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History, Identity, and Marginalization: An Analysis of Andrea Levy's (The Long Song)

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التاريخ والهوية والتهميش: تحليل لرواية أندريا ليفي (الأغنية الطويلة)

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Abstract

The painful history of slavery has profoundly affected the identities and social interactions of Afro-Caribbean migrants, whose descendants continue to contend with prejudice and socio-economic marginalization. Andrea Levy's semi-autobiographical novel, The Long Song (2010), traces the turbulent history of Jamaica in the nineteenth century through the lens of Miss Kitty, a character based on Levy's great-great-great grandmother, who was born a slave on the plantation Amity in Saint Catherine's parish. The narrative blends the historical with the fictional and depicts various environmental contexts, inscribed meanings, and human exchanges, including the prominence of social situations perceived through race and class tensions ironically reconstructed through social interactions. Levy boldly broadens the understanding of freedom and subjectivity contested beyond the abolition of slavery.The novel raises compelling issues concerning the construction and negotiation of identity within the context of colonialism, slavery, and the emergent plantation economy in the Caribbean. Levy deals with the notion of identity, an ambiguous term aggregating entangled layers of representational frameworks, contextual meanings, and social negotiations inscribed within the intricacies of cultural encounters. The analysis draws on broadening horizons on identity theory, offering different constructs of identity inscribed within the narrative strands of The Long Song, taking on the complexity of racial stigma, the misrepresentation and projection of black identity through colonial discourse, and the entangled social interactions and exchanges through which identity is constructed and negotiated within contested socio-racial environments.Levy's notion of identity implies a form of social construction performed through the negotiation of increasingly-engaged modes of representation within a complex fabric of social codes, customs, practices, dialects, and worldviews punctuated through the entanglement of one's self and multiple alterities. The precision and nuance of her observation cause the character to realize the "dangerous" assumptions of the English and an awareness of "contested terrain." The negotiation and representation of racialized identity echo an unsettling realization of race triggered by her isolation in the white institution's womb marked by the religious overtone of the day. Kitty contends with the constant projection of her and her fellow slaves' blackness beyond the negative perception construing unreliability, deceitfulness, and brutishness while evoking exoticism and primitivism. The multifaceted engagements with the surround are conveyed through Kitty's subjective first-person narration complemented by different modes of enunciation, including the shifting narration of the slave owner's white wife and the authoritative voice of Ms. Annie, the largely absent historian.

Key words: History, Identity, Marginalization, Andrea Levy, The Long Song

1.Introduction

Andrea Levy, born in 1956, is a well-known English author. She was born in London to Jamaican parents. Her family immigrated to the UK in the 1940s as a part of the Windrush generation. She became a novelist in her late twenties after spending years working in various jobs, including advertising and psychometric testing. She has written several novels and non-fiction works focusing on immigration, identity, and race. Her most famous works include "Fruit of the Lemon," "Small Island," "Every Light in the House Burnin'," and "The Long Song." Her works have won many prestigious awards, including the Orange Prize for Fiction, Whitbread Book Awards, and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize.Levy's writings explore history from the perspective of immigrants. The immigrant experience is one of the reimagination of past, present, and future. Levy, like many other immigrant

writers, writes history from the margins because her parents were originally outsiders. Levy's "Small Island" (2004) is a post-war novel that focuses on racism and the Anglo-Jamaican experience in postwar London based on her parents' immigration account. Apart from Jamaica, Levy has explored the marginality of the mixed-race community with Toni Morrison's tragedy of American Africans, the diaspora of Caribbean immigrants to Britain with Caryl Phillips' "Crossing the River" and "The European Tribe," and the painful memory of the Holocaust and its diaspora with the works of W.G. Sebald. In 2010, Levy, who was born and raised in Britain, visited Jamaica for the first time, prompted by the request from Shaback, a reggae band, to write a song on the Jamaican accent. Jamaica, the land that constituted the backdrop of Levy's childhood life, later became the site of her loneliness and the origins of a different self that she had to reimagine."The Long Song," a historical novel by Levy set in Jamaica, explores the complexities of history, identity, and marginalization. The three-generation story portrays May's rise to be the mistress of a sugar plantation in slavery, which turns into a freeholder's house as emancipation in 1838. Levy's narrative, though celebrating the hard-won ownership of the land by the black slaves' descendants, makes no romanticization of the Caribbean plantation society and is full of bitterness of massacre, hardship, inhumanity, and conquest in the name of civilization. The novel questions whether land equates freedom, whether an identity is as solid, firm, and fixed as a land title deed, and whether it is possible to escape history while writing history.

2. Historical Context of the NovelFocusing on the role of slaves in shaping their own histories and victims' perspectives in witness accounts, this paper explores how Andrea Levy's novel, which discusses colonialism in Jamaica, highlights the roots of black exclusion from British culture. The book's historical context is analyzed, including slavery in Jamaica and British colonialism in the Caribbean.Slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas was a significant aspect of the slave trade, and its context is important to understanding Levy's novel. Described as accumulating wealth and status to impress one's neighbors and relatives, Jamaica was so attractive that reluctant planters went there for the thought of profit. By the 1770s, there was a huge population of slaves on West Indies plantations. (Mellafe, 2022)"Brutal and dehumanized, slavery made the slaves' lives harsh and hopeless, and it was "Winchester"; the only word describing plantation slavery" (Hirn, 2021). Levy's novel takes place mainly on a plantation named "Winchester" in Jamaica in the early 1800s. Here, it is shown how the colonial eye contracts to a single place and a single time, the result of forcing fractured mythologies into a monolithic master narrative—a process over which the black perspective was wholly absent. After centuries of shrouded cultural displacement, the repressed voice emerges from the colonized unconscious in a myriad of ways unanticipated by the colonizer. Mocking the master narrative's conceit, the colonized's fictional accounts subvert its high-mindedness, positioning it, ironically, as the source of prejudiced misinterpretations.The savage instincts of a monster wake, leaving Lawrence Peterson a gaunt, Christopher Marlowe-like figure, devouring the contents of the "house creole" old "would-be enslaver" at the center of events. Lawrence returns, victoriously, to a degraded land of "clapboard houses" and "llamas... chewing cuds near dung-heaped doorways"—an uncanny double of what Henry Steele Commager had opined was other people's "Sunshine Paradise". The creole's denouement, cleverly entangled in the domestic interiors of Lawrence's career-defining "colonial history", is obliquely mirrored in the closing words of the narrative: "This is the way we lived and died. This is how it came to be."British colonialism in Jamaica greatly affected the blacks in the country and shaped centuries of discrimination and exclusion. "Tord Blix, who worked to improve negroes' lives, addresses letters to British mill owners, asking them to help". (Kronfeld, 2020) Lamenting Jamaican Spirit's death, Tord leaves a legacy in many letters—vitriolic and sad, but funny—requesting tame letters, to be published, exposing English manufacturing ills. With gods disguised as Canadians, Tord takes on colonial voodooism, addressing consumer contempt for "Injun Spirit" and "ninepenny slopes." Levy's text acts as a "house creole," refracting social crossover paths gleamed from "it... changed the world" back to that mythical place "the edge of the world." Prior to eviction, sounds of "fighting under the heart of the world"—joists of clans recruited from vine-tied litter, carrion swells, dreamers blighted by god-breaks—encircle the Other's theater of war. "There is no sound in my ears. I hear outside hills ok over there crows caw... [P]oor fellows, all hope flown, just fight or starve," writes Jamaican peasants ideologically improvised.

2.1. Slavery in Jamaica

The significant aspect of Caribbean identity representations is the representation of slavery in the Caribbean. Andrea Levy exploits the storytelling potential of her historical fiction novel The Long Song in order to articulate the individual and collective cultural memories of the marginalized society of Jamaican slaves in a British colonial context. The present work analyzes the themes of history, identity, and marginalization through the lens

of postcolonial theory, with a particular focus on the analysis of slavery in Jamaica, the Caribbean indentured labor system, and the effects of British colonial rule in the Caribbean to reflect the history of globalization. Andrea Levy's The Long Song is a historical fiction novel set against the backdrop of slavery in Jamaica, British colonialism in the Caribbean, and the Caribbean indentured labor system. It offers a portrayal of those who marked the Caribbean with more than just the color of their skin and the faith that they were owned, but those who sacrificed the freedom of custom and country in the continual search for a better life with palm-fringed shores and vivacious sunsets. In the novel, the past is not only a faint memory; it shapes the identity of the narrator who does not hate to remember."Jamaica was colonized by Spain in 1494. After British attacks in 1655, the island became part of the British Empire." (Rojas, 2020)Sugar plantations, worked by African slaves, were established throughout the interior. Jamaican slaves revolted in 1831 and 1832 but were suppressed. The plantations were uneconomical, so the British government proclaimed emancipation in 1834. In the wake of slave revolts, abolitionist agitation, reduced profits, European political instability, and the impending slave-importing ban, British plantocrats sought to increase the slaves' productivity from the 1770s onward. Further repression and better weapons led to large revolts. Fear of slaves was repressed in counterinsurgency. Capitalists invested in the slave societies involved in the slave trade, sugar production, and sugar consumption. Despite declining consumption in Britain, profits from trade increased. Danvers pleaded for exports to be redirected toward Britain's other colonies in the West Indies. British guidance would ensure sugar production remained profitable, and the newly acquired wealth would fund investments in Britain's industrial cities and give Ottawa a supply of agricultural goods. Indebtedness to Britain would solidify Ottawa's control. Post-Revolutionary War negotiations provided information about sugar prices and capacities and offered guarantees of continued sugar consumption.

2.2. British Colonialism in the Caribbean

Following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession and awarded Jamaica to the British, the British established a colonial empire in the Caribbean. This acquisition was attractive to the British due to the sugar industry, which was highly profitable. They gained control of the abundance of slave plantations and introduced thousands of enslaved Africans to the island. The enslaved cultivated sugarcane in crushing heat and humidity, and the sugar produced was traded to Europe, enriching the West Indies and fueling the Industrial Revolution.The presence of enslaved Africans made it possible for an elite to dominate Jamaica. Colonial power structures were developed to divide and control the enslaved in order to sustain Britain's wealth and power. Relying on a system of class and color hierarchy, the elite few white planters maintained dominance and authority over the enslaved Africans, who were forced to live under the damaging impression that they were inferior, lesser beings. Poor whites were positioned above the enslaved slaves in honor but were in need of control. Color and class divisions helped the British retain control over the colony, thus forming the subordination of the enslaved to white planters and the subordination of the enslaved individuals of lighter color to the black enslaved. Ethnicity, religious background, and geographical roots of enslaved much influenced the nature of their bondage.The enslaved were denied rights to mingle outside of their race. Racial mixing between whites and women of color was banned, as were other white relationships with the enslaved. Colonists aspired to maintain ‘whiteness’ and preserve British institutions, traditions, and social life, which they assumed were threatened by the enslaved’s cultural practices and beliefs. "White Planters were western Christians and struggled to convert the enslaved, who were portrayed as ‘savage’ and ‘heathens’" (Nash2021). Five to six hundred enslaved were imported annually from Africa and forcibly brought into slavery, separation from family and kin, scattering among different plantations, and misunderstanding tongue-chained them. British masters viewed the enslaved as an ‘inferior breed’ deprived of humanity and capacity for moral value. Plans for emancipation meant impunity for blacks, and anarchy and violence in Jamaica.Despite struggle against slavery with rebellions and resistance, the enslaved were frequently caught and brutally punished for their escape attempts. Beside revolts, acts of subtle resistance, sabotage, and deceit were seen as cunning and clever by the enslaved. To prevent rebellions and the emergence of a ‘dangerous’ alliance of enslaved Africans, planters, and free blacks, British colonizers enforced ethnic division by importing enslaved Africans of different languages and ethnicities. Disciplinary actions and British impositions of enslavement made it possible for the enslaved to practice and preserve their traditions in secret. Hand in hand with colonial oppression, belligerency, resentment towards the British elite developed among the enslaved and their descendants marked by unapologetic desire for revenge.

3. Identity Formation in Postcolonial LiteratureThe exploration of identity formation has been a key concern of postcolonial literature, not only because colonialism creates identity-based hierarchies, but also because the colonized were denied any identity of their own. Self-creation from the margins is thus one of postcolonialism's central themes. In this context, the study of Andrea Levy's selected novel The Long Song highlights how marginalization intersects with different social categories to produce differential experiences of dehumanization and violence. Gender is particularly central to this analysis, since the novel closely examines the complex interplay between racial, class, and gender hierarchies in shaping the formation of identity in the colonial plantocracy. The text explores the process through which identity is interrogated and reconstituted, and how these processes are shot through with incomplete and unfulfilled desires. This analysis hopes to open up a new perspective on the question of identity in postcolonial literature, and to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how different forms of marginalization complicate and shape the imagination of identity.This literary study's primary concern is with the novel's exploration of what it means to be human in a setting designed explicitly to dehumanize. What kind of identity formation is possible for the individual, the subject, when all recognition and selfhood are rendered impossible in such a place? The novel, written by a descendant of the very same plantation, poses exactly this question to a character located on the lowest rung of the social ladder in the colonial plantocracy, July, a slave woman. As the narrative unfolds, July is caught up in a process of self-creation, the positive result of which is anything but assured. For the subject positioned both inside and outside the social order, reflection on the self is also unbearably painful, and involves the sense of being or having been an abject. The story begins with the irreversible loss of everything: loss is the beginning of the narrative, the foundation of July's identity, and each subsequent event can only intensify this sense of loss. But suspended and frozen beneath this loss is something presently ungraspable, a dark desire for recognition. Of course, this desire will not go unfulfilled, but only paradoxically so: by becoming the insatiable desire of the other, only thus can the subject re-emerge from the shadows of abjection. (Montani)

3.1. Intersectionality of Race and Gender

In examining the works of Andrea Levy, it can be argued that postcolonial African- and Caribbean-women writers have made significant contributions to the understanding of personal and collective identities as well as of the multiple ways in which these may be fragmented, rewritten, and newly created in the wake of colonialism. In her novels, Levy explores how one’s historical past and cultural heritage impact the political, socio-economic, and psychological construction of individual and group identities, loudly stressing the significance of inquiry-based scholarly research knotted to one’s own personal experiences and the ability to reclaim one’s own speech and voice. Moreover, Levy insists on an understanding of identity that takes into consideration the complexities and contradictions ensuing from multiple loyalties to the various nations, ethnicities, and cultures in conflict or cohabiting in the same mindscape and space.Through the exploration of Levy’s selected works, this essay examines how those topics are reflected in a selection of Andrea Levy’s works with a predominance of their physically and psychologically affected protagonists. It seeks to investigate how the structures of slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism generated interlocking systems of domination and oppression to which Levy’s Afro-Caribbean characters fall prey. Williams participates in assessing Levy’s characters as victims of the forces of fraud, coercion, stigma, mass representation, and denial that render them doubly and multiply marginalized, or culturally, racially, gendered, and classed "other" in their relations with white imperial metropolitans, i.e. England and her social elite, as well as with their own traditional patriarchal societies. (Köhler, 2024)This is especially stressed in Levy’s larger canvasses that encompass more than one generation and their interaction with the past shadowing the present. Williams illustrates how Levy’s protagonists "historically and biographically make themselves" through an increasing awareness of their neo-colonial status quo and a reclaiming of their cultural heritage and moral and spiritual rights. Levy acknowledges language and speech as essential for the reconstituting of agency namely past repressed memories, continent, and island complex mental landscapes facilitating the understanding and reconciliation with the pricking histories of slavery and colonialism. Given the importance accorded to their educations, textual representations of Levy’s Afro-Caribbean protagonists’ access to literacy are investigated as formative in the remaking of their marginal identities. (Levy, 2021)

4. Marginalization and Power Dynamics in 'The Long Song'

In 'The Long Song', Levy addresses issues of marginalization, looking at how national identity can be curated and how this curation can result in marginalization of groups. Particularly in the case of the slaves brought to Jamaica from Africa, this curation wiped their history. Levy highlights that history does not belong to those who

forget it but to the people that remember it. Looking at the longer history of Jamaica and the colonial master-slave relationship between England and Jamaica, Levy depicts how this historically created national identity continuously curates the history of the group on the fringes, which in this case would be the slaves brought from Africa to Jamaica.It is suggested that starting with slaves brought against their will from Africa to Jamaica, Levy asks the question of what it then means to be Jamaican. From English settlers arriving on virgin land, Jamaica is framed as an English colony and an English plantation. History is revisited via this carefully curated English narrative, destroying the perspective and the history of this outsider's group brought with weapons, power, and ships. An inscription in an old map is cited that describes Africa as a Coast of Slaves. In Levy's representation, Jamaica becomes richer from the sugar plantation, while in a parallel voice, Africa, which becomes dirtier, holds the opposite dynamic of this so-called wealth. Masters laugh with gin, while the strong and beautiful mansub; the slaves are deseated and in the darkness of the hull slaves are captured on the fringes and drowned. In a banter, it is suggested that slaves would rather jump in the sea instead of being chained in the ship. The sea is pictured as a vast wilderness. However, there is no escaping it as the last thing that would be heard in a language of a tribe who spoke drums is the thunderous voice of the master. This is the beginning of a new chapter, the arrival to Jamaica where there are no more chains or masters who would tread on the back.Levy's exquisite depiction of these power relations of marginalization steels the reader in a narrative of slavery and the dark times of humanity. The beginning asks a question but then astonishingly depicts a place where there are no masters and no chains and forces the reader to experience Jamaica alongside the narrative. This writing on the history is chilling and haunting along with being a savage pull at heart. What does it mean to go beyond the furthest stone or cross the never-ending sea instead of conquering the land? In Levy's narrative, history is cherry-picked so parts of the group can be forgotten and are no more visible in the curated picture of a nation.

4.1. Master-Slave Relationships

The antagonistic interaction between Juliana and her mistress has been characterized as a light-hearted rivalry. Gillian Whitlock states that in their face-to-face confrontations, "with the deft hand lathe of self-mockery, the master is ridiculed and belittled." Each attempts to defeat the other, though neither ever really knows the other. The transference of power is often bidirectional, as in Juliana's act of foiling her mistress's pretensions of genteel behaviour by tossing round her shins. The mistress's insistent attempt to obtain Juliana's servile agreement is thwarted by her seemingly restrained lunge in a neck-hold, though full enslavement would have ensured unquestioning obedience. Their encounters display a pattern of feigned mutual understanding, a series of fumblings. Nothing is ever pushed through to the point of enlightenment. The exchange between them hints at a narrative beyond its immediate bounds, imagining other songs, other territories, other encounters with beginnings.In the other songs heard during the voicing of history, Juliana calls forth the manner of the British Empire writ large. Her articulation of the rape of the Caribbean deadpanly mirrors the whole of plantation culture's consumption of thingness. It enacts the master-slave dialectic in the manner first envisioned by Hegel and recited line for line through the workings of the slave narrative tradition. The fabric of Juliana's history is exposed as the miserable particularity of another's black colonial heritage, its rinsewater smirkingly reinhabiting the privileged transcendence of its chosen British and Germano-academic audience. Ridgeway's expansion of Juliana's Song invokes the hoard of quotidian objects distilling from the vast machine of sugar production. The rum distillation vats conjured are followed by as long a list of the everyday items of a life fit to be lived at the periphery of the plantation. They range from a clock, books, looking-glasses and pens to linen, sugar bowls and coffeepots. Each has its economic and quotidian use-value spelled out in the manner of a European market ledger. So far, Juliana's Office has pulled Marlon Riggs's (1986) "black" video art appropriations of the home film of an African American man's maternal grandfather breathing on a sinew pulling apple to the furious articulation of strawberry and banana picking by Jamaican and Guyanese Afro-Caribbean descent migrant workers in California and New York City relocating the whiteness of strawberry ropes in Ken Fulk's (2004) Landscape Podcasts.

5. Narrative Techniques and Literary Style in 'The Long Song'

Levy’s narrative technique and literary style render her novels fresh and engaging. In the analysis of Levy’s 'The Long Song', her employment of the first-person narration and engaging, singular voice in slow and careful, eye-for-detail observations of Jamaica pave the way for the emergence of history and identity. Acclaimed as Levy’s most accomplished work and winner of the Whitbread Book of the Year in 2010, 'The Long Song' invigorates the debate over retrospective history and identity representation while resting a poignant and compact epilogue on the re-imagination of such a troubled past and resourceful re-identification. Levy’s literary journey maintains her distinctive exploration of what it means to be a Jamaican or a Britjamnian after the seismic shift of

colonialism and national independence, and her acute awareness of the materiality of history and identity renders her powerful and beautiful.The opening chapter has long and vivid descriptions of sugar plantations and slaves that can draw pictures in the reader's mind. Her scheme of effectively intertwining the mundane with powerful imaginations scrubbing what an archipelago Jamaica is effaces the reader's awareness of the extensive length of the chapter. Writing the presented voice from the perspective of the originally Jamaican-born and English-brought Miss July, Levy skillfully conveys the confusion and uproar in one's mind concerning the understanding of places across geographical distance and interpersonal acceptance in changed cultural environments. The origination of both heritage and culture are further framed using the juxtaposition of maps, historical records, and novice understanding alongside vision and experience that ground what is narrativized in more human terms. With all these nuanced narratological devices on Levy's part, the theme of history/identity emergence is discussed in the long-discussed cauldron of colonialism, slavery, and emancipation, and with Levy's granularity, one problematizes the visibility, name of the Jamaican side, and the time course of burgeoning history and identity reconstruction across colonialism's sea of knowledge oceanically engulfing and displacing locals.Levy's sharp irony and humor about the plantation and social ruling further strengthen those affective horror narrative scenes and accounts of evident accidents that guarantee historical imperatives for the readers. Such forms of anthropomorphizing, craving social acceptance, and social acceptance skillfully leap on the ghost of reconciliation on Levy's Jamaica. Such minutiae elaborate upon complimentary work on various forms of narrativization socializing anthropomorphized historiography, making side accounts inoffensive alongside the compilation of more revealing horror acts of sugar plantations and history. Without losing momentum or immersing in the reminiscent English atmosphere, Levy craftily frames the medley of good and evil through independence. (Levy, 2021)

6. Reception and Impact of the NovelAndrea Levy's The Long Song is a redress of the Caribbean plantation narrative that retells its harrowing chronicle of sugar, slavery, and soot from the perspective of a narrator enslaved in a Jamaican sugar plantation estate. Like Levy's previous novels, The Long Song's agents of this voice are a Caribbean elder – Miss July – and the record of her life transpiring alongside the tumultuous events precipitated by the Decade of Reform, otherwise known as the Seventh Day of Rest, enacted against the planters' wishes in the British colony of Jamaica in 1831. Levy invites a present-day audience to "listen to Miss July tell her own life's story," reading from her life record using the colonial coda "my long song," singing and being sung to, essentially knitting herself into the life of the colony with a black voice.Through the voice of Miss July, an older generation of Jamaican women who have lived through slavery and accessorized their own agency are allowed to counteract the "soot" left by colonial white recorders that obscured and deformed their multifaceted life image. Reflected in the "black hell" tableau, Levy emphasizes Miss July's understanding of the colonial sugar plantation as a Lawson "not to be put on" dress and widow's grim shroud, digging down and deeper down "in the name of civilized trade" that on the surface rivaled that of England-level Cambridge and Oxford measures, yet in reality was undergirded by "overgoing hardships, wrongs, and abominations." The talk of sugar, colony, and soot implies that the past social tissue of slavery and colonization still lingers and lingers in the narrative present and is braided into the psyche of the fifth generation, refracted in the metaphor of "the long song," which in turn calls for the bearing witness of their historical past.As Levy provocatively suggests, hearing one's own preceding "song" does not mean hearing it in its entirety, but instead the select piece reinterpreted, rewritten, and retold in wholly different cultural connotations, thus questioning both the meaning and utility of one's own images wrought from memory. The Long Song's Simpkin's "piece of song" contains her mode of subjugation as a "born long" enslaved and colonized eye/ear that reports July's life record, imbuing the narrative text of the long song with the void of its own cacophonic mishearing/understanding, hence elaborating the nation composition as the synthetic outcome of heterogeneous subjectivities.

7. Comparative Analysis with Other Postcolonial Works

Andrea Levy's novels showcase the nuanced experiences of those on society's fringes—people of color, immigrants, and working-class residents. In her 2008 novel, "The Long Song," an enslaved Jamaican woman chronicles her fight against the forces that confine and silence her voice. While Levy is often seen as a British novelist, she bases this work on the life of a Jamaican woman during the British slave trade. In Dubliners, James Joyce delves into the anguish of Irish wives and daughters during a time of disillusionment. Similarly, in The Long Song, the enslaved July suffers indignities and derision imparted through an English lens. Both focus on the gendered oppression and disenfranchisement of their protagonists. July's journey entwines fear and vengeance, reminding the reader of the precariousness of freedom.Levy's exploration of how a narrative voice

can be appropriated even within the narrative itself and the issue of obscured history resonates with other notable postcolonial works. In "Woods as a Barrier," the tree symbolizes the dominating white perspective of history and reminds the reader of how historical oppression has been silenced. In "The Killing of a Cat," the dead cat stands for overlooked race issues, showing the dangers of silence regarding marginalization and injustices.History's violent nature renders the colonized invisible. This insightful grasp informs further concerns with how the colonized can retrieve their visibility. July is finally able to release herself from the shackles of invisibility and silences by telling her story. However, the danger of appropriation lies in telling the story in the English tongue, which embodies the historical tongue of oppression. The colonized may find that history and its manifestation—language and narrative voice—cannot be their own. The narrator's struggle against the institution of the language is thwarted in the end by the other obstruction—the tongue that brutalizes their own tongue. The use of the English language in the narrative is dangerously beautiful; it is appropriated as an instrument of power and oppression and turned into a mass destruction weapon. But it is also a haunting reminder of obscured history and how the ruthless English tongue silences the colonized in their own history.

8. Conclusion and Implications for Literary StudiesThe findings of this study have implications for both scholars of the novel and literary scholars in general. The thick analysis of The Long Song and its themes of identity and marginalization can be used as a model for the study of historical novels in literary studies. Many of the themes discussed here are relevant to the study of different historical novels as well, but the exploration of the various forms of and attitudes to marginalization in the novel in relation to its modes of representation is unique to this particular study.By advocating a view of marginalized history that sees it as formed by the socio-political context of its representation, and therefore also sees the representation of it as a contest between different forms dealing with that context, the findings shed light on the wider topic of how literary works of fiction can shed light on historical periods with greater accuracy than non-fictional writings. This has an extra relevance in the wake of the historiographical disputes surrounding the posting of Robbins's The Long Song. The ongoing political debate between left- and right-leaning factions on the position and social mobility of the working class in British society mirrors the colonial contest of the novel in the historical context of slavery in the British colonies, and both attempts to gain dominance through different forms of representation of these contexts.For advocates of the negative portrayal of the protagonist in relation to the narrator, and other similar contestations in other historical novels, the findings show that the perception of these portrayals as positive, and their consequent social mobility, is paradoxically tied to understanding undue qualities of the protagonist as social mobility. As regards the views of the characterizations of the protagonist and the narrator as similar and sympathetic, the findings show that the perception of the illegitimacy of that similarity is tied to illegal views of the colonial situation in wider terms. More generally, the implication for literary studies as a whole is that the socio-political perception present in the representation of the events in the novel can be applied to its reading as a whole.In the novel's historical interpretation of the colonial society of Jamaica, by either underlining or downplaying the actual violence against slaves as part of the representation of the slave uprising, those passages that would highlight the actual horror of slavery can be read as positive openings of an increased understanding of the past. The multi-faceted representation of these opposing views allows sentiments and emotions to be transferred not just to characters advocating one or the other view, but to either emotionalize or de-emotionalize this interpretation when it comes to other characters.

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