternative methods to resolve the discordant aspects of her identity and attain a deeper understanding of being. Antoinette acknowledges the presence of racial divisions between herself and Tia. Antoinette's racial identity as white positions her as a representative of the British colonizer.

Tia's racial identity as Black positions her as a representative of the colonized. Antoinette acquires this perception through her engagements with Tia. She comprehends that she is fundamentally in conflict with the Black community of Jamaica. The subject acknowledged the futility of aspiring to integrate herself with the Black Jamaican community. These conflicted feelings of hate and envy toward people of African descent make Antoinette's desire to integrate into the Black community more difficult. These conflicting sentiments

worsen her challenge in accepting her sense of self. Antoinette expressed her ambivalent feelings towards Tia: "Tia always had fires kindled for her, the jagged rock did not inflict any pain on her feet, and I never witnessed her shedding tears" (Rhys, 2001, p. 20). Furthermore, Antoinette utters, "Keep them then, you cheating nigger". In the novel *WSS,* Tia exhibited a strong sense of self-identity as a Jamaican of Black descent.

In the novel, *WSS*, themes of identity, belonging, and colonialism are explored. Antoinette's complex emotions towards Tia further estrange her from the Black community and reinforce the racial schism that separated her from them. Antoinette's complex dynamic with Christophine, her mother's African servant and confidant, demonstrated her ambivalent sentiments towards individuals of African descent. Following Antoinette's mother's rejection, Christophine assumed the role of Antoinette's exclusive provider of comfort and maternal affection. According to Drake (1999), Christophine served as a model for Antoinette, demonstrating qualities of female autonomy and confidence (p.195). Antoinette's perception of Christophine as a positive influence underwent a gradual transformation as she began questioning Christophine's ability to provide sound advice. Christophine's uncertainty about the existence of England served as evidence of Antoinette's perceived ignorance and stubbornness. Antoinette perceived her as an perceived her as an "ignorant, obstinate old negro woman, who is not certain if there is such a place as England" and a "damned black devil from Hell" (Rhys, 2001, p. 122) who unlike "other negro woman wore black or tied her handkerchief Martinique fashion" (Rhys, 2001, p. 18-19). This progression in Antoinette's perspective is a poignant reflection of the deeply ingrained prejudices and the complex interplay of identity and colonial legacy that pervaded the societal fabric depicted in the novel.

Antoinette's initial fascination with England was swiftly replaced by disappointment upon her arrival at Thornfield Hall. She was incredulous that this was the England she romanticized about and wondered if she had been transported to a different place entirely. She expressed her alienation and isolation with these quotations: "they tell me I am in England, but I don't believe them. We lost our way to England. When? Where? I don't remember, but we lost it" (Rhys, 2001, p. 162). Antoinette's idealized vision of England as a picturesque and appealing place was shattered when she was confronted with the reality of her surroundings. Antoinette quickly realized that England was in fact: "a cardboard world where everything is colored brown or dark red or yellow that has no light in it" (Rhys, 2001, p. 162). Antoinette's perspective changed as she recognizes

that her previous idealized image of England was no longer relevant, and she felt disconnected from it. Instead, she feels a stronger connection to her own island and its native people, despite the challenges she faced in her relationships with them. She perceives both England and her husband as unfeeling and uncomprehending.

In the novel, *WSS*, Antoinette's union with Edward Rochester signified her attempt to integrate into white society. This marriage influenced her to embody the characteristics linked with English women, including a heightened dependency on her spouse. This attempt at integration fostered a resilience to tolerate her husband's unfaithfulness. Despite being aware of his indiscretions, Antoinette chose to downplay the severity of his actions, steadfast in her decision to remain with him. This mindset was vividly captured in her resigned declaration: "But I cannot go. He is my husband after all" (Rhys, 2001, p. 99). Antoinette and Rochester did not initially intend to marry each other. However, they both perceived the potential benefits that such a union could offer. This matrimonial agreement was orchestrated by Antoinette's stepfather, Mr. Mason. He harbored aspirations of her marrying an Englishman, viewing it as a strategic move to ensure her future stability and facilitate her assimilation into English society. Additionally, the marriage secured the fortune that Mr. Mason planned to leave for her. "That won't be difficult. I want you to be happy, Antoinette, secure, I've tried to arrange, but we'll have time to talk about that later. (Rhys, 2001, p. 54). The marriage between Antoinette and Edward was advantageous for Edward as well, since he was the second son in his family and would not inherit his family's fortune, which would go to his older brother instead. Through this marriage Edward secured a decent fortune. Edward's rejection of Antoinette, a Creole, reflects the European-English society's attitude towards people with Black heritage. He evaluated everyone on the island based on English standards and considered only things and people that were English to be valuable. As a result, he did not view Antoinette (or anyone on the island) as truly English and said,

> I watched her critically. She wore a tricorne hat which became her. At least it shadowed her eyes which are too large and can be disconcerting. She never blinks at all it seems to me. Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either. And when did I notice all this about my wife Antoinette? After we left Spanish Town, I suppose. Or did I notice it before and refuse to admit what I saw? (Rhys, 2001, p. 61)

In the novel, *WSS*, Antoinette found herself rejected by the Black community on the island, prompting her to look for a new beginning in England. Holding onto the belief that England was the "mother country" of colonial settlers, she hoped that marrying an Englishman, like Edward Rochester, would allow her to assimilate into English society and establish a unique identity for herself. Her admiration for England was clear from the beginning of the novel, where we learned that her favorite image is associated with England;

> So I looked away from her at my favourite picture, 'The Miller's Daughter,' a lovely English girl with brown curls and blue eyes and a dress slipping off her shoulders. Then I looked across the white tablecloth and the vase of yellow roses at Mr. Mason, so sure of himself, so without a doubt English. And at my mother, so without a doubt not English, but no white nigger either. Not my mother. Never had been. Never could be. (Rhys, 2001, p. 32)

Antoinette's intense desire to assimilate into English culture was hampered by her fear and the uncertainty of this inhospitable place, which is reinforced by her English husband's attitude. The rejection Antoinette and her husband experienced from both their communities create a deep sense of alienation, which gradually undermined the marital relationship. This isolation compelled them to grapple with their dual white and black identities. However, Rochester manages to maintain a semblance of stability, largely because he had the opportunity to form his ethnic identity more firmly in England. Antoinette lacked a defined ethnic identity, so she succumbs to this feeling of isolation, and gradually descends into madness. The impact of alienation, identity crisis, and discrimination was evident in the deterioration of Antoinette's mind and her marriage with Rochester.

In contrast to *WSS* the British working class, in the *TLL* novel, were against Caribbean immigration to England. They believed that the opportunities in Britain were already limited and insufficient for the current population, which is why they resisted the influx of immigrants from the Caribbean.

> You are unwanted. You are here because some higher order officials let you stay, not because I want you… You only create problems. You want my job, you want my food, you want to live in my home, you want to use my school, my hospital, my stores. But don't take it personally; I have no quarrel with you as a person. It is immigration I cannot tolerate. (Selvon, 2006, p. 181)

This experience of unemployment for immigrants led to a sense of alienation for the characters in *TLL*, and some resorted to catching pigeons to survive. As one of the characters, Galahad, realized that British people do not value and protect the Black immigrant community as much as they do animals he draws a comparison;

> Him that he had was to try and catch a pigeon in the park to eat. It does have a lot them flying about, and the people does feed them with bits of bread. Sometimes they get so much bread that they pick and choosing, and Galahad watching with envy. In this country, people prefer to see man starve than a cat or dog want something to eat. (Selvon, 2006, p. 123)

This depicted scene was ironic because Galahad, who learned the rule of "survival of the fittest" from the British, ended up eating pigeons to survive like another character Cap. This rule also reflected the racial discrimination that the white working class showed towards Caribbean immigrants because they were afraid of losing their jobs to the newcomers who are willing to work for less. This discrimination led to feelings of inferiority and guilt among the characters.

Samuel Selvon vividly portrayed the experiences of the Black community in the United Kingdom, highlighting their resilience and adaptation efforts in an unfamiliar environment. The book chronicled the lives of the Caribbean characters, each representing different dimensions of acculturation, serving as a historical snapshot of migration from the former English colonies. Skillfully utilizing the West Indian dialect, Selvon encapsulated the sense of isolation and the challenges of integration and discrimination encountered by the immigrant population. The use of third-person singular verbs, particularly among Caribbean speakers, created a sense of community solidarity, which suggested that individual actions resonated as a representation of the collective community experience. This is further echoed in contrasting quotes within the narrative, such as "England is a bitch; there is no escaping it," and Lord Kitcher's optimistic proclamation, "London is the place for me" (Selvon, 2006, p. 34), offering a nuanced perspective on their complex emotions toward their new home in Britain. This novel reflected a shift in black British literary and artistic productions from a focus on asserting individual identity to a more collective identity. This change suggested how the British identity was being discussed or redefined in the context of multiculturalism.

Conclusion

These two novels demonstrate that societies, whether culturally homogenous or heterogeneous, cannot completely integrate with the dominant culture because of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. Incorporating literature is widely regarded as an essential means for facilitating cultural assimilation. Multiculturalism is perceived as a limitation owing to the insufficient intercultural dialogue, integration, and critical analysis of novels from diverse backgrounds. This impedes the process of eradicating cultural distinctions within societies. The shifts in a characters' behavior and perspective stem from their inherited traits, prompting them to challenge the traditions that perpetuate these prejudices. The characters in *TLL* demonstrated a greater degree of dedication towards achieving equality and individuality as compared to Antoinette in *WSS*. Antoinette's attempts to assimilate were met with barriers from both ex-slaves and white English women. This resulted in her exhibiting less open-mindedness and rational thinking when compared to characters in *TLL*. Furthermore, Antoinette's historical background as the daughter of slave owners potentially restricts her ability to transcend her lived experiences and embrace a broader view of reality. In short, a linguistic disparity was observed between the two novels. The use of humor by Selvon in *TLL* from the perspective of liberal humanism established a connection between the characters. Rhys's harsh and resentful tone in *WSS* highlighted the dehumanization of Antoinette through a signification system that lacked meaning. Overall, the characters portrayed in *TLL* exhibit a heightened dedication to the host society's culture and a greater inclination towards social integration than those depicted in *WSS*. Antoinette's restricted exposure to literature interfered with her ability to integrate into the dominant culture, resulting in her husband's discrimination against her. The protagonists in both novels encountered challenges in adapting to a multicultural environment, adhering to their customary lifestyles, and exhibiting resistance towards one another. These situations posed an obstacle in acquiring cultural knowledge and hindered the development of a genuinely diverse community. The effectiveness of multiculturalism is contingent upon acculturation and the capacity to acquire knowledge from various groups. Furthermore, the field of literature has a crucial function in promoting comprehension and admiration within ethnically diverse societies.

TLL by Selvon depicted the challenges faced by West Indian immigrants in London after World War II as they endeavored to adapt to an entirely foreign culture while preserving their distinct cultural heritage. The protagonists depicted in the novel

felt estrangement and displacement as they faced the uncertainty between their previous life and the contemporary one in London. The protagonist, Moses, experienced a feeling of displacement as he tries to reconcile his Jamaican cultural identity with his existence in London. Likewise, Galahad, a character of interest, encountered prejudice and exclusion as a Black immigrant residing within a white society. Jean Rhys' novel, *WSS*, delved into the complex experiences of Antoinette Cosway, a Creole woman hailing from Jamaica who grappled with issues of identity and cultural dissonance while attempting to assimilate into English society. The novel depicts how Antoinette was subjected to discrimination and exclusion from the dominant social order because of her distinctive racial and cultural heritage. Antoinette's struggle with sense of self worsens under the dual pressures of conforming to the cultural norms of her Creole ancestry and the societal expectations of English culture.

The two novels also pointed out the effects of prejudice on a protagonists' existence. *TLL* by Selvon portrayed Black immigrants' discriminatory and suppressive experiences in post-world war London. The characters frequently experience derogatory remarks and preconceived notions based on their race, intensifying their isolation and detachment. Jean Rhys' novel, *WSS*, delved into the various forms of prejudice and discrimination experienced by Antoinette due to her racial and cultural heritage, emphasizing her exclusion from dominant societal norms. The analyzed novels underscore the importance of promoting empathy, understanding, and respect for cultural diversity. They also emphasize the need to address cultural biases and preconceived notions. This body of work illuminates the impacts of multiculturalism on individuals, spotlighting the trials that marginalized communities encounter while adapting to new environments. Consequently, a close examination of multicultural elements in literature can significantly foster social justice and equality by amplifying the voices of minority groups and challenging dominant cultural narratives. Therefore, it is vital to further explore multiculturalism in literary contexts to develop a more expansive understanding of the global community.

Both *TLL* by Sam Selvon and *WSS* by Jean Rhys are novels that, despite being written in a very distinct manner and set in vastly different times and places, share certain parallels. According to the findings of the study, the first similarity between the two novels is that they both investigate the lives of protagonists who are socially excluded and alienated from their own culture. While *TLL* examined the lives of West Indian immigrants living in London who were struggling to adapt to a new cultural environment,

WSS focused on the story of Antoinette, a Creole woman rejected by the society of Jamaica because she is of mixed ethnicity. *WSS* used a variety of narrators and points of view to investigate the complex relationship between identity, colonization, and power. On the other hand, *TLL* used a revolving narrator that spoke a combination English and Creole to depict the experiences of a variety of characters and their struggles with displacement.

To sum up, regarding multiculturalism, both *WSS* and *TLL* share similarities in examining alienation and displacement, using narrative structures, and critically analyzing dominant cultural narratives. Because of these similarities, both novels are significant works of literature that encourage readers to critically evaluate their preconceptions and prejudices about identity, culture, and power within their own lives.

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