



Object Choice in Colonial Space in Andrea Levy's Small Island

Deniz Yıldırım¹

¹ Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Türkiye

Article Info

Received: 19.03.2024

Accepted: 25.06.2024

Published: 30.06.2024

Research Article

Abstract – Small Island (2004) written by Andrea Levy fictionalises the sociocultural clash between the coloniser and the colonised during the early years of the Post-war period. The multifaceted narration provides every character with a voice in which their thoughts and tendencies are visible. Through a close reading of the novel, this article aims to investigate the object choice -in other words, partner selection- of two female characters, Hortense and Queenie, belonging to different racial backgrounds in the colonial dichotomy. While a psychoanalytical approach is utilised throughout the examination of the tendencies of the characters in this novel, the significance of socio-cultural and identity-based elements should be taken into account. Both the aim of this study and the context of the novel necessitate such an approach. Several theoreticians from the fields of psychoanalysis and postcolonialism are utilised for the investigation. The object choices of Hortense are mainly affected by a pattern following her parental figure and the established idealisation of the West by the colonised. On the other hand, the object choices of Queenie are initially influenced by social norms and impositions, and then the emptiness and tastelessness caused by the first chosen object are filled by interactions with two Black male characters. In both cases, an opposite tendency within the colonial dichotomy can be observed in different shapes. This article analyses the object choices of the two main female characters in the colonial context in Andrea Levy's Small Island from a theoretical combination of psychoanalytical and postcolonial perspectives.

Keywords *Object choice, psychoanalysis, postcolonialism, Small Island, Andrea Levy*

Andrea Levy'nin Küçük Ada Romanında Kolonyal Bağlamda Nesne Seçimi

¹ İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Çanakkale, Türkiye

Makale Bilgisi

Geliş Tarihi: 19.03.2024

Kabul Tarihi: 25.06.2024

Yayın Tarihi: 30.06.2024

Araştırma Makalesi

Öz – Andrea Levy tarafından kaleme alınan Küçük Ada (2004), savaş sonrası dönemin ilk yıllarında sömürgeleştiren ve sömürgeleştirilen özneler arasındaki sosyokültürel çatışmayı konu alıyor. Romandaki çok yönlü anlatım, her karaktere bağımsız birer ses vererek, onların düşünce ve eğilimlerinin görünür kılınmasını sağlar. Bu makale, romanın yakın okuması yoluyla, sömürge ikileminde farklı ırksal geçmişlere mensup iki kadın karakterin, Hortense ve Queenie'nin nesne seçimlerini, diğer bir deyişle eş tercihlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Eserdeki karakterlerin eğilimleri analiz edilirken psikanalitik bir yaklaşım kullanılsa dahi, kimliksel ve sosyokültürel unsurların önemi de göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Hem bu araştırmanın hedefi hem de romanın bağlamı bu tür bir yaklaşımı gerekli kılmaktadır. Araştırma sürecinde psikanaliz ve postkolonyalizm alanlarından birçok teorisyenden faydalanılmıştır. Hortense'in nesne seçimleri temelde baba figürünü takip eden bir örüntüden ve Batı'nın sömürgeleştirilen özneler tarafından bir ideal haline getirilmesinden etkilenirken, öte yandan Queenie'nin nesne seçimleri ise başlangıçta toplumsal normlar ve dayatmalar doğrultusunda şekillenmektedir ve ardından ilk seçilen nesnenin sebep olduğu boşluk ve tatminsizlik, iki siyahi erkek karakterle kurulan ilişkilerle telafi edilir. Her iki durumda da kolonyal ikililik içinde karşıt bir eğilim farklı biçimlerde gözlemlenebilmektedir. Bu makale, Andrea Levy'nin Küçük Ada romanındaki iki ana kadın karakterin kolonyal bağlamdaki nesne seçimlerini psikanalitik ve postkolonyal yaklaşımların bir kombinasyonuyla analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler *Nesne seçimi, psikanaliz, postkolonyalizm, Küçük Ada, Andrea Levy*

1. Introduction

Through voicing the disposition of the colonised, Postcolonial literature finds itself to be a genre abundant in its diversity of expression. Andrea Levy's *Small Island* takes this quality of Postcolonial literature to another level by featuring four contrasting main voices. Through its fragmented structure, the reader is given more insight into the personalities of multiple characters in a colonial context. Duboin argues on this matter that Levy "contextualises the migrants' arrival and the disruptive encounter with the racial Other within a global frame" (2011, p. 15). However, this does not necessarily mean that there is nothing or nobody between the novel and the reader. The writer is the filter through which the representation of these characters is provided. Not only because of this but also because of the semi-biographical writing of *Small Island*, the author's views gain importance. In addition to readable sources such as biographical texts, novels, and journal articles, the episode entitled "Andrea Levy: Her Island Story" of *Imagine* series, directed by John O'Rourke, would be insightful in grasping Levy's self-positioning in the colonial dichotomy (2018).

The novel in question includes several romantic and sexual relationships either directly between the colonised and the coloniser or between the coloniser and characters with the most Western characteristics, for instance, Hortense's relationships with Michael and Gilbert or Queenie's interactions with Gilbert and Michael. The multifaceted narration of this novel makes the psychological patterns and processes of the characters visible and therefore more genuine than a single narrator. For this reason, in the analysis focusing on the concept of object choice and reasons why these characters tend to select others as partners, a psychoanalytical perspective would be a functional theoretical approach. However, it might be quite reductionist to investigate such a novel by merely focusing on individual inclinations. The unconscious dispositions of a person cannot be examined without the social conditions of the era (Eagleton, 2008). Therefore, the setting and the context of the novel should not be excluded from the psychological investigation of the colonised and the coloniser because they might have a substantial influence on one's actions. More clearly, the reality of the colonial subject is constructed in such a way that the colonised individual internalises the superiority of the coloniser. Fanon emphasises that the Black exists as Black in juxtaposition to the White and the Black/colonised has no ontological resistance from the perspective of the White man (2008). In other words, the colonial subject internalises the reality of White superiority, especially after the first generation of colonised populations that are presumably exposed to the hard power of colonialism in practice. The following generations are less likely to struggle against the colonial mentality since they are born into the constructed reality in which the coloniser is represented as inherently ideal and supreme.

The content of the novel analysed in this article is considerably abundant in terms of the psychological term "Object Choice" coined by Sigmund Freud. More clearly, certain repetitive patterns can be observed in the partner selections of two characters, Hortense and Queenie. Although these two characters belong to opposite sides of the colonial dichotomy, that is, Hortense is Jamaican and Queenie is British, they are inevitably influenced by the reality surrounding them in every aspect of their lives. Doubtlessly, their inclinations in relationships or sexual interactions cannot avoid such a socio-cultural influence. Moreover, the fact that Levy gives voice to both of these characters as narrators of the story should not be overlooked. The multifaceted narration provides the reader with the uniqueness of every character's context; therefore, genuine thoughts, emotions, and tendencies are conveyed through internal speech which provides the reader with a profound psychological depth. This article aims to investigate the object choice patterns of two characters in Andrea Levy's *Small Island* by establishing its argumentation on psychoanalytical and postcolonial theories and claims that the object choice tendencies in a colonial context can be indicative of internalisation of colonial mentality by the colonised and exoticisation of the Black by the coloniser through fictionalisation of Britain's and Jamaica's sociocultural reality during and after World War II.

2. Theoretical Framework

Through its setting during the initial years of the Windrush Generation, more specifically the year 1948, *Small Island* encapsulates the remarkable interactions between the colonised and the coloniser that took place within this period. The fictionalisation of these encounters includes relationships or sexual interactions between Whites and Others. In order to effectively analyse the psychological states of the characters and the factors affecting their tendencies, it is pertinent to incorporate a theoretical framework that will assist an analytical understanding by examining the combined relevance of both psychological and postcolonial conditions in affecting the object choice in the colonial context. Thus, several theoreticians from the fields of psychoanalysis and postcolonialism and relevant concepts suggested by these scholars will be given in the following paragraphs of this section.

Sigmund Freud studied the issue of partner selection and the “conditions for love under which men and women make their choice of an object” (1997, p. 39). Some of the most poignant conditions for object choice illuminated by Sigmund Freud are “the need for an injured third party”, which is not necessarily a romantic partner but either a “husband, betrothed, or near friend”, the pursuit of the object’s “openly polygamous way of life of a prostitute”, “sexual integrity” and the following interest in copies of the first chosen object, and finally the need for the subject to believe that the object needs him for the rescue and then live (1997, pp. 40-42). An examination merely through a psychoanalytical approach would utilise Freud’s writings as its basis. However, the problematic aspects of Sigmund Freud’s opinions should not be overlooked. Horney argues that Freud’s mistake was to neglect the role of culture and predominantly focus on instincts yet her criticism is not an anachronical one; she is quite aware that during Freud’s era, one would not speak of the interconnection between the cultural and the personal (1939). Although his coinage was a precursor for the conceptualisation of partner selection in psychology, the material analysed in this article, namely, the psychological depth and object choice patterns of Hortense and Queenie, necessitates more compatible concepts. Therefore, Freud’s version of the term object choice will not be utilised since it is evidently phallogocentric and reductionist.

Another psychological concept encountered in the novel is Sigmund Freud’s “Oedipus complex”. It is written that the male subject “does not forget that the mother has given the privilege of sexual intercourse with her to the father instead of him, and he regards it as an act of infidelity on her part” (Freud, 1997, p. 45). Similar to the term object choice, the Oedipus complex is one of the pioneering concepts in the field of psychology, yet, once more, Freud’s phallogocentric stance surfaces here, about which he is criticised but should not be accused of. The same conceptualisation is reversed by another leading figure of psychology, Carl Gustav Jung. It is claimed that “[t]he conflict takes on a more masculine and therefore a more typical form in a son, whereas a daughter develops a specific liking for the father, with a correspondingly jealous attitude towards the mother. We could call this Electra complex” (2012, p. 72). Since the characters to be analysed in this article are females, the theoretical framework should be chosen accordingly although Jung’s reversal of Oedipus into Electra is a brief mention and not a profound theory. Nevertheless, the incorporation of Jung’s idea is essential for this article since it functions as the complementation concerning the parental and infantile factors affecting the object choice of not only males but also females.

Execution of such an analysis by excluding sociocultural factors would be considerably deficient, particularly for a postcolonial work that takes place during and after World War II. Therefore, the psychoanalytical perspective should be reinforced with postcolonial theory. To analyse and clarify the Jamaican characters’ in-between condition in the novel, Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness would be functional. It is stated that “... this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at ones self through the eyes of others ... One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro” (Du Bois, 2005, p. xiii). While Du Bois specifically wrote about the discrimination faced by African American people, this concept can be applied to other racially marginalised groups as well. The internalisation of colonial mentality by the colonised is not an exceptional issue to be encountered in a postcolonial novel; however, this can also be observed in the factors shaping one of the Black

character's object choice pattern in *Small Island*. For this reason, Du Bois' suggestion can be employed in the analysis section of this article.

Frantz Fanon provides a similar approach in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* which is more compatible with the scope of this article. In the chapter entitled "The Woman of Color and the White Man", Fanon scrutinises the reason behind Black women's tendency to prefer white men as sexual or love objects (2008). He writes that "[i]t is in fact customary in Martinique to dream of a form of salvation that consists of magically turning white" (2008, p. 30). It is significant to note that Levy's plot does not provide a similar relationship between a Black female and a White male. However, Whiteness itself is idolised although the chosen objects are not White. On this issue it is argued that "[i]t is always essential to avoid falling back into the pit of niggerhood, and every woman in the Antilles ... is determined to select the least black of the men" (2008, p. 33). Furthermore, it is functional for Black women to choose White men to be accepted -or feel accepted- into the dominant society according to Fanon (2008). In another chapter entitled "The Man of Color and the White Woman", the inclination of Black men to choose White women as their love or sexual objects is examined. Fanon illustrates this issue with the Black men's disposition to have sex with White women through which they accomplish their masculinity (2008). These specific exemplifications in Fanon's work provide a theoretical reference point for the analysis section of this article. Although some do not correspond with each other, they still contribute to the foundation on which the argument will be established.

The investigation of the object choices in *Small Island* necessitates a reliable theoretical basis to reach a profound analysis of this work. The need for a combination of different theoretical approaches is clarified in the Introduction section and the passages above. This article is not merely concerned with applying a certain theoretical framework in a fictional work. More clearly, this article tries not only to indicate the reflections of sociocultural realities of a certain era and context but also to emphasise the essentiality of integrating different approaches if a compelling analysis is aimed. For this reason, the interrelation of one's psychology and surrounding sociocultural occurrences is one of the constituent essentials of this paper. Jung's Electra complex, Du Bois' double consciousness, and Fanon's conceptualisation of relationships between the opposite sides of the colonial dichotomy are the main theoretical components through which the novel in question will be analysed in the next section. Although it is stated above, it should be repeated that the aforementioned Freudian terms such as object choice and Oedipus complex will not be the primary analytical tool in the following parts since they do not provide compatibility among theory, content, and analysis. However, those concepts also cannot be completely excluded because they are the initially suggested versions of such psychological circumstances. In other words, object choice is the main concept around which this article centres but not in the way coined by Freud. Other concepts, on the other hand, will be utilised in a combined way to avoid a superficial indication and to support the aforementioned claim that they should form a combination for an effective analysis of Levy's piece.

3. Analysis

The first step to be taken in this section is to lay the foundation before the analysis through adequate information concerning Hortense's and Queenie's background and their infantile periods. The reason behind such a foundation is to establish a holistic understanding that is functional for this article to scrutinise whether there are unconscious factors that directly or indirectly affect the preferences of characters. In other words, both psychological and postcolonial scopes require preknowledge. The investigation after this foundation will be based on the ideas of the aforementioned theoreticians and focuses on the effect of paternal or maternal figures and the self-interpretation of certain characters during their object choice processes.

The first character to be examined is Hortense. It is insightful to have a glance at the depiction of her father, Lovell Roberts, from Hortense's narration: "Every generation in our district knew of my father and his work overseas as a government man. His picture was pinned to parish walls – cut from the newspapers of America, Canada and England. My father was a man of class. A man of character. A man of intelligence" (Levy, 2004,

p. 32). It is quite clear in these sentences that she idolises her father in an admiring tone. However, it would be an erroneous statement to say that Hortense's idealisation is objective and independent from external factors. In other words, her liking can be explored through a scrutiny of the Electra complex; however, a comprehensive gaze would also look after the outer premises. Her father's popularity and value in the eyes of others might give an answer for this question. It was written in the novel that "every generation ... knew of" him and "his picture was pinned to parish walls" (2004, p. 32). His father is a character viewed with respect and praised by others. Besides, these "pictures" are not merely photographs of Lovell Roberts in ordinary newspapers. Those are American, Canadian, and English newspapers, representing the absolute superiority in the colonial discourse. Could there be a direct influence of such qualities on Hortense's attitude towards her father? The following sentence of her narration might be an answer to this question. "A man of class" indicates his prestigious status, "a man of character" his favourable personality, and "a man of intelligence" his respected profession or admiration towards the location where he performs this profession.

When Hortense's mother figure is examined, one would not encounter such an idealisation. Even the first sentence in which her mother's name is mentioned gives the reader a hint about what sort of an approach Hortense adopts towards her: "I was born to a woman called Alberta" (2004, p. 32). The refusal of embracement of her mother and mentioning her by her name rather than calling her mother shows the reader that she feels a distance between herself and her mother. The distance in question stems from the lack of colonial qualities which represents the level of civilisation for Hortense since she depicts her mother as follows: "a country girl who could neither read nor write nor perform even the rudiments of her times table" (2004, p. 32). This could enlighten the reader when compared to the idealisation of her father and the emphasis on his "intelligence". It is argued on this issue that "Hortense would never imagine herself as similar to this dark shadow or as a Black woman, and she would likely view the woman in the real-life diorama as uncivilized ... Through her colorism, Hortense reinforces the colonial legacy of racialisation in Jamaica" (McMann, 2017, p. 203). This quotation elicits the reason behind the reflection of colonial mentality in Hortense's actions or thoughts. There is no need for an overt idea of Whiteness for colonial subjects to desire the West, which is the case for Hortense since every single character around her is Jamaican throughout her childhood. Yet, the dominance of Whiteness is ensured due to the internalisation of the colonial mentality by the colonised. The White qualities render a character more appealing to the Black, which can be clarified through Fanon's suggestion that the Black is unaware of the persecution executed on him and does not develop any disobedient reflexes since not only he but also his mind is colonised (2008). Although this suggestion of Fanon's is quite comprehensive with relevant exemplifications specifically about Black males, it is quite applicable to Hortense's case. She is not introduced to the White people during her childhood, but the mental invasion of colonialism is so deep that she feels proud of her father due to his higher level in the hierarchy of Whiteness.

As Hortense continues narrating, the reader is given more tangible sentences on why she prefers her father over her mother: "I grew up to look as my father did. My complexion was as light as his; the colour of warm honey. It was not the bitter chocolate hue of Alberta and her mother." (Levy, 2004, p. 32). These words are written as though their sole function is to reinforce the deductions given above but they also put stress upon the skin colour. The idealisation of his father cannot be analysed separately from his quasi-Whiteness, which becomes more prominent in comparison with her mother's "bitter chocolate hue". Then, it is written by Hortense's voice that "[w]ith such a countenance there was a chance of a golden life for I. What, after all, could Alberta give?" (2004, p. 32). Although Hortense is not a proper White, she is aware of the identity capital inherited through his father's lighter shade and the conveniences that might be brought about into her life due to that slightly lighter skin colour. The mother figure, on the other hand, is viewed as inferior since she provides neither economic nor racial advantages for her child. All she can offer is "bare black feet skipping over stones" as to Hortense's narration. Advantages offered by Lovell Roberts are not limited to him only: "If I was given to my father's cousins for upbringing, I could learn to read and write and perform all my times tables. And more. I could become a lady worthy of my father, wherever he might be" (2004, p. 32). It would be overreading to make deductions regarding Hortense's object choice until this point. However, it is evident that she considers

her father as an optimal character regardless of the colonisation of the mind. Both White qualities and her father are the ideal and seem to be unrivalled.

The quotations from the novel and their relevant analytical comments written above demonstrate that Hortense's condition can be rendered through Jung's and Fanon's theories. Jung's definition of Electra Complex is applicable to Hortense since she "develops a specific liking for the father, with a correspondingly jealous attitude towards the mother" (Jung, 2012, p. 72). However, it would be more accurate to state that the "jealous attitude" is not present, instead, it is replaced by a degrading attitude caused by her mother's incapability of certain faculties and fundamentally her racial background. From Hortense's perspective, both are deemed negative qualities which would result in disadvantages throughout her life. Yet, as stated earlier, the tendencies of characters in this novel cannot be comprehended in depth since the unconscious is not shaped merely by familial, infantile, or sexual experiences. It is argued that "[women of colour] dream of a form of salvation that consists of magically turning white" (Fanon, 2008, p. 30). This statement exemplifies the colonised woman's inclination to choose the White, and to view Whites as a means to climb the levels of Whiteness hierarchy. Furthermore, this is an essential factor that influences the Black's preferences during the object choice process. Hortense can be scrutinised through Fanon's writings since she "is determined to select the least black of the men" (2008, p. 33). This does not necessarily refer to the skin colour but the character to be chosen should possess certain Western qualities that are constructed by the colonial discourse. The example of newspapers written in the second paragraph of this section is an insightful example of this situation.

As the plot thickens, the psychological pattern of Hortense that directs her to prefer Western qualities and eschew non-Western ones can be observed in her subsequent experiences as well. For example, when her grandmother, Miss Jewell, speaks, who is the only reminder of her mother, her broken English and strong Jamaican accent are emphasised in the dialogue lines. The moments in which Hortense corrects her grandmother's broken English and informs her with specific knowledge about England would be an accurate example to grasp their relationship. The emphasis on the ignorance of Miss Jewel can be observed in the dialogue where it appears that she does not know what a sheep is, and Hortense helps her by describing the sheep inhabiting England (Levy, 2004). Moreover, Hortense tends to play the role of the civiliser in this relationship by recommending Miss Jewel "to speak properly as the King of England does" and teaching her a poem from English Literature (2004, p. 36). On these matters, Sardar suggests the internalisation of racism and how the colonised people eventually imitate their colonisers (2008). Additionally, he continues by asking: "how to posit a 'black self' in a language and discourse in which blackness itself is at best a figure of absence, or worse a total reversion?" (2008, p. xv). These suggestions are visible in the example regarding the relationship between Hortense and Miss Jewell. Hortense internalised the colonial mentality, intentionally or unintentionally because her reality is constructed in this way, in such a profound way that their roles seem to switch in these occasions where Hortense teaches her grandmother. Her grandmother, on the other hand, is wholly unaware of the colonial indoctrination, just like her granddaughter, and lacks or unconsciously denies the Jamaican national identity. Apart from this, the difference between her attitudes towards Miss Jewel and Michael's parents should not be overlooked as well. In this equation, the Roberts family is the Whiter side while Miss Jewel is the Blacker. While Martha Roberts, as a civiliser, educates Hortense about table manners (2004), Miss Jewel could only become a student, which is discussed above. The ones who assume to be authorised to teach or guide others are the characters with Whiter qualities. In other words, the colonial mentality internalised by these Black characters makes them assume that the Whiter one is, the more civilised one would be; therefore, they are the legitimate educators. Eventually, a concealed hierarchy is created among the characters in the house. As stated in the first paragraphs of the analysis section, Hortense's unconscious is not merely shaped by infantile experiences, but it is strongly affected by the colonial discourse, and it is visible that she internalises the superiority-inferiority equation between the White and the Black.

The unconscious in question is one of the essential agents that shapes Hortense's object choice. Her first preference is Michael Roberts, with whom she grew up together. It was when Michael returned from boarding-

school that Hortense recognised that she was attracted to him. The pattern in question gets involved when Hortense depicts Michael with the very same phrase that she depicted her father: “He shook Mr. Philip by the hand and bowed his head politely, like a man of class, a man of character, a man of intelligence” (Levy, 2004, p. 39). The repetition of this interpretation demonstrates that Hortense’s feelings towards Michael have certain traces from the portrayal of her father. However, this is not a Freudian connection that assumes such a pattern can only be related to sexuality. Instead, colonial discourse and the construction of the reality of the colonised is central to Hortense’s object choice dispositions. Another similarity between Hortense’s father and Michael is their association with the West, which occurs in Michael’s case when he joins The Royal Air Force (2004). The portrayals of Hortense’s father and Michael have parallels from the perspective of Hortense. Although none of these characters are White, they possess the Whitest qualities, which is also the case for Hortense. She has a specific tendency toward Whiteness and civilisation which is discussed above. From this point of view, it can be stated that her psychological state is affected by the internalisation of Western civilisation.

The proportion in which Michael is mentioned and detailed is quite insufficient in comparison with the whole novel. Therefore, Hortense’s first partner plays the role of the middle step in her object choice process. The next character she selects as a love object is Gilbert Joseph, whose very first and most prominent feature from the perspective of Hortense is his resemblance to Michael (Levy, 2004). For several sentences, Gilbert’s name, which is unknown by Hortense, is replaced with “the man who was not Michael” by her (2004, p. 68), which makes Michael’s image the reference point for Hortense. Similar to both Lovell and Michael, Gilbert’s association with the West is emphasised in the book as well. This association is first uttered by Celia, a friend of Hortense and former partner of Gilbert before her. It is written that “[Celia] would sail away from this island, safe in the arms of her handsome RAF man, to a place where he had told her everyone walked on a blanket of gold” (2004, p. 72). It can be observed with this quotation that the closeness to the West becomes a pattern within the object choice of Hortense. It is not even a closeness in appearance but in substance since Gilbert represents an instrument through which one can reach the colonial centre. From a Freudian perspective, it can be stated that the injured third party is visible in this context. At this point, it should be noted that Freud suggests this condition is visible specifically in the object choice of men. However, the example demonstrates that the same pattern can be observed in the tendencies related to the object choice of women. The eventual object choice of Hortense might also be influenced by the initial relationship between Celia and Gilbert. It is stated on this issue that “[Hortense] is ruthless in dispatching her Jamaican rival in love Celia Langley when she ... virtually bribes Gilbert to marry her with the passage fare to England” (Andermahr, 2019, pp. 565-566). As stated by Andermahr, the bribery makes it evident that the initial impression of Gilbert for Hortense is an unmissable opportunity for a ticket to England, which, combined with the pattern she unconsciously followed beginning from her father and continued with Michael, provides the suitable conditions for her to choose Gilbert as an object.

Another part contributing to the psychological pattern of Hortense is the repetition of the phrase she uses to depict her father and then Michael. Towards the end of the novel, which is relatively late compared to her other partners, she depicts Gilbert as “a man of class, a man of character, a man of intelligence” (Levy, 2004, p. 396). When examined through Jung’s Electra complex, specifically the admiration of the paternal figure, it becomes evident that such a pattern which shapes Hortense’s unconscious and eventually canalises her object choice exists throughout the process. All three male characters are men of higher status (or potential to have it), of polite manners, and of remarkable connection to the West. Hortense’s object choices can be understood through Freudian, Jungian, and Fanonian theories. More clearly, from a Freudian perspective, the first condition of object choice is applicable to Hortense’s first encounter with Gilbert during which he is the partner of Celia. She becomes the injured third party in this equation; however, in most of the chapters with Hortense’s inner voice, it is apparent that she considers Celia as a rival in an imaginative race to reach England. Gilbert is the catalyst in this race who could facilitate their life goal of finding peace in the West. Therefore, the only factor for Hortense’s preference is not the existence of an injured third party, but also her idealisation of the Western qualities. On the other hand, Hortense’s admiration of her paternal figure and her displeasure with her

maternal figure are significant indicators concerning her self-positioning in the colonial dichotomy, yet they doubtlessly do not exist inherently. These tendencies are caused by the internalisation of colonial mentality, which can be better understood through Du Bois' concept of double consciousness. More clearly, Hortense's Jamaican identity is in a clash with the colonial mentality imposed on her. Therefore, she does not only think and act as a Jamaican but also perpetuates the colonialism unknowingly. From a postcolonial perspective, we can say that the effects of colonial mentality permeate psychology, which eventually influences and even determines the object choice of a colonial subject.

The second character to be examined is Queenie Bligh, whose real name is Victoria "yet [she is] called for ever Queenie" (Levy, 2004, p. 180). One might guess what kind of background she comes from by simply looking at her two names. Queenie is a White Englishwoman who behaves in a benevolent way towards non-White immigrants which might be seen as a dissident act against the internalised racist standpoint of most English characters in the book. However, when the reason behind her immigrant-friendly attitude is scrutinised the truth might be revealed. In a chapter voiced by Gilbert, it is expressed that Queenie demands unaffordable rent from the immigrant characters residing at her home, and besides she treats her tenants in a quite intervenient way through which she claims her superiority over them (2004). However, it cannot be stated that she only considers immigrants inferiors to be exploited. After the commencement of bombardments in England, Queenie takes action to help the aidless people suffering in the aftermath of the attacks. Among those are non-English people, against which Bernard, Queenie's husband, reacts with blatantly racist comments such as "[t]hey're not our sort" (2004, p. 211). In this little quarrel, Queenie's argument is that "[t]hey're people [who] got nowhere to go [and] need helping" (2004, p. 211). It can be understood from this quotation that Queenie intends to humanise the victims of the bombardment regardless of their identity, and it is important that she does this in action as well. Although these occasions might seem out of the focus of Queenie's object choice, we can establish a basis for the postcolonial approach to Queenie's actions.

Queenie's first object choice is Bernard Bligh, her husband. It is a typical courtly love when these two characters meet. Bernard is an ideal and ordinary husband for Queenie, which is the way her aunt Dorothy recognises him (Levy, 2004). When years pass, however, Queenie finds herself in the middle of a dull and empty marriage, which she strongly regrets (2004). Their relationship becomes more insightful for this article when there is an opportunity for Queenie to encounter another male character, Michael, possessing entirely opposite qualities than those of Bernard's. Queenie's choices fundamentally differ in these two examples. While Bernard is a love object, Michael is a sexual object. The choice of Bernard can be explained through the concept of superego, more clearly, outer factors have such an influence on her unconscious that she assumes that he is the right partner. However, by examining Queenie's complaints about her marriage, it can be stated that her psychological state is limited with the boundaries of patriarchal norms. There is also a sense of tastelessness deriving from the absence of sensual appeal towards her husband during their sexual intercourse. Queenie's interpretation of their sexual experience makes it evident that she does not feel any sensual attraction towards Bernard. She depicts Bernard's sexual organ as "[s]lippy as a greasy sausage sometimes but mostly it was the bark of a tree" (2004, p. 198). In the same chapter, a dialogue between Queenie and a doctor is given, in which the doctor asks whether she gets pleasure from "conjugal relations", and she replies "[n]ot sure what it is, Doctor" (2004, p. 199). The aforementioned tastelessness is apparent in this expression, which, when considered their marriage wholly, creates a psychological gap which could be filled with an opportunity.

When Queenie encounters Michael during wartime, this opportunity is imminent. The first sign revealing her attraction towards Michael is the loss of control over her physical movements. The reason behind this is the thought that he is watching her from behind (Levy, 2004). From this point onward the tension between these two characters rises, resulting in sexual intercourse. It would be insightful to examine the aftermath of Queenie to have a deduction about her object choice. She says:

It wasn't me. Mrs Queenie Bligh, she wasn't even there. This woman was a beauty – he couldn't get enough of her. He liked the downy softness of the blonde hairs on her legs. Her nipples were the pinkest he'd ever

seen. Her throat – he just had to kiss her throat. This woman was as sexy as any starlet on a silver screen. The zebra of their legs twined and untwined together on the bed. Her hands, pale as a ghost's, caressed every part of his nut-brown skin. She was so desirable he polished her with hot breath – his tongue lapping between her legs like a cat with cream. It wasn't me (Levy, 2004, p. 229).

One can understand from this scene that this specific act of Queenie's is an outburst of her repressed desires that she cannot fulfil with her selected object, Bernard. The ordinariness, dullness, and tastelessness creates such a hunger for sensual needs that she in a sense loses consciousness during this sexual intercourse. It is written on a similar subject that "[t]he direct objective was not simply to sexually possess the Other; it was to be changed in some way by the encounter" (hooks, 2014, p. 368). From this standpoint, Queenie's abrupt transformation, unconscious deeds, and her following alienation do not merely derive from her unfulfilled sensual desires. While Bernard is an ideal object to choose belonging to the dominant racial and economic groups, Michael represents the opposite qualities. Therefore, when examining the choice of Michael, not only his potential for sexual satisfaction but also his Otherness should be included in the equation. The aforementioned opposite qualities do not necessarily mean negative ones. He is considered to be morally forbidden for Queenie since she is married, and they belong to two extreme ends of the racial dichotomy in colonial space. Thus, the colonial subject is exploited for the fulfilment of sexual purposes by the coloniser through the exoticisation of his Otherness. Duboin mentions Queenie's tendency "to 'see more countries' and satisfy her voyeuristic desire for exoticism" and her longing "to catch a glimpse of a foreign reality that she cannot grasp" (2011, p. 17). This commentary is central to Queenie's object choice since it reveals her juvenile experiences that indicate the curiosity of the coloniser about the Otherness. The depiction of this sexual intercourse clearly demonstrates the transformation which Hooks mentions. Queenie repeatedly rejects this transformed version of her, yet she cannot stop herself. In Freudian terms, it can be stated that her id, ego, and superego are in conflict with each other in this example, which is a battle won by the id at the end. The id is driven by Queenie's sensual desire to satisfy her long-untouched libidinal instincts, the ego tries to suppress such an act, and the superego strengthens the suppression which surfaces as the rejection of the self because it is not socially and morally acceptable. On the other hand, the state of being desired is another aspect of this example. Although what Michael thinks or feels is not written, since Michael is not a narrator of the story, Queenie's assumption is that "he couldn't get enough of her" (Levy, 2004, p. 229), which indicates that being chosen as an object urges her to be satisfied by this intercourse. Furthermore, her tone completely denies this interaction by narrating this passage from a third person perspective. This can be, and should be, read through the authority of superego on Queenie's thoughts which is once again related to sociocultural factors and the colonial context of that period. Fanon claims that the sexual intercourse between White women and man of colour is an illusion for the Black to persuade himself that his masculinity is reinforced through a metaphorical invasion of the White female body. However, this suggestion should be reversed since the reader does not have access to Michael's inner voice, therefore thoughts. The reversal in question means that the White woman exoticises the Black man and benefits from the different sexual experience offered by this alien body.

The third example is not an actual object choice but rather an interaction with Gilbert. A sort of tension is detectable between these two characters when they first meet. Also, it is significant that Queenie expresses that Gilbert resembles Michael (Levy, 2004). It is stated that "Queenie opens [the door] with a look of 'excited recognition' because Private Joseph resembles her lover, RAF officer Michael Roberts" (Brophy, 2009, p. 5). When this argument is compared to Hortense's pattern of object choice, it appears that a similar pattern can be traced in Queenie's tendencies as well; however, it is explained in detail that these two almost identical partner preferences do not share the same motives. The main difference between the two interactions is whether the male is considered a love object or a sexual object. Michael's case is undebatable, he is a sexual object. With Gilbert, on the other hand, Queenie maintains the distance and tension. Their flirtatious activities are the tangible indicators that there is not a friendly relationship between them. However, the interaction with Gilbert does not provide an insight into Queenie's tendencies concerning her object choice, just like the preference of Bernard. Both Bernard and Gilbert are choices that should be examined in accordance with the choice of

Michael since the former creates a sexual emptiness to be filled by Michael through the exoticisation and utilisation of his Otherness, and the latter becomes an opportunity -which engages her attention specifically about his resemblance to Michael- for Queenie to fill the gap deriving from both Bernard's and Michael's lack of emotional satisfactoriness.

4. Conclusion

The aforementioned two-dimensional structure of the novel *Small Island* generates a necessity for a theoretical basis that comprises psychoanalytical and postcolonial perspectives. Such a combination functions as a tool of interpretation of the different cases including interactions between the White and the Black. The factors affecting the object choice of those characters, such as their unconscious and infantile remnants and their position in the colonial equation, become more explicit through the lens of Freud's, Jung's, and Fanon's ideas. The first half of the analysis section consists of Hortense's case, in which the object choice is fundamentally affected by the parental figure and the established idealisation of the West. Jung's Electra complex and Freud's first condition of object choice, injured third party, can be observed in Hortense's psychological pattern. Although both characters she selects are Jamaicans, their Western qualities are of great significance for Hortense, therefore, Fanon's theory that the Black female's desire to become White applies to this example. Levy's opinions should also be taken into account since they are the filter between the novel and the reader. She reveals her self-identification as White and her desire to be accepted by Western society (O'Rourke, 2018). The second half of the analysis section consists of Queenie's case, in which her object choice is initially affected by social norms, and then the sensual and emotional emptiness created by the first relationship is filled with interactions with two different Black characters. Both Hortense's and Queenie's object choices are open to a psychoanalytical investigation; however, the formation of their unconscious is deeply influenced by racial issues. In conclusion, both cases are analyzed through a theoretical combination of psychoanalytical and postcolonial perspectives, and it is evident that the effect of Western identity is influential on the fictional object choice of characters from different racial and cultural backgrounds.

Author Contributions (Compulsory)

The author read and approved the final version of the paper.

Conflict of Interest (Compulsory)

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Andermahr, S. (2019). Decolonizing cultural memory in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 55(4), 555–569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2019.1633554>
- Brophy, S. (2009). Entangled Genealogies: White femininity on the threshold of change in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*. *Contemporary Women's Writing*, 4(2), 100–113. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cww/vvp012>
- Du Bois, W. E. (2007). *The souls of black folk*. Oxford University Press.
- Duboin, C. (2011). Contested Identities: Migrant Stories and Iiminal Selves in Andrea Levy's "Small Island". *Obsidian*, 12(1), 14-33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44489338>
- Eagleton, T. (2008). *Literary theory: An introduction*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks*. Grove Press.
- Freud, S. (1997). *Sexuality and the psychology of love*. Simon & Schuster.
- hooks, b. (2014). *Black looks: race and representation*. Routledge eBooks.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315743226>
- Horney, K. (1939). *New ways in psychoanalysis*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.
- Jung, C. G. (2012). *Jung contra Freud: The 1912 New York lectures on the theory of psychoanalysis*. Princeton University Press.
- Levy, A. (2004). *Small island*. Headline Review.
- McMann, M. (2017). “You’re black”: Transnational perceptions of race in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Americana hand Andrea Levy’s *Small Island*. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 59(2), 200–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.2017.1369387>
- O’Rourke, J. (Director). (2018, Dec 19). Andrea Levy: Her Island Story (Season 33, Episode 7) [TV Series Episode]. In Hudson, T., Jones, S., Kent, N. (Executive Producers). (2003-present). *Imagine* [TV Series]. BBC Television; BBC Studios Documentary Unit.
- Sardar, Z. (2008). Foreword. In *Black skin, white masks* (pp. vi-xx). Grove Press.