

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**SECOND-GENERATION IMMIGRANT STRUGGLES  
WITH MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY AND  
EMOTIONAL LONELINESS: THE CHARACTER OF  
MEERA IN DAVID CHARIANDY'S *SOUCOUYANT***

**BA thesis**

**MARIE MAISVEE**

**SUPERVISOR: *Jun. Lect.* EVA REIN**

**TARTU**

**2024**

## ABSTRACT

Understanding the possible struggles of second-generation immigrants is necessary for providing them the best circumstances for dealing with them. The present thesis analyses the character of Meera, a second-generation immigrant, in David Chariandy's novel *Soucouyant*, and aims to answer the following questions: how does Meera's understanding of her multicultural identity change throughout her narrative, how does Meera come to experience emotional loneliness and how does she start to overcome it, how do Meera's generational relationships affect her process of understanding her multicultural identity and her experience with emotional loneliness, and, what is the significance of the intertext of the *soucouyant* in relation to Meera's identity and loneliness.

The thesis consists of an introduction, a literature review and an empirical part, and a conclusion. The introduction provides a summary of the novel, the main terms used in the thesis and the research questions. The literature review is divided into three topics: the reception of the novel, multicultural identity and emotional loneliness. The empirical part is also divided into three sections, which concentrate on Meera's relationships with her mother Antoinette, the narrator's mother Adele and the narrator. Meera's understanding of her multicultural identity and her experiences with emotional loneliness are analysed through all the three sections. The conclusion summarises the findings of the thesis.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 RECEPTION OF <i>SOUCOUYANT</i>, MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY, EMOTIONAL LONELINESS: A LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2 The Reception of <i>Soucouyant</i>.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.2.1 The Narrative, the Character of Meera, and the Prominent Themes .....	7
1.2.2 Generational Relationships .....	9
1.2.3 The Figure of the Soucouyant.....	11
<b>1.3 Multicultural Identity.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.4 Emotional Loneliness.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2 MEERA'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HER RELATIONSHIPS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.2 Meera's Relationship with Antoinette .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.3 Meera's Relationship with Adele.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.4 Meera's Relationship with the Narrator.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>RESÜMEE .....</b>	<b>32</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Delisle (2011: 1-2) states that "/.../ second-generation Canadians often construct identities in the space between dominating mythologies of multiple 'homelands' ". This means that their identities are affected by multiple cultures and they do not fit strictly into a singular cultural group. Therefore, the experiences of second-generation immigrants can be complicated when they lack a clear sense of identity and belonging. Hence, it is important to understand the complex experiences of second-generation immigrants in order to provide them with the best circumstances for making sense of their identities and feeling supported during the process. In David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* the topic of second-generation immigrant experiences is examined in a way that offers insights into how the immigrants see the space within which they exist.

David Chariandy's *Soucouyant: A Novel of Forgetting* was published in Canada in 2007. It follows the experiences of the unnamed narrator who, after being away for two years, returns home to his mother Adele, who suffers from dementia. He discovers that a young woman named Meera has moved into his mother's house and has taken on the role of Adele's caregiver. The narrative moves between the past and the present, showing how the relationship between Meera and the narrator develops while simultaneously dealing with the pasts of the narrator, his parents Adele and Roger, Meera and Meera's mother Antoinette. As Adele, Roger and Antoinette are all from the Caribbean and the narrator and Meera are second-generation immigrants living in Canada, then the novel deals explicitly with the complex experiences of immigrants living in Canada.

In this thesis I am focusing on the character of Meera since although some of the reception of the novel has examined her, then no papers concentrating solely on her have been published. I believe that through analysing her character development throughout the novel and the effect of her relationships with Antoinette, Adele and the narrator on her

identity, valuable insights can be added to the reception of the novel as well as to understanding the experiences of second-generation immigrants when it comes to their identity construction processes and emotional well-being. The thesis will provide a deeper understanding of Meera's character and analyse the difficulties that second-generation immigrants may face.

I have chosen two main topics to focus on in this thesis: Meera's multicultural identity and emotional loneliness. In this thesis multicultural individuals are referred to as ones who have resided with more than one cultural group during their life and, therefore, have connections with multiple cultures (Hong et al 2000, Benet-Martínez et al 2002, Yampolsky et al 2015, as quoted in Yampolsky and Amiot 2016: 87). As Meera belongs to both the Canadian and the Caribbean cultural groups, then studying the process of how she organises these different identities within herself is vital in order to understand her as a second-generation immigrant. Therefore, Meera's identity construction process is one of the main topics of study in the empirical part. Emotional loneliness, which I am referring to as a state where a person lacks any emotional support (Green et al 2001, Liu and Rook 2013, as quoted in Wolters et al 2023: 208), is also central to the experiences of Meera. Thus, it is the second main area of study in the empirical part.

Two smaller topics of study are also present in this thesis. Firstly, the topic of generational relationships where both relationships that are intergenerational, involving members of different generations (Merriam-Webster 2024a), and intragenerational, involving members of the same generation (Merriam-Webster 2024b), are examined. Meera's generational relationships are studied as they affect her process of understanding her multicultural identity and dealing with emotional loneliness. Secondly, there is the topic of the mark of the soucouyant, which is referred to as a mark of both experiences with racism (Cvetković 2021: 82) and trauma (Chivers 2019: 115), and as a mark of feeling a sense of

unbelonging to Canada (Dobson and Chariandy 2007: 811). The intertext of the soucouyant is examined in this thesis as it helps to further understand Meera's character development and her relationships.

Based on these topics, this thesis aims to find answers to the following questions:

- How does Meera's multicultural identity organisation develop throughout the novel?
- How does Meera come to experience emotional loneliness and how does she start to overcome it?
- How do the generational relationships in the novel affect Meera's process of understanding her multicultural identity and her experiences with emotional loneliness?
- What is the significance of the intertext of the soucouyant in relation to Meera's identity and her relationships?

The literature review of the thesis discusses the relevant reception of the novel surrounding the style of narration, the character of Meera, the figure of the soucouyant and the generational relationships. Further definitions for multicultural identity and emotional loneliness are provided as well as some of the concepts related to these terms.

The empirical part of the thesis analyses Meera's process of understanding and developing her multicultural identity and her experiences with emotional loneliness. The role of Meera's generational relationships is also examined in terms of their effect on her multicultural identity and emotional loneliness. The significance of the figure of the soucouyant is analysed as well in relation to Meera identity and relationships. In the empirical part the method of close reading is employed by analysing the passages in the novel concerning Meera and her relationships with the help of the theoretical backing from the literature review in order to gain a deeper understanding of her character.

# **1 RECEPTION OF *SOUCOUYANT*, MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY, EMOTIONAL LONELINESS: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **1.1 Introduction**

In the literature review of this thesis the necessary background for the analysis of the character of Meera in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* is provided. Firstly, some of the reception of the novel will be covered in terms of the narrative, the themes and the character of Meera. The following subsections will deal with the reception surrounding generational relationships and the intertext of the *soucouyant*. Secondly, the main terms in the thesis, multicultural identity and emotional loneliness, will be discussed.

## **1.2 The Reception of *Soucouyant***

### **1.2.1 The Narrative, the Character of Meera, and the Prominent Themes**

David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* is a novel with a fragmentary narrative, moving from one character or memory to the next. The novel has been described as having a "unique structure of incomplete and interwoven memories and personal stories /.../" (Minto 2010: 888). Dobson (2008: 165) states that "it is in the interplay between memory and loss, remembering and forgetting, that Chariandy weaves stories of struggle and oppression into a border-crossing narrative that stretches the imagination". Francis (2008: 77-78) points out that the importance of this fragmentary narrative becomes clear only at the end of the novel, when the readers are finally able to get some closure. However, striking is not only the narrative, but also the themes and the care with which the themes are explored within the novel. *Soucouyant* has been studied in terms of its depiction of generational relationships (Delisle 2011, Langwald 2016, Jeffers 2020), care relations (Chivers 2019, Villanueva 2022), memory and trauma (Delisle 2011, Sarkowsky 2017, Chivers 2019, Jeffers 2020),

multiculturalism and belonging (Mackey 2012, Langwald 2016), and the figure of the soucouyant (Delisle 2011, Chivers 2019, Cvetković 2021).

The narrator of the novel is the young male protagonist who remains unnamed throughout the entire story. Mackey (2012: 243) speculates that the main character's name is not revealed because he is essentially telling his mother's story and not his own. It is through the unnamed narrator that the readers learn about his struggles, but also those of other characters, mainly his mother Adele, father Roger and Adele's caretaker Meera. The use of the main character as the narrator of others' stories is considered to be a powerful tool. Jeffers (2020: 3-4) states that through the narrator the readers are able to understand the confusion that he feels in relation to his mother's past. She further proposes that the narrator attempts to make sense of these stories in order to understand the histories of his and Meera's families (Jeffers 2020: 4). Near the end of the novel the narrator's tone changes to an official one, which Jeffers (2020: 5) views as the "official history" voice. Mackey (2012: 240) regards this voice as being "official and detached" as opposed to "personal and poetic" as it is throughout the rest of the novel. Overall, the use of the main character as the narrator is believed to be very deliberate as it allows the readers to see the process of him attempting to make sense of the stories and the people around him.

The character of Meera has garnered some critical attention, though not as much as the narrator or Adele. The most common aspect which has been studied in relation to Meera is her relationship with the main character. This relationship has been examined both from the viewpoint of healing and overcoming struggles (Mackey 2012, Moosa 2014, Jeffers 2020), but also from that of Meera attempting to escape from being connected to the protagonist (Delisle 2011, Jeffers 2020). The second topic that has received the most attention is Meera's relationship with her mother Antoinette. Their relationship is regarded as one that is riddled with difficulties and misunderstandings (Delisle 2011, Jeffers 2020).

Other topics that have been examined when it comes to the character of Meera are her place within the Canadian society (Dobson and Chariandy 2007, Delisle 2011, Jeffers 2020, Solbiac 2021) and the bullying that she faces due to the racism of the Canadian society (Langwald 2016, Ludolph 2021).

Evidently, the reception of the novel has covered various topics, but less attention has been given to the character of Meera. Therefore, this thesis is aimed at adding to the reception of her character.

### **1.2.2 Generational Relationships**

Part of the reception of the novel is dedicated to the inter- and intragenerational relationships that are portrayed in the text and the effects that these relationships have on the characters. Some critics have highlighted the fact that both the first- and second-generation immigrants in the novel have experienced racism (Langwald 2016: 116, Chivers 2019: 119). However, in an interview with Dobson (2007: 811), Chariandy points out that the second generation is less likely to identify with Canada than the older generation since the latter do not wish to accept the shortcomings of their "adopted" country. Consequently, as Langwald (2016: 116) remarks, although generations share similar experiences then in the novel Adele and Roger have difficulty in understanding the narrator's relationship to Canada. As will be examined in the empirical part, this proves to be true in the case of Meera and her mother Antoinette as well.

The scholarship also calls attention the fact that the first generation in this novel is keen on forgetting the past and focusing only on the present (Moosa 2014: 328, Jeffers 2020: 9). This devaluing of the past is a lesson that the older generation tries to pass on (Jeffers 2020: 9). However, the first-generation immigrants are an important source for the second generation to learn about their past and ancestry (Dobson and Chariandy 2007: 811, Jeffers

2020: 2) and, therefore, lessons, histories and even trauma are passed on to the next generation both knowingly and unknowingly (Jeffers 2020: 7-10). The second-generation characters in *Soucouyant* react to these based on their own experiences of living in Canada (Jeffers 2020: 2) and thus, as Delisle (2011: 1-2) states, their identity construction happens "in the space between the dominating mythologies of multiple 'homelands' ". She further explains that although the characters do not actually know their parents' homeland, they are "involuntarily connected to it through language, narrative and genealogy" (Delisle 2011: 9). The critics agree that the main character and Meera have to come to terms with their pasts and integrate them into their lives in order to move forward. Jeffers (2020: 10) remarks that the second generation must understand their past so as to lead lives that are free of the ghosts of their parents' lives. She also states that they must "*unlearn*" the harmful lessons that have been passed on by their parents (Jeffers 2020: 10, emphasis original).

For the main character and Meera an important part of reconciling with the past is the act of sharing stories with each other (Moosa 2014: 335, Jeffers 2020: 11-12). Through this they are able to integrate the pasts into their lives and find understanding through one another, the understanding that they did not feel in their relationships with the older generation (Jeffers 2020: 11). Both Mackey (2012: 229) and Jeffers (2020: 11-12) maintain that the novel highlights the importance of intragenerational relationships when it comes to the second-generation making sense of their past. Altogether the scholarship brings forth an important issue, which is further discussed in my analysis of Meera's relationships, that despite similarities, the first- and second-generation immigrants have difficulty in understanding each other and, therefore, intragenerational relationships are integral for the second generation to make sense of and accept their pasts. However, the possibility of understanding between generations will also be examined in the empirical part.

### 1.2.3 The Figure of the Soucouyant

As the title of the novel suggests, the figure of the soucouyant, a mythical vampire-figure from the Caribbean folklore, plays an important role in this text. Multiple characters in the novel are marked by the soucouyant: Meera has a birthmark on her neck, Adele has scars on her chin and head, and the protagonist has bruises and a mole on his body. Critics have drawn attention to the fact that Meera's mother believes that her daughter's birthmark is the reason why she does not have friends in school (Delisle 2011: 14-15, Jeffers 2020: 8, Cvetković 2021: 82). However, these marks of the soucouyant have also been interpreted as markers of the characters' connection to the Caribbean legacy and history (Delisle 2011: 15, Cvetković 2021: 82). In an interview with Dobson (2007: 811), Chariandy states that the

/.../ novel uses the word and legend of the soucouyant to explore a particular generational condition, a particular state of sensing but not really knowing one's origins, and, consequently, a particular process of exploring one's origins without easy recourse to official meanings or narratives.

Moosa (2014: 325) also proposes that the title *Soucouyant* is used to show how "/.../ cultural memories of the diasporic past are distant and yet intimately close" for the main character. Moosa (2014: 325-326) further argues that through the figure of the soucouyant the effect of colonial violence on the characters' present is shown.

Other possibilities for what the soucouyant may represent have also been suggested. The marks of the soucouyant may refer to the racism and xenophobia (Cvetković 2021: 82) as well as to the trauma (Chivers 2019: 115) that the characters experience within the Canadian society. Chivers (2019: 115) elaborates that the figure of the soucouyant is used in the novel in order "/.../ to trace colonial legacies of trauma that pressure characters in contemporary Canada to force forgetting and to tolerate painful but less physical forms of racist violence". Thus, the scholarship agrees that the signs of the soucouyant that the characters are marked with and through which they are connected serve as indications of their cultural statuses and experiences. In my analysis the mark of the soucouyant will be examined both from the viewpoint of it symbolising the racism and trauma that the

characters have experienced, but also from that of it signalling a sense of unbelonging to the Canadian society.

### **1.3 Multicultural Identity**

*Soucouyant* deals explicitly with the experiences of people who inhabit multiple cultural groups as it explores their sense of belonging to the Canadian society, ties to the Caribbean past and the attempts at finding peace within one's identity. Meera is one of the characters through whom these issues are explored and, therefore, understanding multicultural identity is crucial when conducting an in-depth analysis of her character.

Various definitions, both simple and more complex, have been proposed when describing multicultural identity. In *The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity* a broad definition is used, which views people with ".../ a mixed racial or ethnic background, residence in more than one country, immigration to another county, and exposure to societies in which they are exposed to multiple cultural traditions /.../" as all having a multicultural identity (Hong and Khei 2014: 12). According to another broad definition, multicultural individuals are ones who ".../ have lived with more than one cultural group over the course of their lives, and experience these multiple cultural affiliations as part of their self-concept" (Hong et al 2000, Benet-Martínez et al 2002, Yampolsky et al 2015, as quoted in Yampolsky and Amiot 2016: 87). The definition of multicultural identity by Yampolsky and Amiot (2016: 87) involves immigrants from the first, second and third generation, as well as third-culture kids and individuals who possess more than one racial, ethnic or cultural background. Consequently, people with very different backgrounds and experiences can be viewed as having a multicultural identity.

An important aspect that has been studied in relation to multicultural identity is the way that people organise their multiple identities, which is regarded to be a personal matter

and, therefore, there is no one strict way in which individuals tackle this issue. Yampolsky et al (2013: 1) emphasise that it is important for multicultural individuals to learn to organise their multiple cultural identities within themselves, while Liu (2017: 1) states that the way people experience their connections to cultural groups depends on their "self-identification". Thus, it is understood that multicultural individuals need to find a way of organising their identities that best suits them. Additionally, it is worth noting that the way multicultural individuals organise their identities can be affected by how they are or have been treated in society. Yampolsky and Amiot (2016: 94) maintain that for multicultural individuals the *".../ experience of discrimination can be internalized at the level of their self-concept /.../"*, which in turn means that people's organisation of multiple cultural identities can vary greatly based on their past experiences.

So far, three main modes of organising multiple cultural identities have been found. Firstly, there is categorization which indicates that despite having multiple cultural identities, an individual chooses to identify with only one identity and keep the other identities separate from their self-concept (Yampolsky and Amiot 2016: 87). Secondly, there is compartmentalization which implies that the individual views their multiple cultural identities as being separate or even contrasting, therefore never linking them together (Yampolsky and Amiot 2016: 87). Doucerin et al (2021: 528) note that although the identities are never linked, they are still vital to the individual's overall self-concept. Furthermore, experiencing one's identities depends on the context, meaning that the individual fluctuates between their multiple identities based on what a certain situation requires (Yampolsky and Amiot 2016: 87, Doucerin et al 2021: 528). Thirdly, there is integration which denotes that an individual is able to link and blend their multiple cultural identities together to form one cohesive identity (Yampolsky and Amiot 2016: 87). Yampolsky and Amiot (2016: 87) argue that integration is possible when an individual is

able to see the ".../ similarities and complementing differences between one's groups". Possessing an integrated identity allows the individual to embrace their multiple identities at once and in any context (Doucerin et al 2021: 528). Evidently, there are different ways of organising and understanding one's identities, which lead to different or even contrasting self-concepts. In the empirical part Meera's identity organisation will be analysed based on these methods.

It has also been studied how multicultural identity organisation and well-being are related, which has led to the understanding that all identity organisation methods are not equally effective when it comes to the happiness of a multicultural individual. Yampolsky et al (2013: 4) profess the view that a multicultural individual being able to integrate their identities is most likely to lead to higher well-being. Ward et al (2018: 1427) further state that an integrated or blended identity results in "greater cultural identity consolidation" which causes the multicultural individual to have a sense of belonging and feel content within their identity. Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2023: 11) agree that integration is the best method of organising one's identity when it comes to achieving consistency within the self. As it can be seen, integration is considered as the most effective identity organisation method. When it comes to compartmentalization, Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2023: 11) maintain that it can negatively affect achieving consistency within the self. Ward et al (2018: 1427) hold that switching between multiple identities can lead to "cultural identity conflict" within the individual as core values and beliefs may be conflicting, which can negatively affect well-being. Other authors claim that compartmentalisation and categorisation may cause the multicultural individual to harbour discriminatory attitudes towards themselves (Bastian and Haslam 2006 as quoted by Mosanya and Kwiatkowska 2023: 10). Compartmentalization and categorisation are evidently deemed as less effective methods of organising one's identity. However, categorisation is regarded as the least effective since, as

Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2023: 10) point out, categorisation requires ".../ the suppression of parts of oneself to achieve internal consistency." Overall, the literature agrees that integration tends to lead to greater well-being than other methods of organising one's multicultural identity since both compartmentalization and categorisation can create conflicts within the self. In the empirical part of this thesis Meera's multicultural identity developing process and well-being will be analysed based on the concepts examined in this subsection.

#### **1.4 Emotional Loneliness**

In *Soucouyant* Meera can be recognised as being a very lonely character due to having no friends and a difficult relationship with her mother Antoinette. Consequently, she has no one to confide in about the difficulties that she faces in her life and, therefore, understanding emotional loneliness will help to analyse her character more deeply.

While loneliness can be thought of as an all-encompassing term, it was Robert Weiss who, in 1973, first identified two types of loneliness – social loneliness and emotional loneliness. According to Weiss (1973 as quoted in Tiilikainen and Seppänen 2017: 1071), emotional loneliness is caused by the lack of having someone to confide in whereas social loneliness is caused by the feeling that one does not fit into the social network that surrounds them. Wolters et al (2023: 211) state that these two loneliness types occur based on "different unmet social needs".

Emotional loneliness has been defined as a state where an individual feels deficient in terms of the intimacy of their social relationships (Wolters et al 2023: 211). Valtorta and Hanratty (2013: 518) claim that emotional loneliness refers to ".../ the absence of a specific desired companion", while in another paper it is further described as ".../ the perceived absence of a close attachment figure, such as a romantic partner" (Cacioppo et al 2015, Weiss

1973, as quoted in Buecker et al 2020: 8-9). Altogether, the various definitions of emotional loneliness can in most cases be summarised by an individual experiencing a lack of emotional support (Green et al 2001, Liu and Rook 2013, as quoted in Wolters et al 2023: 208). However, other aspects of life, identity or even health can be the possible roots of emotional loneliness as well. It has been found that an individual might suffer from emotional loneliness due to "/.../being female, /.../ being a care-giver, /.../ low self-esteem and low income /.../" (Dykstra and Fokkema 2007, Drennan et al 2008, as quoted in Tiilikainen and Seppänen 2017: 1071). Emotional loneliness may also be linked to an individual having had difficult experiences in their childhood, such as losing a parent (Tiilikainen and Seppänen 2017: 1081-1082) or having a parent with substance abuse problems (Gierveld 1998 as quoted in Tiilikainen and Seppänen 2017: 1082). Wolters et al (2023: 211) remark that emotional loneliness can also be caused by social anxiety and depression. Overall, the literature covers many aspects of life that can cause emotional loneliness but views the lack of any intimate relationship and emotional support as being the most common cause of emotional loneliness. As will be examined in the empirical part, the lack of a close relationship and emotional support is also what causes Meera's emotional loneliness.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

The literature review of the thesis has covered the necessary information for conducting an analysis of the character of Meera. The concepts surrounding multicultural identity and emotional loneliness, as well as generational relationships and the figure of the soucouyant will be used as the basis for the analysis in the empirical part of the thesis.

## **2 MEERA'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HER RELATIONSHIPS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The empirical part is divided into three subsections based on Meera's relationships with her mother Antoinette, the narrator's mother Adele and the narrator himself. All the three subsections are connected by the underlying theme of analysing how Meera's experiences with multicultural identity and emotional loneliness develop throughout her narrative. Through the relationships the effect of generational relationships is studied, as well as the significance of the intertext of the *soucouyant* is explored. The method of close reading is employed in the analysis of the passages from the novel that are the most relevant to exemplifying the key issues of multicultural identity, emotional loneliness and generational relationships.

### **2.2 Meera's Relationship with Antoinette**

Meera's relationship with her mother Antoinette is considered by critics to be complicated and flawed. I will argue that Meera's problems with her identity and emotional loneliness stem from this relationship and that problems within the relationship arise due to the fact that the two members of different generations have opposing views of Canada.

As it was pointed out in the literature review, Jeffers (2020: 2) states that "/.../ immigrant parents are a main source of their children's understanding of the ancestral homeland and the shapers of their children's experience in the new land." In the novel, Meera's mother Antoinette never talks to her daughter about the life that she had in the Caribbean. Antoinette chooses instead to focus on the present life that she has in Canada and teaches Meera to do the same. Due to never hearing about her mother's past in the Caribbean, Meera is disconnected from her Caribbean ancestry and thus lacks the chance to learn about and understand a big part of her multicultural identity. Therefore, Meera has a categorized

identity as she is only able to identify with one part of her multicultural identity, which, as was pointed out in the literature review, is not the most effective method of organising one's identity. Furthermore, Meera's mode of organizing her identity is not her own choice, but it has been forced upon her due to having no access to other parts of her identity. Hence, it is evident that Antoinette's decision to only focus on the present is hindering Meera from fully understanding her multicultural identity.

Apart from Antoinette focusing only on Canada, it is important to note that, as the reception has pointed out before, she sees Canada from an idealised point of view (Jeffers 2020: 7). She seems to belong to the group of first-generation immigrants who, as Chariandy explains in an interview with Dobson (2007: 811), do not want to acknowledge the shortcomings of Canada. However, due to believing or choosing to believe that the Canadian society is not flawed, Antoinette is unaware of Meera's problems and the reality that she faces. This ignorance is evident in the following conversation:

'Do you think I could pass for Indian?' Meera asked. 'People say I can pass for many things. Even, in winter, a southern Italian.'

'This is the seventies, Meera. This is Canada. What you look like is completely beside the point. You have endless opportunities for wealth and happiness.' (Chariandy 2007: 157)

From this passage it is clear that Meera is attempting to discuss the complicated issue of her multicultural identity with her mother but is being dismissed on account of such a topic being irrelevant in the Canadian society. Moreover, not only is Meera being silenced when attempting to articulate the matter, but her life experiences do not match with Antoinette's opinion of looks being unimportant in Canada. As someone who is being severely bullied and sexualised by her peers due to having a darker skin colour (Chariandy 2007: 158-159), Meera is painfully aware of the consequences of standing out from the Canadian society. Antoinette's dismissal of Meera's question on identity is, therefore, even more damaging as it signals that their mother-daughter relationship is not a space within which Meera could speak freely about her struggles. Not only does this further complicate Meera's issues with

her identity, but it leads to her experiencing a lack of emotional support as she has no one to confide in about the problems that she is facing. Consequently, Meera suffers from emotional loneliness as at this point in the novel her relationship with Antoinette is the closest relationship she has, but due to Antoinette being unable to understand her daughter's experiences and her view of Canada, then ultimately Meera is alone with her problems.

While Meera experiences emotional loneliness in her relationship with her mother, Antoinette also influences other relationships in her life, thus further deepening the emotional loneliness that Meera suffers from. At one point in the novel Antoinette says the following to Meera: "Always make sure to distinguish yourself" (Chariandy 2007: 157). It is then explained in the following passage that Antoinette's idea behind this line is "/.../ to distinguish oneself from such folk as the troubled family living only a few blocks away" (Chariandy 2007: 157). The 'troubled family' is the main character's family who are of Caribbean descent just like Meera and Antoinette and, furthermore, the protagonist is also a second-generation immigrant in whom Meera would be likely to find a person who understands her experiences and struggles. However, as can be concluded from the passage, Antoinette wants Meera to avoid any association with the family and Meera always follows this advice. She is even willing to risk with her health to avoid being connected to the narrator or his family (Chariandy 2007: 158). Therefore, not only is Meera lonely in her relationship with Antoinette, but she is also isolated from other people that could understand her, which only increases her emotional loneliness.

Evidently, as Meera's closest relationship during her upbringing is the one with her mother, then her problems with multicultural identity and emotional loneliness arise from the lack of emotional support and access to her ancestry she experiences within the relationship, which in turn are caused by the two generations experiencing Canada completely differently. Their relationship is an example of how complex intergenerational

relationships can be when the representatives of each generation have conflicting views of the space within which they exist. However, as will be discussed in the next section, Meera slowly starts to overcome her problems through forming a relationship with the main character's mother Adele.

### **2.3 Meera's Relationship with Adele**

Meera's relationship with Adele has so far garnered little attention, however, I regard this relationship to be formative in Meera's process of starting to understand her identity and overcoming emotional loneliness. I will argue that through her relationship with Adele, Meera is able to take the first steps towards developing an integrated multicultural identity, as well as escape some of the emotional loneliness that has burdened her. I will examine how their relationship proves that some understanding between generations is possible, and I will analyse how the intertext of the soucouyant is relevant in relation to this aspect.

During the time that Meera spends living with Adele, she hears about her past experiences. At one point in the novel, the main character asks Meera whether she has heard about Adele's road trip back in the sixties to which Meera replies "She told me the story /.../ She told me many things" (Chariandy 2007: 92), indicating that Adele has shared various stories from her past with her. Some of these stories are centred around Adele's experiences with racism in Canada and, therefore, Meera is able to relate to these due to her own similar experiences. As Cvetković (2021: 82) and Ludolph (2021: 49) claim, Meera and Adele are connected through the racism that they have had to face as black women living in Canada. Here, the intertext of the soucouyant becomes relevant. Meera has a red birthmark on her neck (Chariandy 2007: 10) and Adele has a pink scar on the top of her head (Chariandy 2007: 122) indicating that they are both marked by the soucouyant. These marks represent the racism and trauma that they have both experienced in Canada, but also the feeling of not

truly belonging into the Canadian society. At one point in the novel, it is said that Adele "/.../ knew, of course, how ever more conspicuously different she was" (Chariandy 2007: 49), which is a feeling that Meera is able to relate to as well. Therefore, the marks of the soucouyant serve as the foundation upon which the two women are able to connect. Through this connection, Meera feels seen and validated in a way that she has not felt before, as someone else is articulating the same shortcomings of the Canadian society that she has witnessed and experienced. With this feeling of validation comes also the feeling of being emotionally supported, which means that for the first time Meera is able to escape some of the emotional loneliness that she felt in her relationship with her mother. Additionally, not only do Meera and Adele share experiences of racism, but Adele too has dealt with loneliness. During a phone conversation, Adele tells Meera the following: "Also, I feeling a little bit lonely, in truth" (Chariandy 2007: 168). Thus, dealing with loneliness is another factor that links them together, and through living with one another, not only does Meera ease Adele's loneliness, but her own emotional loneliness decreases. It is, however, worth mentioning that some of the emotional loneliness and lack of emotional support remains since it appears to be Adele who talks of her negative experiences while Meera is merely the recipient of these stories. Therefore, Meera is still keeping her own experiences to herself and remains guarded.

Through their relationship, Meera is also able to gain access to the Caribbean heritage, as Adele occasionally talks of the Caribbean traditions or uses words, which Mackey (2012: 242) regards as being part of a "her hybrid Caribbean-English-mixed-with-dementia". For Meera, these are the first glimpses into her Caribbean ancestry and during the time that she spends living with Adele, she starts to understand this part of her identity a little bit better. There is a passage in the novel, where the narrator says the following:

I mean, you probably weren't born there. You probably aren't any more attached to that place than I am, but you're connected, aren't you? I've noticed the way you interact with Mother. You understand

what she says. You understand her expressions, her names for things. Not perfectly, but enough. (Chariandy 2007: 119)

This moment is crucial in understanding Meera's process of learning about her Caribbean ancestry as it showcases that Adele has told her enough for her to be able understand this "hybrid" language that she uses. Considering that before living with Adele, Meera had no connection to the Caribbean, then learning to understand Adele, who still uses the Caribbean way of speaking, is an important step in developing her integrated identity. One of the words that is part of Adele's "hybrid" language and that she uses in front of Meera is "eyestache". At the very end of the novel there is a moment when Meera uses that same word: "We're leaving when Meera touches my face. 'Eyestache,' she says" (Chariandy 2007: 196). Meera's use of this word indicates that through Adele she has learned about her Caribbean ancestry and, moreover, has managed to integrate parts of the Caribbean ancestry into her own life, or in this case, vocabulary. Apart from the use of this word, it becomes apparent that Meera has also gained knowledge of the Caribbean traditions. At the end of the novel, when the narrator talks of having been blessed when he visited Carenage as a small child, Meera replies by saying "I know, /.../ It was an old gesture. Older than anything like religion or history. Your mother told me this many times" (Chariandy 2007: 196). For Meera's identity formation, all of these pieces of the Caribbean history are important, since the more that she is able to learn about her ancestry, the more she has the chance to understand herself. It is clear that Meera is actively remembering all of the information about the Caribbean and integrating it into her identity. Through this process she is not only becoming closer to the Caribbean heritage, but she is also beginning the process of becoming comfortable within her identity, reaching a greater well-being and gaining the feeling of belonging to the space within which she exists.

In contrast to Meera's relationship with her mother Antoinette, her relationship with Adele indicates that understanding within an intergenerational relationship is possible.

However, it is worth noting that this understanding between Meera and Adele may occur only due to Adele's dementia. At one point in the novel, the main character says that

Mother wasn't simply forgetting. She might be standing near the kitchen window, looking out over the rippled granite of the waters, when a word would slip from her mind and pronounce itself upon her lips (Chariandy 2007: 22)

Jeffers (2020: 9) asserts in her paper that this passage shows how Adele is forgetting to forget her past and, therefore, ".../ she reveals information and events that she would have otherwise intently kept hidden." Nonetheless, the two women do form a connection, through which Meera is able to develop her multicultural identity and find some release from her emotional loneliness. This process further continues in her relationship with the narrator, which will be the topic of the next section.

## **2.4 Meera's Relationship with the Narrator**

In the last section of the empirical part, I will analyse Meera's relationship with the narrator, which so far has been examined by critics from the viewpoint of Meera helping the main character understand himself and his past. I will, however, argue that through her relationship with the protagonist, Meera becomes the most emotionally supported that she has ever been and is able to continue the process of developing an integrated identity. I will analyse how their relationship represents the possibility and importance of second-generation immigrant understanding and I will examine how the intertext of the *soucouyant* is relevant to this aspect.

The relationship between Meera and the protagonist is quite difficult in the beginning as Meera seems to hold resentment towards him for having left Adele alone despite her being ill and needing help. Therefore, she ignores the narrator's attempts at friendliness and does not participate in the conversations that he tries to initiate. The protagonist attempts to talk to Meera about their Caribbean heritage and their place in the Canadian society but Meera is reluctant to open up to him. This is apparent in the following passage:

"We don't really know each other, do we? We grew up in the same neighbourhood and we've never really talked about this. We could just talk a bit more. We could explain...."

"Explain?" she asks.

Her tone makes me stop. She yanks on a shirt and pants.

"And what would that accomplish?" she asks. "How exactly would anything change?" (Chariandy 2007: 120)

This instance in the novel highlights that due to Antoinette's tendency to devalue talking about the past and one's hardships, and the consequent lack of space and emotional support for her daughter to be open about her experiences, Meera has learned not to speak of one's experiences and, therefore, does not understand the main character's attempts at talking about their pasts.

The first signs of willingness to connect with the protagonist appear when one evening he thanks Meera for taking care of Adele (Chariandy 2007: 93). The two characters spend the evening having dinner together and the narrator notes the following: "/.../ I can tell that Meera, too, has become a bit more accustomed to the silence and closeness" (Chariandy 2007: 94). The relationship still continues with its ups and downs and a real connection emerges only after the death of Adele, when Meera is helping the main character to clean the house and tells him "I wanted to explain. I didn't know how. I didn't think you'd understand" (Chariandy 2007: 154). Meera saying this signifies that due to the lack of emotional support in her life she did not even know how to open up to the narrator. What follows is Meera sharing her story with the main character, including her tumultuous relationship with her mother, the racism she has experienced and the fear of being associated with the protagonist and his family, as well as the bullying that she herself has participated in (Chariandy 2007: 154-166). It is the first time that she has someone to be emotionally vulnerable with and, moreover, the protagonist is the first person to ask Meera to share her experiences and invite her to be honest, therefore making Meera feel emotionally supported through not only letting her tell her story but also actively asking her to open up. What is more, just like Meera and Adele, the narrator is also marked by the *soucouyant* as he has a

mole on the back of his wrist (Chariandy 2007: 98). Both of the characters having these marks on their body points to the fact that they share similar experiences of dealing with the racist environment of Canada, as well as the feeling of not truly belonging into the Canadian society. Therefore, the marks provide the ground upon which they are able to understand each other and relate to one another's experiences. This leads to Meera being the most emotionally supported that she has ever been, as she is able to tell her story to the person that is most likely to understand her. Hence, the relationship with the main character provides her with the opportunity to escape some of the emotional loneliness she has experienced.

Apart from Meera sharing her own story, the main character tells her about the life that Adele had in the Caribbean when she was a child. Through this Meera is able to further understand this place that her mother comes from and, consequently, the place that is part of her heritage. All of the information about the Caribbean that she learns from the narrator is essential for her to better know her ancestry, understand herself and further develop an integrated multicultural identity. As Jeffers (2020: 13) states, by the end of the novel, Meera has reached a place where she is able to engage with the past. This has become possible through her relationships with Adele and the narrator as they are providing her with access to the past and, thus, with the opportunity to make sense of the past and integrate it into her identity. Jeffers (2020: 13) has interpreted Meera's and the narrator's situation at the end of the novel as follows:

*.../ they are charged with the difficult role of piecing together those suppressed histories for the sake of their psychological survival, while simultaneously fighting to not let those histories determine their future. While at the end of the novel the two characters are nowhere near completing this process, they are both much closer to an ethical and soulful future than they were when the narrative began.*

Evidently, by the end of the novel Meera does not possess an integrated identity and has a long process of developing her identity ahead, but through establishing a relationship with the protagonist and, consequently, through forming a connection to the Caribbean, she has constructed a basis from which to continue the process. Therefore, Meera is a lot closer to

the possibility of having an integrated identity, feeling content within herself and developing a sense of belonging.

As Meera and the narrator are both second-generation immigrants then their relationship showcases the understating that can occur between members of the same generation. This is especially clear in this novel as, unlike the older generation, they are ready to admit the shortcomings of the Canadian society. Thanks to this, they can be vulnerable with each other and connect on a deeper level which, when looking at the character of Meera, means that she is given the space within which to be vulnerable, feel supported and begin the process of developing an integrated identity. As Mackey (2012: 229) points out, the novel illustrates the need for the second-generation immigrants to engage with each other in order to be able to heal and make sense of their place in the world. Therefore, this intragenerational relationship is essential for Meera to be able to overcome her problems.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The empirical part has found that through her relationships with Antoinette, Adele and the narrator Meera progresses from having a categorised identity to starting the development of an integrated identity. It also found that she experiences emotional loneliness due to her relationship with Antoinette but starts to overcome it with the help of Adele and the narrator as, partly due to the marks of the soucouyant, she is able to connect with them over similar experiences. Meera's relationships indicate that both understanding and misunderstanding are possible in intergenerational relationships but, at times, true understanding is only achievable in intragenerational relationships.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to examine the development of the character of Meera in David Chariandy's novel *Soucouyant* in order to better understand the experiences of second-generation immigrants. The goal was to analyse how Meera's understanding of her multicultural identity changes throughout the novel, as well as investigate why Meera suffers from emotional loneliness and how she starts to overcome it. The role of generational relationships and the intertext of the soucouyant was also studied in relation to her multicultural identity and emotional loneliness.

The literature review of the thesis provided the necessary background for the empirical part. The previous scholarship on the novel was discussed, which showed that the character of Meera and her development had not received enough critical attention. The reception surrounding generational relationships and the figure of the soucouyant was provided as well. The rest of the literature review discussed various definitions and important concepts regarding multicultural identity and emotional loneliness.

The empirical part of the thesis focused on the character development of Meera through examining her generational relationships with Antoinette, Adele and the narrator. The three subsections of the empirical part analysed how Meera's multicultural identity is affected by each of the relationships and how her experiences with emotional loneliness change within these relationships. The significance of the figure of the soucouyant within these generational relationships was examined as well.

When it comes to multicultural identity, the analysis indicated that due to the complex relationship with Antoinette, Meera has a categorised identity in the beginning of her narrative as she has no access to her Caribbean ancestry. However, through her relationships with Adele and the narrator, Meera gains more knowledge of the Caribbean heritage and, therefore, is able to begin the process of cultivating an integrated identity. It

was found that during the narrative Meera's understanding of her own identity grows and she starts to organise both the Canadian and Caribbean identity within herself.

In terms of emotional loneliness, the analysis showed that Meera's emotional loneliness develops as a result of feeling emotionally neglected in her relationship with Antoinette. In her relationships with Adele and the narrator, however, she is able to open up about her experiences and find emotional support which lessens the emotional loneliness.

Meera's generational relationships have an important role in her dealing with both her multicultural identity and emotional loneliness. The analysis led to the understating that Meera's intergenerational relationship with Antoinette is what causes her problems with multicultural identity and emotional loneliness, while her intergenerational relationship with Adele is what starts the process of overcoming these problems. However, Meera's intragenerational relationship with the narrator provides the space within which she truly finds understanding and is, therefore, able to begin the healing process.

The analysis showed that the intertext of the *soucouyant* is relevant in Meera's relationships with Adele and the narrator since the marks of the *soucouyant* that all the three characters have on their bodies serve as the foundation upon which the characters are able to connect. Moreover, Meera's mark is an indication of her complex position as a second-generation Caribbean immigrant in Canada and due to Adele and the narrator sharing similar experiences, Meera is able to relate to them.

This thesis has added to the reception of Chariandy's *Soucouyant* by analysing the character of Meera, who has previously received less attention, and by highlighting the novel's treatment of difficulties and possibilities of negotiating one's multicultural identity and alleviating emotional loneliness as a second-generation immigrant. A further study could explore other works of fiction about the second-generation immigrants and expand on what complicates and facilitates their identity formation and integration into the Canadian society.

## REFERENCES

### Primary source

Chariandy, David. 2007. *Soucouyant: A Novel of Forgetting*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

### Secondary sources

- Bastian, Brock and Nick Haslam. 2006. Psychological essentialism and stereotype endorsement. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42: 2, 228-235.
- Benet-Martínez, Verónica, Janxin Leu, Fiona Lee and Michael W. Morris. 2002. Negotiating biculturalism: Cultural frame switching in biculturals with oppositional versus compatible cultural identities. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33: 5, 492-516.
- Buecker, Susanne, Marlies Maes, Jaap. J. A. Denissen and Maike Luhmann. 2020. Loneliness and the big five personality traits: a meta-analysis. *European Journal of Personality*, 34: 1, 8-28.
- Cacioppo, Stephanie, Angela J. Grippo, Sarah London, Luc Goossens and John T. Cacioppo. 2015. Loneliness: clinical import and interventions. *Perspective on Psychological Science*, 10: 2, 238-249.
- Chivers, Sally. 2019. "Your own guilty story": Rethinking care relations through David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. *Canadian Literature*, 239, 108-124.
- Cvetković, Tanja. 2021. *Soucouyant*, or the narrative of the fragmented self. In Rodolphe Solbiac (ed). *Critical Perspectives on David Chariandy*, 79-88. London: Lexington Books.
- Delisle, Jennifer Bowering. 2011. "A Bruise Still Tender": David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* and cultural memory. *Ariel*, 41: 2, 1-21.
- Dobson, Kit. 2008. Writing across the borders. *Canadian Literature: Predators and Gardens*, 197, 164-166.
- Dobson, Kit and David Chariandy. 2007. Spirits of elsewhere past: a dialogue on *Soucouyant*. *Callaloo*, 30: 3, 808-817.
- Doucerin, Marina M., Catherine E. Amiot and Andrew G. Ryder. 2021. Balancing out bonding and bridging capital: Social network correlates of multicultural identity configurations among Russian migrants to Canada. *Self and Identity*, 21: 5, 527-552.
- Drennan, Jonathan, Margaret Treacy, Michelle Butler, Anne Byrne, Gerard Fealy, Kate Frazer and Kate Irving. 2008. The experience of social and emotional loneliness among older people in Ireland. *Ageing & Society*, 28, 1113-1132.
- Dykstra, Pearl A., and Tineke Fokkema. 2007. Social and emotional loneliness among divorced and married men and women: comparing the deficit and cognitive perspectives. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 29: 1, 1-12.
- Francis, Donette. 2008. Review of *Soucouyant: A Novel of Forgetting* by David Chariandy. *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 17: 1, 76-79.
- Gierveld, Jong J. 1998. A review of loneliness: concept and definitions, determinants, consequences. *Reviews in Clinical Gerontology*, 8: 1, 73-80.
- Green, Laura R., Deborah S. Richardson, Tania Lago and Elizabeth C. Schatten-Jones. 2001. Network correlates of social and emotional loneliness in younger and older adults. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27: 3, 281-288.
- Hong, Ying-yi and Mark Khei. 2014. Dynamic multiculturalism: The interplay of socio-cognitive, neural and genetic mechanisms. In Verónica Benet-Martínez and Ying-yi

- Hong (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity*, 11-34. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hong, Ying-Yi, Michael W. Morris, Chi-yue Chiu and Verónica Benet-Martínez. 2000. Multicultural minds: A dynamic constructivist approach to culture and cognition. *American Psychologist*, 55: 7, 709-720.
- Jeffers, Asha. 2020. Hidden histories and second generation struggles in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 57: 3, 1-14.
- Langwald, Sylvia. 2016. "My history is a foreign word": diasporic generationality and David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*, 36: 1, 108-122.
- Liu, Brittany S. and Karen S. Rook. 2013. Emotional and social loneliness in later life: Association with positive versus negative social exchanges. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 30: 6, 813-831.
- Liu, Shuang. 2017. Identity, bicultural and multicultural. In Young Yun Kim (gen. ed). *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication: Core Theories, Issues, and Concepts*, 1-9. Wiley Online Library. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783665.ieicc0034>, accessed March 2, 2024.
- Ludolph, Rebekah. 2021. Beyond dementia: rematerializing the early reception of David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. In Rodolphe Solbiac (ed). *Critical Perspectives on David Chariandy*, 37-56. London: Lexington Books.
- Mackey, Allison. 2012. Postnational coming of age in contemporary Anglo-Canadian fiction. *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 38: 3-4, 227-253.
- Merriam-Webster. 2024a. Intergenerational. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intergenerational>, accessed May 19, 2024.
- Merriam-Webster. 2024b. Intragenerational. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intragenerational>, accessed May 19, 2024.
- Minto, Deonne N. 2010. *Soucouyant: A Novel of Forgetting* (review). *Callaloo*, 33: 3, 887-889.
- Moosa, Farah. 2014. "I didn't want to tell a story like this": cultural inheritance and the second generation in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. In Cynthia Sugars and Eleanor Ty (ed.) *Canadian Literature and Cultural Memory*, 322-336. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Mosanya, Magdalena and Anna Kwiatkowska. 2023. Multicultural identity integration versus compartmentalization as predictors of subjective well-being for third culture kids: The mediational role of self-concept consistency and self-efficacy. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20: 5, 3880, 1-15. Available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20053880>, accessed February 12, 2024.
- Sarkowsky, Katja. 2017. Haunting conflicts: memory, forgetting, and the struggle for community in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. In Susanne Mühleisen (ed). *Contested Communities: Communication, Narration, Imagination*, 149-170. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Solbiac, Rodolphe. 2021. Intergenerational conversations in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* and *Brother*: Postcolonial listening as reparation for cultural amnesia and traumatic postmemory. In Rodolphe Solbiac (ed). *Critical Perspectives on David Chariandy*, 1-22. London: Lexington Books.
- Tiilikainen, Elisa and Marjaana Seppänen. 2017. Lost and unfulfilled relationships behind emotional loneliness in old age. *Ageing & Society*, 37, 1068-1088.

- Valtorta, Nicole and Barbara Hanratty. 2013. Loneliness, isolation and the health of older adults: do we need a new research agenda? *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 105: 12, 518-522.
- Villanueva, Walter Rafael. 2022. The invisible labour of informal care: parentified, gendered, and racialized caregiving in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*. *Canadian Literature*, 248, 30-51.
- Ward, Colleen, Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong, Agnes Szabo, Tamara Qumseya and Uma Bhowon. 2018. Hybrid and alternating identity styles as strategies for managing multicultural identities. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49: 9, 1402-1439.
- Weiss, Robert. 1973. *Loneliness: The Experience of Emotional and Social Isolation*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Wolters, Nine E., Lynn Mobach, Vivian M. Wuthrich, Peter Vonk, Claudia M. Van der Heijde, Reinout W. Wiers, Ronald M. Rapee and Anke M. Klein. 2023. Emotional and social loneliness and their unique links with social isolation, depression and anxiety. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 329, 207-217.
- Yampolsky, Maya A., Catherine E. Amiot and Roxane de la Sablonniere. 2013. Multicultural identity integration and well-being: A qualitative exploration of variations in narrative coherence and multicultural identification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 1-15.
- Yampolsky, Maya A., Catherine E. Amiot and Roxane de la Sablonniere. 2015. The multicultural identity integration scale (MULTIIS): Developing a comprehensive measure for configuring one's multiple cultural identities within the self. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 22, 166-184.
- Yampolsky, Maya A. and Catherine E. Amiot. 2016. Discrimination and multicultural identity configurations: The mediating role of stress. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 55, 86-96.

## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Marie Maisvee

**Second-Generation Immigrant Struggles with Multicultural Identity and Emotional Loneliness: The Character of Meera in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* / Teise generatsiooni immigrantide raskused multikultuurilise identiteedi ja emotsionaalse üksildusega: Meera tegelaskuju David Chariandy romaanis „Soucouyant“**

Bakalaureusetöö

2024

Lehekülgede arv: 32

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on käsitleda Meera tegelaskuju David Chariandy teoses „Soucouyant“. Analüüsitakse, kuidas muutub teose vältel Meera kui teise generatsiooni immigrandi arusaam oma multikultuurilisest identiteedist ja mis põhjusel kogeb Meera emotsionaalset üksildust ning kuidas ta hakkab sellest üle saama. Lisaks uuritakse põlvkondlike suhete mõju Meera multikultuurilisele identiteedile ja emotsionaalsele üksildusele ning *soucouyanti* kujundi intertekstuaalsust.

Töö koosneb sissejuhatausest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatus sisaldab lühikest teose kokkuvõtet, põhiliste terminite tutvustust ja uurimisküsimusi. Esimene peatükk on kirjanduse ülevaade ja see jaguneb kolmeks osaks, mis annavad ülevaate teose retseptsioonist ja multikultuurilise identiteedi ning emotsionaalse üksilduse teoreetilistest taustast. Teine peatükk on uurimuslik ja on samuti jaotatud kolmeks osaks, mis keskenduvad Meera suhetele ema Antoinette'ga, peategelase ema Adele'iga ja peategelasega. Läbi kõigi kolme alapeatüki analüüsitakse Meera kogemusi multikultuurilise identiteedi ja emotsionaalse üksildusega. Uurimuslikus osas kasutatakse lähilugemise meetodit, mille kaudu uuritakse teost süvitsi kirjanduse ülevaate peatükis esitatud varasemate uuringute toel nii teose kui ka identiteedi ja emotsionaalse üksilduse kohta.

Bakalaureusetöö analüüsi tulemusena leiti, et Meera narratiivi alguses on tema identiteet kategoriseeritud, kuna suhtes emaga puudub tal ligipääs oma Kariibi pärandile. Suhtes Adele'i ja peategelasega õpib Meera tundma Kariibi pärandit ja alustab seeläbi integreeritud identiteedi loomise protsessi. Emotsionaalse üksilduse analüüsist selgus, et suhe emaga põhjustab Meera emotsionaalse üksilduse, sest selles puudub vaimne tugi. Suhtes Adele'ga kogeb Meera esmakordselt vaimset tuge, mis suureneb veelgi suhtes peategelasega, mis tähendab, et need kaks suhet aitavad Meera emotsionaalset üksildust vähendada. Analüüs näitas ka, et Meera ja Antoinette'i suhe ilmestab mittemõistmise võimalikkust, ent Meera ja Adele'i suhe mõistmise võimalikkust põlvkondade vahelistes suhetes. Kõige olulisemaks osutus aga Meera põlvkonnasisene suhe peategelasega, milles teda enim mõisteti. *Soucouyanti* intertekstuaalsuse analüüs leidis, et kujund viitab rassismile ja traumale, mida Meera on kogenud, aga ka tema mittekuuluvustundele. Lisaks ilmnes analüüsist, et *soucouyanti* kujund viitab jagatud kogemusele ja ühiste sidemetele, mille najal Meera leiab mõistmist oma suhetes Adele'i ja peategelasega.

Märksõnad: David Chariandy, *soucouyant*, multikultuuriline identiteet, emotsionaalne üksildus

## **Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks**

Mina, Marie Maisvee,

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

Second-Generation Immigrant Struggles with Multicultural Identity and Emotional Loneliness: The Character of Meera in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant*,

mille juhendaja on Eva Rein,

reprodutseerimiseks eesmärgiga seda säilitada, sealhulgas lisada digitaalarhiivi DSpace kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse lõppemiseni.

2. Annan Tartu Ülikoolile loa teha punktis 1 nimetatud teos üldsusele kättesaadavaks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace kaudu Creative Commons'i litsentsiga CC BY NC ND 4.0, mis lubab autorile viidates teost reprodutseerida, levitada ja üldsusele suunata ning keelab luua tuletatud teost ja kasutada teost ärieesmärgil, kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse lõppemiseni.
3. Olen teadlik, et punktides 1 ja 2 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.
4. Kinnitan, et lihtlitsentsi andmisega ei riku ma teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse õigusaktidest tulenevaid õigusi.

Marie Maisvee

Tartus, 21.05.2024

**Autorsuse kinnitus**

Kinnitan, et olen koostanud käesoleva bakalaureusetöö ise ning toonud korrektselt välja teiste autorite panuse. Töö on koostatud lähtudes Tartu Ülikooli maailma keelte ja kultuuride instituudi anglistika osakonna bakalaureusetöö nõuetest ning on kooskõlas heade akadeemiliste tavadega.

*/allkirjastatud digitaalselt/*

Marie Maisvee

Tartus, 21.05.2024

**Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.**

Eva Rein

Tartus, 21.05.2024