UDC 821.111.09-31:321.3:325(410.111.111) Levy A.
821.111.09-31:321.3:325(410.111.111) Evaristo B.
https://doi.org/10.18485/bells.2025.17.11

Emilija B. Lipovšek*
Academy of Applied Studies Belgrade
Belgrade, Serbia
https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0523-6612

HYBRID FAMILIES IN POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVES: *SMALL ISLAND* BY ANDREA LEVY AND *LARA* BY BERNARDINE EVARISTO

Abstract
Postcolonial urban narratives offer rereading of a metropolis from migrants' perspectives through the descriptions of their experiences of arriving and settling in a city along with questioning the monolithic British national identity. This paper draws on postcolonial theory to examine the complex constructions of family and identity in Andrea Levy's novel *Small Island* (2004) and Bernardine Evaristo's novel-in-verse *Lara* (2009), focusing on the diasporic experiences of migrant families in postcolonial London. This paper will also put a particular emphasis on the children born to white British mothers and Black fathers whose hybrid identities disrupt conventional notions of nationality and belonging.

Key words: urban narrative, postcolonial London, Andrea Levy, Bernardine Evaristo, hybrid identity

* foxlinden@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Narrated from four perspectives, *Small Island* by Andrea Levy is set in three periods: immediately before, during the Second World War, and in the year of 1948. The novel takes place in Jamaica and the UK. Two married couples, the Blighs, Queenie and Bernard from London interchange with the Josephs, Hortense and Gilbert from Jamaica, to narrate the tale of the beginning of the Black diaspora in the UK. There is another important character linking the Blighs and the Josephs: Michael Roberts, a Jamaican military pilot. His mother and father looked after Hortense while they were growing up together in Jamaica, and he stayed at Queenie's house in London on two occasions where he had an affair with her, resulting in the birth of baby Michael in 1948.

Lara, debut novel-in-verse by Bernardine Evaristo, follows Lara's paternal line and introduces the readers to generations of slaves of Yoruba origin in Brazil during the nineteenth century until their return as freed slaves to Nigeria and then their descendant's migration to the United Kingdom in 1949. This is combined with the history of Lara's maternal line describing Irish Catholics at the beginning of the twentieth century, their migration and life in London in the 1920s and later during the Second World War, the period which also affects the other side of the family, the German descendants who were regarded as traitors in the UK at that time. The family lines connecting continents and centuries converge in the main character, Lara, who was born to an Irish mother and Nigerian father in London in the 1960s.

The British Empire started losing its power in the post-war period and simultaneously mass migration to the UK from the freed colonies started, resulting in the so-called 'colonization in reverse'. Carol Boyce Davies finds that "Black British women writers [...] are able to launch an internal/external critique which challenges simultaneously the meanings of Empire, the project of post-coloniality as well as the various nationalistic identifications of home" (1994: 96). Both Levy and Evaristo deploy this double critique challenging dominant narratives of British identity while foregrounding the intersecting dynamics of race, gender, and belonging within postcolonial Britain.

To explore how space and time inform the construction of diasporic subjectivity in these novels, it is necessary to draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope*, which refers to the intrinsic connectedness of

temporal and spatial relationships in literature. According to Bakhtin, "in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (2011: 84). The time in the postcolonial discourse is never linear for it blends together the previous life in the colonies, through remembering and recounting, with the period after migration to the metropolis, merging past and present through memory, displacement, and intergenerational trauma. The space is liminal as migrants find themselves 'unbelonging' to London, as well as to their homes in former colonies. The experience of migration blurs the boundaries between colonies and the Empire, producing what Homi Bhabha terms a *third space*. In such a context, the chronotope becomes a useful analytical tool for tracing how diasporic characters navigate hybrid identities within temporally and spatially layered settings. The concept of *liminal space* is central to postcolonial fiction, as migrants often describe themselves as 'unbelonging', alienated both from the colonies they left behind and from the metropolitan centres to which they migrated. In this regard, Sara Upstone's notion of the 'post-space' (2009) is particularly relevant allowing for heterogeneity, chaos and spatial fluidity, experienced by migrants, whose sense of identity is constantly negotiated against a backdrop of historical displacement and current marginalization.

Rashmi Varma further develops this spatial perspective in *Postcolonial City and Its Subjects: London, Nairobi, Bombay*, where she states that the postcolonial city is "[…] constituted by the tensions and contradictions between the global, national and the local concepts and practices of urban space; hence the idea of the postcolonial city as a conjunctural space" (2012: 14). Although the postcolonial city offers hybridity as a connection between the new and old, the unknown and familiar, there remain differences between spaces within the city which are embedded in the long history of colonization. Varma borrows this division from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth,* where the colonizer's part of the town was always clean, well-lit, fenced and rich, while the so-called 'natives' town', 'medina', 'reserve' are inhabited by the hungry, the poor and desperate (2012: 7). It is obvious that the modern postcolonial metropolis, such as London, replicates the demarcation based on the rich centre of the Empire and the conquered colonies. Varma further elaborates that "within a geometric imagination, colonial and postcolonial urban relations could be figured

as a series of concentric circles. In the inner circle, the masculine sphere constitutes the centre of power in the city, with the women at the periphery. In the global sphere, the European city constitutes the core of the Empire, its colonies the periphery" (2012: 54). Thus, the map of a postcolonial city reproduces and compresses the world atlas from the colonial times with the gendered spaces of the empowered and disempowered reflecting male and female zones, city centre and suburban neighbourhoods replicating the centre of the British Empire and its colonies, respectively. This spatial metaphor underscores the gendered and racialized hierarchies embedded in the postcolonial urban imagination.

In addition to spatial and temporal frameworks, the emotional and psychological dimensions of diasporic experience are crucial for understanding the families portrayed in *Small Island* and *Lara*. Uma Parameswaran identifies the four different stages which migrants encounter during their diasporic experience. The initial stage is nostalgia, followed by adjusting to a new environment, the third involves forming and expressing their opinions on ethnic and cultural issues and final stage finds migrants participating in the politics and national issues (Parameswaran 2007: 165). It can be added that nostalgia occurs soon after the arrival in the new country, and in some cases it never ceases. Migrants' feeling of homesickness can be initiated and then prolonged by the disillusionment with the new environment that turns out to be the opposite of the beliefs and hopes they harboured before leaving their homelands. Thus, once utopia, the land of dreams and opportunities for the migrants transforms into a dystopian chronotope. Simultaneously, the homeland in the former colonies, previously resented, may acquire a new significance as an idealized space of origin and identity, complicating the emotional geography of the diasporic experience.

2. Father Figures

Gilbert Joseph from Andrea Levy's novel *Small Island* served in the RAF during the Second World War as part of colonial troops answering the call from the Mother Country for support at the battle front. When the war was over, he went back home to Jamaica, but he never stopped planning his return to London. Before he set sails on 28th May 1948 on the Empire Windrush ship, he asked his then girlfriend, Celia, to join him and leave

her friend in charge of her pupils so "[s]he will write to us of the hurricanes and the earthquakes and the shortages of rice on this small island, while we sip tea and search for Nelson on his column" (Levy 2004: 94). His remark reflects the dream the colonized nations had about the blissful and bountiful life in the metropolis, which was created and maintained during colonial education that all British colonies received. The image stands in stark contrast to their experience of natural catastrophes and poverty present in the colonies. However, the future migrants could not have known of the food scarcity and rationing in post-war Britain that resulted in the living conditions in London being not much different from their own in Jamaica, which in fact helped them continue with their dreams and plans for the one-way journey across the Atlantic Ocean to the UK. The newcomers faced harsh circumstances upon their arrival in London and that contributed to rapid disillusionment in immigrants.

In a similar way, Taiwo da Costa, Lara's father *in Bernardine Evaristo's Lara,* was the first in his family to leave Nigeria in order to go to Great Britain. Taiwo sailed to the UK just one year after Gilbert's journey on the Empire Windrush in *Small Island*. He answered the Mother Country's second calling to the Empire in 1949, for the centre of the British Empire was lacking manpower needed to rebuild the country after the destruction during the war: "'London calling The Empire! Calling The Empire! | Come in Nigeria.' *I'm coming! I'm coming!*" (Evaristo 2009: 19). He imagined the life in London as many other migrants before leaving the colonies: "… my dreams have been my fuel for years, | all those British films for sixpence at the movie house. | See London, then die. I was desperate to get here" (Evaristo 2009: 19). Taiwo from Nigeria shared the same illusions about the magical metropolis with Gilbert from Jamaica. Both Nigeria and Jamaica with their population as British subjects were under the powerful influence of the colonial myth of prosperity and the abundance of possibilities waiting for them at the centre of the Empire.

During the disembarkation six months after her husband's arrival in London, Hortense Joseph noticed: "Women who shivered in their church best clothes – their cotton dresses with floppy bows and lace; their hats and white gloves looking gaudy against the grey of the night. Men in suits and bowties and smart hats. They jumped and waved at the people who come to meet them. Black men in dark, scruffy coats with hand-knitted scarves. Hunched over in the cold" (Levy 2004: 14). The passengers from Jamaica were dressed differently from those migrants who had already spent a

couple of months in London. The passengers on the ship docked in London were wearing their most elegant clothes for this special occasion revealing that it was very important to them to leave a good first impression. At the same time, they seemed completely unprepared for the colder climate in England since for them winter months did not mean snow and ice. The friends waiting for them wore tattered outfits that can be read as a sign of not being able to find well-paid jobs and earn enough to buy nice new clothes but also that they put on warmer clothing as they had more experience with the local weather conditions. Moreover, the light colours the newly arrived migrants chose to wear can signify their optimism related to the future life in London, and that brightness is directly opposed to the gloominess of the evening and drab clothes worn by their friends and family at the docks. The synthesis of the time of the day with no sunlight and part of the year with the least sunshine emphasizes the feeling that migrants felt unwelcome, and implies that other Londoners expressed coldness and even animosity towards the arrival of the colonized nations. The very harsh weather conditions that reflect the coldness of British attitude towards the migrants from the colonies were also experienced by Lara's father: "I need warm clothes because it is so cold and heating | is expensive: the sun avoids this country, Mama" (Evaristo 2009: 21). Moreover, he was unable to improve his living conditions as he did not earn enough to pay the bills and he could not find a better job due to systemic racism.

When Hortense agreed to marry Gilbert, she started sharing the same fantasies about her future life in London: "In the breath it took to exhale that one little word, England became my destiny. A dining table in a dining room set with four chairs ... the kitchen small but with everything I need to prepare meals. We eat rice and peas on Sunday with chicken and corn, but in my English kitchen roast meat with two vegetables and even fish and chips bubble on the stove" (Levy 2004: 100–101). In the house of her dreams, Hortense wanted to cook meals considered as markers of British culture. Similarly, Taiwo saw everything in the centre of the Empire as more sophisticated than at home, even food: "Why eat rice and stew when you can taste Yorkshire pud, | meat and two veg?" (Evaristo 2009: 20). Despite the fact that many immigrants started missing their homeland cuisine after some time in England, both Hortense from *Small Island* and Taiwo in *Lara* intended to shape their new identities by eating food that represented Britishness to them.

Roaming the streets as *flâneurs* (Benjamin 2007), the main characters observe the multitude of impressions present simultaneously in the city. However, when migrants walk the streets of postcolonial London, they are unable to simply perceive their surroundings and strangers that pass by as they may offend and hurt them. Thus, migrants cannot function as uninvolved and detached *flâneurs*. Rashmi Varma concludes that "[w]alking these wayward pathways in the imperial city, the bodies of women, and those of black and working-class people, both resist and desire (in)visibility and (in)direction" (2012: 54). Both Hortense and Taiwo represent visible migrants due to the colour of their skin, but they wished they could be less conspicuous and, more importantly, not to receive such racist remarks from other Londoners. Regardless of the fact that immigrants were quite polite, the English felt threatened in many situations like when "Gilbert raised his hat to her one morning. She rushed into her house like he'd just exposed himself. Out came Morris who stood on the doorstep to protect her honour" (Levy 2004: 117). The husband felt obliged to defend his wife from a non-existent threat, which he interpreted along the lines of Edward Said' argument that men from the Orient were seen as sexually insatiable and therefore white women were to be guarded from them (2003), and this opinion was widely spread among Queenie's neighbours. Comparably, when Taiwo attempted to be friendly to other Londoners, they usually reacted in the same manner as Queenie's neighbours: "If I say | 'Hello' they are frightened or angry or cross the road. | When we coloureds laugh freely they scowl at us' (Evaristo 2009: 21). Londoners did not approve of migrants' behaviour, tried to avoid any interaction with them, and most often they racially insulted migrants from the colonies.

On the other hand, Queenie could not forget the important role colonized nations had had during the Second World War. Gilbert was grateful to have met Queenie during the war as she offered him a room to rent, for he had experienced difficulties finding accommodation in the capital since many landlords were unwilling to accepts immigrants from the Caribbean as lodgers. He recounted his search: "So how many gates I swing open? How many houses I knock on? Let me count the doors that opened slow and shut quick without even me breath managing to get inside. Man, these English landlords and ladies come up with excuses" (Levy 2004: 215). The usual explanation for rejecting migrants was that the other tenants would be against it, or the neighbours would protest. James Procter explains how finding accommodation in postwar Britain

was extremely difficult since "[t]he housing shortage and overly racist practices associated with the property market in this period meant that the black settlers were often forced to share cramped, derelict housing in the worst areas in the city" (2003: 24). In parallel, Taiwo was also unable to rent a decent flat: "it is so hard to find a good place to live here | because they do not want us in their houses" (Evaristo 2009: 21). Both Gilbert and Taiwo had similar unpleasant experiences which deepened their feelings of unbelonging and being unwelcome in post-war London.

3. Mothers as Metaphors

Sofia Muñoz-Valdivieso states that Andrea Levy uses the conventional metaphor of the parent-children relationship to represent the centre of the Empire as the mother and colonies as her children (2012: 99). Gilbert Joseph asked the readers of *Small Island* directly to reconsider their attitudes regarding Britishness:

> Let me ask you to imagine this. Living far from you is a beloved relation whom you have never met. Yet this relation is so dear a kin she is known as Mother. Your own mummy talks of Mother all the time. 'Oh, Mother is a beautiful woman – refined, mannerly and cultured.' Your daddy tells you: 'Mother thinks of you as her children; like the Lord above she takes care of you from afar.' There are many valorous stories told of her, which enthral grown men as well as children [...] Your finest, your best, everything you have that is worthy is sent to Mother as gifts. And on her birthday, you sing-song and party. Then one day you hear Mother calling – she is troubled, she need your help. Your mummy, your daddy say go. Leave home, leave familiar, leave love [...] Shiver, tire, hunger – for no sacrifice is too much to see you at Mother's needy side (Levy 2004: 139)

Alluding to the call 'Mother Country is calling you' that the British Empire issued to all its colonies for the help in defence during the Second World War and later for the restoration of the ruined country in the post-war period, Gilbert was transferring the image of the Mother into a memory of a family scene where his own mother and father used to nourish the feeling of love and loyalty for the Mother. The image the colonized nations

harboured about the Empire was created under the influence of the colonial narrative maintained for generations and generations, the myth about the protective and benevolent attitude the Empire had towards its colonies and dominions. Additionally, this depiction implies that the British Empire used natural as well as human resources from the colonies, which eventually led to the economic dependence and poverty due to depleted resources in colonized territories while the Empire was becoming richer and more powerful. Moreover, the British culture was imposed as dominant compared to the colonized nations whereas indigenous cultures were pronounced 'primitive' and therefore irrelevant.

The idyllic scene of warmth and closeness would be erased when the colonized nations finally reach the centre of the Empire, as Gilbert described the meeting with the Mother:

> The filthy tramp that eventually greets you is she. Ragged, old and dusty as the long dead. Mother has a blackened eye, bad breath and one lone tooth that waves in her head when she speaks. Can this be that fabled relation you heard so much of? This twisted-crooked old woman? This stinking cantankerous hag. She offers you no comfort after your journey. No smile. No welcome. Yet she looks down at you through lordly eyes and says, 'Who the bloody hell are you?' (Levy 2004: 139)

The Mother he saw eventually in reality was very old, poor, sick and in a bad shape. She reflected the state of the centre of the Empire after the war. The image of an aged and dishevelled woman points to the poor state of a country after the war and it also alludes to the last days of the British Empire as decolonization started in the post-war period. Despite the fact that colonized nations participated in the war efforts, the British offered neither recognition nor hospitality to immigrants trying to settle in the UK. In addition, the British Empire was weakened and falling apart, but still Londoners remained arrogant and required from immigrants to return to their colonies. Avtar Brah in *Cartographies of Diaspora* underscores that during the centuries of colonization, the British Empire considered the colonized nations as the natives and therefore as inferior to the British, and even after the Second World War they still regarded themselves superior to the immigrants arriving from the colonies (1996: 191).

4. Children of Change

Drawing on bell hooks's critical works, Pia Thielmann concludes that "transgression of racial boundaries is experienced by white men as exploration, staking claim, consumption and thus eradication of the Other" (2004: 27). In colonial discourse, the Black female body, particularly that of the so-called 'primitive' native, was often imagined as a territory to be conquered by the white, 'civilized' British male, especially through sexual domination. This was even more pronounced in instances of forced sexual relations between master and his slave. Within this framework, the white male's desire for Black women could be ideologically reframed as a means of implanting dominant, 'civilized' culture onto the 'uncivilized' and 'wild' female body. Thus, often forced, sexual intercourse symbolically enacted territorial conquest, and the resulting children became living products of colonization.

Andrea Levy and Bernardine Evaristo challenge this dominant colonial metaphor in their novels by reversing the roles of the colonizer and colonized. Both authors depict white British women in relationships with Black men from the colonies, thereby subverting the traditional narrative of the white male conquering the Black female. Parallels can be drawn between Queenie Bligh in *Small Island* and Ellen Brinkworth in *Lara*. These white British women became pregnant with a Black male partner during the late 1940s and early 1960s, the decades marked by mass migration from the British colonies to the UK.

James Procter, referencing Sheila Patterson, draws a comparison between the white female body and the domestic space, arguing that "both harbour and embody a national culture threatened with penetration and pollution by the transgressive black settler" (2003: 25). In this context and in line with Louise Bennett's poem *Colonisation in Reverse*, which reframes migration from former colonies to the centre of the Empire as a reversal of the imperial conquest, *Small Island* and *Lara* can be read as literary deconstructions of the colonial metaphor. Instead of the Black female body being colonized by white men, the white female body becomes symbol of the British Empire, and the Black male partner represents the former colony.

This role reversal leads to the birth of biracial children, who embody both colonizer and colonized histories. In doing so, Levy and Evaristo not only critique colonial legacies but also reopen questions about British

identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity in the postcolonial era. The baby in *Small Island* was conceived during a brief extra-marital affair between an English woman and a man from the Caribbean during 1948, the year that is usually considered as the beginning of the mass migration from British colonies to the UK. Symbolically, this refers to the relationship between the Empire embodied as Mrs Bligh and its colonies represented by Michael Roberts. He volunteered to help the Mother country by joining the RAF and Queenie let him stay in her house for a while, just as many immigrants came to England after the war. A baby of mixed race was born out of wedlock. His skin was darker, classifying him as an immigrant even though he had British blood. Despite motherly love, the baby had no future in a white family, as Queenie understood that London in the post-war period was not ready to accept people of other skin colour regardless of their birth right. She decided to convince Gilbert and Hortense to take the baby and raise him as their own child, reasoning the child would have a better life with them. Gilbert and Hortense finally realized that suggestion would be the best for the child and took little Michael with them to their new home in London. John McLeod states that the biracial child in this novel is a symbol of a missed opportunity for the new definition of Britishness in 1948 (2010: 50). Baby Michael represents a hybrid identity which was not well-received in England at the begging of mass migration from the colonies. He was sent from the centre of London by his white mother to a neighbourhood where migrants started settling down, buying and renovating houses.

In contrast, a different voice comes from the second generation of immigrants in *Lara*. Fourteen years after Michael's birth in *Small Island*, Lara was born in London as a child to a mixed-race married couple. Ellen, her mother, was a young British woman who fell in love with Taiwo, who had arrived in London from Nigeria. The racist disapproval their wedding stirred among her parents' neighbours was very strong, especially regarding the children they would have in the future: "Gossiping locals are incensed. A nigger! A darkie! is whispered over hedges, over counters at Mass. | An African, cannibal, savage, monkey, heathen, | a thing from outer space. Good Gracious No … Think of the poor children, half breeds, mongrels. | It's not right bringing them into the world, it isn't" (Evaristo 2009: 70). However, Ellen and Taiwo had a long and successful marriage and Lara was one of eight children in the family. She described her own birth: "My entry to this island was messy, impatient and dramatic. | I was

born May twenty-eight, the year Nineteen Sixty-two, | when England was fast asleep and the moon rose" (Evaristo 2009: 98). Interestingly enough, Lara's birthday is also the anniversary of the Empire Windrush ship setting sail to the UK in 1948.

Just like baby Michael in *Small Island*, Lara was a biracial child, but she had very loving and caring parents and many siblings. She was never feeling abandoned and alone, despite the fact that she kept searching for her identity. As she grew up in London, Lara did not feel accepted, and she tried to define herself: "I'm not black. I'm half-caste, actually.' 'They don't care whether | your mother's white, green or orange with purple spots. | You're a nigger to them" (Evaristo 2009: 128). However, when she was visiting Nigeria, the country her father had been born in, she again experienced rejection: "'Oyinbo!' children shouted after Lara. It means | whitey" (Evaristo 2009: 156).

Lara used her family history to construct her postcolonial identity in the book. Moreover, she can now perceive Great Britain, the country of her birth, in a brand-new light: "I think of my island, the 'Great' Tippexed out of it, | tiny amid massive floating continents, the African one | an embryo within me" (Evaristo 2009: 188). The Great British Isles seemed small compared to Nigeria and Brazil, the countries of her ancestors, and Lara wanted to erase 'Great' from the toponym, which echoes the title of Andrea Levy's novel. According to John McLeod *Small Island* is significant as the writer wanted to remove 'Great' from Great Britain in order to reconsider the superiority of one nation (2010: 50). The country where Lara was born is engulfed by the sea and surrounded by vast continents, so she could not consider it as big as before and therefore it did not deserve its name. In the end, Lara returned home, to London, to the city she was born and raised in. Parallel to renaming her country, her travels to Brazil, Nigeria and back home were also journeys into the self, which became complete as she discovered her hybrid identity on her way back to postcolonial London. Moreover, she was carrying great potential inside her now, as Lara's children one day could be born into a hopefully much better world than hers, and Michael's before her. This would be the new world, where all the islands are of exactly the same size.

5. Conclusion

In *Small Island* and *Lara*, the postcolonial family becomes a site of both rupture and restoration. Both novels engage with the legacies of colonialism not only through British history but also through intimate, family relationships, revealing how private lives are entwined into the Empire, migration, and memory. While baby Michael's abandonment is marked by the early fractures of the British Empire, Lara's later journey reveals a different trajectory, where family and love become the foundation for resilience during the struggle for belonging. Though she faces rejection in both Britain and Nigeria, Lara's self-exploration across continents enables her to reframe her origins and embrace a hybrid identity. Evaristo's symbolic act of removing 'Great' from Great Britain mirrors Levy's critique of colonial narrative given in the title *Small Island*. Ultimately, Lara's return to London is a reclamation of family, memory, and self-definition of postcolonial identity with hope for the next generations.

References

Bakhtin, M. M. (2011). *The Dialogic Imagination* (C. Emerson, M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Benjamin, W. (2007). *Illuminations* (H. Zohn, Trans.). New York: Schocken.

Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities.* London, New York: Routledge.

Davies, C. B. (1994). *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. London, New York: Routledge.

Evaristo, B. (2009). *Lara* [expanded edition]. Tarset: Bloodaxe.

Levy, A. (2004). *Small Island.* London: Review.

McLeod, J. (2010). Extra dimensions, new routines: Contemporary Black Writing of Britain. *Wasafiri,* 25(4), 45–52.

Muñoz-Valdivieso, S. (2012). Metaphors of Belonging in Andrea Levy's Small Island. In: J. P. A. Sell (ed.), Metaphor and Diaspora in Contemporary Writing. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 99–116.

Parameswaran, U. (2007). *Writing the Diaspora: Essays on Culture and Identity*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Procter, J. (2003). *Dwelling Places: Postwar black British writing.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Said, E. W. (2003). *Orientalism.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Thielmann, P. (2004). *Hotbeds: Black-White Love in Novels from the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean.* Zomba, Malawi: Kachere Series.
Upstone, S. (2009). *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel.* Farnham: Ashgate.
Varma, R. (2012). *Postcolonial City and Its Subjects: London Nairobi Bombay.* London, New York: Routledge.

Received: 7 September 2025
Accepted for publication: 29 September 2025