

Between Borders and Bodies: The Immigrant Experience in *Queenie*

DR. GİZEM ALTIN DENİZ*

Öz

Bu çalışma, Candice Carty-Williams'ın 2019 tarihli romanı *Queenie*'yi kesişimsellik merceğinden inceleyerek, göçmen kadın bedenlerinin temsiline ve geçişken yapısına odaklanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Roman, göçmen bedenini kimlik, ırk ve cinsiyet arasındaki sınırların bulanıklaştığı kültürel bir kesişim alanı olarak vurgulamaktadır. Jamaikalı-İngiliz bir kadın olan Queenie, diasporik miras ile çağdaş İngiliz toplumu arasındaki gerginlikleri temsil ederek, göçmen kültürünün hem yaşanmış hem de materyal bir deneyim olarak nasıl var olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu çalışma, göçmen bedenlerin bu ikilikleri nasıl müzakere ettiğini, kültürel gelenekler ve yeni ortamlar arasında nasıl köprü görevi gördüğünü araştırmaktadır. Kesişimsel bir çerçeve aracılığıyla, Queenie'nin bedeninin kültürel geçirgenliğin bir metaforu haline geldiği, ırkçılık, cinsiyetçilik ve toplumsal beklentiler gibi dış güçlerin içselleştirilmiş kimlik mücadeleleriyle etkileşime girme yollarını yakaladığı savunulmaktadır. Dahası, roman göçmen deneyiminin yalnızca bireylerin hayatlarını değil aynı zamanda yerli nüfusun algılarını da nasıl yeniden şekillendirdiğini ve kültürel dönüşümü nasıl teşvik ettiğini göstermektedir. Roman, göçmen bedenini hem savunmasız hem de dirençli olarak sunarak, kültürel müzakerenin fiziksel ve duygusal bedellerine ışık tutmaktadır. Sonuç olarak *Queenie*, göçmen kültürünün yalnızca bir anlatı değil, aynı zamanda çok kültürlü toplumların ve diaspora kimliğinin çok eklemli dinamiklerini yansıtan toplumsal ve somut bir olgu olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: diaspora, göçmen bedenler, kesişimsellik, Jamaikalı-İngiliz kimliği, materyalizm.

Sınırlar ve Bedenler Arasında: *Queenie* Romanında Göçmen Deneyimleri

Abstract

This study aims to examine Candice Carty-Williams' 2019 novel *Queenie* through the lens of intersectionality, focusing on the representation of immigrant female bodies and their porous nature. The novel depicts the immigrant body as a site of cultural intersection, where the boundaries between identity, race, and gender blur. Queenie, as a Jamaican-British woman, embodies the tensions between diasporic heritage and contemporary British society, displaying how immigrant culture exists as both a lived and material experience. This study explores how immigrant bodies negotiate these dualities, serving as bridges between cultural traditions and new environments. Through an intersectional framework, it is argued that Queenie's body becomes a metaphor for cultural permeability, capturing the ways in which external forces like racism, sexism, and societal

* Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, e-posta: altin.gizem@hotmail.com, Orcid: 0000-0002-1866-1734

Gönderilme Tarihi: 13 Ocak 2025

Kabul Tarihi: 25 Nisan 2025

expectations interact with internalized identity struggles. Moreover, the novel demonstrates how the immigrant experience reshapes not only the lives of individuals but also the perceptions of the native population, fostering cultural transformation. By presenting the immigrant body as both vulnerable and resilient, the novel sheds light on the physical and emotional tolls of cultural negotiation. Ultimately, *Queenie* illustrates how immigrant culture is not only a narrative but a social and embodied phenomenon, reflecting the complex dynamics of multicultural societies and diasporic identity.

Keywords: diaspora, immigrant bodies, intersectionality, Jamaican-British identity, materiality.

INTRODUCTION

Candice Carty-Williams' 2019 novel *Queenie* provides a powerful exploration of diasporic identity, intersectionality, and the immigrant body. Centered on Queenie Jenkins, a Jamaican-British woman living in London, the novel delves into the complexities of navigating dual cultural influences in a predominantly white society. Through Queenie's struggles with mental health, relationships, and career, Carty-Williams vividly portrays the tensions between heritage and assimilation. As Queenie struggles with the expectations of her Jamaican family and the challenges of British societal norms, her story becomes a poignant representation of cultural negotiation, highlighting the resilience and vulnerability of the immigrant experience.

Research Focus

This study seeks to investigate the central role of the immigrant body in multicultural societies, as depicted in Candice Carty-Williams' novel. Through Queenie's experiences as a Jamaican-British woman, the novel raises essential questions about the immigrant body's representation as both a site of cultural negotiation and a metaphor for broader societal tensions. What does the immigrant body symbolize in contexts where race, gender, and cultural identity intersect? How does Queenie's body navigate external forces like racism and sexism while simultaneously contending with internal struggles tied to heritage and self-identity? To address these questions, this paper adopts intersectionality and postcolonial theories to guide its analysis. Queenie's lived experience includes both the vulnerabilities and resilience of immigrant identity. By exploring these themes, the study aims to uncover the ways in which Queenie stands up against the dynamics of multiculturalism and diasporic existence.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this analysis draws on intersectionality and postcolonial theory to explore identity and cultural negotiation. Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality highlights how individuals experience oppression based on overlapping group memberships explaining that "group membership can make people vulnerable to various forms of bias" (Crenshaw, 2008, p. 3). Structural intersectionality occurs when multiple burdens interact, creating "another dimension of disempowerment" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1249). Similarly, Patricia Hill Collins's concept of the "outsider within" shows how marginality offers a "special standpoint on self, family,

and society” (Collins, 1986, p. S14), allowing Black women to produce critical analyses of “race, class, and gender” (Collins, 1986, p. S14). As Collins explains, the “interlocking nature of oppression” (Collins, 1986, p. S19) plays a crucial role in configuring identities. Postcolonial theory, particularly Homi Bhabha’s concept of the Third Space, addresses the “fluid and constantly negotiated” nature of cultural identity (Bhabha, 1994, p. 51). It prevents identities from “settling into primordial polarities” and allows for the emergence of “complex figures of difference and identity” (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 1, 4). Sara Ahmed complements this with her theory of embodied otherness, emphasizing how cultural encounters inscribe societal norms on bodies (Ahmed, 2000, p. 23). Additionally, Naglaa Abou-Agag underlines the Third Space as a site for “moving on with human history” and redefining cultural symbols (Abou-Agag, 2015, pp. 28, 37). Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens for analyzing identity, resilience, and cultural hybridity.

Objectives

This essay analyzes Candice Carty-Williams’s *Queenie* within the framework of intersectionality, cultural hybridity, and resilience. The introduction establishes a contextual foundation, situating *Queenie* within postcolonial literature. Subsequent sections delve into intersectionality, exploring her identity as a Black British woman through Crenshaw’s and Collins’ theories. Diasporic tensions and cultural hybridity are examined using Bhabha’s Third Space and Ahmed’s embodied otherness. The narrative’s exploration of resilience highlights Queenie’s self-reclamation amidst societal pressures. Finally, the conclusion draws out the broader societal implications of *Queenie*, positioning the novel as a significant contribution to postcolonial literature, fostering multicultural empathy and confronting societal norms.

1. INTERSECTIONALITY IN QUEENIE

Kimberlé Crenshaw’s concept of intersectionality shows how overlapping systems of oppression – such as race, gender, and class – determine the lived experiences of marginalized individuals. Crenshaw explains that intersectionality reveals the ways in which “race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s employment experiences” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). To capture the complexity of these experiences, race and gender must be examined in relation to one another, rather than treated as separate categories. As Crenshaw notes, “tracing the categories to their intersections” disrupts tendencies to view race and gender as separable (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). Intersectionality serves as a tool to address the marginalization experienced by minority women. Crenshaw argues that failing to consider intersectional dynamics contributes to “failure, frustration, and burnout” in addressing these issues effectively (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1251). Moreover, systems of race, gender, and class domination often converge, and intervention strategies that overlook these dynamics will be “of limited help” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1246). Queenie’s professional life provides a real-world example of how these dynamics operate. At the Daily Read, she faces racial bias that undermines her contributions and amplifies her feelings of alienation. Despite her initial goals to “be a force for change, and for representation,” she finds herself restricted to filing listings and performing minor tasks, demonstrating a lack of respect for her potential (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 73). It is compounded by her colleague’s inability to

accommodate her needs, as seen when she struggles to find makeup products suitable for her skin tone: "Being the only black girl in the office, I had to make do with liquid eyeliner from Zainab in digital and some mascara from Josey (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 77).

The systemic exclusion and tokenization Queenie endures in her daily life emerge through these experiences. Additionally, her manager's criticism exacerbates these feelings. Queenie is told, "You don't come in on time... you aren't focused, you aren't committed," which ignores the systemic barriers affecting her ability to thrive (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 224). The complexities found in Queenie's story can be observed in Crenshaw's assertion about intersectionality in which he defines it as "the multidimensionality of marginalized subjects' lived experiences" (Nash, 2008, p. 2). Intersectionality, therefore, provides a critical lens for understanding the overlapping oppressions Queenie faces in her professional life, offering a way to analyze how systemic biases contribute to her marginalization. Through the concept of the "outsider within," Patricia Hill Collins draws attention to the distinct sociocultural position from which marginalized identities engage with society. Collins notes that Black women's marginality often leads them to develop "Black feminist thought that conveys a special standpoint on self, family, and society" (Collins, 1986, p. S14). Such duality, being "privy to some of the most intimate secrets of white society, while simultaneously knowing they 'could never belong,'" captures the persistent tension experienced in predominantly white spaces (Collins, 1986, p. S14). Despite these obstacles, marginality provides the "ability of the 'stranger' to see patterns that may be more difficult for those immersed in the situation to see" (Collins, 1986, S15). Queenie Jenkins demonstrates this dual consciousness. As a Jamaican British woman, she constantly straddles "two cultures and [does] not feel entirely comfortable in either" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 321). Her relationships reveal the racial dynamics reconfiguring her sense of belonging. For instance, when discovering her ex-partner has a new girlfriend, Queenie remarks, "Course it's a white girl. But we knew it was going to be, didn't we?" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 213). Her identity as a Black woman is filtered through racialized assumptions, especially in personal contexts. Additionally, Zubair (2015) states that identity is "fluid, changing, and context-dependent" (p. 901). Queenie's experiences expose how societal structures impose overlapping disadvantages tied to her race and ethnicity, with intersecting forms of marginalization leaving a tangible impact on her everyday reality (Zubair, 2015, p. 900).

Avtar Brah's concept of home as a contested and fluid space captures how diasporic individuals go through the tension between physical and emotional attachments. Brah asks, "When does a place of residence become 'home'? This is something with which those for whom travel constitutes a form of migrancy are inevitably confronted at some stage in their lives" (Brah, 1996, p. 2). For diasporic individuals like Queenie, home often acts as a "floating and rooted signifier," tied to narratives of the nation yet constantly shifting in meaning (Brah, 1996, p. 3). Queenie's attempts to connect with her Jamaican heritage make this tension visible. When seeking comfort in Brixton, she thinks back on gentrification: "I turned a corner and went to walk straight into the bakery, but was instead faced with a trendy burger bar" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 23). Her loss of cultural spaces intensifies the sense of alienation. Simultaneously, Queenie's struggles in Britain depict the struggles of belonging. Her economic realities force her to live with strangers, leaving her disconnected: "21K

a year wasn't going to get me anything bigger than someone's garage space" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 31). The constructed nature of belonging described in *Creole Indigeneity* emerges through similar experiences: "Creole material and metaphysical belonging (indigeneity) to the New World evolved through two intertwined and necessary phenomena" (Jackson, 2012, p. 2). Queenie's alienation speaks to the broader tension diasporic individuals face in reconciling heritage and lived realities.

2. EMBODIED OTHERNESS AND CULTURAL EXCLUSION

Sara Ahmed's theory of embodied otherness examines how cultural encounters inscribe differences onto bodies, marking them as "other." Ahmed writes, "Strangers are not simply those who are not known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, already recognized as not belonging, as being out of place" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 21). Encounters, Ahmed argues, are not isolated but instead "reopen past encounters," linking present experiences to historical and social contexts that define perceptions of otherness (Ahmed, 2000, p. 8). By detaching individuals from their lived realities, a process that Ahmed calls "stranger fetishism" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 5) reduces them to simplified, abstract figures. Queenie's body demonstrates this constructed otherness. In her relationship with Tom, his grandmother objectifies Queenie's body, describing her skin as "lovely soft brown... but lighter. Like a lovely milky coffee" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 13). Grandmother's comment intertwines colorism with fetishization, reducing Queenie's identity to a racialized aesthetic. Her alienation in predominantly white spaces further supports Ahmed's concept of proximity as exclusion. Queenie observes, "These gatherings really are as simple as 'posh people and me,'" demonstrating how cultural markers render her out of place (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 30). Puar (2007) expands on these ideas by addressing how racialized bodies are systematically excluded. She notes, "The body becomes a terrain of definable localities," pointing to the ways in which society imposes control over identities (Puar, 2015, p. 54). Puar describes a "racial dynamic as a process of value extraction," where marginalized identities are simultaneously commodified and denied full inclusion (Puar, 2015, p. 46). Additionally, Puar writes about the role of "debilitating and abjecting" processes, which not only marginalize but also define the norms of belonging (Puar, 2015, p. 46). Queenie's experiences bring these dynamics into the light, as intersecting systems of racism and sexism position her as an outsider both socially and politically.

2.1. Navigating Cultural Expectations and Identity Tensions

Queenie's identity negotiation vividly portrays the conflict between her Jamaican heritage and British social norms. Candice Carty-Williams' novel describes how cultural expectations and societal pressures create a dual tension for minority women like Queenie, a theme also explored by Emejulu and Bassel (2017). According to their research, "minority women need to navigate both material and discursive obstacles – about whose crisis counts, who can legitimately interlocate on their behalf, and who can mobilise for social justice" (pp. 88-89). Through her family, relationships, and environment, Queenie comes up against cultural pressure – most notably in her relationship with Aunt Maggie, where Jamaican traditions inform expectations of duty and identity. Maggie's superstitious warnings, such as her belief that "Gemini men... will take every single thing from you" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 10), indicate generational views that Queenie struggles to reconcile with

her modern, pragmatic mindset. Moreover, Maggie's distrust of Western medical systems, exemplified by her assertion that "IUDs in Black women [were used] to stop us getting pregnant" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 16), points to intergenerational mistrust stemming from historical injustices. In contrast, British societal norms impose racialized pressures, particularly in Queenie's relationship with Tom's family. Tom's grandmother's comment about their hypothetical children having "lovely soft brown skin, but lighter" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 13) proves the potential of how Eurocentric beauty standards can invalidate Queenie's features. Similarly, her own reflection, "What's wrong with my nose?" after Tom's grandmother's remarks about their future child's "nice straight nose" (p. 13), reveals the internalized impact of such biases. Yet, nostalgic memories, such as shopping with her grandmother in the baker filled with "sugary, and warm, and familiar" smells (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 23), display her enduring emotional connection to her roots. Similarly, Maggie's lament about her daughter's focus on "makeup and boys and fake eyelashes" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 16) points towards a generational shift in cultural values.

Stereotypes further complicate Queenie's identity. Adi's fetishization of her as a "forbidden fruit" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 25), stemming from cultural taboos, reduces her to an object of desire and shows the racial and gendered objectification she endures. At work, the subtle dynamics of exclusion surface when Darcy curtly says, "Queenie! Privacy, please!" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 20), conveying her marginalization in a predominantly white environment where she is often dismissed as an outsider. Moreover, Queenie's struggle to maintain a professional demeanor while managing her personal turmoil, such as her reluctance to discuss her "women's problems" with Aunt Maggie (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 16), signals the intersectional pressures she faces. Through these experiences, Queenie's negotiation of her identity provides a nuanced exploration of the intersection of culture, race, and societal expectations. The tensions she has to deal with are reminders of Emejulu and Bassel's (2017) analysis of the compounded precarity faced by minority women due to systemic inequalities and cultural labor. Queenie's body functions as a porous site, absorbing societal expectations and internalized struggles. Ahmed (2000) describes this permeability as central to encounters, where identities are "constituted in the 'more than one' of the encounters" (p. 7). For Queenie, societal pressures steep into her consciousness, altering her perception of self and belonging. The comments about her skin tone and nose signify the intrusion of Eurocentric ideals, transforming her internal conflicts. Commentary like these can be seen through Ahmed's assertion that such encounters "[shift] the boundaries of the familiar" (p. 7), leaving Queenie to try to balance between Jamaican familial expectations and British cultural norms.

3. THE THIRD SPACE AND HYBRID IDENTITIES

Homi Bhabha's concept of the Third Space, as outlined in *The Location of Culture*, defines a hybrid space where cultures intersect, fostering new identities and meanings. Bhabha (1994) writes, "The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4). Identities are constantly negotiated within spaces that are neither one thing nor another – an experience that can be observed in Queenie's efforts to reconcile

her Jamaican heritage with British societal norms. Queenie's identity exists within this liminal space, embodying the hybridity Bhabha describes. He asserts, "It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). Queenie lives at the intersection of Jamaican traditions and British societal pressures, where the complexities of belonging and cultural negotiation guide her experience. Furthermore, what Bhabha describes as the fluidity of identity in the "beyond" can be seen in the way Queenie continuously redefines herself. He explains, "The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past... It is the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). In trying to exist within a space of cultural convergence and transformation, Queenie struggles to reconcile her heritage and identity – an experience that captures the fluid and evolving nature of identity within the Third Space.

3.1. Diaspora and the Fluidity of Identity

Stuart Hall's essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" explores the continuous negotiation inherent in diasporic identities. Hall (1990) asserts that "Cultural identity...is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not once-and-for-all" (p. 226). In maintaining her Jamaican heritage alongside her British experiences, Queenie lives out the kind of evolving identity this perspective describes. Her identity is reconfigured by "the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (Hall, 1990, p. 225), exemplifying her attempts to balance these dual influences. Queenie struggles every day to balance family expectations and workplace dynamics. Brah's concept of 'diaspora space' stresses this tension, suggesting that "the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of staying put" defines diasporic identities (Brah, 1996, p. 205). Queenie's interactions at work, where the "lived experience of locality" (Brah, 1996, p. 188) contrasts sharply with her familial ties to Jamaican traditions. In predominantly white, modern British workplaces, Queenie experiences "the tensions and negotiations in identity and belonging" (Brah, 1996, p. 16). Moreover, Queenie's conception of home indicates Hall and Brah's ideas. For her, 'home' represents both a mythic connection to her Jamaican roots and a lived experience in Britain. Queenie's ongoing identity negotiation portrays Hall's idea that "diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (1990, p. 235). Queenie's identity is an exchange between "continuity and rupture" (Hall, 1990, p. 255), where hybrid influences reform her sense of self within these overlapping spaces. *Queenie* exemplifies hybridity in literature by creating a narrative that bridges two cultural worlds. Chambers and Watkins (2003) assert that "Postcolonial feminism complicates notions of identity by emphasizing the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural belonging, which is constantly negotiated in diasporic spaces (p. 299). Queenie constantly finds her in a space, whose borders are determined by cultural tension and dual belonging. Her dual identity becomes the vessel for the tensions described as "oscillating between the 'here' of their adopted culture and the 'there' of their cultural roots" (Chambers & Watkins, 2003, p. 301). Queenie's journey establishes her role as a bridge between these worlds. Chambers and Watkins describe how "the intersections of race, gender, and nation in postcolonial texts reveal the capacity of such narratives to serve as sites of cultural negotiation and

exchange" (2003, p. 300). Queenie feels the fragility of her acceptance in predominantly white environments, where being othered becomes a persistent reminder of her uncertain place in society: "It's best to keep a low profile when you always feel like you could be kicked out at any minute" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 83). At the same time, she responds to family expectations while also adapting Jamaican practices within British contexts, as shown in her reflection: "Living with Tom didn't count because I'd trained him up" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 77).

4. EMOTIONAL TOLL OF INTERSECTIONAL OPPRESSION

Queenie's struggles with mental health express the cumulative effects of external pressures, including racism and sexism. Bell Hooks (1981) argues that "No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women... When black people are talked about, sexism militates against the acknowledgment of the interests of black women; when women are talked about, racism militates against a recognition of black female interest" (Hooks, 1981, p. 7). Through the combined pressures of societal expectations and systemic oppression, Queenie encounters the effects of dual marginalization. The stereotype of the strong Black woman exacerbates these struggles. Hooks writes that "though black women are oppressed, they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong – and that is simply not the case" (Hooks, 1981, p. 6). Queenie's emotional vulnerability, such as when she describes standing at a bus stop, "hoping that if I did it long enough the tears that were brimming in my eyes wouldn't fall out" (Carty-Williams, 2009, p. 25), goes against the myth of "strong Black woman." Overwhelmed by a recent breakup, struggles at work, and feelings of isolation, her mental health deteriorates under the weight of societal expectations, displaying her inability to live up to this unrealistic standard. Queenie's identity is continually marked as "other" in predominantly white spaces, adding to her mental struggles. Ahmed also notes, "The stranger is 'known again' as that which has already contaminated such spaces as a threat to both property and person" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 22). Queenie's sense of alienation and vulnerability becomes especially clear when she thinks back on the numbness she feels after a traumatic hospital visit following a miscarriage: "It would have been nice to have the choice" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 17). Her lack of agency and the dismissive treatment she receives become evident in the way the system reduces her body to an object of regulation and control. Trying to make sense of the ever-changing societal perceptions requires immense emotional labor. Ahmed (2000) asserts, "The stranger's body cannot be reified as the distant body. It is our task to think through the different modes of proximity we may have to strangers in contemporary contexts" (p. 13). For Queenie, this manifests in her constant negotiation of proximity to societal norms. Her identity, rebuilt by intersecting oppressions, conveys the emotional and social toll of these interactions. In *Bodies That Matter* Judith Butler explores how societal structures determine bodies and identities – a process that parallels Queenie's own experiences of embodiment and constraint. Butler (1993) asserts, "Bodies only appear, only endure, only live within the productive constraints of certain highly gendered regulatory schemas" (p. xi). Queenie's identity and experiences are deeply constrained by these regulatory schemas, as societal norms of race, gender, and sexuality dictate how her body is perceived and treated. Butler's argument "The construction

of the human is a differential operation that produces the more and the less ‘human,’ the inhuman, the humanly unthinkable” (Butler, 1993, p. 8) helps to frame Queenie’s exclusion from full societal acceptance. Her experiences of racism and sexism, particularly in predominantly white professional and social environments, frame her as “less human” within dominant cultural narratives. Butler’s concept of boundaries and abjection further illuminates Queenie’s struggles. She writes, “The materialization of a given sex will centrally concern the regulation of identificatory practices such that the identification with the abjection of sex will be persistently disavowed” (Butler, 1993, p. 3). Queenie’s identity as a Black woman is marginalized through racialized and gendered exclusions, forcing her to occupy spaces where her body is both present and systematically othered. The constraints placed on Queenie bring the materiality of her body within the intersection of societal structures and identity. Her thoughts at a party where she is cornered as one of the few Black attendees serve as a testimony to that. “Sam goes by Sambo... he publicly ridicules anything resembling Black culture and carries his mute blond girlfriend around like she’s some sort of symbolic rite of whiteness” (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 40). The unfiltered thoughts on hair colors in connection with race show Queenie’s discomfort and the isolation she feels in spaces where her Black identity is marginalized.

5. RESILIENCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Queenie’s journey of healing and self-discovery embodies the resilience of immigrant women in resisting societal pressures. Bell Hooks (1981) notes that “to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation” (p. 6). This distinction is central to Queenie’s story, as her resilience often masks deeper struggles. For example, she says “I just don’t know what to do! Things have been so bad for such a long time, Darcy. It’s relentless... I move out for a bit, sort my head out; then in a few months, all fine, I move back in and we’re happy forever” (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 21). At this moment, Queenie is speaking to her friend Darcy, confiding in her about the emotional exhaustion caused by her disruptive relationship with Tom. Her words carry a sense of hopelessness and frustration with the repetitive cycle of temporary fixes, suggesting that she remains trapped between mere endurance and the possibility of genuine emotional healing. Hooks further states that the societal expectation for Black women is to “adjust, adapt, and cope” (Hooks, 1981, p. 7). Queenie’s eventual decision to prioritize herself over others marks a shift toward transformation. Her reflection, “Why doesn’t he see that? Why are you the one moving out when he can go and stay with his parents?” (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 21), signals her growing clarity and agency. Packing away years of “accumulatively unimportant stuff” (p. 19) symbolizes her shedding of past burdens to reclaim her future. Emejulu and Bassel (2017) write about how immigrant women use creative strategies, such as community organizing and activism, to resist systemic oppression. They note, “Economic insecurity creates real dilemmas for minority women’s activism... however, our data also indicate that other women seek to subvert their precarity by using it as a springboard for organising and mobilising in their communities” (Emejulu and Bassel, 2017, p. 89). Similarly, Queenie’s journey shows how resilience and solidarity empower women to transform their circumstances. For instance, after facing rejection and upheaval

in her living arrangements, she thinks about her ability to persist: "When I arrived, Lizzie and Sarah had rejected me. They thought they 'were going to go in a different, older direction'" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 38). Sylvia Wynter's concept of "being human as praxis" points to the transformation as an ongoing, active process. McKittrick writes, "Being human is a praxis of humanness that does not dwell on the static empiricism of the unfittest and the downtrodden... being human as praxis is... 'the realization of living'" (McKittrick, 2015, pp. 3-4). Her lived experiences and moments of personal growth shape Queenie's journey to reclaim her sense of self and humanity. McKittrick further explores the narrative nature of identity, stating, "Humans are... a biologically evolved, hybrid species – storytellers who now storytellingly invent themselves" (2015, p. 11). Queenie's evolving identity exemplifies this concept as she reclaims agency over her personal and cultural narratives. Her attempt to reconnect with her Jamaican heritage is evident when she says, "Wanting to kill some time before I got home to reminders of my disintegrated relationship, I went to Brixton for some Jamaican bun, hoping that I could kick-start my appetite with my favorite comfort food" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 23). In the midst of personal upheaval, Queenie turns to her cultural roots for solace and a sense of identity, while meeting societal expectations and personal setbacks with resilience. Each confrontation becomes part of an ongoing process of growth and self-discovery.

5.1. Reclaiming Identity and Disrupting Norms

Wynter's idea of interconnectedness foregrounds the relationality in Queenie's transformation as McKittrick notes: "Relationality and interhuman narratives... signal the process through which the empirical and experiential lives of all humans are increasingly subordinated to a figure that thrives on accumulation (McKittrick, 2015, p. 10). Queenie balances personal reflection and moving forward, as seen when she recalls, "I sat in the corridor staring at my phone's smashed screen, waiting for Tom to reply. A few minutes passed, and eventually, no reply later, I walked back toward the waiting room" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 15). Indicating her growing recognition of her worth and the importance of self-reliance, such differences in actions taken by Queenie become central to reclaiming her identity. Her resilience indicates broader societal transformations, paving the way for inclusion and diversity. Judith Butler (1993) states the following:

The forming, crafting, bearing, circulation, and signification of that sexed body will not be a set of actions performed in compliance with the law; on the contrary, they will be a set of actions mobilized by the law... the lived necessity of those effects as well as the lived contestation of that necessity. (p. 12)

Butler, thus, frames acts of resilience as counteractions to societal norms and regulatory structures. Butler further explores the transformative potential of resilience, stating, "The materialization of norms requires those identificatory processes by which norms are assumed or appropriated... immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power (1993, p. 15). Queenie's personal growth represents this rearticulation of societal norms, showing how her journey contributes to broader inclusion and cultural change. Finally, Butler suggests "What would it mean to 'cite' the law to produce it differently, to 'cite' the law in order to reiterate and co-opt its power, to expose the heterosexual matrix to displace the effect of its necessity?" (1993, p. 15). Acts of

resilience, such as Queenie reclaiming her identity, serve as subversive actions that disrupt and transform established norms, paving the way for diversity and societal progress.

5.2. Hybridity and Transformative Power of Diasporic Identities

Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* explores how diasporic cultures actively reshape modern societies. Gilroy (1993) argues, "The history of the black Atlantic yields a course of lessons as to the instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade" (p. xi). As Queenie's identity continuously evolves, her journey contests fixed ideas of culture and nationhood, resulting in a sense of hybridity. Her struggles and growth mirror the diasporic process of cultural transformation. Gilroy critiques ethnic absolutism, advocating instead for the exploration of hybridity and creolization: "Against this choice stands another, more difficult option: the theorisation of creolisation, métissage, mestizaje, and hybridity... naming the processes of cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 2). Queenie grapples with her Jamaican heritage and British societal expectations, blending both influences into an evolving sense of self. Her experiences invoke how diasporic identities foster cultural innovation, redefining societal norms. For example, Queenie's decision to write about issues in Black communities in her column for the *Daily Read* shifts the narrative in her predominantly white workplace. By using her platform to amplify marginalized voices, she critiques the publication's conventional focus and introduces new perspectives. Gilroy's metaphor of the ship indicates the transnational and intercultural exchanges central to the black Atlantic: "Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage... on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 4).

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argue, "Racism and gender relations intermesh in concrete social relations, producing differential outcomes and exclusions, particularly for racialized women" (Preface). The authors also write about the role of community in multicultural and anti-racist thought, linking it to "critical examinations of identity politics" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, Preface). Queenie's identity acts as a focal point for examining belonging and representation, as her dual heritage prompts critical dialogue about multiculturalism in contemporary society. Additionally, Anthias and Yuval-Davis note, "Ethnic positioning provides individuals with a mode of interpreting the world, based on shared cultural resources and collective positioning vis-à-vis other groups" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, p. 4). Through Queenie's experiences, immigrant identities emerge as catalysts for broader societal discourses on inclusion and diversity. Immigrant bodies disrupt traditional hierarchies by challenging dominant cultural norms and redefining societal boundaries. The intersection of class, gender, and ethnicity further captures this disruption. Anthias and Yuval-Davis assert, "Ethnicity cross-cuts gender and class divisions, but at the same time involves the posting of a similarity (on the inside) and a difference (from the outside) that seeks to transcend these divisions" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, p. 6). Queenie's dual heritage and lived experiences bring into focus the multiplicity of social identities that immigrant bodies carry into view, thereby destabilizing traditional hierarchies. Zubair and Norris (2015) focus on the social construction of ethnic otherness, stating, "Within their status as ethnic minorities and migrants, many of these populations experience living in countries where the dominant social policies, norms

and discourses... further marginalise them by defining and constructing their specific experiences... in terms of their cultural difference or ethnic 'otherness'" (Zubair and Norris, 2015, p. 900). Immigrant experiences, shaped by marginalization, hold transformative potential to disrupt societal norms and push for greater inclusion and diversity.

5.3. Immigrant Narratives as Sites of Resistance and Transformation

Immigrant narratives, like seen in the novel of *Queenie*, subvert societal conventions by exposing and negotiating the intersections of power, identity, and cultural expectations. Alexander and Mohanty (1997) argue, "Bringing women's groups together to discuss combined strategies for local funding would be a first step" (p. 256). The kind of collective and relational resistance needed to push back against established systems is expressed through Queenie's story, as her personal and interpersonal struggles unsettle social conventions. The exchange between global capitalism and immigrant identity further complicates this resistance. Alexander and Mohanty state, "The term 'partner,' currently being used by donor agencies to describe their relationship with recipient organizations, only obscures what remains a very real power relation" (1997, p. 256). Similarly, Queenie's negotiation of her dual identity exposes the superficial language and dynamics in multicultural societies, portraying how immigrant narratives expose the inequities embedded within these systems. For instance, when she joins a predominantly white therapy group, her experiences and emotions are met with a lack of understanding, as her struggles are trivialized compared to those of other participants. The superficial inclusivity of such spaces can be easily identified since these are places where systemic inequities in understanding the intersection of race, gender, and mental health are often overlooked. Queenie's relationships serve as critical sites of cultural negotiation and disruption. Her discomfort with her appearance demonstrates this tension: "I slammed out of my bedroom and out of the house" (Carty-Williams, 2019, p. 39). After being frustrated with her hair, which is a recurring symbol of her struggle between embracing her Jamaican heritage and conforming to Eurocentric beauty standards, Queenie at times cannot carry the emotional toll of balancing these conflicting expectations. Her experiences expose the transformative potential of immigrant narratives in redefining cultural norms and fostering greater inclusivity. Chambers and Watkins (2003) emphasize the need to integrate gender and sexuality into postcolonial criticism, stating, "Without doubt, some of the most important work in postcolonial theory and criticism has considered issues of gender and sexuality as well as those of race, nation, and empire" (p. 297). Their discussion indicates the importance of context, arguing, "We want to argue for the historical and geographical specificity of feminisms, and their capacity to engage productively with difference" (2003, p. 299). Thus, it becomes clear how immigrant stories, such as Queenie's, foster empathy and understanding in multicultural societies by challenging essentialist views of identity and paying attention to shared human experiences. Paul Gilroy critiques "ethnic absolutism that values roots above routes," proposing instead "a webbed network of identity that embraces multiplicity and difference" (1993, p. 19). Immigrant stories like Queenie's also resist rigid cultural boundaries, fostering greater acceptance and empathy by exhibiting the complexities of dual identities.

CONCLUSION

Candice-Carty Williams's *Queenie* masterfully interweaves themes of intersectionality, cultural permeability, and resilience, creating a vivid portrait of the immigrant experience. Queenie's identity negotiation captures the immigrant body's dual role: it is simultaneously vulnerable to societal pressures and transformative in redefining cultural norms. Through Queenie's struggles with mental health, relationships, and navigating predominantly white spaces, the narrative explains how intersecting oppressions – such as race, gender, and class – shape the lived realities of immigrant women. Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality and Homi Bhabha's Third Space are used to examine Queenie's body as a porous site of cultural exchange – one that absorbs societal expectations while simultaneously asserting her agency. Queenie becomes a significant facilitator of cultural permeability as she is successful in bridging Jamaican traditions and British societal norms. For instance, her thoughts on gentrification, familial expectations, and professional alienation articulate the tension of belonging to two worlds. Despite these difficulties, Queenie embodies resilience by reclaiming her narrative, fostering both personal growth and a broader critique of systemic inequalities. Her story becomes emblematic of how the immigrant body can serve as a catalyst for transformation and disrupt societal norms. Queenie's journey invites further exploration into immigrant narratives across diverse genres and global contexts. While British postcolonial literature has long engaged with questions of diasporic identity, turning to immigrant experiences in speculative fiction, graphic novels, or autobiographies could uncover new dimensions of intersectionality and cultural hybridity.

Comparative studies of diasporic identities in various cultural settings – such as Afro-Caribbean, South Asian, or Middle Eastern immigrant communities – would deepen our understanding of resilience and belonging. Additionally, examining how second-generation immigrants negotiate heritage and assimilation could provide insight into the evolving nature of diasporic identity over time. Future research might also investigate how the immigrant body functions as a site of activism and solidarity within multicultural societies. By examining community-based efforts or narratives that emphasize collective resistance, scholars could further explore how immigrant experiences contribute to dismantling systemic barriers and fostering inclusivity in global contexts. Candice Carty-Williams' *Queenie* is a powerful testament to the relevance of immigrant stories in understanding diasporic identity and multicultural societies. Queenie's negotiation of her Jamaican heritage and British social norms exemplifies the complexities of belonging, pointing out the immigrant body as a site of both oppression and resilience. The novel's exploration of intersectionality and cultural hybridity not only sheds light on individual struggles but also challenges societal conventions, fostering empathy and understanding among readers. By situating *Queenie* within the broader tradition of British postcolonial literature, Carty-Williams marks the importance of immigrant narratives in redefining cultural boundaries and advocating for inclusion. The novel's themes resonate globally, exhibiting how individual stories contribute to larger societal transformations. Thus, *Queenie* not only amplifies the voices of marginalized communities but also fosters a dialogue on equity, belonging, and the enduring impact of diasporic identities on contemporary society.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Sara (2000). *Strange encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality*. London: Routledge.
- Alexander, M. Jacquie, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1997). *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures*. New York: Routledge.
- Anthias, Floya, Nira Yuval-Davis (1992). *Racialized boundaries: Race, nation, gender, colour, and class and the anti-racist struggle*. London: Routledge.
- Brah, Avtar (1996). *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities*. London: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routledge.
- Carty-Williams, Candice (2019). *Queenie*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Chambers, Claire, Susan Watkins (2003). Postcolonial feminism? In S. Ray & G. Ghosh (Eds.), *Feminisms and womanisms: A women's studies reader* (pp. 295-305). New York: Routledge.
- Collins, Patricia Hill (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, 33 (6), S14-S32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800672>
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams (2008). A primer on intersectionality. African American Policy Forum.
- Emejulu, Akwugo, Leah Bassel (2017). *Minority women and austerity: Survival and resistance in France and Britain*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
- Gilroy, Paul (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hall, Stuart (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 222-237). London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Jackson, Shona N. (2012). *Creole indigeneity: Between myth and nation in the Caribbean*. University of Minnesota Press.
- McKittrick, Katherine (Ed.) (2015). *Sylvia Wynter: On being human as praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Nash, Jennifer C. (2008). Rethinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2008.4>
- Puar, Jasbir K. (2015). Bodies with new organs: Becoming trans, becoming disabled. *Social Text*, 33(3), 45-73. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-3125698>
- Zubair, Maria & Meriel Norris (2015). Intersectionality and 'The Immigrant Other.' In *Perspectives on ageing, later life, and ethnicity* (pp. 889-910).

BATI

EDEBİYATINDA AKIMLAR

editör
OKTAY YİVLİ

HATİCE FIRAT
YASEMİN MUMCU
OKTAY YİVLİ
OĞUZHAN KARABURGU
BERNA AKYÜZ SİZGEN
NİLÜFER İLHAN

ÜMMÜHAN TOPÇU
SEFA YÜCE
HANİFİ ASLAN
METİN AKYÜZ
MEHMET SÜMER
YAKUP ÖZTÜRK



Günce Yayınları

Prof. Dr. Önder Göçgün

TİYATRO DENEN HAYAT SAHNESİ



Günce Yayınları



PROF. DR. ÖNDER GÖÇGÜN

Türk Tasavvuf Şiiri

AÇIKLAMALI VE YORUMLU ÖRNEKLERLE



Günce Yayınları

MODERN TÜRK EDEBİYATI

editör
OKTAY YİVLİ

MUHARREM DAYANÇ
OKTAY YİVLİ
MACİT BALIK
MAHMUT BABACAN
SEVİM ŞERMET

YASEMİN MUMCU
BEDİA KOÇAKOĞLU
NİLÜFER İLHAN
MAKSUT YİĞİTBAŞ
SELAMİ ALAN



Günce Yayınları