
Celebrating the Ambivalent Britishness: Reading Andrea Levy's *Small Island* (2004) from Bakhtin's Carnival Theory

Jiaxin YANG,
School of English and International Studies
Beijing Foreign Studies University, China.
Corresponding email: jiaxinyang@bfsu.edu.cn

ARTICLE DATA

Received: 28 July 2023
Accepted: 19 Sept. 2023
Volume: 3
Issue: (3) Summer 2023
DOI: 10.54848/bjtll.v3i3.66

ABSTRACT

Small Island (2004) is British Jamaican writer Andrea Levy's representative work. By focusing on two British White and Black couples' experiences before and after WWII, the author reexamines the so-called canonical Britishness and subverts the myth of the British Empire. Based on Bakhtin's carnival theory, this paper analyzes the process of the Windrush generation's identity construction after the 1948 British Nationality Act. This paper argues that *Small Island* is a post-WWII carnival celebrating the ambivalent national identity wherein the traditional Britishness is challenged through the characters' ridiculous experiences, the mocking language toward self and other, and their efforts into claiming space in Mother country. By doing so, the Windrush generation breaks the homogeneous national identity while endowing Britishness with new meanings and celebrating the forthcoming exclusive society.

KEYWORDS

Bakhtin; carnival theory; Small Island; Britishness; Windrush generation.

1. Introduction

In 1948, the Empire Windrush ploughed through the heavy waves carrying 492 hopeful and ambitious passengers, largely ex-servicemen who served for their Mother Country England during WWII, from Kingston, Jamaica to London. At the same time, however, the colossal ship of the British Empire that "sailed through the gateway of history" (Mike and Philips 1998) was forced to face an irresistible reassessment of the postwar national identity. *Small Island* (2004), Andrea Levy's prize-winning novel, which was later adapted as a two-part television drama by BBC, is set against this backdrop by intertwining the experiences of Hortense, Gilbert, Queenie, and Bernard before and after WWII to reevaluate the canonical Britishness (Laursen 2012).

Small Island (2004) is distinctively characterized by humor as Andrea Levy sees it as an important part of the human condition through which discloses the real humanity in people. And even when instructing the adaptation of the novel, Levy has taken pains to remind the creators that this story is, in fact, “a comedy of sorts” (qtd. in Shumway 2018). Considering the festive atmosphere brought by the light narration and the sometimes-amusing encounters of the major characters at the critical moments of WWII, this paper will apply Bakhtin’s carnival theory to explore how laughter-tinted characters, language, and space influence the sense of postwar British identity in *Small Island* (2004). Among the existing literature, little has been done to study this novel as carnivalesque literature, and most of which has merely touched upon the fragmented elements of Bakhtin’s carnival theory indirectly, including the symbolic inescapable festive atmosphere, the dialectical relationship between old and new, the prevalence of laughter as well as its power in redefining Britishness. First, the braided narrative (Zhang 2014) characterized by what Bakhtin calls polyphony in *Small Island* (2004) creates a festive atmosphere that transgresses time and space by bringing not only immigrants’ stories, but also the tales of British Whites who live with the Windrush generation (Andermahr 2019). By intertwining and unifying the four characters’ experiences, the novel displays an irrevocable torrent of new situations and experiences caused by the British Nationality Act that overwhelms everyone living in postwar Britain (Pérez). Besides, as a typical postcolonial writing, *Small Island* (2004) presents the strength to reconstruct British identity by rewriting the untold stories as identity heavily relies on the production of past memories (Ellis 2012; Anderson 1983), which demonstrates the typical carnival spirit, that is, subverting the official truth while celebrating the new birth. Further, several studies have been done focusing on the role of laughter in the novel. For instance, Shumway (2018) notices that the permeated laughter in *Small Island* (2004) is ambivalent-oriented because it unifies the West Indian immigrants and the British Whites based on the shared experiences created by humor, while at the same time challenging the questionable power relations by using laughter as a buff zone. Therefore, laughter is exploited by Levy as her “Trojan horse in the war against hatred” (Shumway 2018) which echoes Bakhtin’s ideas of laughter. Similarly, in *A History of English Laughter*, Manfred Pfister (2002) identifies the dual nature of laughter and pays special attention to women’s laughter in its power to unveil the truth. Apart from analyzing laughter, the most important element comprising Bakhtin’s carnival theory, some scholars have paid attention to the functions of space in *Small Island* (2004), the symbolic square market where takes place the folk carnival in Bakhtin’s theory. The significance of homemaking in Britain by immigrants represented by Gilbert and Hortense is acknowledged because they have successfully turned the conventional private space into a site of resistance, fighting against the discrimination imposed by Bernard (Evelyn 2013), the representative of the uncompromising racists (Andermahr 2019) in *Small Island* (2004). Therefore, Kim

Evelyn (2013) contends that through the tumultuous arguments in number twenty-one Nevern Street between the Black tenants and White hosts as well as the neighbors, the West Indians manage to claim their due space and identity in Britain.

As the previous studies suggest, although none of which treats *Small Island* (2004) as carnivalesque literature, their analysis evinces the obvious carnival spirit in the novel and thus provides convincing bases for this paper to read it from a different perspective. Therefore, this study will explore the novel from Bakhtin's carnival theory and argues that *Small Island* (2004) is a post-WWII carnival celebrating the ambivalent national identity wherein the canonical Britishness is challenged by characters' ridiculous experiences, the mocking language toward Britain, and minorities' efforts to claim a space.

2. Bakhtin's Carnival Theory

Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) is a Russian literary theorist and philosopher of language who put forward the influential carnival theory by analyzing the works of Rabelais, the fifteenth-century French writer. According to Bakhtin (1984), the nonofficial-oriented carnival can be dated back to ancient Greece and Rome and during that time people were licensed a "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and the established order" (p. 10) to celebrate the joy and harvest brought by Dionysus, the god of grape-harvest and winemaking. For Bakhtin (1984), the strength of carnival lies in its great potential to involve all the populace to stand on the opposite side of the official feast, characterized by the usage of "the past to consecrate the present" (p. 9), and plant the seeds of change (Nekrashevich 2019) in people's minds even though it may take a considerable amount of time.

As observed by Bakhtin (1984), although the practice of carnival has either been "incorporated into the official calendar" (p. 33) or canceled after the Renaissance, the spirit of carnival is indestructible and gradually finds its expression in literature, that is, the "carnivalization of literature" (p. 122). Similar to the folk practices, Bakhtin points out that many symbolic performances including the risible rituals, the filthy language, and the chaotic space that are heavily tinted with laughter can be found in literary works that contain the carnival spirit. Bakhtin identifies that the primary act in the carnival is the imitation and the mockery of the crowning and the subsequent de-crowning of the carnival king in which the folk power temporarily replaces the secular authority and then returns to the normal (Wickens 2022). However, Bakhtin (1984) emphasizes that the symbolic coronation and de-crowning are not "finalized" (p. 166) but in a highly dialectical state in which de-crowning indicates the coming of the next crowning, just as people who are crowned are doomed to be de-crowned. As a result, the constant comic shift between the two symbolizes the inevitability of subversion and reconstruction, presenting a highly inclusive carnival spirit of alternating,

eliminating the old and creating the new. Apart from the persiflage of the carnival king, Bakhtin (1984) contends that other moral-violated rituals like changing dress, beating, or making jokes are also important auxiliary rituals in adding subversive flavor to the carnival.

Language characterized by humor is another distinctive feature marked by the carnival spirit. According to Bakhtin (1984), the rigid requirements and strict taboos attached to daily language are weakened in the jubilant atmosphere while being replaced by the frank and amusing civilian discourses like unbearable shouting, scolding, curses, sworn oaths, and even drunken nonsense. Like the comic rituals aforementioned, laughable carnival language also has a dual nature and can be exploited as a weapon to confront the so-called truth that dominates the mainstream discourse (Bakhtin 1984). On the one hand, carnival laughter can be created by light jokes carrying wholehearted excitement and happiness while at the same time being the biting jeer, taunt, irony, and sarcasm, taking the aim at the canonical sublimity like the established truth and power and also pinpointing the current crises (Lachmann 1988). Besides, the ambivalence of laughter is also seen from the fact that people who tease others are at the same time the targets of being laughed at. Therefore, Bakhtin concludes that just like the shift between the coronation and de-crowning, carnival laughter is a combination of affirmation and negation which buries the death while celebrating the birth (Sun 2018).

Space is another important element in Bakhtin's carnival theory as it is where the festival is held which attracts people from different stratifications and thus amasses the power to create the possible community to resist the established hierarchies. In literary works, Bakhtin points out that all possible places as long as they gather people around can be counted as the symbolic market squares that appear in actual carnival practices (Wickens 2002). For instance, places like "streets, taverns, bathhouses, ship decks, kitchens, and even living rooms, will add a sense of carnival flavor" (Bakhtin 1984) to literary works.

3. Playing the Game of Crowning and De-crowning

As aforementioned, Bakhtin regards the comical ritual of the constant shift of crowning and de-crowning as the primary carnival act which degrades authority while creating spaces for alternatives (Robinson 2011). In *Small Island* (2004), all four major characters are teased by this amusing ritual at different levels, and by arranging such ups and downs, Andrea Levy manages to expose the stories hidden in the shadow of glorious Britain and thus debunks the myth of Britishness.

The typical one being ridiculed throughout *Small Island* (2004) is Hortense whose coronation and de-crowning reflect the immigrants' gradual disenchantment with Mother Country and the subsequent growth of self-awareness. Before she comes to London, Hortense's growth coincides with the typical trajectory of

the young king or queen who is only qualified with coronation on condition that he or she has suffered hardships. Although born as an illegitimate child and raised by relatives, Hortense regards her warm-honey-colored skin as a special birthmark endowing her with a “particular sense of identity” (Laursen 2012) which predestines her forthcoming “golden life” (Levy 2004, p. 38). Maintaining such delicate superiority, Hortense manages to overcome all the hardships she encounters in her life. For example, when receiving teacher training in Kingston, she has to bear the early morning cold shower, learn proper etiquette, and study hard under the guidance of strict teachers. Finally, these efforts pay back to her, reaching a highly symbolic coronation ritual when Hortense recites Henry V’s *Once More unto the Breach*, the bold speech delivered by the King when rallying his troops before the enemies’ siege (Abate 2001). Hortense’s passionate while restrained speech characterized by elegant English and decent manners make it a queen’s speech on her coronation day and since then, she has become the focus of the college for several weeks and has also been praised for her delicate cooking skills. At this moment, it seems that Hortense, as a newly-crowned young queen, is ready to sail from Jamaica to Britain, a country that “will need to be prepared for your [Hortense’s] arrival” (Levy 2004, p. 105). However, guided by the carnival spirit, Hortense is embarrassed by the de-crowning game as soon as she arrives in London. In the deck, instead of seeing Gilbert “waving hand with joy at the young bride coming at last to England” (Levy 2004, p. 14), Hortense is mistaken by a breathless woman as someone else and even has difficulty making the driver understand her perfect English, the one that wins her the honor to ring the bell for the school for a week. Moreover, the young queen is thwarted by the fact that the house Gilbert rents has no bell that rings the “ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling” (Levy 2004, p. 11) sound in her long-time reverie. What is worse, Hortense is further refused by Britain as she has to clean the floor “on her hands and knees” (Levy 2004, p. 318) and her once-praised cooking skill is horrible enough to scare people away. Similar to her coronation, Hortense’s symbolic de-crowning also happens in front of a crowd when she is mercilessly refused by a White woman concluding that Hortense just cannot teach in this country. Startled and lost, Hortense catches herself in a cupboard and all the women laugh at her. The entering of the cleaning cupboard, to some extent, connotes that Hortense now is dragged by the British institutional racism from the throne and is made to play the role of Cinderella. For Hortense, this humiliating experience is a turning moment when she finally accepts the hostile reality in Britain (Pérez 2010).

Apart from playing the cruel joke on Hortense, Bernard is another being mocked through the carnival ritual of crowning and de-crowning, indicating that Britishness is not just limited to heterosexual Whites. In *Small Island* (2004), Bernard first appears as a king living peacefully in Earls Court, the symbol of the solid and perennial British Empire characterized by strong masculinity (Fang 2012), with his observant

white wife and WWI veteran father. However, as the narration continues, Bernard is gradually disclosed as an impotent “backward” (Levy 2004, p. 253) and even a recreant by his awkward intercourse with Queenie, his idiotic behavior when counting money, and his dirty pants wet by urine when gets lost with Maxi during the service. What is more, as the major White British male in the story, the heterosexuality and masculinity Bernard represents are more or less undermined by his ambiguous relationship with Maxi when they are caught in one blanket which makes Bernard nervous and feel that the pressed bare flesh makes their “bodies wrapped as one” (Levy 2004, p. 358), an ambiguous description of Bernard’s imaginary intercourse with his male comrade. And it is after such skin-to-skin contact that Bernard rarely confesses that it is his fault that not bringing a blanket. In his later experiences, however, Bernard’s British masculinity is temporarily bolstered when he gives up the Burma Star to insist on the truth but is soon degraded by his feminine-featured personality of extreme sensibility and desperation of his illness, which results in his two more years away from home after the war.

From the bittersweet encounters of Hortense and Bernard, on the one hand, *Small Island* (2004) discloses the traumatic experiences of the Windrush generation who bears unparalleled loyalty but is refused by Mother Country and the dark sides of the war while at the same time mocking the narrowness and hypocrisy of the homogenous national identity. However, as Bakhtin suggests (1984), the ritual of coronation and de-crowning is a constantly shifting process through which cultivates new possibilities. Similarly, in *Small Island* (2004), Hortense does not end as a miserable maid but determines to establish their diaspora with Gilbert, indicating the potential of the next coronation or the new life created by immigrants themselves in Britain. Likewise, Bernard’s unconscious admiration of Michael indicates the possibility of a more inclusive national identity.

4. Mocking the Self and the Other

Laughter, the essential clue that threads all elements throughout the carnival, also works as a weapon to confront the conventional Britishness in *Small Island* (2004). To begin with, laughter is exploited by characters to create a safe space to openly voice their critiques toward undesirable power relations (Shumway 2018). In *Small Island* (2004), Gilbert is seen frequently ridicules authority through his quick wit. For example, in face of the unfulfilled ambition in England, Gilbert feels pitiful that on the list of the celestial book, beside the name of Gilbert Joseph the Almighty only writes one word — “driver” (Levy 2004, p. 146). And when reminding the officer that Mother Country has promised him to become a “wireless operator/air-gunner or flight engineer” (Levy 2004, p. 147), the officer only corrects Gilbert that “This is a war, Joseph, not a shop” (Levy 2004, p. 147). On the surface, Gilbert seems to lightly mock himself

behaving like an innocent child complaining about his bad luck not being favored by God and his demanding requirements for Mother Country. However, by “juxtaposing the low and the high” (James 2007), that is, God and secular Joseph, superior officer and inferior airman, Gilbert conveys his complaint toward British authority, the symbolic God among the West Indian immigrants, for her hypocrisy in calling upon her children to reconstruct the country while at the same time repulsing them because of xenophobia (Healy 2000). Similarly, Gilbert’s mockery toward the homogenous Britishness is seen in his words of comfort to Hortense when her cries attract lots of attention. Satisfied with Hortense’s ignorance of the busybody, Gilberts comments that “Good, because you know what? The King has the same problem” (Levy 2004, p. 463). Once again, in the light joke, Gilbert puts the high and low together but turns Hortense, the representative of immigrants, into the one like the King who bears special missions while the Whites the ordinary populace. By using the safe and relaxing space created by laughter, Gilbert enshrines the immigrants and thus breaks the clear boundaries used to separate the self and the other and also pays due recognition to the contributions made by British West Indians.

On the other, humorous language used in carnival also helps challenge the outside officialdom by creating a second world organized based on laughter through which people enter the “utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance” (Bakhtin 1984). In *Small Island* (2004), laughter plays its role by first removing the hierarchy and distance between the so-called different ethnic groups. When Gilbert first meets Queenie after returning lost Arthur to the hostess, Queenie is quite indifferent to Gilbert and has no intention to invite the black stranger into her house. However, after some efforts, Gilbert successfully makes Queenie laugh whose noise “could make a pig sit up and look for his mummy” (Levy 2004, p. 171) by complimenting that she is lucky to have a father-in-law as a wedding gift rather than a “toothless rancorous old mother-in-law” (Levy 2004, p. 171), a traditional practice back in Jamaica. Through the laughter, the taboo between the black male and white female is easily broken and a more intimate relationship between human beings is sprouting. Influenced by Gilbert, Queenie is delighted and humorously responds to the question of whether her husband would mind the former’s entering by saying that “I’ll just go and write to him. He’s in India. Should get a reply within the year. D’you mind waiting” (Levy 2004, p. 172). Further, Gilbert’s quick wit also invites Queenie to join him in ridiculing the canonical British culture and even wins her over as an ally to fight against racism. For example, Queenie laughs at Gilbert’s interesting conversation with the waitress about the meaning of the word “off” and is not angry being mocked by Gilbert that her typical British fashion of saying “I don’t mind if I do” is “one long tortuous way of saying yes” (Levy 2004, p. 147). This episode suggests laughter’s power in creating a carnival space that encourages free conversation and mutual understanding in a potentially inclusive Britain. Further, when

the American GI provokes Gilbert in the cinema Queenie stands up cursing the GI to “put a sock” (Levy 2004, p. 186) in his mouth, and tries to safeguard Gilbert by grasping him tightly.

5. Claiming the Hearth and the Nation

In Bakhtin’s carnival theory, space that gathers a massive scale of people is significant because it is where breaks the hierarchy by creating the possibility of free contact among people from all stratifications. In *Small Island* (2004), the conventional truth of Britishness is first challenged by the performances of Caribbean soldiers and White British on the battlefield, a space that also features the carnival spirit (Wickens 2002). By depicting the battlefield experiences of British Whites and Caribbean soldiers, Andrea Levy presents the laughing side of the serious history and thus mocks the conventional gilded images of White soldiers (Wickens 2002). In mainstream discourse, British White servicemen are depicted as heroes both before and after the war but seldom does the public see the silhouettes of West Indians (McCartney 2014). However, in *Small Island* (2004), White soldiers are teased for their incompetency in occupying critical positions in the war. For example, representative of White servicemen Bernard is, in fact, not willing to fight for his Mother Country and he enlists in ARF only to prove his masculinity to people around him. What is more ironic is the fact that, according to Bernard’s narrative, these White soldiers seldom confront the enemies face-to-face but keep avoiding the latter or making troubles within the troops. For example, the most horrible things Bernard has experienced during WWII might be the unexpected encounter with an injured Japanese calling his friend in Burma and the strange fire that killed his comrade, Maxi. However, in the above two scenarios, White soldiers are merely either cowards or troublemakers who present no relations with the grand narrative of the war. Moreover, other comic scenes related to White soldiers include Bernard’s embarrassing shower experiences being laughed at by Burma locals, the filthy discussion about sex positions within the troop, and Bernard’s humiliating prison life. By stark contrast, Caribbean servicemen represented by Gilbert demonstrate firm loyalty and passion to protect their Mother Country even though they are only allocated to unimportant positions. However, the experiences related to them are more masculine-related like Gilbert’s direct confrontation with racist GIs and his task to deliver warfare materials although it only ends with frustration. To further celebrate the heterogenous Britishness, at the end of *Small Island*, Andrea Levy (2004) quotes Winston Churchill’s wartime speech, “Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few” (p. 531), once again challenges the canonical Britishness by paying due recognition to the contribution made by immigrants who are long been marginalized by the official discourse.

Apart from challenging the power relations in the public sphere of the battlefield, Andrea Levy also

turns Earls Court into a site in which the established order is resisted and even collapsed by immigrants' determination to claim a space in it (Evelyn 2013). The argument concerning the house culminates when Bernard returns from war finding that Queenie has violated his will to rent the house to the colored. As an "uncompromising racist" (Andermahr 2019), by no means can Bernard take Blacks into his house and thus is determined to drive them out of his territory. However, in face of the Black tenants, Bernard seems to be a clown who merely makes unreasonable demands. For example, when being asked by Kenneth why he is in such a hurry to expel the tenants, Bernard's "mouth opens a little but nothing comes through" (Levy 2004, p. 443). Even though they are not British by conventional meaning, these immigrants regard themselves as being endowed with equal rights as the Whites to be respected in Earls Court because fighting for their rights in this house not merely means securing a physical place to reside in but relates to their status in Britain. In other words, protecting their rights in this house is also a gesture to claim a space in postwar England. When leaving Earls Court, Gilbert is crowned as a king asking Bernard to reflect on his behavior, "You wan' know what your white skin make you, man? It make you white. That is all, man. White. No better, no worse than me — just white" (Levy 2004, p. 525). At the end of the story, Gilbert and Hortense begin their new life in Winston's house which is exclusively for immigrants and Hortense will install a bell, the symbol of the longing diaspora, ringing ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling in front of the door, indicating immigrants' determination in claiming their space and celebrating a heterogenous British identity in the near future.

6. Conclusion

Small Island (2004) deals with a critical period of history when the canonical sense of Britishness that immigrants "supposedly cannot appreciate, understand or integrate" (Evelyn 2013) into Britain is put into question. By reading *Small Island* (2004) as a carnivalesque writing, this thesis suggests that Andrea Levy presents a postwar irresistible carnival in which the ambivalent national identity is celebrated through the comic experiences of the four characters, the mocking language toward the British myth, as well as the claiming behaviors of Caribbean immigrants. By doing so, a new sense of British that includes both males and females, Whites and the colored, heterosexual and homosexual is successfully constructed, paying due recognition to those who comprise the history of the nation.

References

- Abate, C. S. (2001). "“Once More unto the Breach”: Katharine’s Victory in “Henry V”." *Early Theatre* 4: 73-85.
- Andermahr, S. (2019). "Decolonizing Cultural Memory in Andrea Levy’s Small Island." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 55 (4): 555-569.
- Anderson, Benedict. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Ellis, A. E. (2012). "Identity as Cultural Production in Andrea Levy’s Small Island." *EnterText* ("Special Issue on Andrea Levy") 9: 69-83.
- Evelyn, K. (2013). "Claiming a Space in the Thought-I-Knew-You-Place: Migrant Domesticity, Diaspora, and Home in Andrea Levy’s Small Island." *South Atlantic Review* 78 (3/4): 129-149.
- Fang, H. (2012). "Andrea Levy’s Three “Dialogues” with the British Society: An Interpretation of *Small Island*." *Contemporary Foreign Languages Studies* 10: 69-73.
- James, C. (2007) "“You’ll Soon Get Used to Our Language”: Language, Parody and West Indian Identity in Andrea Levy’s Small Island." *Journal of West Indian Literature* 5 (1): 1-14.
- Healy, M. S. (2000). "Colour, Climate, and Combat: The Caribbean Regiment in the Second World War." *The International History Review* 22 (1): 65-85.
- Lachmann, R., R. Eshelman, and M. Davis. (1988). "Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture as Counter-culture." *Cultural Critique* 11: 115-152.
- Laursen, O. B. (2012). "“Telling Her a Story”: Remembering Trauma in Andrea Levy’s Writing." *EnterText* ("Special Issue on Andrea Levy") 9: 53-68.
- Levy, Andrea. 2004. *Small Island*. London: Headline.
- McCartney, H. B. (2014). "The First World War Soldier and His Contemporary Image in Britain." *International Affairs* 90 (2): 299-315.
- Nekrashevich, Y. O. (2019). *Language of Carnival: How Language and the Carnavalesque Challenge Hegemony*. Diss. University of South Florida.
- Pérez, F. I. (2010). "(Re)Mapping London: Gender and Racial Relations in Andrea Levy’s Small Island." *Interactions* 19 (1-2): 27-40.
- Pfister, M. (2002). *A History of English Laughter: Laughter from Beowulf to Beckett and Beyond*. Netherlands: Brill.

- Philips, M. and P. Trevor. (1998). *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-racial Britain*. London: HarperCollins.
- Renfrew, A. (2015). *Mikhail Bakhtin*. New York: Routledge.
- Robinson, A. (2011). "Bakhtin: Carnival against Capital, Carnival against Power." *Ceasefire*, 1-11.
- Shumway, J. H. (2018). "'Laughter is Part of My War Effort': The Harmonizing and Humanizing Influences of Laughter in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*." *Theses and Dissertations*, 1-27.
- Sun, L. (2018). "Carnavalesque: A Keyword in Critical Theory." *Foreign Literature* 3: 94-104.
- Wickens, G. G. (2002). *Thomas Hardy, Monism, and the Carnival Tradition: The One and the Many in the Dynasts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Zhang, F. (2014). "Writing 'Our' Shared History: A Review of Andrea Levy's *Small Island* and *The Long Song*." *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Language* 37 (4): 136-142.