

Hybridity, Assimilation, and Acculturation in Chinua Achebe's "No Longer at Ease," Jamaica Kincaid's "Lucy," and Tayeb Salih's "Season of the Migration to the North": A comparative Analysis (2).

IBRAHIM MOHAMMED ALMOSAWY

^a Assistant prof, Department of English literature, College of Languages, salah Eldin university, Kurdistan-Iraq, Email: ibrahimmosawy112@yahoo.com

* Corresponding Author: IBRAHIM MOHAMMED ALMOSAWY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to provide a postcolonial analysis of Kincaid's Lucy. The thesis explores postcolonial concepts such as hybridity, assimilation, and acculturation in the novel Lucy. An in-depth analysis will be conducted on the characters and the main character. Lucy, the main character of the novel, grapples with her colonial heritage by consistently contemplating the concept of home. Being unfamiliar with a white-dominated culture, she grapples with stereotypes against black and brown individuals. This study provides a thorough analysis of Lucy from a postcolonial perspective, utilizing contemporary instances to demonstrate how colonialism has influenced her sense of self and her journey toward self-discovery within a complex postcolonial environment. According to Edwards, Lucy is described as "black", "feminist," and "postcolonial". Gebert asserts that one of the central topics of Kincaid's Lucy is the "colonial history of race and class".

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1. Introduction

Jamaica Kincaid is a highly significant contemporary novelist of Antiguan American descent. Kincaid consistently highlights the detrimental impact of colonialization on her native land throughout her works. Jamaica Kincaid, born Elaine Potter Richardson in 1949, is a prominent novelist of Antiguan American descent. Jamaica Kincaid authored numerous literary works, encompassing novels, short tales, and essays. Notable among her creations are Annie John (1985), Lucy (1990), An Autobiography of My Mother (1995), Mr. Potter (2002), My Garden (1999), and My Brother (1997). Kincaid consistently highlights the significance of memory and history in all her literary works. She believes that writing is a means of exploring and understanding oneself. As stated by Bouson, Kincaid: "A memory- haunted woman who continually remembers and tries to make sense of her Caribbean upbringing on the island of Antigua . . . Speaking openly about her life and work in her many interviews, Kincaid emphasizes the autobiographical and psychological origins in her writings. (1)

This study offers a postcolonial interpretation of the novel Lucy (1999). The narrative chronicles the journey of a young woman hailing from Antigua who assumes the role of an au pair for a Caucasian family residing in the United States. It highlights the author and Lucy's intense anger at anything that served as a reminder of the colonizers, their homeland, and family. Lucy's

profound animosity against the colonists' educational system, her place of birth, and individuals of power is clearly manifested in her intense anger. Lucy has the belief that Antigua's school system, which is influenced by British education, exalts colonialism and causes humiliation to her country. Due to her belief that her country underwent colonization, she harbors a strong aversion to it. So, migrating to America enables her to elude her previous experiences. Her tumultuous connection with both her mother and boss reflects her profound aversion to authority and manipulation. Lucy grapples with her feelings of bitterness throughout the story and comes to the realization that her country's history of colonization influences her current circumstances and future.

The submissiveness and humility of Antigua can be traced back to the period of British colonization and the educational system that was imposed by England. Kincaid criticizes colonialism in her writings, including the portrayal of colonizers who come to Antigua for entertainment and gather to observe a royal figure passing by. Following the success of *Annie John*, Kincaid wrote *Lucy* in 1990. *Lucy* exhibits multiple postcolonial characteristics. During the act of reading, individuals can mentally place themselves into the perspective of the speaker. Conrad pioneered the use of stream of consciousness in his masterpiece *The Heart of Darkness*, which is considered the first modern and postcolonial fiction. Like Conrad's novel, *Lucy* is written in the first-person perspective by Jamaica Kincaid. The speaker delivers her message without any interruptions and shows no concern about whether readers understand her. In the novel, Kincaid uses historiographic metaphors and simple metafiction to assert the authorship of her writing. Although the novel has five chapters dedicated to various aspects of her life, such as her experiences as an au pair, her recollections, her colonial and postcolonial background, her mother's life, and her family, the author only introduces herself in the final chapter. Intertextuality is a distinctive technique. On numerous occasions, she alludes to *Annie John*, her previous literary work.

2. Method

This novel brought Kincaid's fame. She authored *Lucy*, her second novel, as a sequel to *Annie John*, but with a separate storyline and publication. As the work was authored by an individual from Antigua, it is classified as postcolonial literature. The novel *Lucy* and its main character are also named Lucy. She is often reminded of her colonial past. Antigua achieved independence in 1981, somewhat late compared to other countries. Living in America, a former colony, she observes a notable distinction between the concepts of independence and freedom in the United States and the oppressive rule in Antigua. Additionally, she faces challenges due to her lack of experience living in a predominantly white environment. Nevertheless, she currently resides in a society that harbors numerous misconceptions regarding individuals of African and West Indian descent who are physically strong and well-built. In the novel, a heroine takes the place of a hero. Therefore, it can be classified as postcolonial feminist literature. This study, however, examines the novel through a postcolonial lens, employing specific instances.

The woman has always been plagued by her past of being in a state of servitude, submission, and bondage. Kincaid has been subject to varying interpretations by critics. Consequently, several critics label her as a feminist, while others categorize her as a postcolonial writer. Some argue that her writings are predominantly autobiographical and written in the style of black women authors. Some commentators regarded her as an immigrant writer in her later works. Kincaid's literature also explores the themes of racism, classism, and gender. This exemplifies the intricacy of the writer.

Kincaid's *Lucy* explicitly declared novel, is one of her most significant works. According to Bouson, *Lucy* is her avowed autobiographical fiction (2). The narrative chronicles the experiences of a West Indian girl who assumes the role of an au pair in a Caucasian household in the United States. The novel has been subject to varying interpretations by critics. It is deemed autobiographical because it parallels Kincaid's life. The work prominently explores themes of gender, hybridity, sexuality, ethnicity, etc.

She has always been tormented by her past of being in service, submission, and bondage. Kincaid has been subject to varying interpretations by critics. Consequently, several critics label her as a feminist, while others categorize her as a postcolonial writer. Some argue that her writings predominantly draw from her own life experiences and are written in the literary tradition of black women authors. Some commentators regarded her as an immigrant writer in her later works. Kincaid's works also explore the themes of racism, classism, identity and gender. This exemplifies the intricacy of the writer.

Kincaid's writings consistently exhibit a strong aversion for English colonizers. The influence of British colonialism had a profound impact on every aspect of life in Antigua. Lucy observes that British education enforces and affirms colonial hegemony. This is her inaugural novel set outside of Antigua. This succinctly elucidates the work's diasporic essence and conspicuous juxtaposition. Kincaid enjoys drawing comparisons between her country of origin and America, while not finding it enjoyable. One factor that contributed to Kincaid's disdain for British schooling in her country was this. In her novel *Lucy*, the protagonist expressed her aversion to reading Wordsworth's poetry "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" due to her perception of it as frivolous and devoid of meaning. She found it illogical to serenade flowers that she had never laid eyes upon, and furthermore, she considered it inappropriate to engage with a cultural expression that was foreign to her. As a result, she was unable to communicate through sign language with the colonists' flowers.

The text commences in a manner reminiscent to a biography, with the writer detailing her daily existence. Deliberately examining the subtext, she portrays issues and memories related to colonialism and postcolonialism. Jamaica Kincaid's writings effectively depict the emotions experienced by a woman who has been colonized when she moves to another country. Lucy's sentimentality towards her mother and birthplace is apparent initially, despite her lack of affection towards them. She subsequently explores the concepts of hybridity, assimilation, enslavement, self-identity, discrimination, stereotypes, generalization, etc.

Lucy, a 19-year-old teenager, grapples with her historical colonial background and feelings of longing for the past. In the opening page, it is revealed that her family from Antigua lacks the financial means to purchase a refrigerator. Subsequently, she asserts that the elevator, apartment, and all the elements of her living space are significantly more luxurious compared to those in Antigua. (1). Consequently, her life in America is superior and more convenient compared to Antigua. This image depicts a country that is underdeveloped and has been subjected to colonization. While the residents of a liberated nation such as America had the freedom to live according to their desires, their colonial predecessors endured a life of destitution. According to Annie, she prefers sunny weather since it brings back memories of her home and helps alleviate her feelings of homesickness (2-3).

Subsequently, Lucy states that she corresponded with her mother and relatives residing at her place of origin. She wrote all her letters in a decorative and ornate manner to prevent her family from suspecting that she was feeling homesick or unhappy. Despite her emotional distress, she attempts to conceal it by using insincere expressions. (5). Kincaid used rudimentary illustrations to acquaint readers with colonial imagery at the beginning of the narrative. She highlights the fact that Antigua was devoid of employment opportunities because of colonization. Consequently, Lucy endeavors to earn a living and manage her longing for home in a distant country. The narrative progressively incorporates instances of colonization. Lucy engages in a conversation about a correspondence received from her mother cautioning her to exercise caution when using the subway. According to Kincaid, she was informed that an immigrant girl's neck had been cut, maybe a female of African or Hispanic descent (17).

In this segment of the story, a society exhibits prejudice, despite being responsible for bringing the immigrant to their country. Had colonization not occurred, the girl and hundreds of others may not have immigrated to America so remaining in their country was feasible. Following the demise of

the British Empire, numerous colonial nations attempted to establish new lives in New York and London. They were ultimately faced with killings committed by the colonizers. Once more, individuals who were subjected to colonization experienced hardship inside communities that were not colonized. Kincaid highlights the plight of individuals who have been subjected to impact of colonialism.

Kincaid subsequently examines the impact of colonial language. She examines her mother in both French and English languages (58). Prior until 1981, Antigua was under British colonial rule. One of the final nations to achieve independence from Britain. To provide context, most colonial nations achieved independence during World War II, whereas her country remained under British control until the end of the 20th century. Prior to British colonization, the French held dominion over them. The island was governed alternatively by the British and the French. The local language on the island progressively transitioned to French and English. Individuals have neglected their native languages and have resorted to utilizing both French and English. Kincaid demonstrates the linguistic transformations of colonizers in his narrative. The process of acculturation is apparent in this instance, as the individuals underwent a shift in language. Devoid of colonization, this task is unattainable.

In addition to the imposition of language, Kincaid illustrates how the cultivation of sugarcane fields facilitated colonization and indoctrinated the indigenous population with British nationalism and songs glorifying heroic acts. Lucy, the protagonist in Kincaid's novel, refers to Mr. Mathew, a fisherman from her hometown. He was a parentless individual whose parents passed away while working in sugarcane fields. (65). His parents, like many sugar workers, were probably African slaves. She reluctantly sings "Rule, Britannia," a hymn that she was obligated to sing in school but had no desire to. Britannia, exert control over the waves; Britons will never be subjected to slavery. Despite not being of British nationality, she was compelled to perform this song due to her island's affiliation with the British Empire. (85). This chapter of the narrative illustrates the process of indoctrinating children in order to ready them for colonization. Nevertheless, engaging in patriotic and nationalist behaviors diminishes one's self-worth, and she was occasionally subjected to embarrassing inquiries about her origins, serving as a reminder of her history of colonization. This also suggests that her realm was deemed insignificant, since it referred to it and the other adjacent islands collectively as "the islands" without giving them individual names. "I had met Dinah the night after we arrived here on our holiday, and I did not like her. This was because the first thing she said to me when Mariah introduced us was "So you are from the island?" I don't know why, but the way she said it made a fury rise up in me." (56)

Bhabha's concept of ambivalence refers to the complex and contradictory ways in which colonizers and the colonized perceive and relate to one another. Dinah, the companion of Mariah, symbolizes the white colonizer, who perceives the colonized as inferior and foreign. The colonized, in turn, regards the colonizer as admirable yet morally compromised. The state of being hybrid typically entails both advantages and disadvantages. These concepts are discussed in Key Terms in Postcolonial Theory by Altun .

Lucy's profound anger towards anything that evoked memories of her place of origin, her relatives, and the culture of submission was clearly evident in her. Initially, she harbored strong hostility towards her parents, particularly her mother, and then towards her entire environment. Lucy made a solemn promise to leave the region that had been conquered. She declared, "When I turn nineteen will be living at home only if I drop dead" (112). Lucy was displaced from her native land and community due to colonization. Due to the process of colonization, she harbors strong feelings of animosity towards her homeland and family. She relinquished her national identity and was ostracized by her family and community.

Lucy, a nineteen-year-old, becomes an au pair for a wealthy family and takes care of their children in one of the states in the United States. Referred to as a bildungsroman: A literary work

exploring the protagonist's cognitive development and heightened consciousness. She contemplated the idea of departing from her colonial domain and the inhabitants, who had a low and cruel nature, which becomes evident when they encounter the conqueror.

Upon arriving in America, Lucy endeavors to suppress her background, which has consistently hindered her progress. "I looked at a map. An ocean stood between me and the place I came from, but would it have made a difference if it had been a teacup of water? I would not go back" (9-10). A significant number of the letters sent by her mother were left unopened. Ultimately, she incinerated every single one of them. Despite experiencing a strong desire and nostalgia for her hometown, Lucy made the decision to not go back, even after living in America (124). Gebert states that Lucy emphasizes the protagonist's detachment from her previous experiences (119). She developed a fresh persona after losing her memory of her origins due to the influence of the invaders.

This study analyzes the growth of the young artist's personality both domestically and internationally, focusing on the postcolonial viewpoint. The text delves into the process of moving from a state of innocence to one of experience, as well as the dominance of male perspectives, resistance against colonial and postcolonial powers, the concept of identity, the blending of different cultures, the process of assimilation and acculturation, the dispersion of people from their homeland, and the displacement of cultural norms. All these themes are interconnected with the discussion around postcolonialism.

Kincaid's Lucy explores themes related to identity. To evade the emotional distress caused by sorrow and the act of being deceived, Lucy decides to seek refuge in America, separating herself from her mother and the traumatic experiences she endured throughout her colonial education. Lucy utilizes many individuals, items, and figures to construct her own personal identity and sense of self. Lucy appears to be self-reliant, but she is constantly influenced by her mother's guidance and the lingering sadness from her upbringing. By diminishing Lucy's pursuits for uniqueness, readers may overlook the broader concern of how external influences mold one's self-perception, resulting in a blend of collective convictions and encounters. Lucy uses personalities such as Mariah to gain diverse perspectives on the world and her own identity. Using narrative, paintings, literature, and photography, Lucy explores her internal conflicts and highlights the innate human desire to establish one's identity in relation to others. Kincaid demonstrates that identity is complex and contradictory. Following Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of Kincaid's small island, Antigua, in 1493, a sugar plantation was established. However, the availability of fresh water was limited.

African Americans were considered a dormant force, and their social status may rise when faced with challenges. Once the dormant volcano becomes active, white people are unable to survive in their countries. Lucy asserts that had she remained in her homeland, her existence would have been exceedingly bleak, hence her decision to relocate to North America. Lucy, a person with dark skin, chose to travel to North America to work as an au pair, a domestic worker who provides childcare and household assistance. Lucy contemplates, "If I had to a picture of my future then. It would have been a large grey patch surrounded by black, blacker, blackest" (6). Working on the colonizers' land enables her to acquire an education. The enslaved individuals go on a quest for liberation yet encounter numerous obstacles that can result in either calamity or triumph. Their organizational framework and itinerary are important. Conquering the unknown is not always possible. Lucy asserts "On their way to freedom, some people find riches, some people find death", but I did not succeed" (129). In exceptional circumstances, individuals who have traversed the route under peculiar circumstances may desire to retrace their steps. This represents the lived experience of colonial individuals. She was dissimilar to them. She fails to achieve wealth, freedom, or perish while resisting empire.

Lucy is informed about Mariah's historical knowledge of the area and its inhabitants. Lucy disputes the assertion that women are systematically oppressed in society, history, and culture globally, contending that the discussion pertains specifically to her mother and country. Lucy

implies that studying different cultures and customs cannot fully educate individuals about their own national culture, traditions, and social norms. She contends that it is absurd for the colonizer to attempt to control or manipulate the colonized. Lucy asserts that Maria,

... spoke of women in society. Women in history, women in culture, women in everywhere. But I couldn't speak, so I couldn't tell her that my mother was my mother and that society and history and culture and other women in general were something else altogether ... My life could not really be explained by this thick book that made my hands hurt as I tried to keep it open. (131-132)

Towards the conclusion of the story, Lucy engages in a contemplation of her own persona and the trajectory of her existence. Paradoxically, readers anticipate the introduction of the main character in the initial pages of conventional writing. The author introduces the protagonist near the end of the story because the protagonist's identity undergoes a transformation, which serves as a sort of criticism towards colonization. Therefore, she is required to elucidate the impact of colonizers on colonized communities. She possesses numerous names due to it, indicating a state of identity crisis.

Lucy Josephine Potter is one of her three given names, as stated by Kincaid (95). Later, she expresses her dislike for all these names because they are all associated with a colonial figure who acquired wealth from sugarcane in Cuba. Later in the text, the name "Potter" is stated as her prior name. She harbored a strong aversion for this name due to its association with whiteness and Englishness, which she perceived as oppressive towards her own people. Nevertheless, her parents were oblivious to the name's evident colonial heritage. Nevertheless, her name was exclusively Lucy. She harbors a strong aversion for this name, yet it was the sole option available to her (95). Josephine's origin is Antigua, however, all three names possess colonial backgrounds as they do not belong to the Caribbean culture. Her various names are burdened by her colonial identity. She possesses a colonial heritage that is represented by these three names. She desires to break free from her historical association with colonialism, but her sense of self is still rooted in colonialism.

Kincaid employs museums to illustrate the state of education in Antigua, which occurs approximately halfway through the narrative. Lucy has a strong affinity for museums, which is not shared by her friend Peggy. Subsequently, she expresses her fondness for museums due to the absence of such institutions in her country. Kincaid's intention is to communicate the notion that England displayed a lack of concern towards the education of its colonies (65). A museum serves as a manifestation of a society's cultural and historical acumen. The Antiguans experienced a loss of their cultural and historical heritage. What type of historical information would a museum exhibit? Due to Antigua being under British dominion, museums were unable to display the atrocities of colonialism. Therefore, they would only display the simulated characteristics of colonization. Similar to the song 'Rule Britannia,' they may propagate counterfeit patriotism among educational institutions.

The novel also demonstrates Bhabha and Said's concept of discrimination and generalization towards the "exotic other". The colonizer utilizes certain representations of the colonized in order to diminish their worth. In the story, Mariah's friend Dinah inquires of Lucy whether she hails from the islands. (38). Dinah referred to British-controlled colonies when she mentioned islands. Antigua was among a multitude of Caribbean islands. Although it is small, it served as a residence for numerous individuals, including Lucy. Dinah's behavior towards Lucy indicates her support for colonialism, regardless of its significance to her. She regards Lucy as inferior. Later in the novel, she acknowledges that she identifies herself as a Caribbean girl. Therefore, it is clear that there are instances of colonial generalization and prejudice. Lucy might have shown greater concern if she had referred to her own country by its proper name rather than simply as an island. Lucy's assertion of her fondness for Hugh, Dinah's spouse, is indicative of its significance to her, as it was triggered by his inquiry about her place of origin in the West Indies. Dinah, Hugh's wife, supports colonialism, although Hugh himself does not.

Mariah, Lucy's boss, introduces herself at the beginning of the novel. She asserts her Indian heritage based on her ability to engage in activities such as bird hunting, corn roasting, and fish catching. Although her appearance does not like that of an Indian, she asserts that she has Indian ancestry. Lucy asserts that Mariah has blonde hair, which contrasts with the typical brown hair color of Indians. Despite her emphasis on remarkable and essential activities such as fishing, hunting, and preparing corn, these are considered primitive. New Yorkers have never engaged in such activities and tend to belittle individuals who do, as they rely heavily on purchasing all their necessities from food stores. The author also references the challenges and genocidal events faced by Native Americans. According to Kincaid, she asserts that not all Indians are alive. The presence of Lucy working in America can be seen as a manifestation of colonialism. Had her country been effectively governed and had England extended the same opportunities to Antiguan citizens as they do to their own citizens, she would not have chosen to work as a domestic worker, taking care of someone else's children. (29)

Lucy harbored a strong aversion towards her history, leading her to disdain any form of control or influence exerted over her, including that of her own mother. This narrative included one of the most complex and elaborate mother-daughter dynamics in the realm of literature. Lucy perceived her mother as a figure of authority and a representation of her history that she desired to distance herself from. She refuses everything that evokes memories of history and the process of colonialism. She is astonished to discover that the events of her past have a significant impact on her current circumstances and have the power to mold her future.

Mariah, the boss, and Lucy were in a picturesque location when Mariah pointed out the daffodils to Lucy, anticipating her appreciation for them. Mariah was taken aback when the daffodils provoked hostility, and Lucy interpreted them as a representation of the colonizer. Lucy was astonished by the flowers and expressed her aversion to Mariah. Due to their association with colonial oppression, she harbors a desire to commit murder against them. Describing the event:

Mariah took me to a garden, a place she described among her favorites in the world. She covered my eyes with a handkerchief, and then, holding me by the hand, she walked me to a spot in a clearing. Then she removed the handkerchief and said, "Now, look at this."...Along the paths and underneath the trees were many, many yellow flowers...I did not know what these flowers were, and so it was a mystery to me why I wanted to kill them...Maria said, "These are daffodils". Mariah, mistaking what was happening to me for joy at seeing daffodils for the first time, reached out to hug me, but I moved away. (29-30)

The daffodils exemplify the contrasting perspectives of the colonizer and the colonized as they observe the same object. Daffodils symbolize both triumphs and victories (30). Lucy's story serves as a reminder of the lasting impact of the distressing memories associated with daffodils, which have left a cultural mark. The cultural disparity that Lucy was unable to overcome, endure, or resolve is referred to as 'the Daffodils difference' (Francoir 97). Lucy, who has been deeply affected by the political aspects of education, has developed a strong association between the color yellow and symbols of oppression. Lucy expresses

The color yellow, symbolizing the colonizer in the novel, turns into a motif and a recurrent preoccupation all through the novel. All Lucy's dreams are, thus, hued in yellow. She recounts one such dream in which I was being chased down a narrow cobbled street by bunches and bunches of those same daffodils that I had vowed to forget, and when I finally fell down from exhaustion they all piled on top of me, until I was buried underneath them and was never seen again. (81)

Lucy consistently contemplated the presence of the colonizer in Antigua. She perceived the colonizer's influence pervading the entire island, particularly in the realms of language and education. Said argues, the subjugation and governance of individuals necessitates their education and control within specific territories (327). Lucy believed that performing 'Rule Britannia' at school was degrading for a subjugated nation to commemorate the triumph of the colonizer. She considered

it absurd to criticize the colonizer who spoke the same language as her. Gebert states that the colonial administration imposed its values and cultural norms by implementing an education system that was not under local authority (123). The school disciplined her by assigning her the task of writing numerous phrases from *Paradise Lost*. British colonialism exerted complete control over all aspect of Antigua's social, cultural, linguistic, and religious existence, distorting and eradicating all that was indigenous. They desire to conceal their identity to govern the captured island.

Lucy's relationship with her mother, Annie Potter, is characterized by conflicting emotions. She is unable to harmonize her feelings of rage and love. The protagonist's lingering emotions for Mariah, her Caucasian and affluent employer who also serves as a maternal figure, demonstrate this. Lucy expresses her affection for Mariah, "The times that I loved Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. The times that I did not love Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother" (58). Lucy's refusal to read her mother's letters demonstrates her indifference and yearning for her. Upon receiving a letter informing her that there has been no rainfall at her residence since her departure, she responds sarcastically,

I did not care about that any longer. The object of my life now was to put as much distance between myself and the events mentioned in her letter as I could manage. For I felt that if I could put enough miles between me and the place from which that letter came, and if I could put enough events between me and the events mentioned in the letter, would I not be free to take everything just as it came and not see hundreds of years in every gesture, every word spoken, every face. (31)

She acknowledges that her mother loves her, but she desires her mother to emulate her, a notion that Lucy vehemently opposes. She claims to prefer death over imitating others,

But I already had a mother who loved me, and I had come to see her love as a burden and had come to view with horror the sense of self-satisfaction it gave my mother to hear other people to comment on her great love for me. I had come to feel that my mother's love for me was designed solely to make me into an echo of her; and I didn't know why, but I felt that I would rather be dead than become just an echo of someone. (36)

Lucy continues to see her mother's impact even while living in diaspora. Having a picnic in the forest by the Great Lake with Mariah evokes recollections of her mother from her time as a schoolgirl. Her mother traversed two little rivers and a dense rainforest to reach school. She observed a monkey continuously for several days. She found the monkey's appearance displeasing, so she began hurling stones at him, all of which he consistently failed to hit. The monkey deftly intercepted and returned the stone that she had thrown. Her mother had severe injuries and was experiencing profuse bleeding. Lucy harbors an aversion for traversing through woods due to a distressing incident from her early years. According to Lucy,

That was just one of many stories I knew about walking through places where trees live, and none of them had a happy outcome. And so as soon as we started our walk through the woods, I would strike up a conversation—either with the children or, if they were not interested, with myself. Eventually I got so used to being afraid to walk through the woods that I did it by myself and began to see that there was something beautiful about it; and I had one more thing to add to my expanding world. (55)

Lucy's mother's past traumas continue to haunt her, causing pain for Lucy in her evolving environment. According to Bousoon, the memory-haunted Lucy learns "just how difficult it is to escape the past" (Snodgrass 179). When she is requested to accompany Mariah to the forest, a painful recollection from her mother's past pollutes her current existence.

Despite Lucy's mother's absence, Bloom asserts Although Lucy's mother is physically absent from the narrative, she is powerfully evoked. Contours of her mother's life provide the protagonist with a blueprint for her existence (81). Edwards further underscores the fact that Lucy resides apart

from her home and mother, yet the mother's influence on her is so potent that she struggles, if not unable, to cultivate an independent sense of self:

For although Lucy has escaped from the overwhelming power of her mother, the maternal figure still holds a dominant place in her mind. After leaving home, Lucy finds that her mother's power seems, at times, to grow stronger. And she even begins to view her mother as God-like and omniscient, an ever-present and all-powerful being. (63-64)

Lucy asserts that she experiences both affection and hatred for her Caucasian boss because the employer bears resemblance to her own mother: "The times I loved Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. The times that I did not love Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother" (58). Nichols asserts that Mariah assumes the role of a surrogate mother and mentor to Lucy, prompting Lucy to draw parallels between her connection with Mariah and her relationship with her overbearing mother. Observing Mariah enveloped by pink and white flowers instantaneously evokes the essence of the mother, which always accompanies the daughter:

I was supposed to be upstairs giving the children their baths, but seeing Mariah look so beautiful, I couldn't tear myself away. How many times had I seen my mother surrounded by plants of one kind or another, arranging them into some pattern, training them to grow a certain way; as they were the only times I can remember my mother serene, motionless, for she had the ability to appear to be moving even though she was standing still. Mariah reminded me more and more of the parts of my mother that I loved. Her hands were just like my mother's—large, with long fingers and square fingernails; their hands looked like instruments for arranging things beautifully. Sometimes, when they wished to make a point, they would hold their hands in the air, and suddenly their hands were vessels made for carrying something special; at other times their hands made you think they excelled at playing some musical instrument, though in fact the two of them were dunces at anything musical. (59)

Lucy scrutinizes Mariah closely due to this. Mariah believes that Lucy has an affinity for flowers and frequently discusses their aesthetic appeal and fragrance. Lucy expresses that the fragrance of these flowers compels her to remove her clothing and envelop herself in roses to perpetually enjoy their scent. This comment elicits uncontrollable laughter from Mariah. She places her vase of flowers on the table and bursts into laughter. Lucy expresses her desire for a similar experience with her mother, attributing it to Mariah's laughter.

Lucy occasionally regarded Mariah as a superior maternal figure compared to her own mother. The author acknowledges the protagonist's several efforts to create a narrative that transitions her from being alienated to assimilating into American society, albeit these attempts were initially disliked. She strongly urged Lucy to accompany her on picnics, expressing her desire for Lucy to have the opportunity to spend the night on a train and wake up to breakfast while the train passed through recently plowed fields. Lucy uncovers her benevolence and magnanimity during the journey. Lucy observes that the train is divided based on socioeconomic class, and she is not surprised by this. She notices that the people who are seated and enjoying their dinner resemble Mariah's relatives, while the individuals serving them resemble her own relatives.

Despite being part of the second group, she is surprised by the way Mariah, her white employer, treats her as if she was one of her own daughters or a member of the family, rather than just an au pair who is supposed to serve her. Mariah expresses disapproval of Lucy's Irish American friend Peggy, describing her as an unlikable individual upon closer acquaintance. However, Mariah acknowledges the need of Lucy having a friend and suggests that Peggy fulfills this role: "I guess you like Peggy a lot, and, you know, you really should have a friend" (63). She assumes a maternal role that is not excessively invasive in her children's lives. Lucy acknowledges that Mariah surpasses her mother in one aspect: "This is a way in which Mariah was superior to my mother, for my mother would never come to see that perhaps my needs were more important than her wishes" (64).

Lucy harbors a deep fear of emulating her mother's behavior as the story progresses. She suffers from mother-phobia, which is an intense fear of her mother or the idea of becoming like her, due to her mother being associated with colonization and patriarchy. According to Snodgrass, her mother represents the characteristics of British propriety, manners, language, and self-discipline (179). She resists her mother's authority because she perceives her as a colonial subject who obediently adheres to British policies and traditions without objection. As stated by Gebert, "Her resistance is focused primarily on her mother, because she symbolizes all limitations Lucy has fought against. Her mother becomes a foil to Lucy because, having lived her life within the confines of what tradition and colonial mores demanded, she takes for granted that her daughter would accept those limitations, too". (139)

Her mother symbolizes the submissive nation that reluctantly agrees to, if not embraces, the demands of the colonizers. The mother's persistent endeavors to make her daughter conform to the norms of her Eurocentric culture could be interpreted as the oppressed Caribbean society's efforts to compel the younger generation to comply with the standards imposed by the colonizers.

Lucy concurs with Kincaid's view that her mother serves as a tool of male dominance, symbolizing a mother figure that upholds a male-centered society. Lucy is profoundly disillusioned by her mother's increasing insistence that she adhere to the societal norms of Antigua, particularly with regards to women and their entitlements. Moreover, it transforms the mother into a symbol of submissiveness inside a patriarchal system. According to Ippolito's analysis in her book "Caribbean Women Writers: Identity and Gender," Lucy's society both marginalizes and commodifies women,

In Antigua and elsewhere in the West Indies, there was an accentuated violence directed toward women based on popular attitudes toward their sexuality and their bodies. These attitudes were a combination of Victorian ideology and regressive religious views spread through the educational system, sometimes even adopted by the women who were denigrated by these ideologies. (qtd. in Röpke 15)

Lucy, derived from the name Lucifer, exhibits several characteristics of the Devil, specifically her defiance towards God. "I named you after Satan himself. Lucy, short for Lucifer. What a botheration from the moment you were conceived" (152), her mother declared. Lucifer, commonly abbreviated as Lucy. The protagonist is haunted by a vexation that has been with her since her conception, which fuels her desire to rebel against her mother and anybody who resembles her. Prior to responding to her mother, she experiences a moment of hesitation. Subsequently, she retains all her letters without reading them. Even letters marked as 'URGENT' are left unopened: "One day a letter arrived for me, and written all over the envelope in my mother's beautiful handwriting was the word URGENT. To me the letter might as well have had written all over it the words "Do not open until doomsday," because I added it to all the unopened letters I had received from home". (115)

To save herself from experiencing the pain of missing her mother and loved ones, she incinerates the letters. As her words attest, "I knew that if I read only one, I would die from longing for her" (91). Lucy forms a friendship with Peggy, a girl who is known for her promiscuity. Through this friendship, Lucy is introduced to casual sex, something that her mother strongly disapproves of and considers to be immoral behavior (Simmons, *The Rhythm* 131). Lucy engages in multiple casual sexual relationships. She deliberately avoids contacting her mother and defies her wishes, which can be seen as a symbol of her resistance against imperialism and patriarchy. By disobeying her mother, Lucy is expressing her refusal to conform to the expectations of the colonizer and the male-dominated society she lives in, both at home and in exile. This act of defiance marks the beginning of Lucy's journey from being a submissive girl to becoming a mature and independent woman who has a control over her own life and future. Even her migration can be interpreted in symbolic terms as rebellious enough: Lucy decides to serve and toil in the US than enjoy her life in Antigua, which is reminiscent of Milton's Satan who rebelliously enough finds it "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n" (Milton 263). Braziel expresses,

Kincaid accomplishes something very similar to Dante, I contend, in the novel *Lucy: Antigua* is tropical and hot, yet her mother is fiery, blazing, godlike; and in New York is cold, icy, dreary; yet like Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*, she gets to diabolically reign in hell, which is better than to serve in heaven, as Milton's Lucifer proudly proclaims. (93).

Although Mariah treats Lucy as her charge rather than a servant, Lucy is determined to rebel alongside her. Lucy expresses gratitude towards Mariah, acknowledging her kindness and generosity. She considers Mariah to be like a mother to her, always showing concern for her well-being and even bringing her gifts when she goes shopping. Lucy feels fortunate to have met and worked for Mariah instead of her acquaintances.

In her first year in the US, Lucy leaves Mariah's house due to her memories of her mother and the 'motherland' values she must avoid (Bloom 80). According to Snodgrass, "[Lucy's]disaffection for mother figures is so strong that she alienates herself from Mariah, her employer, who attempts to ease the au pair into the household, community, a temperate climate, and Western feminism" (132). She also views Mariah's assistance as intrusive. She sees Mariah as "the representative of narcissistic power against whom Lucy must fight if she is to forge a separate identity" (Simmons, *The Rhythm* 129). Her reluctance and occasionally hatred of her white employer is due to Mariah's symbolism of Western domination, which evokes British colonialism in her Eurocentric society. Bloom claims that ideological, cultural, and social barriers and Lucy's unresolved mother-daughter bond damage her relationship with her employer. Mariah is mocked for her ignorance of social and racial inequities and her employer's attempt to intellectualize and universalize women's experiences. Lucy is captivated to Mariah because of her warmth and generosity to her staff.

Lucy intentionally avoids Mariah, who means well but does not align with her goals. Instead, she actively seeks out a new job that she believes will contribute to her personal growth and independence. At the age of twenty, Lucy manages to achieve both self-realization and independence within a year by fully immersing herself in her passion for art, which she considers to be her purpose in life.

Lucy, a rebellious individual reminiscent of Lucifer, departs from the warm and beautiful Caribbean Island of Antigua to settle in a cold and dreary place. Here, she leads a life full of excitement and novelty as an outsider. According to Simmons, Lucy, who was named after Lucifer by her mother, has been expelled from both the Caribbean and her previous way of life. The vibrant and sunny Antigua has been substituted by Lucy's wealthy employer, Mariah, who provides her with feminist literature to assist her in overcoming her feelings of grief and melancholy.

This is significant because Lucy's mixed identity in the diaspora is closely intertwined with her maternal figure and the bond between mother and daughter. The protagonist recognizes that she "must separate herself from [her mother's overwhelming matriarchal hold] if she is to develop her own identity" (Edwards 64). The presence of her dominant mother hinders or even prevents her from forming her own identity. Despite her mother's absence, she struggles to assert her independence. In a culturally diverse country like the United States, she is determined to liberate herself from the constraints imposed by her mother, which have restricted her at a young age.

The displacement in the story represents the protagonist's transition from innocence to experience. Snodgrass describes it as a profound transformation of the protagonist's emotions and thoughts. Lucy works as a nanny for a white family consisting of a husband, wife, and four children in New York City. The family appears to be a happy one, with the husband, wife, and children resembling each other. In photographs displayed around the house, the six yellow-haired heads of varying sizes are arranged together like a bouquet, connected by an invisible string. Mariah expresses her love for Lucy, and Lucy believes her because she feels that Mariah can love a young woman who has traveled from a distant place to help care for her children.

Mariah, who is a friend of Lucy, impresses her in various ways through her employment. Mariah takes her destitute employee and her family to a beautiful Great Lakes shore in April. After blindfolding Lucy, Mariah leads her to a new and lush location. The flowers that Lucy sees are daffodils, which Mariah hopes she will find lovely regardless. According to Snodgrass, Mariah's gestures and introduction of Lucy to North American life suggest that Lucy should adopt Mariah's preferences and embrace daffodils as a symbol of spring. Mariah is polite to Lucy and wants to integrate her into her culture, but she mistakenly assumes that everyone shares her love for daffodils. She fails to realize the impact of daffodils on Lucy and mistakenly believes that they represent beauty and affection for her. However, daffodils symbolize spring and nature's beauty in different cultures.

Linked to the British colonization of Lucy's home island, these symbols evoke a sense of "sorrow and bitterness" (30) from her distant past. Furthermore, they represent the enforced colonial education of the Caribbean natives by white colonizers. The discussion of daffodils angers Lucy because it reminds her of a bitter personal experience from her childhood. At the age of ten, she was required to memorize and recite an English poem about daffodils, likely Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," in front of her parents, teachers, and classmates at the school auditorium. Despite her effective performance, Lucy was tired of the experience and the poem itself. However, social etiquette compelled her to put on a facade of politeness to please the audience.

Lucy's desire to forget Wordsworth's poem reflects her rejection of British dominance in Antigua and the discriminatory behaviors of white people based on race and gender. According to Gregg, English Romanticism's idealization of the individual's connection with nature is tainted by a hidden imperialist violence, where nature and native people are objectified and controlled. In Ferguson's book *Jamaica Kincaid: Where the Land Meets the Body*, she describes this poem as symbolic of a colonial system that imposed its own values and cultural standards through an education system that was not locally controlled. This marks Lucy's initial attempt to reclaim her own identity.

Lucy tells fairytales to encourage Miriam's youngest daughter, Mariah, to eat her stewed plum and yogurt. Lucy speaks quietly to avoid Mariah hearing her, as Mariah disapproves of this method of raising children. Mariah believes that being honest with kids is preferable and considers fairytales, particularly those involving princesses being awakened by princes after long naps, to be detrimental. She believes these stories give girls a misguided view of life. Lucy's mother's teaching method, as described by Mariah, is considered inappropriate. Mariah believes that Lucy's mother's education and upbringing have led to her misunderstanding of the world. Lucy's mother's fairytales have instilled in her unrealistic expectations that often prove to be incorrect. "Her [Mariah's] speech on fairy tales always amused me, because I had in my head a long list of things that contributed to wrong expectations in the world, and somehow fairy tales did not make an appearance on it". (45)

Lucy's persistent quest for identity in the diaspora, a world that is incompatible with her homeland and unwilling to accept her, symbolizes her desire for independence. The influence of her dominant mother and the subservience imposed by the British colonizers prevent Lucy from establishing her own identity at home, prompting her to seek autonomy abroad. In an interview, Japtok says "This search my characters undertake is not a search for identity but a search for autonomy, personal autonomy" (qtd. in Röpke 8). Lucy seeks a means to fulfill her long-held dream, which she discovers through migration. However, establishing her identity in the diaspora, particularly in the US, proves challenging for Lucy. Initially, she feels ostracized and experiences a sense of exile and isolation, which she prefers over the control exerted by her mother. "Lucy has sought to escape the strictures of life in Antigua. But she does not find an immediate sense of release or freedom in the United States. Rather she experiences a bewildering sense of alienation. (Edwards 61).

The story begins with the title "Poor Visitor" and ends with the character named Lucy, which implies the protagonist's growth and independence. In the first scene, Lewis, Mariah's husband, refers to Lucy as "poor Visitor" during dinner. This label applies to Lucy, a maid from a disadvantaged Caribbean country who left her home to support her family. Lucy describes her journey to the US as being "shipped" like cargo; a distressing experience reminiscent of the transportation of African slaves to the New World. She refers to her small room near the kitchen in her wealthy white employers' house as "a box in which cargo traveling a long way should be shipped. But I was not a cargo. I was only an unhappy young woman living in a maid's room". (7)

The term 'visitor' conveys a sense of temporary presence. Lucy's role as an au pair is merely a steppingstone towards her pursuit of independence and personal fulfillment. Lucy highlights that she was referred to as the Visitor by Mariah and Lewis during dinner after she moved in, as if she were just passing through and would soon bid farewell. Later in the story, the protagonist evolves from being the 'poor Visitor' to the humbled and self-reliant "Lucy," as indicated by the subtitle of the final section. The novel concludes with the statement that Lucy is getting on her feet in the new world, which is quite surprising. She no longer fears the seemingly alluring lives of white Westerners. The fact that she managed to survive without her mother is truly inspiring. She states, "It was January again; the world was thin and pale and cold again; I was making a new beginning again" (133).

The concept of a "new beginning" serves as a catalyst for Lucy, an adept reader, to construct a hybrid identity and cultivate her artistic skills, ultimately leading her to pursue photography. Fulani argues that Lucy's newfound emotional freedom, coupled with a modest financial means, empowers her to explore her creative passions. As a result, she enrolls in a photography class at a night school and captures her initial portrait of a collection of objects that represent her defiance against the societal expectations of Caribbean women and the traditional notions of femininity imposed by her mother (17). Fulani's central argument is that the protagonist made a deliberate decision to pursue photography instead of complying with her mother's desire for her to become a nurse. In a similar vein, she challenges her mother's wishes once again by abandoning her nursing studies and opting for photography at a nearby educational establishment. Lucy's photographs serve as a symbolic expression of her refusal to conform to the gender norms imposed by her mother. Engaging in photography brings her happiness and solace. She admits to taking photographs without a clear purpose, but finds pleasure in the activity, even enrolling in a night course simply for the enjoyment it brings her.

Lucy's creative process is not revealed later in the novel as some may anticipate, but rather too early on through her discernment of contrasts between dark and light on her initial day in the United States, where she links ordinary hues such as 'gray' and 'black' with her fresh existence: "It was my first day. I had come the night before, a gray-black and cold night before—as it was expected to be in the middle of January, though I didn't know at the time—and I could not see anything clearly on the way in from the airport, even though there were lights everywhere" (3).

She further explains that upon her arrival in the diaspora, she has a sense of disappointment and longing for her homeland. Initially, when she made the decision to live overseas, she did not anticipate feeling a deep longing for her place of birth or the people she left behind. As she puts it, the perception of life abroad is less favorable compared to her home:

In books I had read—from time to time, when the plot called for it— someone would suffer from homesickness. A person would leave a not very nice situation and go somewhere else, somewhere a lot better, and then long to go back where it was not very nice. How impatient I would become with such a person, for I would feel I was in a not very nice situation myself, and how I wanted to go somewhere else. But now I, too, felt that I wanted to be back where I came from. I understood it, I knew where I stood there. If I had had to draw a picture of my future then, it would have been a larger gray patch surrounded by black, blacker, blackest. (6)

Conversely, her place of origin is linked with vibrant colors such as 'pink' and 'green', which represent magnificence and grandeur:

In the past, the thought of being in my present situation had been a comfort, but now I did not even have this to look forward to, and so I lay down on my bed and dreamt I was eating a bowl of pink mullet and green figs cooked in coconut milk, and it had been cooked by my grandmother, which was why the taste of it pleased me so, for she was the person I liked best in all the world and those were the things I liked best to eat also. (6-7)

Lucy's artistic pursuits provide her with empowerment in her new surroundings, where she faces marginalization based on her race and gender. Additionally, her artistic endeavors aid in her seamless integration into society, facilitating the development of her hybrid identity as both Antiguan and American. As stated, the protagonist's sentiments towards her homeland are characterized by a complex mix of affection and alienation. (Röpke 16)

Lucy can be described as a hybrid individual due to her strong connection to her Caribbean culture, while simultaneously rejecting certain aspects of it. Her education was provided by the British educational system, which was enforced in Antigua and other British colonies. However, she harbors animosity towards her British colonizers and faces internal conflicts. Despite her rejection of American values, she finds herself drawn to the United States and is beginning to adopt a more western lifestyle.

Lucy's strong affinity for her own place is demonstrated towards the conclusion of the story when she purchases calico curtains adorned with vibrant flowers for the windows of her apartment alongside Peggy. While such curtains are familiar and acceptable in the Caribbean, they are considered gaudy or tasteless in the United States.

The curtains at my windows had loud, showy flowers printed on them; I had chosen this pattern over a calico that the lady in the cloth store had recommended. It did look vulgar in this climate, but it would have been just right in the climate I came from. Through the curtains I could see that the day was just like the one before: gray, the sky shut up tight, the sun locked out. I knew then that even though I would always notice the absence or presence of the sun, even though I would always prefer a sunny day to a day without sun, I would get used to it; I wouldn't make an important decision based on the weather. (144-145)

Lucy has made diligent efforts to assimilate into her hybrid culture. On her initial morning in the United States, she is taken aback by the "pale-yellow sun" in contrast to the "radiant sun" of her homeland. "That morning, the morning of my first day, the morning that followed my first night, was a sunny morning. It was not the sort of bright sun-yellow making everything curls at the edges, almost in fright, that I was used to, but a pale-yellow sun, as if the sun had grown weak from trying too hard to shine". (5)

During an interview conducted by Vorda, Kincaid stated that her protagonist has a distinct persona that prevents others from possessing her or obstructing her path. Following her escape from her mother's confinement, Lucy is determined to avoid being controlled again. However, towards the conclusion of the story, she expresses a need to experience possession and love, while she acknowledges that it is not now possible in her current circumstances. (25)

The story functions as a traditional coming of age story but deviates from the traditional arc in which the protagonists find a unique sense of identity independent from those around them. On the surface, it may appear that Lucy is acting independently of past influences in her attempt to create a new life for herself. Moving to America, refusing to reply to her mother's letters, and engaging in casual relationships can all be viewed as acts of rebellion in Lucy's journey of self-discovery. Hyper fixation on this aspect of rebellion prevents readers from viewing the characters Lucy interacts with, such as Mariah, as extensions of her own identity, altering the way she perceives the world. By trying to escape her past, Lucy forms new dependencies, taking on a variety of lenses that she uses

to decipher the world, but never truly faces her internal conflicts head on which ultimately results in patterns of loss and betrayal. Kincaid utilizes both the characters Lucy interacts with and physical objects to create a degree of separation between Lucy and her perception of reality, highlighting Lucy's inability to confront her internal conflict.

Throughout the novel, Mariah acts as a mother figure to Lucy in the absence of her real mother, therefore effectively becoming a person that Lucy attempts to view the world through. Despite knowing her for only a short period of time, Lucy develops a dependency and a sense of loyalty to Mariah, feeling a sense of betrayal when disappointing her. One significant instance in which Lucy experiences these feelings of betrayal and loss is when Mariah eagerly introduces her to daffodils, due to her past is unable to enjoy them like Mariah had hoped:

This woman who hardly knew me loved me, and she wanted me to love this thing— a grove brimming over with daffodils in bloom— that she loved also. Her eyes sank back in her head as if they were protecting themselves, as if they were taking a rest after some unexpected hard work. It wasn't her fault. It wasn't my fault. But nothing could change the fact that where she saw beautiful flowers I saw sorrow and bitterness. (30)

3. RESULTS

The daffodils and her hatred for them are representative of Lucy's inescapable past. In this instance, Lucy acknowledges that neither she nor Mariah are at fault for their difference in views, but there is still a feeling of guilt as if betraying Mariah, someone who supposedly loves her and resembles the role of a mother to Lucy, due to her inability to find beauty in the daffodils. In a way, Lucy is attempting to live through the eyes of Mariah as a form of escapism. Her yearning to view the daffodils, in the same way, represents both the resentment for her past and the desire to be transformed into someone new. This passage reinforces the lack of control that Lucy experiences throughout her childhood and into adulthood, although Lucy presently believes that she has greater control after moving to America. To compensate for her own feelings of confusion surrounding her identity, Lucy attaches herself to Mariah, who like a mother, introduces her to new perspectives and ways of living.

By attaching herself to Mariah, Lucy believes that she detaches herself from the influence of her real mother. As Simmons explains, "Lucy's mother, source of all intelligence, power, beauty, and magic, has been replaced by Lucy's wealthy employer, the affectionate but sheltered and naive Mariah, who proffers books on feminism to help Lucy over her deep sense of loss and despair" (Simmons, Jamaica 467). Mariah exposes Lucy to new forms of media, allowing Lucy to explore her world through photography and art. Upon seeing the paintings by a man who had left his home to travel, Lucy expresses, "I don't know if Mariah meant me to, but immediately I identified with the yearnings of this man; I understood finding the place you are born in an unbearable prison and wanting something completely different from what you are familiar with, knowing it represents a haven" (Kincaid 95). Through paintings and the recognition of the artist's desires, Lucy recognizes a desire within herself that she was unable to pinpoint clearly on her own. The continuity of art and Lucy's connection to it reveals the way in which she processes her emotions and perception of self. Similarly, Lucy describes:

Mariah had given me a book of photographs, because in the museum were some photographs I particularly liked. They were photographs of ordinary people in a countryside doing ordinary things, but for a reason that was not at all clear to me the people and the things they were doing looked extraordinary—as if these people and these things had not existed before. When I told her how much it pleased me to go and look at these pictures, she went out and bought me a book of them. (115)

Like the paintings, the photographs provide a look into the experiences of others, offering an escape from her own reality. The photographs become an outlet by which Lucy processes her

emotions that she is unable to directly manage. It is through external sources rather than voluntary introspection that Lucy truly faces her feelings surrounding her past and present. Lucy grounds herself through other people and objects.

The writer used tangible objects throughout the novel function as symbols for Lucy's perception of the world. As she explores photography, the physical camera lens is representative of the lens she views her surroundings. The camera lens creates a separation between Lucy and her reality which she never openly faces. It may be argued that Lucy's interest in photography is simply a form of pleasure that she discovers in the process of creating her "first real past – a past that was own and over which I had the final word" (23). Lucy's dive into photography can be viewed as a reclamation of simple enjoyment and fun that she missed out on during her childhood. It can act as a symbol for the restoration of autonomy, but as demonstrated by her internal dialogue surrounding her mother and her childhood, Lucy is never truly free from her past's influence. Instead, the distance created by the lens acts as a form of protection, forming an illusion of complete separation. In the same manner as the camera lens, Lucy's avoidance of her mother's letters represents the same type of separation. Moving to America and the physical distance between Lucy and her homeland functions in the same way. Lucy's efforts in widening the gap between herself and her past are her attempt to redefine her identity, straying away from the loss she has faced by tangibly moving in hopes that that loss will no longer define her.

Jamaica Kincaid's work tells a greater story about the human desire to identify with other people and the difficulties of defining oneself. Defying the idea of individuality, Lucy demonstrates how it is through a multitude of influences that one truly finds their identity. People desire a feeling of autonomy, but no one is truly an independent thinker. In the formation of identity, Lucy takes on parts of her mother, of Mariah, of her lovers, and of the culture that surrounds her. This search for identity is exemplified as Lucy grapples with her name, Lucy Josephine Potter. A name, something that is out of one's control, is an integral part of identity and can tell a story. The name Josephine reveals Lucy's mother's hopes and desires, as she was named for a prosperous family member that later lost his riches, and the name Potter reveals the history of her family with the trauma of slavery that they endured. Growing up Lucy disliked her name and called herself other names, such as Emily, Charlotte, Jane" after the "authoresses whose books [she] loved" (149). Lucy's identification with other names further shows the importance of external influences, whether that be the people she interacts with daily or the people that she looks up to, in defining herself. After her mother finally reveals the origins of Lucy's name, Lucy expresses:

I went from feeling burdened and old and tired to feeling light, new, clean. I was transformed from failure to triumph. It was the moment I knew who I was...I knew well the Book of Genesis, and from time to time I had been made to memorize parts of Paradise Lost. The stories of the fallen were well known to me, but I had not known that my own situation could even distantly be related to them. Lucy, a girl's name for Lucifer. (152)

The relationship between her name and Lucifer, a character that she knows well, further emphasizes the illusion of individuality. The origin of her name brings Lucy a sense of comfort and belonging as she is able to seemingly pinpoint and define herself in relation to someone else. By viewing herself through the lens of Lucifer, Lucy overcomes the feeling of being misplaced. Her name suddenly gives her meaning and security, providing a new perspective.

Jamaica Kincaid's writing style, which includes poetic elements, serves as a device for enforcing the overarching themes of identity, loss, and betrayal. As Simmons points out, Kincaid's use of rhythmic repetition in Lucy has the power to both mesmerize readers and act as a symbol for developing themes (Simmons, Jamaica 472). Kincaid utilizes this rhythm when she writes:

I used to be nineteen; I used to live in the household of Lewis and Mariah, and I used to be the girl who took care of their four children; I used to stand over the children, four girls, at the street corner, waiting for the spotlight to change color; I used to sit in the kitchen, with the inevitable sun

streaming through the window, with Mariah, drinking coffee she learned to make in France, and trying to explain to myself, by speaking Mariah, how I got to feel the way I even now feel.... (137).

The list-like form Kincaid uses causes readers to reflect on elements of Lucy's life that she is preparing to leave behind. The repetition of "Here again we see a detailed accounting of all that is soon to be left forever, as if this is a way of continuing to have those things which are one's life, even as one prepares for depart" (Simmons, Jamaica 472). Like the teachings of her mother and her childhood experiences which she has left behind, there is a recognition that although there is loss, these moments have contributed to Lucy's formation of identity. In a broader context, Kincaid's writing often contains contradictions within itself (Simmons Jamaica). Difficulty in categorizing Kincaid as a writer, reveals the many facets of a person as she is not just defined to Caribbean, Black, or feminist literature genres.

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