

The Post-war Jamaican Immigration to Britain; The Windrush Generation: Were They Immigrants or Refugees in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*

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Abstract

After World War II, the immigration from the West Indies to the United Kingdom started and the post-war Caribbean immigrants moved to Britain. They tried to survive in British society with their fragmented identities and they were misrecognised as refugees in social life. Considering the Windrush migration in the post-war era, the Jamaicans, who immigrated to London, came to the fore. The experiences of Windrush generation in London reflected the in-betweenness and hybridity of these immigrants together with their cultural adaptation problems in Britain. Although they were officially accepted to contribute to the British economy, some of them felt displaced as if they were coming as refugees and struggled to be recognised socially. They had to overcome some barriers through the process of recognition. The position of these Jamaican immigrants in Britain was problematic despite their legal recognition, because they suffered from cultural trauma as a result of their identity crisis. Regarding the post-war Caribbean immigration to Britain in literature, Andrea Levy's novel *Small Island* should be explored. In this autobiographical work, as one of the representatives of Windrush generation in Britain, the novelist's own experiences can be observed. Levy's social, racial and cultural fragmentation as a hybrid, who was torn between her Jamaican background and English nationality, led her to focus on the lives of the Caribbean immigrants, who have tried to be socially recognised in British society. Even though in the post-war epoch these immigrants were officially identified in Britain, some of them regarded themselves as refugees, who were misrecognised or non-recognised due to their hybridity. Therefore, in this paper, the process through which the Caribbean immigrants in Britain were legally recognised, together with their social, mental and cultural displacement, will be explored by analysing Levy's *Small Island* in the light of the novelist's own experiences.

Keywords: Post-war Era, Immigration, Windrush Generation, Post-war Britain, Andrea Levy's *Small Island*