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FROM 'UNDESIRABLE ALIEN' TO PROUD BRITISH JEWRY: THE JEWISH IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN MEMORY AND HISTORY, 1881 TO PRESENT

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ABSTRACT

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FROM 'UNDESIRABLE ALIEN' TO PROUD BRITISH JEWRY: THE JEWISH IMMIGRANT

EXPERIENCE IN MEMORY AND HISTORY, 1881 TO PRESENT

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This thesis examines the changing representations of the Eastern European Jewish immigrant experience in Britain from the period of mass immigration to the twenty-first century. A broadly generational approach has been adopted, enabling the study to explore the continuity and change within private and popular narratives regarding Jewish immigration and settlement. This structure permits the study to trace the development of popular myths and memory, particularly regarding the Jewish East End. It highlights the generational divisions which have seen facets of Eastern European Jewish culture remembered fondly in popular memory today, compared to their negative portrayal by society during the era of mass immigration. Moreover, this approach explores the development of identity, with 'Eastern European', 'Jewish' and 'English' identities being navigated, contested, and reconciled by the children and grandchildren of the first generation of immigrant Jewry.

Comparisons are made with American popular representations of the Lower East Side, which has been immortalised as *the* definitive site of American Jewish memory. It is this comparison, alongside the thesis' approach of examining self-representations over time which offers a fresh perspective of Jewish history in Britain. Central to this thesis accordingly, is the wide range of media analysed. Artwork, photographs, memoirs, oral history, exhibitions and museums, are all considered as sources of self-expression available to immigrant Jewry and successive generations. Such materials have been supplemented by governmental and institutional reports, along with depictions of the Jewish East End in film and television. It is by appraising how these sources have represented immigrant Jews and their children, both individually and as part of a larger phenomenon, which underscores the originality of the thesis in engaging with the history and memory of immigrant Jewry.

This thesis has been organised into three, chronologically structured chapters. The first investigates contemporary representations of both immigrant Jewry and the Jewish East End during the period of mass immigration. After discussing the limited amount of written testimony, the chapter focuses on visual representations. Both the visual depictions of nouveau riche immigrants and the artistic creations of talented young artists are considered, with the defensive and 'English' nature of these images assessed. From this foundation, Chapter Two explores the early written testimony of the second generation, defining these as accounts created before the 1960s. Within the chapter the narratives of success and acceptance of notable public figures such as Selig Brodetsky are contrasted with the marginalised counter-narratives of individuals such as socialist author Willy Goldman. The final chapter explores the extent to which early dominant narratives of origin and success have been embraced in private and popular memory by the following generation. Here, the widest selection of materials is assessed, reflecting the increased forms of self-expression available from the 1960s onward. With the Jewish East End regarded as 'disappearing', and a stronger and more confident modern sense of identity, nostalgia for what were originally regarded as undesirable traits flourished within popular memory.

Contents

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Samuel Hawkins, declare that this thesis entitled 'From 'Undesirable Alien' to Proud British Jewry: The Jewish Immigrant Experience in Memory and History, 1881 to Present' and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

- None of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: ....

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Both the 'East End' and 'Jewish East End' are literary constructions.[1] Far from fixed and categorical, the very nature of both in popular imagination has shifted markedly over the years. The experience of Eastern European immigrant Jewry, and representations of this community are often bound with the history and memory of the Jewish East End, and powerfully communicate the malleable nature of both the area (both 'real' and 'imagined'), and minority history. Academic literature, however, has tended to overlook the generational transformation in both personal narratives and the history of immigrant Jewry. Whilst much research has been conducted concerning the settlement of Jewish immigrants, the responses of English society towards them, and specific facets of the Jewish East End and immigrant culture, emphasis is missing on the development of the community's history within the spheres of private and public memory.

That the East End was contentious in the public domain during the era of mass immigration has been much examined, with anti-alienists such as Arnold White proclaiming that 'London shall be for Londoners, not for alien hordes debilitated by social and legislative persecution'.[2] Within a generation popular opinion had changed drastically, with comedian Bud Flanagan, son of immigrant Jews described as 'so popular that he became an English institution'.[3] Nevertheless, the process of this transformation within the overall memory of the Jewish immigrant experience has not been fully investigated within the academic realm.

Recognising this important lacuna within the historiography, this thesis examines the changing representations of the Jewish immigrant experience from the period of mass immigration to the twenty-first century. Adopting a broadly generational approach, this study will explore both the consistencies and key changes over time within private and popular narratives, as constructed by immigrant Jewry and the two successive generations. As a result, the development of popular myths and memory regarding the general experience of immigrant Jewry, particularly within the Jewish East End have been investigated, highlighting the

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[1] In their introduction to 'Revisiting the Victorian East End', a special issue of the journal *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Emma Francis and Nadia Valman detailed some of the early literary constructions of the area. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, a 'media frenzy' saw many journalists, such as Arthur Morrison and Jack London, preoccupied with identifying and labelling the 'East End'. Many ultimately sensationalised the area as a site of extreme poverty, destitution and depravity, with the pauperised working-classes of the East End portrayed as a great ongoing economic and social crisis. A crisis which threatened to overwhelm the respectable Victorian middle-classes. See: Emma Francis and Nadia Valman, 'Introduction: Revisiting the Victorian East End', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, No. 13 (2011) <http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.635>.
[2] Arnold White, 'The Alien Immigrant', *Blackwood's Magazine* (January – June, 1903), p. 141.
[3] 'Obituary: Mr. Bud Flanagan', *The Times*, 21 October 1968, p. 10.

generational divisions which have seen previously maligned elements of Eastern European Jewish culture remembered warmly. Moreover, through the wide range of media assessed, this thesis examines the developing identity of immigrant Jewry, where 'Eastern European', Jewish' and 'English' identities were all navigated, contested, and eventually seemingly harmonised by their children and grandchildren. Of further significance are the comparisons made between American popular representations of the Lower East Side (the area with the largest settlement of East European Jewish immigrants and also the most written about), and the Anglo-Jewish context. Such comparisons and the broad range of media and memory analysed and brought together by the thesis, offers a fresh perspective of the different generations of memory of immigrant Jewry, whilst also addressing an overlooked facet of British Jewry's history.

A Historiography of the Jewish Immigrant in Britain

As with popular representations of the Jewish East End, the history of British Jewry has seen much revisionism. Prior to the late 1960s, the history of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Britain, and their settlement was overlooked. Academic studies into British Jewry were scarce, being a distinct and isolated sub-section of British history. This is best demonstrated by the work of the Jewish Historical Society of England (JHSE). Founded in 1893 by Anglo-Jewish scholars such as Lucien Woolf, the chronological focus of Anglo-Jewish history was upon the 'ancient' rootedness of Jews in society. Great emphasis was placed upon Medieval history, the readmission, and the triumphant procession of Jewish emancipation. The history of Britain's Jews accordingly was designed to demonstrate both the patriotic nature of British Jewry, and their long-standing presence within society.[4]

The 1960s witnessed a revolution in historical thinking, legitimising social history. Moving beyond the confines of academic history focusing upon the intellectual, economic, political and religious elite, this democratisation of history welcomed a radical engagement with previously marginalised elements of the past. One such engagement, saw notable historians of British Jewry, Vivian D. Lipman and Israel Finestein, explore Victorian Anglo-Jewish history. Whilst significant first steps towards broadening the scope of Anglo-Jewish history, and indeed in Lipman's case, he was ahead of his time with his publications, these histories were still highly sanitised. Whiggish in

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[4] Many modern historians have commented upon the secluded nature of British Jewish history prior to the late 1960s. The final JHSE presidential speech by Cecil Roth in 1968, is heralded as symbolising both the insular and stagnated nature of this history, which was wholly preoccupied with demonstrating the progression of Britain's Jews towards emancipation. History of Jews as a minority, or specialised studies moving beyond this remit were left to amateurs, beyond the confines of the JHSE. See: Todd Endelman, 'Writing English Jewish History', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 623-636; and Tony Kushner and Hannah Ewence, 'Whatever Happened to British Jewish Studies? In Search of Contexts', *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter, 2010), pp. 1-26.

nature, they celebrated the successful integration of Jews as Englishmen. Tales of discord were broadly omitted, with Eastern European immigrants, whilst acknowledged, reduced to a passive and compliant mass who were successfully managed by the communal Anglo-Jewish leadership.

A pertinent example of this treatment can be found within Lipman's centenary history of the Jewish Board of Guardians, *A Century of Social Service* (1959). Here, Britain's long-standing liberal tradition of asylum was championed. In his view the Anglo-Jewish leadership, through institutions such as the Jewish Board of Guardians, battled against the unjust persecution of Eastern European Jews, whilst trying to manage popular English anxieties regarding the unprecedented levels of alien immigration:

> If, in historical retrospect, the Jewish organisations may be criticised for trying to restrict the flow of immigrants, or of showing insufficient sympathy with them, one must remember that these bodies were trying to cope with a situation with which they were constitutionally unfitted to deal. The responsibility for the tragedies of that period rests not with them, but with the conduct of those who made the Russian Empire a place in which its law-abiding Jewish inhabitants could no longer live.[5]

The message henceforth was clear: the leaders of Anglo-Jewry deserve to be celebrated for admirably stepping up to relieve the Jewish refugee crisis of 1880-1905, which was caused by the backward and reactionary regime of late Imperial Russia. When immigration to Britain could not be prevented, they successfully settled immigrants who were 'economically viable', whilst either assisting others onwards to the United States, or back to Eastern Europe once the troubles had settled in their home regions. This was all managed whilst dealing with an increasingly hostile public sentiment towards the deluge of aliens into the East End.

It was an American scholar who sparked the initial wave of revisionism. Lloyd Gartner's *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914* (1960) has widely been heralded as the seminal study which initiated the transformation of Anglo-Jewish history. Moving beyond a celebration of communal Anglo-Jewry, this study critically assessed the historic background of mass Jewish migration from Eastern Europe and appraised the nature of this settlement in England. Moreover, the role of Anglo-Jewry in the reception and assimilation of immigrant Jews was re-examined, with Gartner challenging long-held myths regarding the integration and prosperity on hand for immigrant Jewry.[6] A relatively self-contained study, Gartner's work was primarily concerned with the social and economic structure of immigrant Jewry. Accordingly, the reception of immigrant

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[5] Vivian D. Lipman, *A Century of Social Service, 1859-1959: The Jewish Board of Guardians* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1959), p. 101.
[6] Geoffrey Alderman, 'The Canon: The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914. By Lloyd P. Gartner', *Times Higher Education*, 2009 <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/books/the-canon-the-jewish-immigrant-in-england-1870-1914-by-lloyd-p-gartner/406690.article> [accessed 21/10/2015].

Jews by English society was superficially addressed, with most emphasis placed upon the tensions which existed between the established Anglo-Jewish community and their immigrant co-religionists concerning matters such as religion, customs and economics. The rising existence of anti-alienism and the advent of the 1905 Aliens Act subsequently received little attention.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Gartner made to Anglo-Jewish history was regarding the identity of immigrant Jewry. The apologetic nature of British Jewish history had long portrayed the mass of immigrant Jewry as religious refugees fleeing intolerable Tsarist persecution, images which became enshrined in myth in popular memory. Gartner, however, concluded that whilst during specific flashpoints many were indeed refugees from pogroms and violent measures, those in the intervening years were not. Rather, they were economic migrants, who sought a better life in Western nations, such as Britain or the United States, could they afford to travel there.[7] This conclusion revolutionised the history of British Jewry, and inspired a new generation of academics to explore the political and social landscape of Britain and its reaction to immigration during this period.

These works were in part further influenced by contemporary concerns. Two leading studies on the subject were published just a year apart. John Garrard's *The English and Immigration 1880-1910* (1971) was published for the Institute of Race Relations and originated from his desire to highlight the parallels between two great immigrations: that of Eastern European Jewry which inspired the creation of the Aliens Act, and the Commonwealth immigrants which prompted the passage of 1962's Commonwealth Immigrants Act. A detailed political study, Garrard sought to detail Britain's 'underlying ambiguity' towards immigrants, which extended 'even to the juxtaposition of sentiments of tolerance and intolerance in the same statements'.[8]

The book placed Jewish immigration within its socio-political context and explored the development of both anti-alienism and anti-Semitism, which influenced the passage of the Aliens Act.[9] Furthermore, the reaction and responses of the Liberals and Trade Unionism to the Act and

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[7] Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914, Third Edition* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), pp. 44-46.

[8] John Garrard, *The English and Immigration: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Influx, 1880-1910* (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1971), p. 7.

[9] This study recognises that the spelling of the term 'anti-Semitism' has been debated in academic circles. The origins of the term have been much discussed, with scholars disagreeing over whether anti-Semitism should be hyphenated or not. Indeed, some have asserted that considering the term 'Semite' encompassed the languages of Middle Eastern and northeast Africa, the hyphenated usage of 'anti-Semitism' could be characterised as portraying prejudice against all these peoples, and not Jews alone. This study has used the hyphenated spelling most commonly encountered, but still pertains it to relate to prejudice against Jews, as Jews. Where quoted materials have utilised a different spelling, they have remained unchanged so as not tamper with the original script.

its implementation were examined. Garrard revealed how popular grievances regarding issues such as the housing shortage in the East End and unemployment were gradually grafted onto highly publicised criticisms of immigrant Jewry. Due to the concentrated nature of their settlement in the East End, the immigrant Jewish class was very visible, and accordingly became a scapegoat for such public concerns. Images of a 'golden age' were portrayed as being desecrated by an 'alien invasion', whose crowded presence in the East End made polemical complaints appear undisputable.[10] It was anxiety to garner public support which influenced both the Conservatives and Liberals throughout the period, and the belief that immigration restriction was a popular measure which persuaded the Liberals to take little action to modify the provision of the Aliens Act following their election success in 1905.

Bernard Gainer's *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (1972) focused more upon the development of popular anti-alienism in England. In more depth, Gainer examined how real and imagined economic grievances combined to exacerbate relations between Englishmen and 'alien', gathering pace and transferring into the political arena. The result was legislation which hardliners in the Conservative Party felt was unsatisfactory to stem the tide of immigration, whilst the elected Liberals were ambivalent towards its enforcement.[11] Gainer highlighted the exaggerated alarmism which was exploited by both anti-alienists and restrictionists. Whilst certain anxieties were based in actuality, such as the housing shortage crisis and overcrowding of the East End, the 'evils' of the sweating system were not solely attributable to Jewish immigrants, and in fact predated their arrival. Furthermore, the central tenet to Gainer's study was the hyperbolic nature of anti-alienism. Characterised by both ignorance and exaggeration, his conclusion remarked the absurdity that 'so few and so innocuous a band of immigrants' in London's East End were able to generate a national crisis, with the English government failing to recognise just how 'illusory the alien menace was'.[12]

The theme of how contemporary concerns have informed popular debates regarding immigration in British society has been reflected in recent studies during the past two decades. One noteworthy example is Anne Kershen's comparative study of London's East End, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, 1666-2000* (2005). In similar vein to Garrard, Kershen examined the history of three different immigrant groups in the East End. Broadly overviewing religion, community, economic activity, as well as experiences of prejudice, Kershen noted the continuity of anti-alienism and xenophobia in English society

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[10] Garrard, pp. 50-51.
[11] Bernard Gainer, *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1972), pp. 196-197.
[12] Ibid., p. 215.

concerning the immigrant minority of Spitalfields, with language and anxieties updated to address the relevant party: those of Huguenot, Jewish or Bangladeshi origin.[13] Kershen's work also harnessed modernised theories of immigration and applied them to a review of the area and its different immigrant communities. Significantly, this underlined the commonplace practice of the host society to simply categorise a highly diverse community of individuals under one, collective label, such as 'alien' or 'Asian'.

Following the works of Gartner, Garrard and Gainer, a wealth of specialised studies into previously maligned facets of British Jewish history were developed. The scope for revisionism initiated by Gartner's examination of communal Anglo-Jewry influenced various studies into the politics of philanthropy and communal organisation. Eugene Black's *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry* (1988) assessed the period from a top-down perspective, exploring how communal Anglo-Jewry managed mass immigration. Black was frank regarding the systematic policy of repatriation during the earlier years, which targeted 'imposters' for refuge, and noted the anxiety of the Anglo-Jewish leadership towards maintaining a positive, 'English' image for the Jewish population of England.[14] Black's work provided a comprehensive guide to the key personalities and interactions of Anglo-Jewry, noting the tensions which existed over directing the community's official response.

The nature of these key personalities, and their role in shaping communal policy has been much debated. Daniel Gutwein painted an uncompromising picture in *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry, 1882-1917* (1992). Identifying the two dominant Anglo-Jewish figures of the period, Nathaniel Rothschild, the first Lord Rothschild and Samuel Montagu, the MP for Whitechapel between 1885-1900, Gutwein detailed a struggle between the pair. Montagu was characterised as being closer to immigrant Jewry in spirit, being a relatively recent addition to the Anglo-Jewish cousinhood. Whereas Rothschild desired to exert influence and control over immigrant Jewry, anglicising them through social control and philanthropy, Montagu desired a more active form of integration:

> […] Montagu's policies developed the Jewish working class's political self-confidence, self-consciousness and political participation and made them a subject of community politics. In spite of continued dependence on Montagu by virtue of their patterns of governance, both the Federation and the Working Men's Club – like the Jewish trade-unionism supported by Montagu – served as a

[13] Anne J. Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, 1666-2000* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 217.
[14] Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 266-270.

'school for democracy' for the Jewish working classes which hitherto had no experience with power the responsibilities accompanying it.[15]

It was this desire to elevate both immigrant Jewry and the Jewish working class to a level of self-governance which alarmed Rothschild, with the decentralisation of communal power opposing the overall interests of the Anglo-Jewish ruling class. In his conclusion, Gutwein asserted that the clash between Rothschild and Montagu was not only a matter of personality, but also a clash between opposing social politics. Whilst many historians concur that Rothschild and Montagu represented different approaches towards managing the immigrant community, some disagree with Gutwein's thesis. Geoffrey Alderman's ambitious overview, *Modern British Jewry* (1998) rejected this assessment. Whilst Alderman's book broadly covers the history of British Jewry from the emancipation to the conclusion of the Second World War, he did explore the relationship between Rothschild and Montagu. The foundation of the Federation of Synagogues has often been characterised as Montagu's challenge to Rothschild's authority. Alderman, however, disagreed:

> Of Montagu himself it has sometimes been said that he desired to supplant Lord Rothschild as the undisputed lay leader of Anglo-Jewry, and that the launching of the Federation was designed to achieve this end. Such was the view put about by the gossip-mongers. There is not a shred of evidence (even circumstantial) to support it. At its foundation Rothschild was offered, and accepted, the Presidency of the Federation, and actually presided at the second meeting of its Board of Delegates (16 January 1888).[16]

It was not only the history of communal Anglo-Jewry that received a critical analysis following the publication of Gartner's *The Jewish Immigrant*. One of the most influential studies on the Jewish immigrant labour movement is William Fishman's *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (1975). A highly detailed assessment of immigrant labour, Fishman utilised Yiddish newspapers to demonstrate the existence of radical political activity within the Jewish East End. Radical political organisation was characterised by Fishman as flourishing within the immigrant quarter, with two distinct events thwarting the progression of Jewish trade unionism: the 1870 Education Act, which cut off the ready supply of second and third generation immigrant children into the workforce, and the outbreak of the First World War.[17] Whilst significant in highlighting the existence of a Jewish trade union movement in the East End, Fishman's work overstated the

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[15] Daniel Gutwein, *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry, 1882-1917* (Leiden, The Netherlands; New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 303.
[16] Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 161.
[17] William Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004, first published, London: Duckworth, 1975), pp. 304-306.

extent of its popular appeal. Radical political Jewish immigrant activity was overall, an undercurrent in the Jewish East End, and not the participation of the majority, as Fishman suggested.

The scope of this specialism opened Anglo-Jewish history in numerous directions. Harold Pollins for instance, examined the economic activity of British Jewry in *Economic History of the Jews in England* (1982). Recognising that economic histories had little to say about Jewish activity in England, partly due to the lack of reliable statistical information, Pollins sought to describe Jewish economic activities and the reasons for any patterns. Central to the book, was the transformation of Anglo-Jewry during the period of mass immigration, whereby thousands of working-class immigrant Jews transitioned the overall makeup of the community from the middle-classes, to labourers. Significantly, Pollins concluded that immigrant Jewry did not change their economic status overnight by migration. Rather, they changed their surrounding context from Eastern Europe to England. Whilst some prospered exceptionally, it was rather their children and grandchildren who possessed the opportunity to enter the middle-classes, with rapid progress halted until the opportunities were available in the years of fuller employment following the Second World War.[18]

Notably, the specialism of Anglo-Jewish history enabled a flourishing of detailed investigations into specific facets of immigrant life. The role of gender and religion within immigrant households has been explored by Rickie Burman in various studies. Utilising the oral history collection of the Manchester Jewish Museum, Burman explored conceptions of the role of Jewish women in both the domestic and economic spheres. Far from women rejecting the customs of Eastern Europe, whereby women were the sole breadwinner for the family so husbands could dedicate themselves to religious education, Burman revealed the persistence of women's economic involvement amongst the first generation.[19] Further studies into the role of Jewish women beyond the confines of stereotypes has been pursued by Lara Marks, whose case study of Jewish prostitution highlighted the influence of communal Anglo-Jewry in combating the

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[18] Harold Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), p. 240.
[19] Rickie Burman, 'The Jewish Woman as the Breadwinner: The Changing Value of Women's Work in a Manchester Immigrant Community', *Oral Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 27-39; and Rickie Burman, ''She Looketh Well to the Ways of Her Household': The Changing Role of Jewish Women in Religious Life, c. 1880-1930', in Gail Malmgreen (ed.), *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

white slave trade, whilst reducing the public visibility of Jewish prostitutes in order to maintain the desired image of Jewish women as good mothers, central to Jewish family life.[20]

One of the most recent additions to this growing wealth of academic literature is Susan Tananbaum's *Jewish Immigrants in London, 1880-1939* (2014). An important study, Tananbaum explored how Jewish immigrants – particularly women and children – absorbed English language and customs. A sympathetic study regarding immigrants, Tananbaum noted the challenges historians face in hearing the voices of immigrants, with much of the information garnered for her research being teased from materials which discussed them, rather than being direct immigrant testimony.[21] Consequently, to engage with the immigrant perspective Tananbaum examined both newspapers and the official reports of institutions which remarked upon the reactions of immigrants to philanthropic and anglicising measures. It is through these reports that Tananbaum reconstructed the interactions and activities of immigrant women and children with the bodies which they encountered.

Accordingly, whilst an invaluable study exploring how Jewish women and children experienced and engaged with Anglo-Jewry's anglicisation measures, this is still a top-down study due to the limitations of sources. Nevertheless, Tananbaum's in depth coverage of Jewish immigrant childhood addressed a significant historiographical gap, neatly examining the dual process of anglicisation within immigrant homes between mothers and children, following their interactions at school, with health care services, and the workplace. Indeed, Tananbaum proposed that children were vital in exposing their mothers to English language and customs, with women more likely to embrace anglicisation than men due to the Victorian ideal of women as the 'keeper and protector of the home' leaving them a child's primary point of contact. Furthermore, Tananbaum proposed that anglicisation was not a linear process. She characterised this change as occurring at three different stages. Adults who arrived between 1880 and 1905 tended to cling to their familiar customs and traditions of Eastern Europe. The children who entered the education system between 1905 and 1914, however, entered an integrated network of Anglo-Jewish communal influence, and were receptive to anglicising measures. It was then in the interwar years, that Tananbaum asserted that 'patterns of modern anglicised life took root'.[22]

As recognised by Tananbaum, historians face much difficulty in directly accessing immigrant testimony. Accordingly, many studies are top-down in nature, with the physical world of

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[20] Lara Marks, 'Race, class and gender: the experience of Jewish prostitutes and other Jewish women in the East End of London at the turn of the century', in Joan Grant (ed.), *Women, Migration and Empire* (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham, 1996).
[21] Susan L. Tananbaum, *Jewish Immigrants in London, 1880-1939* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), p. 11.
[22] Ibid., pp. 167-168.

immigrant work and home well documented. Most studies have focused and developed upon lines of exploring the changing social and political climate of both Britain and the altering social space in which immigrant Jews occupied. Intentional or not, these lines of historical enquiry reflect the reality that much of the readily available source material comes from governmental or Anglo-Jewish institutions, whilst the unpublished material relating to the Jewish immigrant experience is limited in terms of both quantity and quality.[23] One important work which proactively sought to engage with the remaining voices of East End Jewry is Jerry White's *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887–1920* (1980). White's focus was upon the daily life within the East End 'ghetto', specifically the Rothschild Buildings tenement block.

Utilising the oral history and written testimony of individuals who lived there as children, White carefully navigated both reconstructing everyday life for immigrant Jewry, and the complex relationship between philanthropy and missionary activity which characterised the model dwelling's operation. Indeed, in the introduction White noted that he did not cover the religious life of immigrant Jewry as much as originally anticipated, but for this, he did not apologise:

> I think it fairly reflects the concerns of the people that I interviewed – whereas I have paid greater attention than others to class control and class tensions in home and school and workplace.[24]

A detailed study, *Rothschild Buildings* offered a unique blend between historical investigation and memory work. Effectively utilising the oral testimony of individuals who grew up in the tenement block, the book illuminates many details regarding second generation Jewry and their recollection of their parents' experiences. The study itself is heavily influenced by White's Marxist approach, which emphasised class conflict and the struggle amongst immigrant Jewry and their children to 're-establish the economic independence and security which they and their parents had lost in the Pale'.[25] Nevertheless, this was a significant specialised study in the history of British Jewry, proactively engaging with the history and experiences of a previously maligned class of Jews.

Such comprehensive, specialised studies were not the only result of the revisionism of British Jewish history which has been traced back to Gartner. The 1980s saw the formation of

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[23] David Englander (ed.), *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain, 1840-1920* (Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1994), pp. 3-4.

[24] Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. xv.

[25] Ibid., p. 252.

what has been described as the 'New School' of Anglo-Jewish history.[26] Critical reassessments were conducted by historians who challenged long held assumptions regarding Britain and her liberal tradition, with the 'tolerance' afforded towards minorities queried. One of the leading historians of this revisionism was Bill Williams, whose work influenced theories on the 'emancipation contract'. This model proposed that the acceptance of minorities such as immigrant Jewry was conditional, subject to the adherence to English custom and 'norms'. It was this top-down pressure for Jewish assimilation and integration which influenced the role and actions of Anglo-Jewry towards immigrant Jews. To protect the status of British Jewry, the communal leadership assumed the mission to anglicise the newly arrived, whilst repatriating the 'undeserving' cases who would not easily assume the 'English' image. Such measures were taken as the Anglo-Jewish leadership perceived their privileged position as being dependent upon Jewish integration into society as Englishmen first and foremost, and not simply as law-abiding Jewish citizens.[27] Henceforth, they could not allow 'Jewishness' to become synonymous with the pauperised 'alien', and so a dual policy of anglicisation and repatriation was pursued during the period of mass immigration.

This conception of Anglo-Jewish history was further developed by David Cesarani. His edited volume, *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (1990) featured essays by fellow historians equally critical towards England's liberal tradition and status as a host society. A significant theme throughout the collected essays was the persistence of ambivalence, negativity and anti-Semitism towards England's Jews. Far from a historical phenomenon confined to a specific period, the collection argued for its reach throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cesarani himself highlighted the overlooked nature of British anti-Semitism, with what he defined as the 'apologetic tendency' of British Jewish history permitting such a lacuna in the historiography. With examples of intolerance and persecution in British shores seemingly paltry compared to the atrocities on the European continent, and Anglo-Jewish history long depicting a linear, whiggish narrative, incidences of xenophobia in England had been marginalised.[28] Indeed, a separate essay by Cesarani noted the central role of anti-alienism and xenophobia in England's political culture throughout the early twentieth century. Highlighting the prejudice and process of 'othering'

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[26] The term 'New School' was first used by Todd Endelman in his historiographical essay regarding the evolution of Anglo-Jewish history. Indeed, this development was highly praised by Endelman, who noted that recent debates had 'transformed a once somnolent backwater into the liveliest, most contentious branch of modern Jewish history'. See: Endelman, 'Writing English Jewish History', p. 634.
[27] Bill Williams, ''East and West': Class and Community in Manchester Jewry, 1850-1914', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 20.
[28] David Cesarani, 'Introduction', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

which led to the 1905 Aliens Act, the 1918 Nationality Act and the political tightening of the 1919 Aliens Act, Cesarani concluded:

> In so far as nationalism in politics and culture is central to the existence of any nation state, then anti-alienism must be seen as central, too. The construction of the alien is a nodal point where ideology and politics intersect. In the definition of the alien, the state and the people act in collusion: popular attitudes and official policy are fused to produce a coherent account of the nation. During the long period of Britain's decline as a world power and the concurrent stress within society, the forging of the nation was critical. To omit anti-alienism from this process is like playing 'Macbeth' without the ghost.[29]

Such assessments are shared by Tony Kushner. Far from British liberalism omitting anti-Semitism, Kushner proposed that the pair have long co-existed. Indeed, whilst less cohesive or organised than notable examples on the European continent, the ambivalence of British liberal culture towards her Jewish minority has enabled expressions of anti-Semitism to persist. Notions of Jewish 'contributions' towards the survival of anti-Semitism has been highlighted by Kushner as an example of liberal anti-Semitism in action, with the belief that outbursts of hostility towards British Jews due to their refusal to fully integrate into society is 'well-earned' being inherently anti-Semitic.[30] Furthermore, Kushner and Cesarani together discussed the complex relationship between English liberalism and anti-Semitism in a debate article in the *Jewish Quarterly* alongside other leading British Jewish historians, historians who did not necessarily concur with their assessment.[31]

One such leading historian was David Feldman. Whilst Feldman noted that a relationship existed between liberalism and anti-Semitism, he asserted that liberalism was not a pervasive factor in dictating the terms of Jewish inclusion in English society.[32] Feldman's interpretation is most comprehensively conveyed in *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (1994). Less critical of England as a host society, Feldman detailed the opportunities afforded to Anglo-Jewry. Indeed, it was these opportunities which Feldman argued contributed towards the active participation of immigrant Jewry in their anglicisation, with them redefining their identity as English Jews, enabling them to increasingly participate in politics themselves.[33]

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[29] David Cesarani, 'An Alien Concept? The Continuity of Anti-Alienism in British Society Before 1940', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (November, 1992), p. 47.

[30] Tony Kushner, 'The Impact of British Anti-Semitism, 1918-1945', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 202.

[31] 'An Anglo-Jewish *Historikerstreit*', '"England, Liberalism and the Jews"', *Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 33-38.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[33] David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 382-383.

Whilst Feldman noted that the passage of the 1905 Aliens Act was a landmark in the decline of English liberalism, he remarked that it should not be regarded as a 'legislative quirk', born of prejudice. Rather the measure signalled the development of England towards the modern control of immigration and restricted borders.[34] Historians accordingly should seek to uncover the reasons why immigration became such a pertinent issue at the turn of the century, rather than frame it as an expression of xenophobia. For Feldman, it was the pressures of modernity and overcrowding which influenced the formation of the Act, with the prevention of thousands of impoverished, poorly-equipped foreigners settling in London being regarded as the most expedient solution to addressing these issues.

That the Aliens Act was not inherently anti-Semitic was earlier concluded by Colin Holmes in his survey, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (1979). Holmes noted that the entire debate surrounding 'alien' immigration and its impact on the East End cannot be understood unless it is recognised as Jewish immigration. However, in its final form, the Act was passed as anti-alien legislation, rather than anti-Jewish.[35] To support such a conclusion, Holmes highlighted the recommendations of the 1903 Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, which specified the proposed targets for restriction were 'certain classes of aliens' which were 'undesirable'.[36] This was defined to be the impoverished, criminal and rogue elements of alien immigration: not Jews for being Jewish. Subsequently, even though it was Eastern European Jewry which had prompted immigration restriction, the measure was not purely designed to keep out Jews from Britain.

Todd Endelman likewise regarded the role of British anti-Semitism as marginal during the period. In *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (2002), he acknowledged the existence of anti-Semitism within British society. However, he contended that Britain's relationship with anti-Semitism differs markedly than the European continent, suggesting that the revisionism which purport to an insidious persistence of British anti-Semitism are misguided:

> It is also significant that the Tories did not officially embrace antisemitism or make it central to their party's message, as did right-wing parties elsewhere in Europe. Of course, they exploited anti-alien sentiment and passed restrictionist legislation, but this was not the same as urging the revocation of emancipation and the exclusion of Jews from the national mainstream, the goal of their continental counterparts.[37]

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[34] David Feldman, 'The Importance of being English: Jewish immigration and the decay of liberal England', in David Feldman and Gareth Steadman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis – London: Histories and Representations Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 79.
[35] Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1979), p. 101.
[36] Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, with minutes of evidence and appendix, Vol. I. The Report*, Parliamentary Papers [Cd. 1741] (1903), pp. 40-41.
[37] Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 164.

Regardless, the critical reassessment of the relationship between English liberalism and anti-Semitism enabled interdisciplinary studies to flourish. Anglo-Jewish literary studies, for example, have deconstructed the utilisation of 'the Jew' as a literary figure during the nineteenth century. Bryan Cheyette's *Constructions of `the Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (1993) demonstrated that 'the Jew' was not a pre-defined and static figure. Rather, authors and writers would actively 'construct' them according to their own 'literary and political concerns'.[38] Examining the figure of 'the Jew' throughout the period, Cheyette noted the changing nature of literary depictions of Jewish individuals. Strikingly, he recognised that there was no liberal, linear progression in the treatment of 'the Jew', with constructions radically changing over time according to their context.

Indeed, the malleability of 'the Jewish' figure was also the subject of Juliet Steyn's *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (1999). Steyn's book explored how British social and political issues contributed towards Jews – particularly foreign Jews – being singled out and subjected to the process of 'othering'. Through the practices and procedures of the day, the picture of the Jew as the 'other' was normalised in popular, political and legal discourses.[39] Lines between fiction and reality were blurred, with gross generalisations made about Jews or 'aliens', with them being looked down upon as being unpatriotic, dirty, or people of poor moral character. The language used towards Jews by anti-alienists in the 1903 Royal Commission on Alien Immigration is regarded as demonstrating the entry of such vernacular into official discourse, with one witness permitted to brand them 'dirty and filthy and disgraceful in an English country', whilst another could adjudge Jews – not aliens – to 'live like rats in a hole – I cannot find words bad enough for them myself'.[40]

The intellectual stimulus generated by the 'New School' of Anglo-Jewish history particularly invigorated studies into Victorian literature and culture. In a historiographical essay on Victorian Anglo-Jewish literary history, Nadia Valman noted the parallels between Anglo-Jewish historiography and the rediscovery of Victorian Anglo-Jewish 'novels of revolt'. Appraising the key works of literary historians in the developing field, Valman remarked that this intellectual growth of literary criticism expanded the analysis of 'the Jew' as a stereotyped literary figure, into observing the active participation of Jewish authors in constructing cultural identities. Close reading of texts permitted new lines of enquiry into questions regarding form and genre, and

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[38] Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of `the Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 268.
[39] Juliet Steyn, *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 60.
[40] William Walker, 8947 and Walter Trott, 8997, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration with minutes of evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II*, Parliamentary Papers [Cd. 1742] (1903).

enabled Anglo-Jewish texts to be 'read as much for how they argue as for what they argue'.[41] A key development which has shaped many studies, even outside the field of literature.

In her co-edited volume with Eitan Bar-Yosef, *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: between the East End and East Africa* (2009), Valman explored the role of Jewish authors in engaging and shaping Jewish stereotypes in literature during and after the Boer War. With the unpopularity of the war, individuals such as the anti-imperialist J.A. Hobson, negatively cast the Jew into the role of a 'vampiric capitalist'. Notably, Hobson expanded the language of the 'racial conflict' of the East End to South Africa, as he sought to portray Britain's military intervention as being the result of the machinations of Jewish capitalists.[42] Far from being rebutted by Anglo-Jewish authors, however, Valman noted the active participation of them in developing the ambiguous figure of the Jewish entrepreneur, with some authors portraying the patriotic potential of the successful Jewish capitalist. Rather than a positive or negative literary construction, Valman concluded that the 'alien entrepreneur' became for both Jewish and non-Jewish authors a 'cipher' to be utilised when imagining the national future of Britain.[43] The active participation of immigrant Jewry and the successive generations in engaging and shaping the 'identity' of East End Jewry is something which this thesis seeks to further explore.

David Glover's *A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (2012) re-engages with an exploration of this landmark legislation. Rather than tracing the development of political arguments, Glover's work rather examines how popular grievances developed during the period. Expanding upon preceding works, Glover noted how criticisms of the 'alien' were often rife with contradictions between liberal and illiberal ideas. This, however, did not stop them becoming entrenched in popular fiction, newspaper reports, and legal and political discourse.[44] Indeed, Glover posited that part of the ability of anti-alienist and anti-Semitic arguments to influence British public opinion was the relatively recent recognition of 'anti-Semitism' as a concept. In the 1880s, the word was new to Britain, having come to prominence in Germany in 1879. Of the ten occasions where the word was used by *The Times*, nine accounts pertained to developments in Europe, chiefly in Germany. Such forms of anti-Jewish prejudice henceforth were regarded as

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[41] Nadia Valman, 'Semitism and Criticism: Victorian Anglo-Jewish Literary History', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 27. No. 1 (1999), p. 244.
[42] Nadia Valman, 'Little Jew Boys Made Good: Immigration, the South African War, and Anglo-Jewish Fiction', in Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (eds.), *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: between the East End and East Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 48.
[43] Ibid., p. 62.
[44] David Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 9-10.

'fundamentally un-British, little more than a European disorder'.[45] It was the rawness of the term in Britain which enabled what Glover defined as 'counterpublics' to form:

> By contrast, White and other members of Britain's Radical Right sought to create what might best be
> described as a 'counterpublic', a loose formation with a largely oppositional relationship to the main
> centres of power, whose many-sided activities aimed to expand its base of supports and
> sympathisers, drawing in as many people as possible.[46]

Glover's work accordingly, can be recognised to approach the often-researched development of the passage of the Aliens Act from a new perspective. Situating the political arguments within their socio-cultural context, the work detailed how illiberal and xenophobic ideas could be articulated and legitimised within popular cultural forms during a period of anxiety. It is the desire of this thesis to equally contribute towards offering a fresh perspective upon a lively research area, by demonstrating how immigrant Jewry and their children and grandchildren have contributed towards popular memory and imaginings of both the Jewish East End and general immigrant experience in Britain. To pursue this, a wide selection of different types of primary material which sought to both engage with and represent the Jewish immigrant experience have been examined. It is the belief that the breadth and depth of the materials examined in this thesis contribute towards exploring the negotiated development of modern Anglo-Jewish identity, and how this has shaped both popular and private engagement within narratives regarding the experiences of immigrant Jewry: an engagement which was significantly encouraged by the 'memory boom'.

Popular History, the 'Memory Boom' and the Jewish East End

It was the arrival of the 'memory boom' in the late 1970s and early 1980s which saw the rise of both popular history and multidisciplinary studies. Whilst some historians portrayed the usage of memory as a historical source as merely the latest trend in history, others believed that its study could highlight previously unexplored details of the past. During this time, the term 'collective memory' was increasingly used to encompass the sense of a shared communal memory within specific groups or nations, with it asserted that by exploring how collective memory was shaped, one could understand how societal and personal identities are forged.[47] Despite these

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[45] Ibid., p. 82.
[46] Ibid., p. 86.
[47] Not all historians agree that 'collective memory' is a recent historical field of study. Jeffery K. Olick for instance, has argued that many academic studies previously explored topics relating to memory. However, it was not until the 'cultural turn' of the 1970s, that collective memory studies were recognised and defined for the first time, as more interdisciplinary studies were pursued by scholars in both the humanities and social sciences. See: Jeffrey K. Olick, 'Collective Memory: A Memoir and Prospect', *Memory Studies,* Vol. 1, No. 1 (January, 2008), pp. 19-20.

developments, however, no consensus exists definitively defining 'collective memory' as a concept. This thesis will encounter what is broadly defined as collective memory in its study of representations of the Jewish immigrant experience. Through memory sources such as memoirs and oral history, imaginations of the past formed through myth and memory will be identified.

The first usage of the term 'collective memory' is widely attributed to Maurice Halbwachs' study, *The Collective Memory* (1950). Halbwachs posited that a unique form of memory exists within different communities, which he defined as 'collective memory'. Whilst history is subjective, collective memory was argued to exist within a community's consciousness, influencing and shaping a group's self-definition.[48] When considering representations of both the Jewish East End, and indeed the overall immigrant experience, one can recognise elements of what Halbwachs defined as collective memory at work. As this thesis will explore in more detail, the common myths of origins which were defensively shaped by the first generation became embedded in the very identity of the immigrant Jewish community.[49] Whilst Halbwachs was influential in the development of memory studies, his assessment is far from the defining word on collective memory, with his work rather initiating the conversation among academics.

The relationship between history and memory has been widely discussed amongst academia since the 'memory boom'. The validity of collective memory as a concept has often been challenged, with critics of memory studies drawing firm distinctions between the operation of history as a discipline, and memory as an act. Those sceptical of the value of memory have highlighted the challenges of using memory as a historical source, noting the simplification and nostalgic nature of memory, which seeks to engage with that which cannot be recovered. However, whilst memory is fraught with complications for the historian to overcome, the examination of what is remembered and how it is framed, compared to the silences in memory, can be invaluable in exploring how individuals and communities have defined themselves. Memory and collective memory, particularly, can be useful in exploring the sociological and cultural development of group identity, identifying how certain traditions have been shaped and maintained to fit the memories of different communities.[50]

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[48] Maurice Halbwachs from *The Collective Memory* (1950), in Jeffery K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, (eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 142-143.
[49] See: David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, *Patterns of migration 1850-1914: Proceedings of the International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England in association with the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996), pp. 247-253.
[50] James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 202.

The 'memory boom' of the 1970s developed out of the 'cultural turn' (a movement which promoted among the humanities a cultural and literary analysis of materials, as opposed to straightforward readings of official documentation and data), whereby scholars increasingly saw the value of democratising history and making it part of a wider social process.[51] Peter Burke urged historians to approach memory in two differing ways: either as just another source, or as a historical phenomenon, of which one needs to ask how and why it has been shaped.[52] Subsequently through the interrogation of memory, one could assess the extent to which history has been shaped by the 'victors', dictating what is remembered and what is forgotten. Indeed, history as a discipline itself was critically reappraised, with some academics asserting that it was 'invented' in the nineteenth century for the legitimisation of national states.[53] The 'memory boom' therefore opened up history not just into the public sphere for popular usage, but it also helped to create the grounds from which scholars could pursue interdisciplinary studies of memory in historical terms. The interrogation of memory, it was recognised, could offer an invaluable asset and a new set of tools and knowledge to the reading of history.

These developments converged to facilitate the emergence of popular history, presenting the opportunities for 'ordinary' people to engage with local history, chronicle their life, and share their stories. Numerous community history projects were launched at local levels to encourage popular engagement with the past. Indeed, it was the timing of the 'memory boom' which to an extent initiated the 'rescuing' and preservation of the history of the Jewish East End. The literate or semi-literate nature of first and second generation immigrant Jewry did not extend itself to the recording of personal history, whilst their anglicised children seemed to have not recognised the importance of these stories either.[54] What written testimony that exists is often exceptional accounts, with much of second generation testimony being the successful, anglicised children who 'escaped' the 'ghetto' to public acclaim. Henceforth, the relative wealth of written testimony and memory regarding the Jewish East End and immigrant Jewry was the product of the popularisation of history following the 'cultural turn' of the late 1970s. Recognising the fading nature of the Jewish East End, the struggles against Oswald Mosley's fascism in the 1930s and

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[51] Popular Memory Group, 'Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method', in Richard Johnson (ed.), *Making Histories: Studies In History-Writing And Politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 207.
[52] Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory', in Jeffery K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, (eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 189.
[53] Ibid., p. 190.
[54] Tony Kushner, 'The End of the Anglo-Jewish progress show: Representations of the Jewish East End 1887-1987', in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 82.

motivated by desires to capture hidden facets of the working-class experience, many non-professional writers were moved to conserve the disappearing memories of the area.[55]

Following the generational outward migration of the third and fourth generation of East End Jewry, the East End was rediscovered to be 'Jewish' in a positive manner. Thanks to the works of amateur historians along with William Fishman, the Jewish East End Project (JEEP) was founded and helped to bring previously unexplored aspects of the Jewish experience to light, culminating in the 1987 Celebration of the Jewish East End. Marginalised histories of the Jewish immigrant or, for example, of Jewish prostitutes and anarchists, were brought to the forefront, attempting to conserve a record of the fading Jewish East End. However well-intentioned such efforts – they were fraught with the dangers which accompanied the booming 'heritage' industry of the 1980s – which in this case was by celebrating what was once overlooked, providing a romanticised and distorted view of the Jewish East End. These dangers, however, were generally regarded to be overcome by JEEP in 1987's celebration, with the organisers acknowledging the influence of nostalgia whilst seeking to reveal the harshness of life behind romanticised images.[56]

As noted, the timing of this popularisation of history means that much popular memory of immigrant Jewry and their children is situated within the interwar period. Moreover, as observed, this memory tends to regard the Jewish East End as a signifier of the quintessential experience of the Jewish immigrant. East End Jewry had gradually dispersed across London and indeed Britain, as the anglicised children and grandchildren relocated leaving behind an ageing and rapidly diminishing population, with just 25,000 Jews still residing in the East End in 1948.[57] By contrast, during the period of mass immigration around 60 to 70 percent of immigrant Jewry settled in London's East End. Whilst figures vary, Endelman noted that the significant majority of British Jews resided within London on the eve of the First World War, with around 180,000 recorded. To put this into perspective, Britain was home to around 300,000 Jews by this time, and the two next largest communities were Manchester, with 30,000, and Leeds with 20,000.[58]

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[55] Jerry White, 'Introduction', in Charles Poulsen, *Scenes… from a Stepney Youth* (London: THAP Books, 1988).
[56] Commenting upon the 1987 celebration and the work of the Museum of the Jewish East End, Tony Kushner regarded the dangers of nostalgia to have been positively counterbalanced. Taking the example of the Museum's 1986 exhibition, 'Boris: The Studio Photographer 1900-1985', Kushner remarked that the exhibition combatted romanticism by portraying the photographs as a 'form of escapism from the dreariness' of daily life. Furthermore, by detailing the heavy workload of Boris's average day, the exhibition successfully indulged in a nostalgic revisiting of the Jewish East End, while representing life in 'a hard-hitting way'. See: Kushner, 'The End of the Anglo-Jewish progress show', p. 98.
[57] David Cesarani, 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Suburbs: Social Change in Anglo-Jewry Between the Wars, 1914-1945', *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June, 1998), p. 20.
[58] Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 129.

Considering this change and the inherent nature of memory, it was natural that much of popular memory and narratives romanticised the Jewish East End. Moreover, as remarked upon, it was the dangers of memory in romanticising the past which stimulated much criticism of memory studies. The simplification of memory often does not permit complexity, with the past categorised to be 'good' or 'bad', rather than nuanced. The author knows the ultimate destination of their personal life story. Tales of hardship, communal charity or moments of self-realisation are accordingly all events in the grand narrative of creating a personalised and accepted reality of the past when representing lived experience.[59] That this depiction of the past is a construction, and not an accurate portrayal of events 'as they actually were' is something this thesis will explore, following the formation of popular myths and narratives regarding the Jewish immigrant experience, and particularly the Jewish East End.

A Point of Comparison: The Development of American Jewish Memory

Whilst assessments of the generational nature of Anglo-Jewish memory are fleeting, much work has been completed exploring the Eastern European immigrant past of American Jewry. As a point of comparison, this thesis engages with the American generational model of memory as detailed by some leading historians on American Jewry. One such treatment can be found within Steven Zipperstein's *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History and Identity* (1999). Within the book, Zipperstein outlined a generational pattern regarding how American Jewry have perceived and represented their former homelands across the Atlantic. At the turn of the century, American Jewish depictions of Jewish lives within Eastern Europe were overtly negative, with the first generation keen to capture their relief at settling in the United States, a land of liberty. Life in Eastern Europe was portrayed to be a desolate, barren wasteland for Jewry, with the community enduring crippling poverty and violent, anti-Semitic pogroms.[60]

Zipperstein asserted that the second generation's engagement can be characterised as a sense of ambivalence towards their Eastern European roots. The children of those who participated in the great immigration, they had little to no direct experience of their parents' homeland and were generally indifferent to their history. Rather, these children grew up embracing 'Americanism', and perceived themselves to be wholly American in terms of society and culture. It was not until the third generation that Zipperstein remarked a nostalgic return to the Eastern European past was possible. The traumatic events of the Second World War and the

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[59] Georges Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits and Autobiography', in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 41-42.
[60] Steven Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 21-22.

Holocaust saw many become conscious of their Eastern European roots, and the 1950s indicated a sentimental move towards reconnecting with an endangered, and in many cases, lost cultural world. American Jewry accordingly reimagined their past in nostalgic terms, seeking to rescue and conserve an Eastern European Jewish community obliterated by Nazi persecution.[61]

Eli Lederhendler observed how great American immigration myths empowered American Jewry to revisit the past in such terms. In a historiographical essay, Lederhendler detailed two generalised models of American history which influence popular narratives. First is the often-repeated story of immigrant newcomers being accepted and embraced into part of a 'pre-existing, homogenous American nation', whereby cultural differences are minimised to enable easy entry. Where this portrayal of history is undesirable, American society has instead been depicted as one which constantly recreates itself, embracing diversity which then permits newcomers to integrate into a cultural melting pot.[62] Regardless of the model utilised, the American Jewish immigration story of persecutions suffered in Eastern Europe, forcing their migration and settlement fits seamlessly into the founding American myths. Myths which focus upon the Pilgrims as escaping their own religious persecution, before sacrifice and hard work enabled them to create a new, inclusive nation.

Lederhendler's survey primarily detailed the revisionist studies of American Jewry, which revealed the complex nature of the immigrant experience. An experience which had seen the conflicts and fissures within the community overshadowed by the settlement myths which emphasised a harmonious world of Jewish acceptance and integration, promptly followed by their swift economic and social upward mobility. The comparative distance of modernity from the period of settlement, however, permitted American Jewish historiography to revise old histories and myths, with the new sceptical historical schools not being afraid to interrogate past creations of Jewish American integration and acceptance. Histories no longer needed to show that this Jewry was 'American' and belonged in the country, with the age of post-migration historiography ready to be explored.[63] Similar developments within the historiography of British Jewish history have been detailed within this introduction, developments perhaps best showcased by the advent of the 'New School' of Anglo-Jewish history.

Unlike the American treatment of Jewish memory, the generational developments of myths and memory have been less explored within the Anglo-Jewish context. Works by Jonathan

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[61] Ibid., pp. 29-30.
[62] Eli Lederhendler, 'Jewish Immigration to America and Revisionist Historiography: A Decade of New Perspectives', *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Sciences,* Vol. 18, (1983), p. 392.
[63] Ibid., pp. 404-405.

Boyarin, Selma Berrol and Hasia Diner have all engaged with the development of popular myths regarding the Lower East Side. Indeed, a common theme throughout these studies is the recognition of the Lower East Side as a unique site of American Jewish memory, with it utilised as *the* definitive site for American Jewish memory. Boyarin's *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (1992) and Diner's *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (2000) in particular emphasise the transformative narrative which the Lower East Side possessed for American Jewish memory, with its 'preservation' in memory regarded as integral to American Jewry's self-definition and shared identity.[64] Diner's conclusion emphasised the centralisation of the Lower East Side in American Jewish memory:

> In the 1960s the Lower East Side, as a shrine of memory, became universalised and firmly established. After that, *all* American Jews referred to it; *all* public presentations of Jewishness emanated from the image of the Lower East Side.[65]

Berrol's comparative study, *East Side/East End: Eastern European Jews in London and New York, 1870-1920* (1994) may have been less concerned with the politics and development of memory, but still offered valuable insight into how the Lower East Side has become an exceptionalism. Primarily focusing upon the engagement of American and English Jewry within the sphere of education, Berrol asserted that narratives stressing the importance of schooling to the rapid elevation of American Jewry are exaggerations. Rather, individual and societal conditions influenced the faster development of American immigrant Jewry, as for 'a variety of reasons, the road was better paved for those who came to New York'.[66] However, Berrol noted similarities between the experience of the Lower East Side and Jewish East End, similarities which later can be recognised within the treatment of the Jewish immigrant experience in both popular American and Anglo-Jewish memory.

Indeed, it is the desire of this thesis to detail and explore both the similarities and differences within American and Anglo-Jewish memory. To achieve this, a broad range of different media regarding the experience of immigrant Jewry and their settlement and integration into British society has been examined. These materials span a period of roughly eighty years and explore how this self-representation developed across three generations of memory. The defensive, 'English' portrayals of the first generation which marginalised their Jewish difference is

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[64] Jonathan Boyarin, 'Introduction', in Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

[65] Hasia R. Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 176.

[66] Selma Berrol, *East Side/East End: Eastern European Jews in London and New York, 1870-1920* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994), p. xiii.

found to contrast remarkably with third generation narratives which sought to 'rescue' and celebrate previously maligned facets of the Jewish experience. Of interest to this thesis is the uneven development of memory and representation, with a discord of counter-narratives recognised within the surviving record of the second generation.

A Study of Modern British Jewish Self-Representation and Memory

This brief historiographical survey has revealed the scope for examining the continuity and change within representations of the Jewish East End and the immigrant experience, as authored by the community. As the following chapters will reveal, depending upon whether one consults contemporary source materials, or the memory orientated narratives which arose following the 'memory boom', vastly differing representations are encountered. The generational transformation of the identity of immigrant Jewry and their children will be examined, with this process of identity development and formation being central to the nostalgic revisiting of immigrant life and culture. Indeed, many studies have revealed the contested nature of the Jewish immigrant, or 'alien' in English society during the era of mass immigration, with restrictionists and anti-restrictionists passionately arguing for contrasting images. Accordingly, immigrant Jewry were characterised as 'dangerous political criminals' and 'weaklings who are bound to become social burdens' on one side of the debate, whilst simultaneously portrayed as dutiful, adaptable people with great capacity to be 'industrious citizens'.[67] Popular memory, however, largely omits these tensions and the contested nature of the community's image, instead focusing upon the positive aspects of Jewish experience.

This thesis examines a diverse range of media spanning over eighty years and created by a variety of individuals and institutions, all with differing aims and motives. Accordingly, this study will reveal how such negativity, particularly within depictions of the Jewish East End, has been subdued within popular memory, with much of the content created following the Second World War building upon defensive myths regarding the nature of the Jewish immigrant community. Whilst counter-narratives are present, they are isolated affairs lost amongst the grand narrative which has been shaped and influenced by the heritage industry which flourished following the 'memory boom'. Whilst popular engagement with the past is positive affair, it is fraught with dangers when primarily viewed through the heritage industry, which discourages complexity and nuance. Rather, historical heritage sites characterise the past to be a sanitised, unchanging and unproblematic place, which can be neatly conserved to be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of

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[67] White, 'The Alien Immigrant', p. 141; and Hubert Llewellyn-Smith, 'Influx of Population (East London)', in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London: 3rd Edition, Vol. 3: Blocks of Buildings, Schools and Immigration* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1904), p. 110.

their personal and emotional attachments (or lack of) to specific site of memory.[68] Recognising the development of this industry and memory culture, a 'flowering' of source material will be explored, representing the expansion of forms of self-expression available to immigrant Jewry and the successive generations.

This thesis is not a conventional historical study. Whilst organised chronologically and historical in scope, this is interdisciplinary, utilising approaches from different fields. The central theme of this study is the question of identity. How immigrant Jewry and the successive generations have defined and identified themselves is at the heart of this research and reveals the origins of popular myths and narratives of immigrant Jewry which persist today: myths which have been especially immortalised in the memory of the Jewish East End, with both private and public representations adhering to a generalised narrative. This narrative, however, has evolved differently to the American memory of the Lower East Side. Whilst there are many similarities, significant differences emerge in both the utilisation of memory and the overall consistency of narratives.

It is this exploration into memory and identity which sees this thesis overlap between both history and cultural studies. The sheer breadth and depth of source material engaged with provide the study with many challenges to overcome. Unique questions regarding form and genre must be considered across the chronology, whilst the contemporary background contexts of the source materials are not fixed. Whilst they relate to each other for the purpose of this study, the utilisation of a photograph from 1910 differs greatly to the assessment of an oral interview from 1970.

Accordingly, each source – whether visual, written or audible – must be uniquely appreciated and analysed as its own source. Whilst they are interconnected via the prism of memory and representation, they do not all extensively and equally engage with the entirety of the Jewish immigrant experience. The subtleties and differences between images created by different individuals, utilising different mediums therefore must be recognised, reflecting the diversity of individual experience. Considering the nature of this study, a further challenge is the separation of myth from reality within both representation and memory. Whilst some sources are easier to interrogate, the complex nature or unrecoverable gaps of knowledge surrounding some materials must be observed. Regardless of the form of media, all the examined source materials are *constructions*. None can truly purport to recapture the true 'essence' of the historical reality. However, that these representations increasingly claim to do so (whether consciously or

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[68] Kushner, 'The End of the Anglo-Jewish progress show', p. 97.

unconsciously) has been integral to the process of myth-making regarding the history of Eastern European immigrant Jewry in Britain. By bringing these sources together, this thesis aims to demonstrate how this process has unfolded as the children and grandchildren of immigrants authored the story of the community.

The materials for this thesis have been broadly categorised to fall within three distinct generations of memory. To categorise these materials, rough chronologies have been utilised concerning the creation or usage of the source. Chapter One explores contemporary representations of the first generation of immigrant Jewry, those who arrived during the period of mass immigration. The chapter begins by discussing the problems of exploring self-representations within written testimony by surveying the available contemporary literature. Indeed, it is noted that little direct written testimony can be found to be authored by immigrant Jewry, and that the written record which does exist, is dubious. Henceforth, this chapter focuses upon self-created visual representations of immigrant Jewry.

Photographs of immigrants, particularly those of the ambitious nouveau riche class are examined, with the forms of self-representations demonstrated, compared to the contemporary record. To broaden the examined visual record, artwork from and regarding the Jewish East End is also considered, adding further nuance to the chapter and moving beyond the self-representations of the economically aspirational and successful immigrant. From these visual sources, this opening chapter establishes a notion of how certain sections of immigrant Jewry both perceived themselves and wished to be perceived by society, outlining a unique perspective of the early private and public self-created representations of Jewish immigrants. The development of identity is crucial to this study, and the examined visual record within this chapter provides insight into how some Jewish East Enders identified themselves during a period of tension and antipathy.

Chapter Two builds upon this foundational chapter, assessing the early written testimony of what this thesis has defined as the second generation of memory. These self-authored expressions can be perceived to be the tentative first steps of self-definition following the Second World War, but before the 'memory boom' inspired a positive reconnection with the Jewish past. Continuing the exploration of identity, this chapter explores this cautious, yet highly publicised engagement with 'Jewishness', primarily through the memoirs of notable public figures such as Selig Brodetsky, Samuel Chotzinoff and Bud Flanagan. Considering the successful careers and high public profile of these individuals, this chapter compares their engagement and representation of both the Jewish East End and their 'Jewishness' with the surviving narratives of less famous and remembered figures.

As a point of further comparison and in recognition of the limitations of these memoirs and the gaps of their coverage, this chapter also features an examination of photographs of the Jewish East End. This enables the thesis to continue to explore visual representations of Jewish East Enders, whilst identifying how these images have shaped contemporary memory of the area. Indeed, whilst the focus of this study is the representation of the history of the first generation of immigrant Jewry (that is those who arrived during the period of mass immigration), the inclusion of these visual sources reveals how lacunas within the memory this generation were filled by positive images of the successive generation. Comparisons are also made within this chapter with the American Jewish memory of the Lower East Side. Whilst many similarities are found between the attitudes of the second generation, significant differences are recognised.

The final chapter is the largest, reflecting the 'boom' of memory culture regarding Jews of Eastern European heritage. Likewise, the examined range of source materials is far more expansive, with artwork and memoirs expanded upon through oral history, museum exhibitions and television documentaries. The highly publicised engagement with 'Jewishness', particularly concerning the community of the Jewish East End and its rediscovery is assessed, with the desire to chronicle and preserve a 'disappearing' community fostering much nostalgia. Compared to the preceding two generations of memory, this chapter will consider how the transformation of identity of British Jewry has converged with both the romanticism of the heritage industry and the 'memory boom', to create a harmonious version of not only Jewish East End, but other Jewish communities too. That popular history and celebrations of the Jewish East End have developed parallel to more critical academic studies will also be reflected upon, with the counter-narratives and inconsistencies in the overall experience that occasionally reveal themselves in popular memory addressed and highlighted.

As noted, a wide selection of materials are examined by this thesis. Considering the wide selection of sources utilised by this study and its emphasis upon memory and identity, the increased forms of self-representation available to Jewish East Enders required examination. Indeed, much of the sources within Chapter Three would not have been available had it not been for the 'memory boom' and the proactive efforts of organisations to record individual testimony. For example, in terms of oral testimony this thesis owes great appreciation to the efforts of the Museum of the Jewish East End and the Jewish Women in London Group. Indeed, the Group's 1989 publication of the interviews they conducted between 1984-1988 features prominently in

the third chapter, whereby the Group sought to explore both the impact of migration on the lives of Jewish women, and the myths regarding gender roles throughout Britain.[69]

It was through the work of oral history which the Jewish Women in London Group and the Museum of the Jewish East End have both contributed greatly to British Jewish history, by preserving some record of the experiences and perspectives of Jewish women. As this thesis will explore in more detail, female voices are largely absent from the immigrant voice early on, and it was only the efforts of such organisations to redress the balance which has enabled this disparity to be somewhat addressed. Furthermore, the highly publicised nature of British Jewish memory and the Jewish East End is reflected upon in Chapter Three, with museum exhibitions and television documentaries for broad audiences signifying how the community's history has been portrayed for a national audience.

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[69] Jewish Women in London Group, *Generations of Memories: Voices of Jewish Women* (London: Women's Press, 1989), p. 1.

Chapter One: Contemporary Representations

The Problems of Contemporary Representations

The Eastern European Jewish immigrant, often described as the 'alien', was a highly contested figure during the period of mass migration. Recognising the public nature of the 'alien' question, a mass of literature was created which explored both the condition and nature of the immigrant experience in London's East End. However, such works provided *external* representations of the community. This response was intensified as the East End itself was already a focal point of social investigation during the period, with the impoverished conditions of workers, 'aliens' or otherwise, being regarded as a symbolic pocket in the nation's capital of the industrial, moral and social problems of modernity.[1] Consequently, historians and scholars of culture are left with a wealth of investigative, defensive and polemical sources presenting Jewish life in the East End. Developed by the middle- and upper-classes of society, they are tonally reminiscent of the 'civilising mission' which Western societies pursued towards indigenous peoples in the 19th and 20th centuries.[2]

This has made the writing of the history of the Jewish immigrant experience fraught with difficulties. These challenges have been recognised, with academic work of the last 30 years critically reassessing the older, 'whiggish' histories of immigrant Jewry's settlement and integration into society. The institutional, top-down emphasis upon Anglo-Jewry's role in shaping the immigrant experience has been re-evaluated, recognising the agency and role which immigrants played in the processes of their anglicisation.[3] Despite the importance of such works, they still do not extensively engage with the immigrants' own perspective of their lives, and the self-representation of their transition from 'alien' to Englishmen.

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[1] In his 100-year survey of Jewish settlement of the East End, Vivian D. Lipman remarked upon the symbolic nature which the East End had assumed for middle-class England. A nineteenth century term, the 'East End' was more of an idea than a place, where the lives and culture of 'West End' society could be contrasted with their working-class brethren. It was this contrast which saw the area develop from an area of adventure and curiosity, to a symbol of the nation's decline and problems. See: Vivian D. Lipman, 'Jewish Settlement in the East End, 1840-1940', in Aubrey Newman (ed.), *The Jewish East End, 1840-1939: Proceedings of the conference held on 22 October 1980 jointly by the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Jewish East End Project of the Association for Jewish Youth* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1981), pp. 17-40.

[2] Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (eds.), *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: between the East End and East Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 15.

[3] David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 349-350; and Susan L. Tananbaum, *Jewish Immigrants in London, 1880-1939* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), p. 5.

Social histories of the period reveal a multitude of external representations of immigrant Jewry. Anti-alienists were generally insistent that the issue of immigration restriction was not a question of 'Jewishness', but rather 'alienness'. Accordingly, many leading anti-alienists and restrictionists found themselves often fervently rebutting accusations that they were fostering a Continental-style anti-Semitism in England.[4] A prime example of this comes from William Evans-Gordon, a leading restrictionist and MP for Stepney between 1900 and 1907.[5] In his study of the question, *The Alien Immigrant* (1903), he insisted it was not the *Jewish* nature of the immigrants which moved him to champion restricting immigration, but their secluded nature which crowded out the native poor:

> I wish to make it perfectly clear that I direct no hostile criticism against the Jews as a people. The very qualities which have kept them distinct are excellent, and I yield to no one in regard for the admirable filial and parental sentiments and the respect for home life which are characteristic of so many of them. But they are, necessarily, a race apart.[6]

More infamous was Arnold White, the polemical journalist. He favoured fear-mongering far more than Evans-Gordon and went to great lengths to portray his opposition to unrestricted immigration as respectable. White had no qualms with representing the mass of Eastern European Jewish immigrants as an undesirable collection of people:

> With regard to the quality of the destitute alien, the Russian Jew — who is by no means generally the sort of person who would be considered as a desirable addition to any community — there are, of course, many industrious, even over-industrious, persons who seek a livelihood in this overpopulated country; but there are thousands of others who prefer existence without physical exertion, and who are content to live on others untrammelled by considerations of honesty or truth. Certain economic benefits bestowed on Great Britain by the invasion of the Russian Jews may be admitted; but the question for statesmen is whether those advantages are equal to the benefit that the country would derive from the total cessation of the immigration of professional paupers, anarchists, and thieves, who also manage to obtain a footing in this country under a strained interpretation of the doctrine of the right of asylum.[7]

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[4] David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 72.

[5] Evans-Gordon resigned from both his seat in Stepney and politics in April 1907, due to poor-health. By 1907, though, the political climate had shifted markedly, with London's Tory MPs losing six of eight seats to the Liberals. By 1910 Evans-Gordon's former seat had also been lost. See: David Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 152-153.

[6] William Evans-Gordon, *The Alien Immigrant* (London: William Heinemann, 1903), p. 246.

[7] Arnold White, *The Modern Jew* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), pp. 189-190.

The extent to which the anti-alienist campaign was anti-Semitic is something which has been much discussed. No common consensus exists on the state of anti-Semitism in England during the period. Bernard Gainer argued that much difficulty exists in assessing its influence, as 'racial attitudes' during the period were 'in most cases largely conventional, not deep-seated, and counter-balanced by a humanising liberty of thought and practical toleration'.[8] Moreover, John Garrard, noted that discussion over the extent to which anti-alienism was anti-Semitic distracts historians from a multitude of other sins. The exaggeration, alarmism, and violent language employed during the campaign are equally concerning. Whilst one can argue that it was not 'real' anti-Semitism, Garrard still concluded that what happened came close to unashamed xenophobia, being 'virtually indistinguishable, in everything but terminology, from overt anti-Semitism, which was not respectable'.[9]

Such discussions are further complicated by Colin Holmes' study, which noted that whilst anti-Semitism existed, it was unorganised and fragmented. Rather than targeting Jews *en masse* as Jews, it was a hostility reserved towards certain sections, such as the pauper immigrant or rich financier.[10] Indeed, Victorian studies have noted the malleable identity of the 'Jew' in English society during the period. In a co-edited volume, Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman highlighted the complexity of the 'Jew' during the Boer War, with paradoxical images extending beyond negative stereotypes. Whilst the Jews of the East End were 'tribal', 'alien' and 'undesirable', during the 1890s Jews were also interestingly cast and imagined as romantic figures in South Africa, and key components in the expansion of the British Empire.[11]

These positive images rarely extended to immigrant Jewry. With the 'alien' question recognised as a topic of national importance, the efforts of anti-alienists soon extended beyond polemical publications, and into state enquiries. One of the most brazen attempts came from White at the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration. The Committee sat for about 18 months, with its final report published in August 1889. Whilst it concluded that the number of aliens in the East End was not sufficient to cause alarm, the Committee observed a notable increase in recent arrivals. Most troubling, was the recognition that the better classes of immigrants generally treated England as a waystation, whilst the less desirable remained.[12]

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[8] Bernard Gainer, *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1972), p. 118.
[9] John Garrard, *The English and Immigration: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Influx, 1880-1910* (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1971), p. 61.
[10] Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1979), p. 111.
[11] Bar-Yosef and Valman, pp. 5-6.
[12] Garrard, p. 28.

This observation was central in White's argument for restriction. In two separate sessions, he sought to prove evidence of this by bringing a selection of 50 destitute aliens before the Committee, men who had been on British shores for less than four months. They were all paid five shillings for both their attendance and agreement to be questioned. Significantly, the first session saw men questioned who had been identified by an agent in White's employ.[13] One by one, they told similar stories through an interpreter: they had intended to travel to America, but a lack of prospects had prevented their progress. In terms of their entry into England, they had little difficulty crossing the borders, but soon had found life in the East End to be unforgiving, leaving them with close to nothing.[14]

The trustworthiness of these accounts is questionable in terms of representing the immigrant experience. These men were picked by White as part of his anti-alienist campaign. Furthermore, the evidence of one of these selected men, Jacob Grill, in the first session reveals foul play. During his questioning a letter was passed to Samuel Montagu, the Jewish MP for Whitechapel, from Morris Stephany, secretary of the Jewish Board of Guardians. The letter revealed that Grill had been recognised by Stephany in the lobby as a recipient of aid from the Board.[15] In a short exchange, Grill revealed that he had been picked up by 'the people' and told to say that he had only been in England for four months, and not four years. As with the other men paraded by White, Grill had received a vague promise that by giving evidence of his poor condition and recent arrival, he would either be returned home or moved on to America.[16]

It was only because Stephany implored Grill to tell the truth that this was revealed. The Committee concluded that an honest mistake must have been made somewhere. Nevertheless, it would be hard to believe that this episode did not discredit White's evidence. Furthermore, for the historian it makes the brief testimony provided by these 'greeners' dubious, with the validity of their testimony distorted by White's manipulations, and there being no plausible way to separate fact from fiction. Consequently, the wider context betrays the legitimacy of this rare incidence whereby Eastern European immigrant Jewry were encouraged to articulate their own experiences.

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[13] Arnold White, 1323 ff, 1587 ff, *Report from the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) together with the proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and appendix* (1888-1889).
[14] See the accounts of Noah Randy 1403 ff, Abraham Francoise 1427 ff, Libel Abramovitch 1462 ff, and Moses Weiner 1714 ff, *Report from the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration*.
[15] In an attempt to deter foreign, 'undeserving' poor from travelling to London on the basis of receiving free aid and support, the Jewish Board of Guardians stipulated that all applicants for aid should have resided in the country for a minimum of six months. As noted by Eugene Black, this was a curious condition, considering the Board had been set up to deal with the newly-arrived poor. For detailed information on the workings of the Board, see: Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), Chapter 3, Philanthropy and Social Control.
[16] Jacob Grill 1491 ff, *Report from the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration*.

One of the greatest sources regarding Jewish immigration during the period can be found within the archives of the Jewish Board of Guardians, whom Stephany represented.[17] These papers are of great importance when examining Anglo-Jewry's relationship with Eastern European Jewish immigrants and refugees. However, their professional and functional style leaves no room for the immigrant to speak for themselves. Rather they are reduced to statistical figures, as exemplified by the report of the Board's Emigration Committee. For instance, the 1900 report concisely stated that out of 2,903 new cases, 1,744, 'or 61 per cent, applied and were assisted ONLY to leave the country', with 375 of that number emigrating outside of Europe.[18] This concluding line is present in all the examined reports. The only sense of immigrant input in the report is the Committee's recognition that out of most of the cases worked, the majority preferred the United States as their destination; despite recent reports of the increasing difficulty to settle there.[19]

From this study's brief examination of the Board's letter books between 1901 and 1909, they fare no better in offering the historian direct access to the immigrant perspective. Many of the Board's letters were concerned with the institution's administrative processes. Correspondence with specific committees of the Board, along with other organisations such as the Jewish Colonial Association and the Mansion House Fund are present. However, it is noteworthy that exceptional incidences of aid and case studies are highlighted in the letters. For instance, one detailed the Board's investigation and subsequent distribution of emergency aid following a fire at 72 Royal Mint Street on 22 November, 1902.[20] Furthermore, whilst the individual case studies highlight specific incidences of cases worked by the Board, they reveal the simultaneous sympathy and coldness with which the Board treated applicants.[21] It was this

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[17] Now held at the University of Southampton, the collection contains many of the annual reports and executive minutes of the organisation.

[18] Board of Guardians for the Relief of the Jewish Poor, *Annual Report for 1900*, p. 47, Archives of Jewish Care, MS 173/12/7, University of Southampton Special Collections (hereafter SUA).

[19] Ibid., p. 78.

[20] The letter detailed the premises, a shop which had been divided into two halves. Above were six 'dwelling rooms' for eight families. In the fire, it was noted that unfortunately Mrs Yablonka and two of her children, aged four and seven had perished. The rest of the letter concisely presented the results of a special sitting held in response to the fire. Each family was briefly commented upon, with the levels of aid distributed confirmed. For example, Abe Schwartz and his wife were provided with £6.00 to both move to Tottenham and purchase clothing and blankets. Meanwhile Jacob Grossman, an individual lodger aged 19, and who lost everything in the fire, was provided with £4/14/0. This was to send him to America, where he had a brother and sister. See: MS/173/1/11/3, Letter Books, 1901-1909/270, SUA.

[21] An example of this would be the case of Isaac Glass in 1905. His mother had been a long-term recipient of aid from the Board. Whilst Isaac's situation was challenging, and the Board expressed sympathy, his family history appears to have worked against him. His father deserted them in 1896. His mother then lavishly spent the Board's maintenance grants over the next four years, which saw Isaacs's sister, Leah, removed and placed in the Jews' Hospital and Orphans' Asylum in 1900 and all aid terminated. His mother meanwhile remarried, inheriting a new child to look after. Isaac's situation accordingly deteriorated, but the Board steadfastly asserted that the family was not eligible for special aid. Rather, it concluded, Isaac should be

perceived distance, and lack of empathy towards applicants for aid which led to Katherine Ashe resigning as an Assistance Health Visitor for the Sanitary Committee in 1906. In her resignation letter, she decried the nature of the Board's operation which placed emphasis on statistical returns for public engagement, with people's welfare being of secondary concern:

> I consider the methods employed by her towards the people in the conduct of the work to be lacking in moral principle, in courtesy and consideration, and in straight forwardness.[22]

Whilst the letter books of the Jewish Board of Guardians do not feature incidences of immigrant testimony, some semblance of a voice can be found within the 1903 Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. A variety of individuals were questioned, with both restrictionists and their opponents carefully selecting and employing witnesses to further their cases. The case for restriction was pursued first, with Evans-Gordon leading the questioning of East End residents, shopkeepers, local councillors, doctors, sanitary inspectors etc.[23] Three anonymous 'English'-Jewish East Enders were interviewed whom had all emigrated at least 13 years previously. Unlike White's attempt to discredit the 'alien' by revealing tales of hardship, these anonymous anglicised immigrant Jews were selected to offer a different perspective. One after another, they stressed that they arrived before the influx of immigration, working hard to settle and assimilate into the East End (despite not being naturalised). By contrast, recent immigrants or 'greeners' were vilified by the restrictionists during the Royal Commission as crowding these good 'English' men out of employment, exacerbating the state of impoverishment in the East End.

The immigrant voice heard at the Royal Commission accordingly is a heavily filtered one. For the recently arrived, their defence was left to the Anglo-Jewish leadership who tended to equally distance themselves from them.[24] The main grounds for immigrant defence was their potential for assimilation, with Herman Landau and Montagu both praising the rapid progress of the anglicisation of immigrant children.[25] A successful banker and communal leader, Landau was an immigrant himself, arriving in 1864. Significantly, he also was a prime mover behind the

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removed from his mother's care, or she should apply through the proper channels and appear before the Relief Rota. As with the Board's annual reports, no testimony from Isaac's mother is present within the correspondence, with it consisting of administrative discussion surrounding the family's case history. See: Ibid., 573-574, 583, SUA.

[22] Ibid., 864 – Miss Katherine Ashe to the Sanitary Committee, 14 October 1906, SUA.

[23] Garrard, p. 39.

[24] Juliet Steyn, 'The Complexities of Assimilation in the 1906 Whitechapel Art Gallery Exhibition 'Jewish Art and Antiquities', *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 13 No. 2 (December, 1990), p. 48.

[25] Samuel Montagu 16859 and Herman Landau 16298, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration with minutes of evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II*, Parliamentary Papers [Cd. 1742] (1903).

foundation of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in 1886.[26] Such sympathetic voices were, however, crowded out by the restrictionists, whose case was greatly helped by the disgruntled native tradesmen and anonymous English-Jewish East Enders, such as Mr. A:

> Your general conclusion is that these people who come over here are damaging one another and cutting one another's throats as regards work and wages? —So they do. In our trade among foreign employers they are giving people what they like—paying what wages they like, and those poor creatures cannot help themselves because if they leave that place they have to go to work for another foreigner, and he does the same thing, so they cannot help themselves.
> […] What do you say is your remedy for this? —My remedy is we should not allow them to come over.[27]

Whilst the Eastern European Jewish immigrant was unable to publicly answer such attacks, they were not entirely without defence. The best known and most influential medium through which they were represented was the Anglo-Jewish weekly newspaper, the *Jewish Chronicle*. The self-described 'organ of Anglo-Jewry', the *Chronicle* provides a middle-class perspective, tracing the response of established English Jewry in society towards their immigrant co-religionists. Consequently, no direct immigrant voice is found in the paper, especially in the early days of the period of mass movement to and through Britain.

Even so, an overview of the *Chronicle* between 1880 and 1914 reveals the paper's changing nature and eventual embracing of immigrant culture, under Leopold Greenberg's ownership from 1907. Prior to this the newspaper was primarily concerned with reports in the style of 'society news' about the Anglo-Jewish elite. More than flattering pieces on leading Anglo-Jewish figures, David Cesarani noted that these reports were designed to show that English Jews were 'intrinsic to the country's social fabric'.[28] Following contemporary social conventions, the attitudes of the Anglo-Jewish ruling class were to follow the Victorian social ethos of the age: the improvement of social conditions of their poor co-religionists through paternalistic philanthropy. The extent to which this was instructed by a genuine concern for the Jewish immigrant or inspired by a desire to extend control over this developing class has been hotly debated.[29]

Before the passage of the Aliens Act, the *Chronicle* shared the communal leadership's apprehension regarding the social and moral condition of East End immigrant Jewry, particularly

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[26] David Englander (ed.), *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain, 1840-1920* (Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1994), p. 19.

[27] Mr. A 3509, 3512, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II*.

[28] Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry,* p. 69.

[29] For a full discussion of the historiography of this debate, and the contested nature of the leadership of the Anglo-Jewish community, see the introduction to Daniel Gutwein, *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry, 1882-1917* (Leiden, The Netherlands; New York: E.J. Brill, 1992).

their alleged clannish and 'alien' nature. In a survey of the newspaper, Ann Ebner noted three editorial concerns during the 1890s: the swift anglicisation of immigrant children, diluting the 'alien' religious identification of their parents, and the plight of industrial advancement.[30] One favoured solution to these problems was the promotion of anglicising clubs and societies. Indeed, the attitude of the *Chronicle* towards the immigrant East Ender is evident in the following extract describing the work of Clubs for Working Girls:

> Among the ways, which at the present time are so many, of helping those who are, morally, mentally, or physically, are worse off than ourselves, the efforts which are directed towards linking the higher classes with the lower and towards obliterating the vulgarity of exclusiveness, seem to us by far the most helpful.[31]

For the historian, the *Jewish Chronicle* is highly informative in outlining Anglo-Jewry's response to the rising presence of immigrant Jewry in the East End. The overriding sentiment was one of concern, with the belief held that Jewish immigration was a 'problem' which needed to be resolved. Ideally, impoverished and disadvantaged immigrants would not travel to England, and should be discouraged. But if they did arrive, they were not the negative force which anti-alienists such as White portrayed them to be. The *Chronicle* accordingly often praised aspects of immigrant Jewry, such as their 'thrifty' and 'industrious' nature. But as Cesarani observed, these were the classic bourgeois values of English society. Their 'Jewish' traits were on whole deemed undesirable, attributes from 'the old country' which needed to be 'eliminated as speedily as possible', especially the use of Yiddish.[32] The chasm between the reality of immigrant life in the East End and the perspective of Anglo-Jewry is often laid bare in the *Chronicle*'s correspondence column. On 1 November 1895, a contributor believed the following suggestion would greatly assist in answering the question, 'What Shall We Do For Our East End Brethren?':

> Now, Sir, if I may be permitted to make a suggestion. I fancy a thoroughly up-to-date swimming bath and gymnasium, properly equipped and constructed near the proposed University Settlement, would tend to develop the muscles of the poor operatives in the boot, shoe, and tailoring trades. It is a pitiable sight to see some of these round-shouldered, pale-faced toilers, and if my suggestion is carried out, I venture to prophesy it will do much to alleviate their sufferings.[33]

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[30] Ann Ebner, 'The East End as seen through the pages of the Jewish Chronicle – a preliminary paper', in Aubrey Newman (ed.), *The Jewish East End, 1840-1939: Proceedings of the conference held on 22 October 1980 jointly by the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Jewish East End Project of the Association for Jewish Youth* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1981), pp. 285-286.

[31] *Jewish Chronicle*, January 10, 1890, p. 14.

[32] Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry*, p. 76.

[33] *Jewish Chronicle*, November 1, 1895, p. 16.

As noted the *Chronicle* did move closer towards a wider Jewish readership. Under Greenberg's editorial direction, it considered itself to be a trustworthy medium for showcasing all Jewish principles, thought and aspirations, whilst also being a public forum for all Jewry.[34] A brief sample of the newspaper during this period reveals more attention paid to the general lives of immigrant Jewry. A regular column, 'From the East End', saw more page space dedicated to the coverage of the Jews of East London, even covering Yiddish cultural events and featuring interviews with personalities from the world of Yiddish culture.[35] A notable example comes from April 1909. In the 'Music and Drama' section, a special feature ran titled 'Mme. Feinman at the Pavilion Theatre: The "Sarah Bernhardt" of the Yiddish Stage'. The article lavished Feinman with praise for her performance in a recent play, "The Orphans", noting the emotion she stirred within the audience. More interesting is that the article featured a small interview with Feinman, where she not only credited the Yiddish speaking audience for inspiring her acting career; but also empathised with the plight of recent immigrants:

> The play is so true to life, the characters we see every day. I must not forget to say, too, that I arrived only a few hours ago from America, and the passage, part of the time, was very hard.
> You know London?
> Oh! yes. I came to London from Warsaw when I was a very little child, and was at school in the East End. Then I went to America, where I have been many years, but I am always pleased to come to London.[36]

Whilst the *Jewish Chronicle* from 1907 did not offer the Jewish immigrant a direct voice *per se*, it moved on from previous coverage by shifting its focus towards the East End and popular culture. Whilst it may be easy to criticise the paper for being too establishment-orientated, one must consider the position and aims of the *Chronicle*. As Cesarani concluded, to carry weight and prestige it needed to be 'responsible' in its reportage and representations. Furthermore, one must recognise that the newspaper was successful in representing the views of much of its readership, since a community newspaper will not survive if it runs contrary to this.[37]

Considering the success and longevity of the *Jewish Chronicle*, harsh assessments have been made of the East End's Yiddish press. A variety of different Yiddish newspapers were started during the period, but many soon disappeared under the heavy costs of publication and lack of paying readership. Consequently, it is difficult for historians to accurately examine the impact of the Yiddish press. Indeed, many academics have agreed with Lloyd Gartner's assertion that only

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[34] Ebner, p. 292.
[35] Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry*, p. 112.
[36] *Jewish Chronicle*, April 16, 1909, p. 19.
[37] Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry*, p. 252.

fragments of Yiddish newspapers survive in England, with many of the fleeting publications lost. As such, historians have been reduced to a bibliographic enumeration of many from surviving figures.[38] It is from these figures which Gartner revealed that Yiddish newspapers were highly unstable before 1890, with editors moving between papers or attempting to launch their own. Five known attempts were made in 1867, 1874, 1878, 1884 and 1899 to launch such newspapers, but none survived their first year.[39]

That the market was unstable is confirmed in the pages of *Hashulamith*, the 'London Jewish People's paper'. A newspaper with a cultural outlook, it started in Spitalfields in 1891 before going on hiatus for two years. Following its reissue, the *Hashulamith's* programme remarked that in its two-year absence, various Yiddish newspapers were published in London with differing aims, but none had been able to continue. Why this was the case it could not answer, but it scoffed at the claims of Anglo-Jewry that London was no place for Yiddish, particularly as it was home to more than 60,000 Jews.[40]

Despite the relative stability of many newspapers in the 1900s, the stigmatisation of Yiddish seems to have affected many assessments of the Yiddish press. Many have followed in the footsteps of William Fishman, placing emphasis on the records of the radical Yiddish press which have been well preserved. Most noteworthy is *Di poylishe yidel*, first published in July 1884 and the first Yiddish Socialist journal. Fishman regarded the paper as expressing views close to the immigrant workers of the Jewish East End, who found themselves still bound to the ghetto and limited by old restrictions, despite the supposed liberty of England.[41] The threat of violence and instability in Eastern Europe had been replaced by the English model of economic and class restrictions.

Consequently, *Di poylishe yidel* encouraged its readership to learn English, a vital step towards more effective class and trade union organisation due to greater integration.[42] However, it is difficult to assess how successful this message was, or even the extent of the paper's circulation. Anne Kershen posited that it could not have been large, with Jewish workers following

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[38] Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914, Third Edition* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), p. 256.

[39] Ibid., p. 257.

[40] The first issue of the 1893 edition of *Hashulamith* along with some issues of *Di poylishe yidel* have been translated, as part of the 2012-2014 Yiddish Crowdsourcing Translation Project which was run as a joint-effort by the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick, the Kheel Center for Labour-Management Documentation and the Archives at Cornell University. See: *Hashulamith*, No. 1, July 1893, p. 1.

[41] William Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004, first published, London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 91.

[42] David Feldman, 'Jews in London 1880-1914', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity: Volume 1* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 216.

the English tradition of tailors and shoemakers, of a few men buying a newspaper, then passing it on or reading it aloud to colleagues.[43] Thus, the importance of the Yiddish press should not be uncritically dismissed. That East End Jewry were progressively anglicised is evident through the Yiddish journals, trade union reports and posters which began to incorporate an anglicised language in their vernacular, especially trade union announcements.[44]

Despite the challenges in accurately assessing the Yiddish press, there is no denying that these newspapers offer a contrasting image of the immigrant experience to that of the *Jewish Chronicle*. Whilst the latter focused upon portraying immigrant Jews as potential 'good Englishmen', *Di poylishe yidel* was Socialist motivated writing. Fishman asserted that from the newspaper an 'earthy image of Jewish tailoring life is conveyed in the mood and language of the hands themselves. The curse of the local trade is the insecurity derived from the ebb and flow of seasonal demand'.[45] Indeed, a highly charged account of 'busy time' at the workshop plainly concluded that for the immigrant worker, the hardship endured when in work was just as miserable as the slack season:

> Now, dear readers, you have some idea of the 'busy time', but that is not all. The best sign of it are these same people carrying bottles of medicine from various hospitals; one is missing a lung, the other has no heart [?], this one is missing a pair of feet—when you see this, then you know that now is the blessed season called 'busy time'.
> So tell me, am I right when I call the busy time just us much a plague and a curse for the Jewish garment worker, not a bit better than the slow time? I hope you will understand me now, and agree that I am perfectly sane.[46]

As with the previously explored contemporary sources, one cannot attest that this representation of immigrant life is derivative of the 'typical' experience. It is likely that this presentation of poverty and hardship was influenced by the socialist and class consciousness of the newspaper, which sought to shock its burgeoning readership into class solidarity and political action.[47]

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[43] Anne J. Kershen, 'Yiddish as a Vehicle for Anglicisation', in International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, *Patterns of migration 1850-1914: Proceedings of the International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England in association with the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996), p. 62.
[44] Anne J. Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, 1666-2000* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 144.
[45] Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals*, p. 144.
[46] *Di poylishe yidel*, Vol. 1, No. 10, 26 September 1884.
[47] Unfortunately, due to the author's basic Yiddish, it is not possible here to examine the Yiddish press during the period of interest. Whether the publications of *Hashulamith* and other, non-political Yiddish newspapers

This brief survey has revealed the challenges which the historian faces when attempting to access the immigrant 'voice'. The materials examined show that few opportunities exist to directly view immigrant Jewry discussing their own experiences. Rather, what exists in the contemporary public and private record are fragments, ones which are not sustained, and are extremely selective and distorted. Whilst they are of great value to the study of the period, for the historian seeking a deeper representation of the immigrant experience, one must turn to different sources.

Whilst questions arise surrounding the literacy, especially in English, of the first generation of immigrants, their ability to visually represent themselves was boundless. This chapter accordingly turns to visual sources such as photographs and artwork to examine early forms of self-representation of the Jewish immigrant experience. As with any historical document, these still require a careful and critical treatment, but they possess great potential in offering agency to immigrant Jewry in terms of representing their own lives and understanding the early forms of self-definition and identity. Indeed, it is noteworthy that significant literature exists of the Lower East Side, with first generation immigrants emphasising both their 'Americanisation' and relinquishing the traditions and habits of the 'old world'. Steven Zipperstein described this phenomenon as a 'range of silent images' which cast Eastern Europe entirely in dark terms, whilst accentuating assimilation.[48] It is the development of representations of the immigrant experience in Britain which this thesis will explore, with the following chapters further contextualising this by comparing these narratives with that across the Atlantic Ocean.

Photographs of the Jewish Immigrant

The 'cultural turn' of the 1970s changed how history was approached as an academic discipline. Responding to the criticisms of the insular and archive-focused approach of academia, interdisciplinary work such as cultural studies flourished. Moving beyond the archive, this approach focused upon also examining fictional and non-fictional texts, visual sources, and analysing memory.[49] Whilst the use of different sources enhances the interrogation of the past, it must also be recognised that they create their own challenges. For instance, whilst one may assume that a photograph circumvents questions regarding authorship, motivation and interpretation, instead simply showing a scene or person 'as it were', they too are subject to the complexities of context. The decision to take a photograph is as much a construction as a newspaper report or official document. The photographer makes active choices involving

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were closer to the immigrant's own experiences is something this study cannot assess consequently, with only the Socialist press being the most translated material.

[48] Steven Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. 4.

[49] Peter Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2004), p. 104.

aesthetic and ethical values about what they record, and those who are subject to the camera's gaze. Understanding a photograph therefore involves recovering the message which it intentionally conveys, alongside the surplus meaning of its construction.[50]

Photographs provide an intriguing point of interrogation for the contested images of the both immigrant Jewry and the Jewish East End. John Tagg posits that the moment a photograph is taken, a new and specific reality is created, one which is the material creation of the photographer, intended to work in specific contexts and for specific uses.[51] The photographic moment consequently is one of precision, identification and construction, whether it is a carefully planned photoshoot or snapshot. Whilst the camera itself does not lie, a photograph alone is a moment of time without context or reason.[52] The moments before and after its creation are lost, with a singular moment captured for posterity. Henceforth, a photograph of a family may convey a sense of closeness and warmth, concealing the actuality of a troubled existence.

Images possess great power. Whilst they benefit from accessibility, it is revealing that different meanings can be taken from the same photograph. It is this problem which has seen photographs traditionally overlooked as historical sources of information.[53] Whilst a certain moment has been recorded, one must query why this specific moment has been isolated, removed from all other moments.[54] It is these unique moments which this section will explore, examining how immigrant Jewry have been represented by a selection of different photographers and photographs.

Considering the longevity and potential public nature of photography, it is crucial to examine how immigrant Jews allowed themselves to be photographed by external and internal hands. By examining studio portraits, for example, one can ascertain how individuals visualised and wished to represent themselves to the world.[55] Indeed, superficial questions regarding the

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[50] Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art* (Stanford, California: Standard University Press, 1990), pp. 6-7.

[51] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 3.

[52] Lucjan Dobroszycki, *Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), p. xiii.

[53] Robert Papstein, 'Creating and Using Photographs as Historical Evidence', *History of Africa*, Vol. 17 (1990), p. 247.

[54] John Berger, *Understanding A Photograph: Edited and Introduced by Geoff Dyer* (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), p. 21.

[55] A study by Michael Berkowitz has explored how American and Anglo-Jewish Zionist leaders used photography to help form a new, politicised 'Jewish' image, moving away from religious iconography as a mark of Jewishness. See: Michael Berkowitz, 'Religious to Ethnic-National Identities: Political Mobilisation through Jewish images in the United States and Britain, 1881-1939', in Stewart M. Hoover and Lynn Schofield Clark (eds.), *Practising Religion in the Age of Media: Exploration in Media, Religion, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 305-320.

'Englishness' of immigrant Jewry can be answered from assessing whether the subjects retained or marginalised Eastern European traditions such as dress. Furthermore, by contrasting studio portraits with more intimate or journalistic photographs, one can examine considerations regarding private and public images of immigrant Jewry and how their lives were represented. In many respects, the photographs selected are by themselves studies on contemporary conceptions of the family, Jewish or otherwise, along with the class and gender expectations of society. These photographs therefore provide one with an avenue to explore how immigrant Jewry, and indeed the Jewish East End has represented itself, confirming or rebutting external images.

Photography was a new and growing field during this period, which meant it was not a vocation which was closed off to recently arrived Jews, as many professions were. A marginal profession, its developing status meant that it was barely considered respectable. It was this status which enabled Jews to dominate British photography, with Michael Berkowitz noting that from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1950s, the photographer in a studio would frequently be Jewish, usually a relatively recent immigrant, and marked by a distinct foreign accent.[56] The photographer was generally not noteworthy, only the subject. Consequently, many photographers are often unknown from this period, with exceptional cases arising when a prominent studio was involved.

The developing status of photography meant that the act of getting one's photograph 'done', or indeed possession of one's own camera, was typically the preserve of the nouveau riche Jew. Initially confined to the emerging middle-classes, photographic portraits were symbols whereby one secured their cultural and social status by being captured in a portrait.[57] Not that this was the preserve of the culturally aspirational alone. One of the most famous photographers of the era, Henry Walter Barnett, was the son of London Jews who had emigrated to Australia in the late 1840s. His relocation to London in March 1897 was treated as a significant social and cultural event, and he soon became renowned for catering for British high society, including royalty.[58] Photography henceforth, was a medium whereby both elites and the socially ambitious could represent themselves on a seemingly equal basis. This section accordingly will additionally consider how particular social signifiers were embraced by aspirational immigrant Jewry, especially in comparison with the hostile and external visual representations of the Jewish East End.

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[56] Michael Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography in Britain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), p. 24.
[57] Tagg, p. 36.
[58] Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography*, p. 40.

A brief assessment of photographs created by external agents will therefore be considered first. For example, the photographs taken of Jewish immigrants for the 'fact'-finding book *The Alien Immigrant* by Evans-Gordon contrast markedly with those authored from *within* the East End. As noted, with his Stepney constituency home to a significant number of 'aliens', Evans-Gordon spearheaded the restrictionist cause, being both a key expert and driving force behind the 1903 Royal Commission.[59] The Commission itself has been regarded as a trial of the Jewish immigrant, with Evans-Gordon gathering a large array of witnesses associated with East London to probe the immigrant's character.[60] The 'aliens' had no opportunity to defend themselves. The representation of the immigrant Jew found within *The Alien Immigrant* therefore is a heavily politicised and emotive one, created by Evans-Gordon's restrictionist agenda.

Throughout the debate, Evans-Gordon maintained that his opposition to unrestricted immigration was not due to the Jewishness of the immigrants, but their un-British nature. 'East of Aldgate one walks into a foreign town', he remarked in the opening section of the book.[61] Genuine political refugees should be granted asylum, but England's open-door policy had left the East End vulnerable to unregulated immigration *en masse* by criminals and the 'waste population' from abroad, ousting Englishmen from their homes and causing the area's ghettoisation. Here, he began to focus on the Jewishness of the newcomers. Whilst he offered sympathy for the poor condition of Eastern European Jewry, Evans-Gordon proposed the following rebuttal to the open-door policy of England:

> And it is not fair to pit our sympathy with the oppressed in Russia against our sense of duty to our own people. 'Charity begins at home' is a saying that sounds selfish. But when altruism towards aliens leaves some of our poorest folk without homes and without work, it is time to say that the burden of solving the problems of Eastern Europe is not to be laid on them. 'I blame the Jews,' Mr. Israel Zangwill said recently to a representative of the *Daily News*, 'for always expecting Christians to solve their problems for them. ... I blame the Jews for not solving their own problem.' That is a most concise statement of my case.[62]

From this statement, Evans-Gordon's restrictionist credentials are apparent. Figure 1 can accordingly be recognised as an emotionally charged image, supporting the case for immigration legislation. The photograph's label alone clearly establishes the agenda: 'Ghetto Children'. Such labelling identifies the children from the outset as being of different racial stock and especially

[59] Colin Holmes, 'The Chinese Connection', in Geoffrey Alderman and Colin Holmes (eds.), *Outsiders & Outcasts: Essays in Honour of William J. Fishman* (London: Duckworth, 1993), p. 84.
[60] Juliet Steyn, *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 65.
[61] Evans-Gordon, p. 10.
[62] Ibid., p. 295.

Figure 1: Ghetto Children, Stepney, c.1903 from William Evans-Gordon, *The Alien Immigrant* (London: William Heinemann, 1903)

different to English children. This language isolates them, offering no hope for their integration into society. These children, quite simply, are born and bred of the ghetto. Unchecked Jewish immigration consequently would lead to the ghetto's expansion and an increased number of these children, which was of social and moral concern for society, due to the already existing poverty of the East End.[63] Such representations formed part of the restrictionist argument against uncontrolled immigration and spiralled out of anxieties over the declining state of Britain's Empire. Many accordingly argued that the imposition of a Jewish ghetto in the heart of London was detrimental in terms of the nation's health, with moral decline and even racial degeneration a risk if such settlements existed unchecked.[64]

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[63] As discussed, the East End was already an area of great anxiety for concerned onlookers at the turn of the century. With the area associated with poverty and hardship, the imposition and expansion of an impoverished immigrant Jewish class greatly alarmed much of England's middle-classes. For both onlookers and residents, the immigrant Jew in the East End was an undesirable class of people, exacerbating the problems of the area. For a brief discussion of how East End Jewry were identified and imagined by English society, see the introduction to Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (eds.), *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: between the East End and East Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
[64] Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, pp. 47-48; and Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: a European disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 215-216.

This message could be derived from this photograph without approaching its structure and subjects. As with any photograph, the question of the compliance of the individuals photographed must be considered. It appears that the children were curious, and along with their parents were willing to be photographed. Yet one must query the setting of this image. The children are photographed from afar, with the photographer maintaining their distance. Such framing makes them appear as curiosities, almost animalistic, with Evans-Gordon and the photographer being literally separated from this distant and 'alien' environment. Lacking individuality, these are not good 'English' children who it was possible to photograph closely. Rather these are the undesirable 'aliens' whose growth the restrictionists were urging the government to control via legislation.

Furthermore, the boys are huddled together in a narrow alley, seemingly preferring safety in numbers and cramped living conditions instead of approaching the more reasonable area of the pavement. Indeed, this crowding emphasises their numbers, conveying notions of the East End being overrun and invaded by these 'Ghetto Children'. Such fears were common in restrictionist rhetoric, and one of the most infamous examples of such sentiment can be found at a January 1902 meeting of the British Brothers' League. Speaking at the meeting, A.T. Williams dismissed the use of statistics, claiming all he needed were his eyes to see the 'good old names of tradesmen gone, and in their places are foreign names'. Such words struck a chord, with feverish cries of 'Shame' and 'Wipe them out' erupting from the crowd.[65]

Significantly, the crowding of the boys has left a young girl on her own, the only figure whose face is visible with any clarity. Her isolation carries the negative suggestion of immigrant children following in their parents' footsteps, caring only for their own existence and not of society as a whole. Meanwhile the adults are left in the background, their negligence implied by their distance from their children. They appear as almost shadowy figures peering out from safety, conforming to a negative image of Jewish self-preservation and interest. One of the accusations branded towards immigrant Jewry was that they could quite happily live in crowded conditions, forcing Englishmen out of their jobs. In her social mission to explore the conditions of the English working class, Olive Malvery claimed that immigrant Jewry lived in cramped conditions, and had imposed these customs on the East End:

[…] almost like beasts, herded into inconceivably small spaces. This is not an English characteristic; these conditions are forced upon our people because there is no room for them.[66]

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[65] *East London Observer*, 18 January 1902.
[66] Olive C. Malvery, *The Soul Market* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1906), p. 207.

Considering this negative description of immigrant Jewry and the photograph's wider context, it makes the voluntary nature of this representation contentious. Whilst these children have allowed themselves to be photographed, the extent to which they dictated the terms of the image is unknowable. Did they and their parents agree to be photographed, but only if they were standing far away from the photographer, cramped together? Or did Evans-Gordon construct the image, instructing the children to crowd together in the alley, isolating the young girl and leaving the lamp post in the foreground, as a visual and metaphorical barrier between Englishmen and the 'alien'? If so (and this seems very likely), then this photograph is clearly constructed with the connotation in mind of immigrant, or 'Ghetto Children' as being forever 'aliens', living in deplorable conditions, to the detriment of themselves, and English society.

Key to the formation of this message is the caption. The photograph's meaning can be subverted, with the dress of the children for instance highlighted to argue against their 'alienness'. Whilst they may not be wearing smart formalwear, they are in English dress. Indeed, what marks them out as 'alien' is the label which the photograph's caption bestows upon them. Photographs are themselves multi-layered, with no agency of their own. It is how they are framed and utilised by the photographer or viewer which conveys meaning and intention. To repeat, photographs capture a visual moment, and are but a minute time sample – what John Collier describes as a 'hundredth-of-a-second slice of reality'.[67] How they are framed and shown is vital in shaping a message. As soon as a photograph is used with words, together they produce an effect of certainty, almost irrefutable proof of the moment photographed and its meaning.[68] The label of Figure 1, 'Ghetto Children' accordingly provides the photograph's meaning. The photograph itself then confirms this label, as the viewer is already predisposed to view these children through this device of 'otherness', noticing all that signals them as being distinct from English children, subconsciously or not.

As discussed, tensions existed in English society regarding the identity of immigrant Jewry. The 'alien' question was hotly debated, with the hostile depictions of Figure 1 being one of many representations. The very identity of the Jewish immigrant was fraught with conflict, with them simultaneously cast as victims of persecution and deviant economic migrants, or either helpless burdens on society whilst also valuable and thrifty future citizens.[69] What was agreed upon,

[67] John Collier Jr. and Malcom Collier, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 13.
[68] Berger, pp. 65-66.
[69] Juliet Steyn, 'Reviews: Forced Journeys: Artists in Exile in Britain c. 1933–45, Ben Uri Gallery/London Jewish Museum of Art, January 20–April 19, 2009 and Forced Journeys: Artists in Exile in Britain c. 1933–45 by Shulamith Behr, Jonathan Black, Rachel Dickson, Sander L. Gilman, Fran Lloyd, Sarah MacDougall, Ulrike Smalley, Jutta Vincent', *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2010), p. 293.

however, was that Jewish immigrants brought their own customs and traditions, with a differing conception of religious practice promoted throughout East London and other immigrant communities to what observers were familiar with. The refined and respectable orthodox practices of the established Anglo-Jewish community and United Synagogue was soon at odds with the impassioned and 'exotic' nature of immigrant Judaism.[70] Consequently, this alternate religiosity was treated by some quarters of society as a curiosity, and a practice belonging to foreign lands.

The desire to represent Jewish immigrants and their religious practices as primitive, belonging to foreign shores can be recognised in a photograph of a *kosher* butchers found within *The Alien Immigrant*. From the 1880s, the upper classes of English society were preoccupied by a multitude of concerns regarding low-profits, high unemployment, Jewish immigration, the growth of Socialism, European political struggles, overcrowding and also the effects of a succession of poor winters on the poorer classes.[71] Such anxieties saw the growth of photojournalism and surveys into the social condition of the working classes, studies which ranged from scientific and measured affairs (such as the Booth survey) to politicised and polemical investigations.

At a first glance, Figure 2 appears relatively innocuous. What appears to be a family is pictured outside their butcher shop, accompanied by children, possibly some of their own. There is a slight awkwardness about the five adults photographed, suggesting they were not entirely at ease with being photographed. Despite this it seems that the novelty was too much to resist, with them agreeing to pose for the camera, whilst several children excitedly enter the scene. The adults wear solemn and serious expressions, whilst they are clothed in the appropriate everyday English attire for their profession, conferring almost an air of respectability about them. However, the appearance of one woman, who with her shawl appears more like the stereotypical peasant, combined with the excited and uncontrolled nature of the children undermines this notion. A notion then shattered by the photograph's caption, the loaded term, 'Alien Butchers'.

What is it that makes these 'alien' butchers distinct from English butchers? Other than their nationality, that very art of *kosher* butchering is what this photograph argues. In line with Jewish religious rules, *koshering* was the distinctive practice of slaughtering meat and removing forbidden parts, before draining the blood from either meat or fowl to prepare the food for eating. Looking closer at Figure 2, however, it seems that the photographer wishes to draw attention to the condition of the butchers, to emphasise their 'alienness'. The shop's interior

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[70] Englander, p. 180.
[71] Tagg, p. 132.

Figure 2: Alien Butchers, Stepney, c.1903 from William Evans-Gordon, *The Alien Immigrant* (London: William Heinemann, 1903)

cannot be seen, with three figures peering out the window, whilst the man in the background is barely visible. Furthermore, the edges of the window are worn with the brickwork damaged. The 'alien butcher' therefore is portrayed to run a potentially insanitary workplace.

Such representations suggest that even in their divine rituals and worship, the Jewish immigrant operated at low levels of hygiene, which offends good and respectable Englishmen. Accusations of ignorance of basic sanitary conventions were often levied against immigrant Jewry. Extremely negative newspaper reports, such as the *Lancet'*s 1884 investigation, fostered the belief that the East End's problems of poor ventilation and overcrowding were caused by unchecked immigration.[72] It was to counter such beliefs that the Jewish Board of Guardians adopted sanitary inspection as one of their core duties as a relief organisation, to facilitate the betterment of living conditions in the East End.[73]

Figure 2 purposely chose to photograph these Jewish butchers in front of their store and with meat hooks and the tools of the trade. This photograph was constructed to emphasise not only their 'alienness', but also their threatening and potentially cruel nature. Furthermore, it is

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[72] Tananbaum, p. 34.
[73] Laurie Magnus, *The Jewish Board of Guardians and the Men Who Made It, 1859-1909* (London: Jewish Board of Guardians, 1908), p. 110.

significant that from the 1880s, an opposition to religious slaughter was developing in Britain. Ostensibly founded due to concerns regarding animal welfare, the issue of religious slaughter attracted interest from the RSPCA, whilst the visibility of *kosher* butchering only increased as more Eastern European Jews arrived. However, the extent to which concerns over humane butchering were sincere were questioned by Anglo-Jewry. On the eve of the First World War, the *Jewish Chronicle* remarked that there was an organised campaign against *kosher* butchers, with public meetings held against *shechita*. But, in a period marred with anti-alienism and anti-Semitism, the paper believed that many of these people were far less motivated by genuine concern for animals, and were merely taking advantage of the latest way to harm Jewry.[74] Indeed, there is something about the utilisation of the phrase 'ritual slaughter' to describe *kosher* butchering which Brian Klug has noted enables critics of the practice to liken it to images of a primitive and savage religion, with faceless priests chanting and brutally sacrificing animals or people.[75]

Considering this context, the photographing of *kosher* butchers appears to be Evans-Gordon seeking to utilise the negative connotations of religious slaughter to further criticise the Jewish immigrant and their 'alien' nature. Subsequently, this is not a complete or natural representation, but rather a composite text created to serve as evidence in the anti-alienist campaign.[76] The agency of the subjects has been removed, with their portrayal taken over by external and hostile hands, desiring to ostracise them as outsiders. The simple posing, poor internal shop lighting and crowded nature of the children all work together with the photograph's caption to seemingly reveal the 'alienness' of these people. But just as this image reveals that photographs can be layered to generate negative perceptions; the following photographs prove that such messages can be subverted by those wishing to represent their *own* reality and experience. From the anti-alien/anti-Semitic Evans-Gordon, it is necessary now to look at immigrant self-representation.

Figure 3 is a photograph of the Perkoff family in the snow. The photograph was taken by Isaac Perkoff of his family sometime between 1900 and 1905. Perkoff learnt the photography trade in Kiev, under the guidance of his father, Michael. The family emigrated to England in 1870 and soon opened St. Petersburg Studios on Commercial Road. Here, Perkoff developed a portfolio by photographing his family in a variety of different situations, along with other recent

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[74] Tony Kushner, 'Stunning Intolerance: A Century of Opposition to Religious Slaughter', *The Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Spring, 1989), p. 16.
[75] Brian Klug, 'Overkill: The Polemic against Ritual Slaughter', *The Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1989), p. 42.
[76] Tagg, p. 148.

Figure 3: Perkoff family in the snow, c. 1900-1905, Perkoff Family Archive, London Jewish Museum

immigrants. Assessing his work, Juliet Steyn remarked that taking photographs appears to have

been part of the family's daily routine, with their family album held at the London Jewish Museum

being full 'of the seemingly natural attributes of their family life'.[77]

Whilst Perkoff's father was religious, Isaac and his family were not, being secular Zionists.

The 'Jewish' identities expressed in their photographs therefore are not of a religiously orthodox

family. Figure 3 was taken after Perkoff had achieved a measure of success and was able to

relocate outside of the 'Jewish' East End to Clapton, an area occupied by the 'respectable'

working class. According to the 1891 census the street where they moved, Lea Bridge Road, was

occupied almost entirely by working- or lower-middle class English people, such as labourers,

clerks and shopkeepers.[78]

Both Perkoff's story and this photograph accordingly could be interpreted to reveal the

upwardly mobile nature of immigrant Jewry. The photograph depicts the Perkoffs enjoying the

snow in their garden at Lea Bridge Road. Perkoff's wife Anna is present, along with their eight

children, whilst the other woman is unknown. Some of the children are holding snowballs,

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[77] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, p. 21.
[78] Ibid., p. 25.

presumably having been paused whilst playing. There is a sense of movement in the photograph, with the child central in the image slightly out of focus, whilst the child on the far right is entirely blurred with his/her face obscured. These features make it appear that this image is a 'true' snapshot of a moment in time, as opposed to a constructed image. However, this is not the case. Whilst this may be a private scene, it has been photographed for commercial purposes. Indeed, rather than the lack of focus detracting from Perkoff's competency as a photographer, the image captures a jovial family scene. Primarily, the photograph has been constructed to advertise St. Petersburg Studios. That it reveals a domestic scene of Perkoff's family is of secondary concern.

Figure 3 showcases not only Perkoff's photographical talent, but also his personal success. That he was proud of his achievements can be recognised through the commercialisation of this image, with it placed on the official St. Petersburg Studios backing board and frame, which featured his name, business address and awards won. That the photograph is of an immigrant Jewish family is not self-evident, with their clothing belonging to the English lower-middle class. Anna's hat, however, is Eastern European in style. This hybrid attire reveals that the Perkoffs possessed the wealth to dress their children appropriately for the cold weather. Moreover, Anna's hat could perhaps have been selected to help appeal to Perkoff's clientele – the majority being Jewish immigrants of the East End. The naming of the studio further suggests this marketing ploy.[79] Of further interest in Figure 3 is the actual scene which has been constructed. The unidentified woman has a sledge out for the children to play with, whilst Anna is also involved. Her sleeve has snow splayed up it, revealing she has also been participating in the snowball fight. She is poised with one arm raised unnaturally, to show that she too is holding a snowball and is involved in the game. The photograph seeks to present therefore that this family was not only successful, but also a close-knitted unit, to both private and public viewers of the image.

That the Perkoffs were a relatively recent immigrant Jewish family makes decoding Figure 3 more complex. To a certain extent, the photograph could be regarded as a visual representation of the success of immigrant Jewry in Britain. The debate surrounding the integration and adaptation of 'the Jew' as a category often adds complexity, applying meanings to images beyond

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[79] In his study, *Jews and Photography in Britain*, Michael Berkowitz highlighted how both 'indistinct or romantic' origins along with claims of having trained in Paris or Madrid were thought to be 'good for business' for many Jewish photographers between 1850 and 1950, regardless of their clientele. In a similar manner, one can consider the intentional naming of the Perkoff photographic studio as St. Petersburg Studios to have been motivated by the family's intended clientele: immigrant Jewry. By signifying the Russian origins of the firm, Jewish East Enders could feel secure over who would be capturing their image and representing them. Likewise, for prospective non-Jewish clientele, associating the studio with the capital city of Russia was not necessarily a signifier of the firm's 'Jewishness', but rather the cultured and worldwide view of the firm. See: Introduction to Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography*.

their original intentions.[80] This complexity can be impossible to truly decipher, leaving certain sources shrouded in uncertainty. Whilst Figure 3 could be perceived to visually represent the success of immigrant Jewry, this interpretation could be influenced by the approach taken in this thesis. To another observer, this could simply be a commercial photograph, depicting a bourgeois, English family. As observed the 'Jewishness' within this image is not self-evident, and such interpretations of the photograph may be informed by prior knowledge of the image and its subjects. The true motivations of Perkoff, and how this photograph would have been received are not wholly recoverable, with conclusions being reconstructed through assessing the image.

Regardless of this ambiguity within Figure 3, it is apparent that the prospect of Jewish assimilation into English society was highly contentious during this period. A key facet of the restrictionists' case against uncontrolled immigration was the perceived aloofness of immigrant Jewry. Arnold White argued that Jews – orthodox or not – belonged to a separate race and community as they refused to fully integrate with English society.[81] Whilst one would anticipate the status of Anglo-Jewry and success stories such as the Perkoffs to allay such fears, conversely it often exacerbated them. Rather, the very adaptability of Jews was highlighted as a cause for alarm. Instead of accepting a role as a significant minority, Jewish immigrants could, and were disappearing into the 'respectable' ranks of middle-class England. By 'othering' immigrant Jewry by racial definition and categorisation, the upper ranks of English society were seeking to preserve their sense of class boundaries by exempting immigrant newcomers.[82]

Whilst immigrant families were often regarded to be bound up in their own traditions, the futures of their children were believed to be malleable by some sectors of society. Established Anglo-Jewry placed great hopes upon the swift anglicisation of immigrant children, believing their youthful age created the opportunity for their transformation into Englishmen.[83] This was a vital component in the leading Anglo-Jewish families' endeavours to combat anti-Semitism and preserve their own position, by reducing the visibility and foreignness of immigrant Jews. It accordingly aimed to decrease hostility towards Jewish clannishness, and fears of a separate, distinct Jewish colony within the nation.[84] Consequently although Figure 3 may not be a photograph of a 'typical' immigrant Jewish family, it still communicates the tensions which existed in terms of representing immigrant Jews during the period.

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[80] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, pp. 12-13.
[81] Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, p. 25.
[82] Deborah Cohen, 'Who Was Who? Race and Jews in Turn-of-the-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (October, 2002), pp. 480-481.
[83] Tananbaum, p. 20.
[84] Feldman, 'Jews in London', pp. 209-210.

Whilst Figures 1 and 2 emphasised Jewish 'alienness' and were created by external hands, Figure 3 provides a far more sympathetic portrayal of the Jewish immigrant experience, confirming the existence of families which embraced 'Englishness'. As revealed, not only does the identity of the photographers differ, but more significantly the intended messages greatly contrast. Placed together these photographs highlight the contemporary scope of conflicting representations of immigrant Jewry. Indeed, the Perkoffs can be regarded to be representative of the desired form of anglicisation, whereby the family had adopted the significant elements of English culture, whilst seeking to retain their core 'Jewish' identity, as implied through the naming of the photographic firm.[85]

Michael Perkoff's photograph of his two daughters, Tsippa and Minnie (Figure 4) seemingly shows the desires of Anglo-Jewry realised. Taken in 1895 shortly after the family had moved to Lea Bridge Road, Clapton, there is a sense of ease and warmth in the photograph.[86] As the Perkoffs were well-established studio photographers by 1895, much of their photographs feature individuals in their best attire. The girls' casual clothing therefore suggests that they were not expecting to be photographed. Tsippa's hair is loose and unbrushed, whilst women typically would have had their hair pulled back into a bun, or under headwear for planned formal photographs. Despite this, the posed nature of the girls makes this photograph appear more akin to a conventional studio portrait, as opposed to a spontaneous snapshot of domestic life. Tsippa's untucked blouse and the fact that Minnie wears an apron suggests that the sisters were at work, before being stopped to pose for the photograph. Henceforth, this is not the natural image one might have initially presumed.

The most intriguing aspect of the image is that the girls hold an open book between them. Assessing the photograph, Steyn posited that the book's inclusion suggests that it was a 'natural' part of their family culture. Whilst the girls may have been working, they could easily transition from work to leisure, enjoying a book.[87] Even though the book they are holding is unknown, the photograph represents the girls as both anglicised and culturally mobile women whose

[85] Klaus Hödl, 'History', in Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman (eds.), *Routledge Handbook to Contemporary Jewish Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 88.
[86] There has been much debate about whether Clapton was in the 'East End' of London. As noted, the street the Perkoffs moved into was occupied by the 'respectable' English working-class. Whilst Clapton is today recognised as being part of the East End, during the period of study its social and economic position saw it often removed from such considerations. For example, the famous Booth survey of the 1880s omitted Clapton, and indeed Hackney from the East End entirely. 40 years later, however, in Llewellyn-Smith's *The New Survey of London Life and Labour*, Hackney was incorporated into definitions of the East End, along with Stoke Newington. What is certain therefore, is that the Perkoffs would have been recognised as an economically successful family, having migrated away from both the 'Jewish East End' and the impoverished area in general. See: Lipman, 'Jewish Settlement in the East End', pp. 18-19.
[87] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, p. 25.

Figure 4: Perkoff sisters, c. 1895, Perkoff Family Archive, London Jewish Museum

aspirations move beyond a life in the home. One could infer therefore that these young women were not destined to grow into the stereotypical housekeeping role of the 'Yiddishe Mama', but rather strong Englishwomen with many possibilities open to them. These women were free to pursue their own destiny, enjoying the freedoms of England. They had embraced the liberal conception of Englishness: that of a free people.[88]

Of further significance is that the photograph captures the sisters in a domestic setting. Minnie wears an apron, suggesting she either has, or will continue to carry out domestic chores. Such a scene challenges the anti-alienist accusation of Jewish immigrant homes being unhygienic, with it commonly argued that immigrants were ignorant of basic sanitary requirements. When detailing overcrowding in the East End, critics claimed that the interiors of almost all immigrant homes were damp and dirty, with refuse left outside to rot.[89] Figure 4 undermines such notions.

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[88] Robert Colls, 'Englishness and the Political Culture', in Robert Colls and Phillip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 31.
[89] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 152.

Not only have the sisters been paused whilst carrying out domestic chores, but the fact that it was taken at their home in Clapton communicates the industrious and socially mobile nature of this immigrant Jewish family.

Tsippa and Minnie are at ease, posing happily. Despite the attempt to make the photograph appear like an interrupted domestic scene, the image is not too dissimilar to a portrait. Portraits are complex images, both acting as a description of a person, whilst framing their social identity.[90] In this sense Figure 4 can be recognised as the affirmation of their identity as educated young women. That this image has been framed by one of the St. Petersburg Studios boards further suggests that this photograph was utilised for the firm's portfolio. Subsequently, Perkoff presented his daughters positively, as intelligent, vivacious but also dutiful women.

As with Figure 3, this photograph can be recognised to be utilising the image of the anglicised 'Jewish family' as a rebuttal and defence against anti-alienism. Interestingly, this image relates to the modernised, bourgeois-conception of Jewish women in the home. The Jewish mother in Eastern Europe was the driving force behind the family, balancing both the domestic and material spheres. This was because respectable Jewish men were to be religious scholars, devoting all their time to study.[91] Despite the relative slowness of change in Eastern Europe, the anglicisation of immigrant Jewry saw them often adopt English and bourgeois attitudes towards the expected roles of marriage. Jewish husbands accordingly became expected to work to support their family, and generally assumed control over finances. For Jewish women, after marriage their duties became confined to housekeeping, a trend recognised by Rickie Burman's study of second generation Jewish women in Manchester.[92] Whilst Tsippa and Minnie are shown to be cultured in Figure 4, they are still placed within a domestic setting. They are seen to be the very image of the aspirational bourgeois woman, showing the potential of the Jewish immigrant to seamlessly settle into English middle-class culture.

Such representations were rife within the studio photography of nouveau riche immigrants. Two portraits of Henry and Annie Schnabliner for example, continue to diametrically oppose the negative images found within Figures 1 and 2. A studio portrait, Figure 5 was taken by Oscar Baumgart at The Empire Studio, 118 Commercial Road, which Baumgart himself established in

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[90] Tagg, p. 37.

[91] This system, coupled with the early marriages which young men and women often found themselves contracted into was opposed in Eastern Europe by the *maskilim*, who sought to inculcate a more bourgeois version of the family unit on the continent from the mid-1800s. See: David Biale, 'Childhood, Marriage and the Family in the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment', in Steven M. Cohen and Paula E. Hyman (eds.), *The Jewish Family: Myths and Reality* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), pp. 53-55.

[92] Rickie Burman, 'Jewish Women and the Household Economy in Manchester, c. 1890-1920', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 71.

Figures 5 and 6: Henry and Annie Schnabliner, 1898 and 1905, London Jewish Museum

1896.[93] Like the Perkoffs, it can be argued that Baumgart embraced his Eastern European 'Jewishness' in naming the studio, utilising nostalgia for the *heim*. However, the name of the enterprise is ambiguous enough to potentially imply allegiance to a different empire, that of Britain. Regardless, there seems to be no evidence that Jews needed to conceal their Jewishness when establishing photographic studios, since it was taken for granted that Jews were comfortable with the necessary levels of technical expertise to operate photographic equipment.[94]

Unlike the previously examined photographs, Figure 5 is undoubtedly a studio creation and presumably intended for private use. The cause for its commission is unknown, but it appears that the couple commissioned a series of photographs from Baumgart for some special occasion, since the collection within which this photograph is held also features solo portraits of Henry and Annie from the same photoshoot. Annie was born in Latvia and came to England along with her parents and five siblings in the 1880s. As with studio photographic traditions, the couple are dressed in

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[93] photoLondon, 'Baumgart, Oscar', *photoLondon*
<http://www.photolondon.org.uk/pages/details.asp?pid=502> [accessed 11/09/2016].
[94] Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography,* p. 30.

formal attire. Notably Baumgart did not use an over-stated background, opting to simply photograph their busts. This ensured all attention is placed upon Henry and Annie, with no other distractions impacting upon how they are represented. Both are well dressed, with Henry in a suit and neatly fastened bow tie. His moustache is well groomed, suggesting he took great pride in his appearance. Annie meanwhile wears a dress, complete with a high collar and puffed out upper shoulder piece, which was fashionable at the time.[95] Her hair is neatly tied back into a bun. There are no apparent signs of Jewishness in the photograph, perhaps most notably being the absence of a beard on Henry. Figure 5 accordingly presents them as an assimilated, 'English' couple.

The very art of striking a pose is carefully constructed. Henry meets the photographer's gaze, unafraid and demanding respect, whilst Annie calmly sets her gaze into the right far distance, as was the convention of studio photography in Europe during the era.[96] When posing for the portrait, the Schnabliners were seeking to represent the best version of themselves. Their postures are upright and calculated, with controlled expressions worn to show they were in command of the situation. The very act of striking a pose infers self-respect, whilst demanding respect from others.[97] Despite this, however, the setting of the photograph reveals that this couple were not as powerful as the image suggests. Combined with Figure 6, it reveals that this was indeed, the *best* and idealised version of the Schnabliners, as opposed to their daily existence. Furthermore, an examination of the Census records uncovers the couple's placement within the heart of the Jewish East End, unlike the Perkoffs who escaped the 'Jewish' area of settlement.[98] Moreover, this photograph held special significance for the Schnabliners and their beloved. To a stranger, this photograph carries no special meaning, and depending on the context of its reading lends itself to a variety of interpretations.[99]

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[95] Victoria Albert Museum, 'History of Fashion, 1840-1900', *Victoria Albert Museum* <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/ > [accessed 11/09/2016].
[96] Dobroszycki, p. 9.
[97] Bourdieu, p. 80.
[98] The 1901 and 1911 Censuses reveal the settlement and movement of the Schnabliners within the Jewish East End. Notable is the different spelling of their name, which was originally recorded as 'Shnabliner'. Inconsistencies were common within these records, with Annie's nationality changing from 'Russian Austrian subject' in 1901, to 'Russian' in 1911. Indeed, the Census is significant in revealing the staggered nature of Jewish migration, with the couple's first home at 4 Railway Place, Mile End Old Town being shared with Henry's brother, Leon, and Annie's sister, Minnie Kandler. By 1911 the couple had relocated to 37 Oxford Street, Whitechapel East, moving from a four-room house to one with six rooms. Whilst the couple had no children yet and Leon and Minnie had moved out, they now shared their home with Annie's brother, Phillip. The 1911 Census further records that the couple married in 1899, and reveals the changing profession of Henry, from 'goldsmith' to 'French polisher'. Significantly, Annie is listed as having no occupation. See: *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1901*, Class: *RG13*; Piece: *331*; Folio: *122*; Page: *28*, Kew, Surrey: The National Archives of the UK; and *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*, Class: *RG14*; Piece: *1479*, Kew, Surrey: The National Archives of the UK.
[99] Berger, p. 53.

To emphasise again, a photograph is a snapshot of time without any context. Alone, Figure 5 presents a well-dressed couple. Their lives and the circumstances surrounding the image are unknown. It is only when accompanied by Figure 6 that a specific reading can be decoded from the photograph. Whereas Figure 5 showcases a seemingly affluent couple in 1898, Figure 6 reveals that the Schnabliners did not exist continuously in this middle-class world. Taken in 1905, the photographer of this second image is unknown. Once more, the Schnabliners stand formally dressed. Henry wears a suit, with his top hat and formal dress gloves held in either hand. His moustache has grown bushier, suggesting he possessed less time for grooming. He also wears a boutonnière, meaning the couple had either been to, or were about to attend a formal occasion. Annie meanwhile smartly wears a full-length dress, with a floral design. Her hair is neatly pulled back into a double bun, whilst she stands with her arm around Henry.

As with Figure 5, there are no obvious signs of Jewishness such as specific jewellery or clothing. This is revealing, as some historians argue that photographs of Jewish content are always affected by the Jewishness of either the photographer or subjects; even if those involved in its creation do not acknowledge it themselves.[100] Indeed, the only true signifier of 'Jewishness' in this photograph is its setting: the Jewish East End. Whilst Figure 5 was a studio portrait, the setting of Figure 6 and the anonymous nature of the photographer betray the apparent instantaneousness of the photograph. Taken outside and in public the photographer appears to have possessed no true awareness of the background they selected for the image. Consequently, Figure 6 divulges the poor condition of their surroundings. The brickwork to the right of the photograph is falling apart whilst a skip rests to the left with rubble spilling out, and next to that is an abandoned bucket. Such a background of an untidy neighbourhood contrasts greatly with the individuals pictured, striking the question as to what is out of place; the couple or their clothes?

Placed contextually with Figure 5, Figure 6 reveals much of the immigrant experience. That immigrant Jewry in the East End lived in poor material conditions is communicated by the unfiltered nature of the photograph's background. However, the Schnabliners were not impoverished victims of circumstance. They possessed the agency to define their lives. Both photographs show that the couple held both the means and desire to elevate their position, assuming the codes and dress of the English middle-class. Anti-alienists initially argued that the masses of Jewish immigrants were destitute paupers, who had failed in Russia and would fall upon the rates in England. When this argument was disproven, criticism changed to raising

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[100] David Shneer, *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2011), p. 5.

concerns regarding the 'alien' presence lowering the tone, character and morals of their areas of settlement.[101]

Whilst it would be unwise to use two photographs of one couple to generalise about the entire Jewish immigrant experience, these two images together highlight the fallacy of anti-alienist arguments. These photographs represent and showcase the upwardly mobile, self-sufficient nature of immigrant Jewry, alongside their willingness to adopt English customs. Whilst such self-representations of Figures 5 and 6 may have been intended only for private use, it is noteworthy that they share similar messages as the public images of Figures 3 and 4. Moreover, more intriguing is the Schnabliners fostering an 'English' identity in the private sphere. To not only the outside world, but also within their own home, it appears that they viewed themselves as embracing acculturation.

It should be emphasised though, that neither Figure 5 or 6 offers a more 'authentic' representation of the Schnabliners. Rather, one can identify within Figure 5 a more controlled expression of self-definition on behalf of the couple. With the photograph a commissioned studio portrait, great care has been taken when constructing every facet of the image. Figure 6 by contrast, does not possess the same level of control and attention to detail. Despite their confident pose and respectable dress, the unfiltered background provides context which dampens the aspirational nature of this self-representation. This is, however, confined to this specific image when further context is provided, through Figure 5 and the Census records. Isolated and without any context, Figure 6 could be showcasing a wealthy middle-class couple, temporarily in dilapidated surroundings. It is only when this specific snapshot is illuminated with further photographs and information regarding the Schnabliners, that specific readings of this photograph can be developed.

Figure 7 is also a revealing photograph and can be decoded in two different manners. The first approach is simply analysing the scene. Once more, the photographer is unknown. They have photographed machinists working in a small tailoring workshop in London. In the photograph, the crowded and busy nature of the workplace has been captured. Despite the room's natural lighting the right-hand side falls into darkness. Indeed, the darkness of the room and work is conveyed by the low lamps positioned above the work benches, which were used to assist the machinists when operating machinery. The workshop itself initially appears disorganised. The floor between the benches is covered in surplus materials, whilst more abandoned materials can be seen on the desk in the foreground, along with the shelf towards the back.

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[101] Garrard, pp. 52-53.

Figure 7: Tailoring Workshop, c. 1910-1914, London Jewish Museum

Despite the workshop's seemingly chaotic and messy nature, it is well-organised. The benches are ordered for efficiency with machines placed a certain distance from one another to enable the maximum number of workers seated. One can even view spare thread to the right of some sewing machines, a measure presumably taken to ensure the fast reloading of thread when it ran bare. The closeness of the workers, not just in terms of seating, but their casual poses further conveys the sense of this being a close workplace community, at ease in the environment.

Roland Barthes mused that when one is aware of being photographed, their pose is a momentary construct, almost a transformation of the self into an idealised type.[102] Nevertheless, this photograph seems to have caught some workers unawares, with a couple of faces blurred from movement. Such blurring lends to the 'naturalness' of the image, with it seemingly being an 'authentic' snapshot of life, as opposed to a studio construction, as with Figure 4. As such Figure 7 seemingly confirms the romanticised depictions of the Jewish East End tailoring workshop; that of a closely bound community where despite challenging work, strong ties of family and friendship pulled everyone through adversity.

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[102] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography: Translated by Richard Howard* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 10.

Most immigrant Jewish workers in the East End laboured in workshop trades between 1880-1914. The local economy was characterised by small scale production, with the high cost of factories and rents deterring the creation of large enterprises. Furthermore, the demand structure of most trades, such as tailoring and furniture, favoured small and flexible organisations. This created a subdivision of labour, where manufacturers would put out work to homeworkers or sub-contractors, who would then complete the necessary service before returning the specific part. In the late 1880s, it was estimated that a would-be master tailor could set up his own workshop with just one pound of capital. Whilst the figure would have risen it later years, it was still achievable for one to try their hand at running a small firm.[103] The workshop in Figure 7 therefore may be an example of one of these successful enterprises.

It is notable that the men and women photographed have dressed smartly for work. Whether this was everyday attire, or for the sake of the photograph is unknown. Regardless, in the photograph all the men's ties remain worn; whilst those whose shirts are visible are tucked in. Some men still wear their waistcoats. Furthermore, their anglicised appearance can be recognised by the lack of facial hair or any form of head covering. Such an image clashes with the anti-alienist accusation that the Jewish immigrant, or 'alien', worked in miserably poor conditions, for unacceptably low wages, essentially pauperising themselves.[104] The men and women in Figure 7 are workers, but the photograph represents them as respectable citizens, with this image subverting accusations of immigrant Jewry's poor working condition as hapless 'sweated' labour.

With the photographer's identity unknown, one can only speculate regarding their motivations. This does not seem to be an early journalistic photograph. Rather it appears to be a private photograph. Such conclusions can be tentatively drawn based upon the untidiness of the workplace. Had the image been intended for public viewing, one would anticipate the workers to have been posed similarly to Figure 2, lined up or seated together.[105] However in Figure 7, the workers have been left arranged as they presumably would have been whilst normally working, which generates a less polished feel to the photograph. Furthermore, the collection within which this photograph exists adds another layer to the image and enables a second reading to be decoded.

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[103] Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 197.
[104] Gainer, p. 28.
[105] A brief sample of the photographs held at the London Jewish Museum of Tailoring Workshops c.1910-1930 commonly shared this photographic structure, with everyone arranged, seating or standing, together, purposely for the photograph. Typically, the workers in these photographs are front facing and proudly looking towards the camera.

Not only a photograph of a tailoring workshop, this is a photograph of the workshop where Annie Schnabliner (from Figures 5 and 6) worked. Annie can be seen seated second from the right. As observed, immigrant Jewish women in Britain were generally housewives and mothers first and foremost. Those which worked averagely spent less than ten years in the labour force.[106] The presence of Annie in this photograph is intriguing, especially when juxtaposed with her appearance in Figures 5 and 6. Immigrant Jewish women sometimes ventured into the workforce to supplement their family's strained income, with the seasonal nature of employment for their husbands, poor health or bereavement potentially needing them to act. It is equally possible Annie entered the workplace to pursue greater personal freedom and minimal wages, since specific freedoms were often restricted within orthodox family homes, whilst further education was often barred to women.[107]

Between Eastern Europe and Britain, the role of women in the Jewish family was in transition. The ideal family unit on the continent saw men focus their energies upon religious studies, whilst the women took care of all the earthly concerns: housekeeping, childcare and breadwinning.[108] The first generation of Jewish immigrants would have been confronted by very different societal expectations. Whereas religious learning brought social status and respect among all social classes on the continent, in Britain it was the bourgeois middle-class notions of wealth which bestowed prestige and success. In England particularly, the established Anglo-Jewish community had long embraced the Victorian values and assumptions of society and sought to instil them within their foreign co-religionists. A working wife accordingly was perceived as a sign of economic hardship, and low social status.[109] Such transformations within immigrant Jewry did not occur overnight, however, as confirmed by Figure 7, with many women still preferring to work, hardship or not. It was the children of Jewish immigrants who generally remained in the home as housewives, ascribing to middle-class ideals.[110]

Regardless of the circumstances which saw Annie enter the tailoring workshop, Figure 7 provides great context for the previous photographs. Whilst the social status of the Schnabliners was obscured in Figure 5, this subsequent photograph suggests the conclusions drawn regarding Figure 6 possess validity. Annie lived in the East End and was a first generation immigrant. Her life took her to a tailoring workshop, following much of immigrant Jewry during the period. And yet the first two photographs reveal her life was not one of continual hardship. Along with her

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[106] Tananbaum, p. 166.
[107] Ibid., p. 151.
[108] Rickie Burman, 'The Jewish Woman as the Breadwinner: The Changing Value of Women's Work in a Manchester Immigrant Community', *Oral Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Autumn, 1982), p. 27.
[109] Ibid., p. 35.
[110] Burman, 'Jewish Women and the Household Economy', p. 72.

husband Henry, she possessed the aspirations, and means to achieve those aspirations, even if only for a moment. Furthermore, Figures 5-7 represent the more gradual acculturation, progression and development of immigrant Jewry. Through these photographs the ambitious aspect of Annie's life is revealed, with her self-image in the studio portrait being that of a refined Englishwoman. Figures 6 and 7 reveal the world of the Jewish East End which she inhabited, but positively show the 'English' nature of her at both special occasions (Figure 6) and at work (Figure 7). Conversely, Perkoff's photograph of his daughters (Figure 4) implied that their transformation from immigrant daughters to Englishwomen was already complete. Contextualised alongside Annie's photographs, however, the manufactured nature of this representation becomes more apparent, as does the more measured and gradual process of acculturation experienced by immigrant Jewry.

Figure 7 in this context thus represents the workshop as a signifier of the Jewish immigrant experience. The workshop was where many men and women worked to support their families. But life was not necessarily only one of depravity and hardship. These men and women managed to adapt to English customs and life, as the studio portrait and casual snapshot of the Schnabliners reveal. They cared about how they were viewed by society and consciously adhered to English social dress codes when selecting their best formalwear, for both their planned portrait, and for the occasion which they were attending in 1905. The lives, and indeed the very chosen identity of immigrant Jewry represented by these photographs is a nuanced one. Whilst Annie worked in a tailoring workshop, her chosen idealised representation of herself was as a dignified Englishwoman. Consequently, contemporary polemical images of the Jewish East End as a clannish ghetto for 'aliens' appear flawed. Immigrant Jewry often desired to eventually assimilate into society, but to expect instant results was misguided.

Figure 8 returns us to the Empire Studio of Oscar Baumgart, c. 1900-1910. Mr and Mrs Tarnapolsy have been photographed with their six children. Mr Tarnapolsy worked as a master tailor in Fashion Street, one of the success stories of the Jewish East End.[111] The image's studio quality is instantly recognisable. Mounted on a studio card advertising the business and proudly naming Baumgart, the polished nature of the photograph is apparent even without these signifiers. The family have been photographed in front of a backdrop of a stately home. Compared to the posed individuals the background is jarring, appearing flat and possessing the quality of an

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[111] A brief examination of the Census records found no entries for 'Tarnapolsy'. As noted with the Schnabliners, this is not uncommon with immigrant names. In the summary books for Spitalfields (Christ Church) in 1911, at 14 Godfrey House on Thrawl Street is Mr Tarnapolsky and his family of six. This is curious, as Figure 8 shows a family of eight. However, Thrawl Street is near Fashion Street, which leads this study to conclude that this is the same family. See: *1911 Census Enumerator's Summary Books*, Class: *RG78*; Piece: *51*, Kew, Surrey: The National Archives of the UK.

Figure 8: Tarnapolsy Family, c. 1900-1910, London Jewish Museum

image within an image. Furthermore, in the bottom right-hand corner one can view part of the wooden stand which held up the backing image. Evidently, the only 'real' elements of the photograph are the family and the chairs they are seated upon.

The family are dressed in fine attire, matching their fabricated grand surroundings. Under brief examination, however, some details emerge revealing the equally constructed nature of their appearance. The boy to the left of Mr Tarnapolsy for instance, does not seem comfortable or at ease in his clothes. When examining a photograph of three peasant men dressed in suits c.1914, John Berger drew similar conclusions. Berger asserted the suits 'deformed' the men, with their bodies not the correct fit for the clothes. Whereas social elites would wear well fitted clothes, created to enhance their authority, in the photograph he observed the peasant's physiques were ill-fitted, with their hands too big, bodies too thin and legs too short for their suits.[112] A similar effect can be found within Figure 8. Along with the boy's unease, his shoes are

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[112] Berger, pp. 37-39.

well worn and scruffy, either overlooked or unable to be rectified before the photoshoot. The boy is not comfortable with the dress conventions he has been instructed to adhere to.

Consequently, there is a sense that the male members have all dressed how they believed English gentlemen would dress, with Mr Tarnapolsy and his elder son both wearing waistcoats, ties and jackets, with pocket watch chains visible. Similar instances were found in anthropological studies during the period, where photographers dressed their subjects in the 'costumes' they were associated with, thereby constructing the very 'type' they sought to document.[113] Accordingly this is not an 'authentic' middle- to upper-class family, but rather an imitation of one. Celebrating Mr. Tarnapolsy's success as a master tailor, the family have dressed how they envisioned a 'successful' middle-class family would. Criticisms of the chameleon-like adaptability of Jews to imitate English society was one of Arnold White's confused arguments of Jewish difference, with this flexibility belying their 'indelible racial essence'.[114]

Similar signs of imitation are present amongst the appearances of the female family members. The young girl seated centrally also wears scuffed shoes. One would anticipate an 'authentic' middle-class family to have ensured their children possessed polished shoes for the occasion. Mrs Tarnapolsy's hair was put into two buns, a late Edwardian style often used when women would wear a large cartwheel hat. Whilst they appear 'English' in regards of dress, Mrs Tarnapolsy's visible necklace is reminiscent of a *mezuzah* necklace.[115] Such a small and unobtrusive visual reminder of her Jewish identity suggests that this family regarded themselves as English Jews, adopting the customs of the host society, whilst retaining their Jewish identity.

To have one's portrait taken was one of the symbolic acts by which they could make their social rise visible not only to themselves, but also to others of similar social status.[116] Mr Tarnapolsy's position as a master tailor reveals that he possessed the drive and acumen to successfully launch his own workshop. Whether this business was one of those which was long-lived is another matter entirely, as many immigrants were condemned to rise and fall up the

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[113] Alexander Ivanov, 'The Making of a Young Photographer: From Ethnography to Art', in Eugene Avrutin (ed.), *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions* (Waltham, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2009), p. 30.
[114] Bar-Yosef and Valman, pp. 8-9.
[115] In Rabbinic Judaism, the *mezuzah* is affixed to the doorposts of a home or place of business. Inside it contains a parchment of scroll featuring specified Hebrew verses from the *Torah*, and acts as a symbol of God's watchful care over the premises. Indeed, the 'protective' aspect of the *mezuzah* has often been debated, with the scroll being argued to either be a 'protective' instrument, or a symbolic affirmation of faith. These conflicting interpretations make Mrs Tarnapolsy's necklace all the more intriguing, inviting speculation over her adoption of the necklace. For a detailed discussion of the *mezuzah*, see: M.L. Gordon, 'Mezuzah: Protective Amulet or Religious Symbol?', *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought*, No. 16, No. 4 (1977), pp. 7-40.
[116] Tagg, p. 37.

social scale of workman to master tailor, due to the seasonal nature of employment and the relative ease of establishing a small workshop.[117]

It is necessary to insist once more, that a photograph is but a glimpse of a fixed moment in time. Alone ambiguous and without context, Figure 8 reveals nothing about the fate which befell the Tarnapolsy family. Rather, the message coded in the photograph represents their aspirational drive, with Mr Tarnapolsy and his wife seeking to capture the moment of their success by commissioning a studio portrait, framing them as a successful middle-class English family. As with the other self-representations examined, to be successful was synonymous with being anglicised and bourgeois. Indeed, these images represent the lives of immigrant Jewry to have followed Victorian liberal thought in embracing the ethos of Samuel Smiles, with working-class immigrant Jewry pursuing their self-improvement through industry, thrift and sobriety.[118]

To summarise this section, a selection of photographs have been examined to explore contemporary representations of immigrant Jewry, as created by immigrants themselves. As discussed, images concerning both the very nature of these people and their experiences in Britain were heavily contested during this period. Whilst the self-authored representations found within these photographs can be regarded as primarily the productions of nouveau riche immigrants, that they desired to cultivate a respectable, 'English' identity is revealing. Ostensibly private images, the photographs of the Perkoff, Schnabliner and Tarnapolsy families reveal both the conscious and subconscious creation of 'English' identities. The extent to which the emotionally charged and propagandist images of Figures 1 and 2 shaped these responses is unknown, but these photographs from Evans-Gordon are contextually significant for showing the development of identity which occurred within the first generation of immigrant Jewry.

Placed in opposition to Figures 1 and 2, these photographs reveal a community in transition. Of importance is the marginal or non-existent 'Jewishness' within Figures 3-8, with the subjects and photographers both discarding their 'alien' reputation and embracing an 'English' identity for these images. Images which were primarily for private and personal consumption. Indeed, the three photographs of Annie Schnabliner are telling in regards of revealing the complexities of photographs. Used alone, all three photographs offer different representations than when placed together. That the earliest photograph of Annie suggests a firm sense of

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[117] Beatrice Potter, 'The Tailoring Trade', in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London: 3rd Edition, First Series – Poverty, Volume 4: The Trades of East London Connected With Poverty* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1904), pp. 61-62.
[118] Nadia Valman, 'Little Jew Boys Made Good: Immigration, the South African War, and Anglo-Jewish Fiction', in Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (eds.), *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: between the East End and East Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 51.

middle-class identity does not make it inauthentic, but rather reveals the complex and navigated nature of self-representation and identity within immigrant Jewry. Significantly, these images consequently display the active embracing of 'Englishness' and acculturation within a visible section of immigrant Jewry, both privately and publicly.

Early American narratives of Jewish settlement are notable for sweeping generalisations. Indeed, it is these images which have enshrined the community's history in myth. Identified as being prime for revisionism, Eli Lederhendler characterised these accounts as part of the American Jewish settlement myth, whereby immigrant Jews became fully American, having 'made it' in society.[119] As with American testimony, these early representations found within photography can be recognised to show their creators and subjects casting aside their 'alien' Jewishness, instead opting to emphasise both their 'English' nature, and the values and conventions of mainstream society. Moreover, it is not only in terms of the forms of self-representation found within photographs, that the complex nature of identity formation amongst immigrant Jewry can be recognised. The English art world is a scene of equally finely navigated identities.

The Jewish East End and the World of Art

More so than with photographs, historians have been reluctant to incorporate evidence offered by artwork. As with photographs, art documents are fraught with specific challenges. Once more, one must acknowledge that the image is constructed, formed out of a specific set of circumstances, conventions and constraints, which all interplay to influence the artwork's final form.[120] Like any historical document, questions surrounding authorship, motivation, reception and usage must be considered, with the very existence and survival of a particular artwork, offering clues as to its value as a historical source.

For the historian, art stimulates questions surrounding what has been depicted. Is it a 'true' representation of a scene, or the stylised and distorted view of an outsider? Does the image conform to socially accepted self-images, or do they challenge them? The utilisation of art in history accordingly provides a unique manner of understanding how certain individuals and groups engaged and identified with culture and society.[121] Considering this, the artistic image itself is not alone of historical value and the end of analysis, but rather part of a complex series of

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[119] Eli Lederhendler, 'Jewish Immigration to America and Revisionist Historiography: A Decade of New Perspectives', *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Sciences,* Vol. 18, (1983), p. 392.
[120] Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the interpretation of the past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 2.
[121] Dana Arnold, *Art History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 28.

investigations placing the image within its own unique context. The style, form and manner of what has been created are all as important as what is represented.

The very nature of this study and utilised sources means that one becomes entangled with the debate regarding the nature, or indeed the very existence of 'Jewish' art. 'Is there a Jewish Art' was a famous speech by Harold Rosenberg at the opening of the Jewish Museum in New York City in 1966, outlining the complexities of the issue. According to Rosenberg, depending upon who one asked, they would receive a different answer. Gentiles would either reply that there was or there wasn't, whilst Jewish people themselves would ponder, 'What do you mean by Jewish art?'[122] The uneasy status of whether Jewish art exists or not appears to be a relatively modern phenomenon, originating in the early nineteenth century.[123]

Furthermore, the desire of many Jewish artists to have their works viewed simply as 'art', exempt from such qualifying labels complicates the usage of this term. However, it is beyond this study's capacity to attempt to decipher the meaning of what makes art, 'Jewish'. If pushed to comment though, one would infer that it is the personal act of reading art which makes it 'Jewish' or otherwise. Indeed, Dana Arnold notes that it is our ability to read art which empowers it with meaning, with the interaction between viewer and object being vital in determining how an image is interpreted.[124] Following this, the works discussed in this chapter are 'Jewish' insofar as they are used to examine how Jewish immigrants and their daily lives were represented by their creators, individuals of Jewish origin. The validity of this perception filter is itself questionable, with how one reads the selected artworks being somewhat informed by their own understanding of the period, which was formed prior to engaging with them.[125] However, one never can turn off this filter of pre-ordained knowledge and view any historical document as it was truly 'meant' to be understood, whether artwork or otherwise.

The utilisation of artwork enables this study to move beyond how the nouveau riche and aspirational saw and represented themselves. A freer form of representation is available for

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[122] Harold Rosenberg, 'Is There a Jewish Art?', *Commentary,* (1 July, 1966), p. 57.
[123] Kalman P. Bland for instance, persuasively argued that the question over whether 'Jewish' art exists or not, can be asserted to have been born out of the arguments and counterarguments of Jewish assimilation and anti-Semitism in the early nineteenth century. Whereas Immanuel Kant approved of the piety of Judaism adhering to aniconism (that is, remaining a People of the Book rather than People of the Image), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel condemned it. Such notions of Jewish aversion to artistic creation soon became pervasive, being adopted to either champion the purity of the Judaic religion, or conversely its lack of religiosity and substance. See: Kalman P. Bland, *Artless Jew: Medieval & Modern Affirmations & Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), Chapter One: Modern Denials and Affirmations of Jewish Art: Germanophone Origins and Themes.
[124] Arnold, p. 91.
[125] Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 9.

exploration, with this form of self-representation open to the 'ordinary', so long as they possessed the talent to transfer this to a canvas. As this segment will reveal, the 'Jewishness' and identity of the creators of these images was not consistent, nor was their expressive styles. Identity is a malleable and changing concept. How one considers oneself, Jewish or otherwise, is subject to constant negotiation, resistance and change.[126]

This study accordingly will consider the extent to which the discussed works of art were shaped by both their context and the surrounding 'English' culture. The reception of art was built upon expectations of integration and assimilation, with 'successful' artwork expected to ascribe to a certain popular form and style. This interaction can be regarded to be akin to the general nature of immigrant Jewry's interaction with English society, with the overall condition of their acceptance being conditional, based upon their assimilation and adoption of the host culture's norms, conventions and values.[127]

Before engaging with representations from immigrant artists, it is useful to define the artistic mainstream to which they were expected to conform to. To this end, this study has turned to the artistic creations of Sir William Rothenstein (1872-1945). Somewhat neglected now, Rothenstein was a man caught between eras. Museums and galleries today are framed around specific themes. Rothenstein's work, however, is not 'modern' enough for twentieth-century exhibits, nor 'Victorian' enough for nineteenth-century galleries. Furthermore, his works do not adhere to a singular style or categorisation.[128]

Born into a German-Jewish family in Bradford, Rothenstein was the Anglo-Jewish figure which pious Eastern European Jewry feared and resented: a Jew ambivalent to his religious identity. He married Alice Kingsley, a non-Jewish actress in 1899; his children were raised as Christians, and he was buried at St Mary's in Far Oakridge.[129] Consequently, Rothenstein's cultural identity was complex. In some sections of English society, he was regarded as a foreigner, despite being born in Bradford and being deeply involved with English art. Equally, when described as a Jewish artist, this was challenged on the grounds of whether he was Jewish *enough*.[130]

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[126] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity,* p. 18.
[127] Nadja Stamselberg and Juliet Steyn, 'Migrants, Waste and Belonging: Myth and History', in Juliet Steyn and Nadja Stamselberg (eds.), *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), p. 11.
[128] Samuel Shaw, *From Bradford to Benares: The Art of Sir William Rothenstein* (Bradford: Bradford Museums and Galleries, 2015), p. 8.
[129] Peter Gross, 'A cultural moment in the midst of change: Background to the times of the establishment of the Ben Uri Society', in Gillian Rathbone (ed.), *The Ben Uri Story from Art Society to Museum: and the influence of Anglo-Jewish Artists on the Modern British Movement* (London: Ben Uri Gallery, the London Jewish Museum of Art, 2001), p. 32.
[130] Shaw, p. 11.

Figure 9: William Rothenstein, *Jews in Mourning in a Synagogue*, 1906, Tate Collection

Rothenstein's scenes of Jewish life can accordingly be understood as images created by an assimilated Anglo-Jewish individual of religious practices unfamiliar to him.

Between 1903 and 1908, Rothenstein turned his artistic attention towards Whitechapel, following a 1902 visit to the Spitalfields Great Synagogue in Brick Lane. Introduced to the synagogue by the brother of fellow artist Solomon J. Solomon, Rothenstein's memoirs detailed how observing this world of Jewish ritual fascinated him. Witnessing first-hand bearded Jewish men deep in prayer, Rothenstein was moved to capture the 'devotion of the Jew' in oil paintings. However, these orthodox Jews were suspicious of Rothenstein, even believing him to be a Christian missionary, indicative of his 'outsider' status. To achieve his ambition, Rothenstein consequently rented a room in Spital Square, where he persuaded three or four men to sit for

him.[131] It is from these sittings that *Jews in Mourning in a Synagogue* (1906) and *Reading the Book of Esther* (1907) were created.

Figures 9 and 10 are positive images of orthodox Jewish religious life. *Jews in Mourning in a Synagogue* depicts a collection of men gathered to express sorrow over the passing of either a family member, or friend. The men are all dressed in *tallit*, whilst two stand, presumably reciting a mourning *Kaddish*. Great care has been taken to capture an essence of anguish, with the men wearing expressions ranging from stern contemplation to despondency. The painting was well received upon release and was exhibited at both the New English Art Club in the summer of 1906, and then the exhibition of *Jewish Art and Antiquities* at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in November-December. The *Jewish Chronicle*'s reviewer lavished praise upon the painting, noting: 'There is a dignity and a solemnity about the work that commands silence', and that the painting conveyed a 'more complete Jewish atmosphere and deep feeling' than Rothenstein's previous work.[132] This was despite that according to custom, Jews would not have mourned in a synagogue.[133] Such comments hint to the similarity of class background between the *Chronicle* and Rothenstein. Accordingly, one can infer that this externally created image of beauty was deemed preferable by the paper, to the images created from within the Jewish East End by immigrant artists which tackled more challenging scenes.

The erroneous nature of the painting's scene confirms that this image was constructed by an outsider. The oil painting was not an exploration of Rothenstein's relationship with his Jewish heritage, nor with immigrant Jewry. Indeed, this does not seem to be a personal painting, engaging with a moment of personal significance. Rather, this is a genre painting, created to highlight the intense ritualistic devotion of Judaism. The scene is well lit, with the men portrayed to be dignified in their grief, with an idealised version of orthodox Jewry constructed. Figure 9 consequently can be regarded as a case study of something which the artist perceived to be both foreign and beautiful. The extent to which this painting was influenced by the ongoing discussion regarding immigrant Jewry is uncertain. Whether Rothenstein was inspired by something he found moving or was stirred to challenge the hostile representations of both the immigrant and native Jewry is something which is open to different (and wholly legitimate) readings.

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[131] Lisa Tickner, *Modern Life & Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 150.
[132] *Jewish Chronicle*, November 9, 1906, p. 5.
[133] Terry Riggs, 'Jews Mourning in a Synagogue 1906' *Tate Online Catalogue* <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rothenstein-jews-mourning-in-a-synagogue-n02116-text-catalogue-entry> [accessed 14/10/2016].

Significantly, there is no sense of the locale of the painting, or history. The décor is clean and crisp, contrasting with contemporary investigative reports of immigrant synagogues in the East End, which often emphasised their 'wretched' condition, forced upon them by the poverty of the area.[134] Indeed, this could just as easily be a classical painting of Eastern European Jewry in the distant past, as it could be of a contemporary scene. Despite the painting being created in the East End, and featuring Jewish East Enders, this painting is not necessarily representing any facet of the Jewish immigrant experience. Accordingly, Figure 9 is open to a variety of interpretations. Whilst this could be regarded as purely an image exploring the beauty of worship, it could equally be perceived as a defensive image against hostile representations of Judaism. Moreover, whether this painting was created to spotlight the orthodox Jews of the East End, or the entirety of Jewry is open to interpretation. Regardless, it was perhaps this sense of timelessness which saw the painting receive great acclaim from Anglo-Jewry and the English art world, with it being the first work by a member of the New English Art Club to be accepted into the Tate Collection. Consequently, the nature of 'Jewish' subject matter, by an artist with Jewish roots was no cause for concern or rejection by the English art world, when pursued in this classical genre form.

Similar comments can be made regarding *Reading the Book of Esther*. Here Rothenstein depicted the religious scene of three men standing at a lectern covered in a patterned woven cloth. Two men stand to the right, closely leaning over the book and wearing expressions of firm concentration. To the left stands a rabbi, with a longer beard and more relaxed expression. All three have beards and are wearing their *kippas* and prayer shawls. By composing the painting as a close up, there is a sense of this being a private, intimate moment, to which both Rothenstein and the viewer have been invited to witness.

As with Figure 9, this painting is an idealised representation of the religiosity of orthodox Judaism. However, it is precisely this composition which distances Rothenstein from these immigrant Jews. The Whitechapel Paintings, as Rothenstein's artistic forays into the Jewish East End became known, were not explorations of identity, life and ritual in the ghetto, but rather of the spirituality of worshippers.[135] As such, it is interesting to note that these images all concentrate on male religiosity. In hostile, polemical representations of the 'alien', the focus was often upon the male, a threatening and dangerous figure. As previously noted, the practice of

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[134] Perhaps the most famous example of these reports is Beatrice Potter's 'The Jewish Community', in Charles Booth's *Life and Labour*, a multi-volume survey of the working classes of London. Potter described her visit to a small East End synagogue, and colourfully described and contrasted the conditions of the 'old-world memories of a majestic religion and the squalid vulgarity of an East End slum.' See Beatrice Potter, 'The Jewish Community', in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London: 3rd Edition, Vol. 3.* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1902), pp. 170-172.
[135] Gross, p. 33.

Figure 10: William Rothenstein, *Reading the Book of Esther*, 1907, Manchester City Art Gallery

koshering was often linked to unnecessary brutality, with Jewish religious custom portrayed as being not religious at all, but something inherently cruel and untrustworthy.[136] These scenes of male spirituality henceforth can be seen to have formed part of the Anglo-Jewish defence against such attacks. That these men were old is noteworthy and further adds a layer of ambiguity to the painting. Whilst it could show an awareness of Rothenstein's part of the decreasing levels of orthodoxy amongst immigrant Jewry, this choice could equally have been a conscious decision by the artist to emphasise the harmless nature of Jewish religion. Moreover, it could simply be the result of what Rothenstein associated with Judaism: the elderly bearded men who captivated his imagination in 1902.

Rothenstein, however, was not alone in this understanding of immigrant Jewry and orthodox tradition. He contributed nine paintings to the 1906 *Jewish Art and Antiquities*

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[136] Klug, p. 40.

exhibition, which sought to uncover Jewish treasures and display them alongside modern artistic achievements, to enhance Jewish prestige and status. The achievements of the 'Jew' on display were the achievements of the 'English Jew', who the exhibit desired to portray as a valued and key member of English society.[137] Organised by the authorities of the Whitechapel Gallery and with support from leading Anglo-Jewish societies, the exhibition was funded by both individual donations and support from the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish World*.[138]

Originally planned for the autumn of 1905, the exhibition was intended to follow the form of the 1887 Anglo-Jewish Exhibition. However, the Gallery was unavailable, leading to the exhibition's postponement.[139] The original planned date alongside its themes reveal that the exhibition was intended to refute the anti-alienism of restrictionists, as the Aliens Bill was discussed in Parliament. Indeed, during the discussion of the Bill, the definition between the 'alien' and 'Jew' often overlapped, to the great concern of Anglo-Jewry. Subsequently, the exhibition's Upper Gallery was devoted to 'Jewish Art', showcasing the recent artistic feats of both English and European Jewish artists. Special mention was made in the catalogue to the works of contemporary Jewish middle-class artists such as Rothenstein and Solomon. The importance of 'Jewish' art was made clear, as the following extract reveals:

> And this, we may be sure, will be the course of future development – continual assimilation, with the single object, in this country, of advancing the honour and glory of the British school. Young men and women of ability are arising on every side who will certainly remove the reproach of the past, and the graphic arts, like the others, will before long be recognised as equal witness of the emotional and intellectual genius of the House of Israel.[140]

Rothenstein's paintings can be regarded as part of the response to the criticism levied at the 'alien' in the 1903 Royal Commission, where great hostility and negative images of the Jew as neighbour and citizen arose from polemical interviews.[141] Figures 9 and 10 challenged such representations, depicting the purity of Jewish religious customs. These are not sinister and 'alien' rituals, but moments of devotion and spirituality. The 'classicism' of the paintings contributes to the noble, almost timeless nature of the portrayed practices, conveying a sense of an almost boundless Jewish religious tradition, as opposed to a clash between poverty and piety in the East End, the centrepiece of the 'alien' question. These are images designed for public consumption, genre paintings celebrating antiquity and custom. The inclusion of Rothenstein's work

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[137] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, p. 79.
[138] Steyn, 'The Complexities of Assimilation', p. 45.
[139] Whitechapel Art Gallery, *Exhibition of Jewish Art and Antiquities – November 7 – December 16* (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1906), p. 1.
[140] Ibid., p. 85.
[141] Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, pp. 17-18.

accordingly, provided a strong rebuttal to declarations of Jewish 'alienness'. His artwork was not only highly praised and appreciated within the English art world, but also presented a positive image of Jews and Judaism. Furthermore, as noted, whilst Rothenstein possessed Jewish connections, he was firmly raised and rooted within English society.

In this regard, Rothenstein's paintings fitted seamlessly into the aim of *Jewish Art and Antiquities* to show Jews as intellectual, artistic and socially mobile individuals, who despite their religious differences to Christian Englishmen, can, and have integrated into society, whilst also greatly contributing to it.[142] As observed, whether this was the intention behind Rothenstein's artwork can be queried, with his cultural identity complicated. Indeed, his ambivalence towards his own Jewishness has been described to have bordered on the cusp of denial and rejection. Despite this, Rothenstein was very active in the English Jewish art world, being a key figure in the Jewish Educational Aid Society (JEAS), mentoring young Jewish artists before the First World War.[143] This ambivalence henceforth can be extended to Figures 9 and 10, with the clash between the author's intention, and how they were utilised by Anglo-Jewry being open to interpretation.

Subsequently Figures 9 and 10 should be understood not as 'accurate' scenes of immigrant life, but rather as idealised and romanticised scenes of what orthodox worship could be. After all, the two paintings were staged by Rothenstein in a room in Spital Square. These were not direct, personal explorations of his own identity. Moreover, the very utilisation of these paintings in the influential *Jewish Art and Antiquities* exhibition further poses questions regarding how these paintings were to be interpreted. One can assert that their inclusion at this exhibition sought to politicise the images, using them to challenge hostile depictions of Jews. Whether this was to defend all Jewry, or purely to separate Anglo-Jewry from the allegations made towards immigrant Jewry is debatable. Such observations and questions, though, cannot be extended towards the artwork of the equally influential Anglo-Jewish artist, Alfred Wolmark (1877-1961), whose work is often regarded as being far closer to immigrant Jewry in character.

Born in Warsaw, Wolmark arrived in England when he was six years old and was raised in a bourgeois religious household in Devon. Wolmark is regarded to have taken the authenticity of his paintings very seriously. When encouraged to create *The Last Days of Rabbi Ben Ezra* (1903), an ambitious painting based on the poem by Robert Browning, he returned to Poland to observe

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[142] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, p. 93.
[143] Lisa Tickner and Peter Gross, 'The Jewish Educational Aid Society and Pre-First World War British Art', in Gillian Rathbone (ed.), *The Ben Uri Story from Art Society to Museum: and the influence of Anglo-Jewish Artists on the Modern British Movement* (London: Ben Uri Gallery, the London Jewish Museum of Art, 2001), pp. 62-63.

Figure 11: Alfred Wolmark, *In the Synagogue*, 1906, Ben Uri Gallery

Eastern European scholars as models for the painting.[144] As with *In the Synagogue* (1906) and *Sabbath Afternoon* (c.1909-10), *The Last Days of Rabbi Ben Ezra* is considered as an expression of Wolmark's cultural identity as a Jew, and a defence of the Jewish people from the derogatory comments being made in the 'aliens' debate.[145] Between 1900 and 1910, Wolmark produced around fifty works on Jewish themes, many which were based within the East End. A quick comparative glance reveals a sense of Wolmark's work being more intimate than Rothenstein's. Such observations have been made by Peter Gross, who remarked that whilst Rothenstein's works

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[144] Norman L. Kleeblatt, 'Master Narratives/Minority Artists', in Matthew Baigell and Milly Heyd (eds.), *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p. 8.
[145] Ibid., p. 9.

retained a sense of deliberate distance from his subjects, Wolmark's works were 'more at home' with the scenes of Jewish life which he was creating.[146]

In the Synagogue follows Rothenstein in a realist approach. In the foreground of the oil painting sits a man who appears to either be deep in prayer or thought. He wears a *tallit* and a *kippa*, which along with his meditative-like contemplation emphasises his Jewish religiosity. Interestingly the colours of this man, adorned in white and blue, along with his placement in the foreground make him the painting's focal point, despite his position in the lower right-hand corner. The rest of the synagogue is visible behind him, with at least five individuals seated in the pews. Whilst Figure 9 showcased the spirituality of Jewish orthodoxy, *In the Synagogue* appears to offer a more informed portrayal of the immigrant synagogue typical in the Jewish East End, than that presented by Rothenstein. For many Eastern European and consequent immigrant Jews, the synagogue was not just a place of worship, but also a cornerstone of life. For these people, the synagogue additionally functioned as a place study, shelter and companionship.[147]

Wolmark accordingly, appears closer to immigrant Jewry in 'spirit'. Whereas Rothenstein championed the purity of religion, a more 'authentic' scene has been constructed here. However, it is key to note that this has still been constructed. The nostalgic sentiment of Figure 11 is evident by contextualising the painting. When one considers the contrasting images of immigrant life, particularly within the Jewish East End, scenes of pious religious life were often overlooked, discredited, or set against scenes of poverty. Such harshness is absent in this painting. Many immigrant synagogues were criticised for their poor condition, with a 'close and odorous atmosphere' being reported to be commonplace and yet embraced by immigrant Jewry.[148]

The interior in Figure 11, however, appears to be relatively spacious, with the contemplative man free to connect to God in his own way. Meanwhile other worshippers have spread out across the pews, some deep in study, others relaxing. Whilst there is no sense of this being an impoverished ghetto synagogue, its simple décor makes it apparent that this is not a wealthy building. Indeed, during this period in Western Europe, many Jewish paintings were nostalgic, visualising a religious return to a simpler time.[149] Such themes are present within *In the Synagogue*, with the realist painting depicting the simplicity of daily synagogue life. Modern concerns of Jewish immigrant life are entirely absent, with this image, like Rothenstein's, not being committed to a specific time and place.

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[146] Gross, p. 33.
[147] Chaim Lewis, *A Soho Address* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1965), pp. 57-58.
[148] Potter, 'The Jewish Community', p. 171.
[149] Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons*, p. 185.

The very structure of Jewish worship was a contentious issue in the community. Anglo-Jewry's long-established synagogues shared many design features with contemporary English institutions. Part of their method to anglicise immigrant Jewry focused around superseding the small, slum based *chevras* of the East End, and even the more respectable local synagogues with larger model synagogues. As noted by Judy Glasman, the often clashing institutions of the United Synagogue and the Federation of Synagogues managed to successfully anglicise the majority of East End synagogues by bringing the small, *landsleit*-based religious groups in line via philanthropic, sanitary and building projects.[150] The synagogue depicted in Figure 11 consequently can be seen to be typical of one of the smaller bodies which Montagu's Federation sought to amalgamate with another congregation, in exchange for membership of the Burial Society.[151]

Sabbath Afternoon moves away from the synagogue, to the sacredness of the Sabbath at home. One of the last 'Jewish' paintings by Wolmark, the painting shows an orthodox Jewish couple at home. They are both as close to the window as comfortably possible, with the vacant chair to the left of the image implying the husband's recent movement to make better use of the light as he reads. Jewish religious custom prevents orthodox Jews from lighting fires or using machinery, which makes the couple's desire to make the most of the remaining light outside more apparent. Furthermore, there is even a seemingly abandoned ball of wool left on the floor, communicating the complete cessation of work, whether for business or pleasure, another consequence of the day of rest. The painting itself features looser, less defined figures, a signifier of Wolmark's subsequent move towards modernism in his career.

Whereas *In the Synagogue* is a positively nostalgic image of Jewish religious life, *Sabbath Afternoon*'s message is less clear, and perhaps intentionally ambiguous. One could infer from the image that Wolmark was praising the religiosity of this couple. They have remained true to their religious heritage, respecting the sanctity of the Sabbath. Moreover, despite its realism, the contemporary concerns of immigrant Jewry are absent. The couple have managed to observe the Sabbath despite the industrial world which looms large in the window. There is no indication in the painting regarding whether they struggle to maintain this piety. Nor does the room appear to be in a dirty, damp and poor condition, an issue which plagued many immigrant families. In fact, they appear to have plenty of space, something which was contrary to the period in the Jewish East End, where the average number of residents per house in Whitechapel rose from 9.4 per

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[150] Judy Glasman, 'Assimilation by Design: London Synagogues in the Nineteenth Century', in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 207.
[151] Ibid., p. 202.

Figure 12: Alfred Wolmark, *Sabbath Afternoon*, c.1909-10, Ben Uri Gallery

home in 1871 to 13.75 in 1901.[152] Consequently, rather than an image of recently arrived immigrant Jews, this appears to be a middle-class, established Jewish couple.

Despite Figures 11 and 12 being closer to the immigrant experience than Rothenstein's paintings, their carefully constructed nature reveals them to be equally sanitised representations. In terms of the Jewish East End, the focal point for immigrant Jewish settlement in Britain, they portray the area as being inhabited mostly by practising orthodox Eastern European Jews. Yet the hardships of life are absent. Rather, romanticised and nostalgic images are created, showcasing the spiritual and devout nature of immigrant Jewry. Whilst many individuals would have fitted into this representation, there would have been plenty more who were far less pious. Indeed, the declining levels of synagogue attendance were well observed at the time, with the *Jewish World* noting that the lures of 'anglicisation' and 'cultured hedonism' were enticing Jewish youths away from the synagogue.[153] The consistency of Jewish religiosity as portrayed by two Anglo-Jewish

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[152] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 147.
[153] *Jewish World*, October 14, 1898, p. 14.

painters is therefore curious and suggests either a lack of understanding of immigrant lives, or an intentional framing of a romanticised portrayal of the older, pious and respectable religious Jew. Whether this was to combat negative anti-alienist representations, or simply a common perception of the stereotypical orthodox Jew is open to interpretation.

Wolmark's representation of the lives and experience of immigrant Jewry was not one of continual desperation and strife, but one full of moments of deep contemplation and quiet study. Orthodox immigrant Jewry were not simply 'aliens', responsible for the 'deterioration' of living conditions due to their filthy habits and traditions, as one witness suggested to the Royal Commission in 1903.[154] Rather they were a peaceful and spiritual people, as Figures 11 and 12 desired to communicate. Such an image conversely is highly distorted. Whilst many Jewish immigrants would have been like Wolmark's depicted subjects, many would have been less reverent. Moreover, their domestic circumstances were far more problematic, as some of the previously examined photographs reveal.

As observed, *Sabbath Afternoon* is an ambiguous image. Whether this is a positive or negative representation of Jews in Britain is subjective. Many questions arise when considering the painting's meaning. Whilst the image could be used to assert that Wolmark was praising Jewish religious tradition, it could equally be argued that the painting sought to highlight the last vestiges of orthodox Jews in Britain. Moreover, whether this painting reveals the conflict between modernity and tradition, or the compatibility of the two can be equally contested, as can the very identity of the couple. This ambiguity accordingly lends itself to a variety of interpretations regarding the Jewish immigrant experience. Furthermore, whether this image purports to show a fading sense of Jewishness, or perhaps a new, modern form of orthodoxy adds an additional layer of nuance. Indeed, it is significant to note that whilst Figures 9, 10 and 11 portray a Jewish religious identity centred around the synagogue, *Sabbath Afternoon* highlights a peaceful, domestic setting, which was closer to English Christianity.

Regardless of these complexities, *Sabbath Afternoon* would have been embraced by Anglo-Jewry as a positive representation of Jews, immigrant or otherwise. In Figure 12, Wolmark provided a counter-image to negative stereotypes of Jews, instead showing the Jew to be a peaceful and spiritual individual. Whether this was intentionally framed to combat anti-Semitism, or simply the result of Wolmark's artistic experimentation is challenging to decipher. What is significant to note, however, is that as with Rothenstein's paintings, such images were not created to reflect reality. After this period, Wolmark moved closer to the modernist art theories inspired

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[154] George Augustus Dix, 5286, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II.*

by Post-Impressionism and Fauvism, which stimulated the English art world from 1910. It was his move to embrace modernist tendencies in art which has seen Wolmark called the 'father' of the Whitechapel Boys, with their experimental artistic creations challenging the English art world, and Anglo-Jewry's desired representations.[155]

The 'Whitechapel Boys' is the name given to a loosely connected group of Jewish artists and writers, who rose to prominence in the early 20th century. The name is relatively modern and was coined by the author and translator, Joseph Leftwich, who was part of the group.[156] These artists notably came from a very different background to Rothenstein and Wolmark, being the children of recently arrived immigrants. Sharing a background in orthodox Judaism and residing within the self-contained Jewish immigrant community of the East End, all these artists would have been conscious about their Jewishness as an identifying label, expressing it consciously or unconsciously within their art, regardless of their attitude towards their parent's faith.[157]

The harsh conditions of the East End are considered to have been key in inspiring some of the notable works by these artists, with the poverty they endured leaving a permanent mark on their outlook. Leftwich remarked upon how the opening of both the local library and Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1901 were hugely significant moments in their early development. Before these institutions, Leftwich reminisced that they would 'mooch around the streets of Whitechapel completely wrapped up in our own misery; we didn't care where were going because walking and talking were all we could do'.[158] The creation of the library and Gallery gave the creative and ambitious youth of Whitechapel grounds to meet and discuss both their aspirations and culture, forgetting for a while the hardship which awaited them outside.

The Whitechapel Boys found themselves torn between loyalty to family traditions, and their ambitions to move beyond the 'ghetto' and contribute to the wider English cultural world. Such internal conflicts caused the biographer of Isaac Rosenberg, Joseph Cohen, to conclude that the poverty which afflicted the lives of Bomberg, Gertler and Rosenberg, affected their personalities so deeply that their burgeoning artistic steps in young adulthood were left 'permanently scarred by the deeply inbred conviction of certain failure'.[159] Such anxieties could not have been helped

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[155] Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall (eds.), *Out of Chaos – Ben Uri: 100 Years in London* (London: Ben Uri Gallery & Museum, 2015), p. 35.
[156] William D. Rubenstein, Michael A. Jolles and Hilary L. Rubenstein, 'Joseph Leftwich', in William D. Rubenstein, Michael A. Jolles and Hilary L. Rubenstein (eds.), 'Leftwich, Joseph', *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 559.
[157] John Russell Taylor, 'Jewish Artists and the Course of Modern Art', in Gillian Rathbone (ed.), *The Ben Uri Story from Art Society to Museum: and the influence of Anglo-Jewish Artists on the Modern British Movement* (London: Ben Uri Gallery, the London Jewish Museum of Art, 2001), pp. 10-11.
[158] Dickson and MacDougall, *Out of Chaos*, p. 162.
[159] Richard Cork, *David Bomberg* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 22.

by the existential question over the existence and form of 'Jewish' art, with there being no fixed frame of reference for exploring Jewish themes in the English art world. Indeed, even the 'School of Paris' between 1910 and 1930 saw no discernible 'Jewish' art arise, with the Jewish artists who flocked to Paris from both the ghetto or middle-class homes, aligning themselves with different artistic schools such as Fauvism, Cubism and Surrealism, as opposed to developing a defined 'Jewish' style.[160] Such freedom combined with the youthful vigour of these artists, and lent itself to experimentation. Experimentation which the established English art world led by the Royal Academy of Art disapproved of.

It was not just the Whitechapel Boys who challenged the established world of English art. The Royal Academy of Art was regarded as an antiquated institution even before their rise. The Slade School of Fine Art was established in 1871 at University College London. Its first professor, Edward Poynter insisted the school could never hope to compete with the Royal Academy. This statement soon proved to be overly cautious, with the school quickly attracting many of the most talented art students in England, including many who became leading figures in the avant-garde world between 1910 and 1914.[161] Far from a conservative school, the Slade's students were encouraged to rebel against the Royal Academy's old-fashioned practices, and the Slade gained a reputation exceeding the older school.[162]

In 1910, however, the English art world was rocked by Roger Fry's exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*. Almost overnight, the developments of the past 30 years on the continent were unleashed in England. Frederick Brown, then the Slade Professor of Art was taken aback by Fry's exhibition. To his generation realism was the ideal for art, with good draughtsmanship studying the natural world and capturing the essence of the 'thing there'.[163] The Slade suddenly appeared outdated, with many energetic young artists fascinated by modern European art styles such as Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism.

A small group was inspired by these new ideas and sought to create an 'English' avant-garde movement, which was dubbed 'Vorticism'. William Wees regards Vorticism as mirroring its contemporary prewar era, with 1910-1914 seeing politics, social relationships and the art world rife with rebellious challenges to traditional values.[164] Whilst Vorticism never officially consisted of more than five painters, one sculptor and two poets, it described itself as an 'art of

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[160] Grace Cohen Grossman, *Jewish Art* (New York: Hugh Lauter Levin Assoc., Inc, 1995), pp. 276-277.
[161] William C. Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), p. 28.
[162] Sarah MacDougall, *Mark Gertler* (London: John Murray, 2002), p. 31.
[163] Wees, p. 28.
[164] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

individuals'.[165] This group can be regarded as being representative of the extreme challenge to mainstream English art, and was a movement which the Whitechapel Boys skirted around the edges of. Shocked by the developments in Europe, both in the art and political world, Vorticism was born out of a sense of English decline and falling behind.[166] It was only the interruption of the First World War and the high cost of mechanised warfare, which disheartened many artists who had previously been captivated by the clean, mechanical lines and form of the avant-garde which ended the movement, inspiring many to retreat towards the realist figurative forms of pre-1910.[167]

It was into this artistic upheaval which the Whitechapel Boys and David Bomberg (1890-1957) entered. Born in Birmingham, Bomberg was the fifth child of an immigrant leather worker from Poland. The family soon moved to Whitechapel, where they settled into a top-floor flat with no bathroom or lavatory. Bomberg's mother is often credited as recognising his burgeoning talent as an artist, encouraging him from a young age. She eventually managed to obtain a room for him in the flat next door, where he could focus on painting and drawing.[168] Bomberg's talent quickly became widely appreciated and won him many admirers. Indeed, it was thanks to the recommendation of Solomon J. Solomon and a grant from the JEAS that he was admitted to the Slade in 1911, which was then recognised as the top art school in England.[169]

Perhaps key to the predominance of Jewish themes in the early works Bomberg and the Whitechapel Boys was quite simply their limited opportunities to view first-hand the world beyond the 'ghetto'. Unable to afford professional models or proper studios, these artists often worked at home, relying on family members and each other to pose as models.[170] Such constraints explain the high number of portraits of the artist's parents, or fellow artists. Regardless of the underlying cause for the exploration of Jewish themes, Bomberg, like his fellow immigrant artists, often felt torn between two worlds, even though he was not a practising Jew.[171] As the children of Jewish immigrants their fate was to be consigned to a life of economic deprivation, the ghetto and religious orthodoxy. However, their chosen vocation as artists offered

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[165] Keith Tuma, 'Wyndham Lewis, Blast, and Popular Culture', *ELH*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Summer, 1987), p. 412.
[166] Paul Peppis, *Literature, Politics, and the English Avant-Garde: Nation and Empire, 1901-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 7.
[167] Arts Council of Great Britain, *Vorticism and its Allies: Hayward Gallery, London, 27 March – 2 June 1974* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1974), p. 26.
[168] Richard Cork, 'The Whitechapel Boys', in Shulamith Behr (ed.), *Ben Uri: 100 Years In London: Art, Identity and Migration* (London: Ben Uri Gallery & Museum, 2015), p. 57.
[169] Avram Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj: Jewish Experience in 20th Century Art* (London: Lund Humphries, in association with Barbican Art Gallery, 1990), p. 54.
[170] Sarah MacDougall and Rachel Dickson (eds.), *Whitechapel at War: Isaac Rosenberg & his Circle* (London: Ben Uri Gallery, London Jewish Museum of Art, 2008), p. 25.
[171] Tickner, p. 163.

access to another life, one free of the limitations placed upon their families.[172] It is the recognition of their complex identities as immigrant Jews and aspiring artists, which makes the artwork produced by these individuals revealing in terms of exploring representations of the Jewish immigrant, and especially life within the Jewish East End. Unlike Rothenstein and Wolmark, Bomberg and the Whitechapel Boys had one foot in the ghetto, and one outside.

As noted, the Whitechapel Boys entered an art world in flux. Caught in the middle of changing tastes and competition regarding cultural superiority, they were taught in a period of great artistic uncertainty. In Bomberg's case, his early attitude towards the developing artistic schools can be described to have been wary at best. Indeed, his pre- and early Slade work suggests that as an artist, he was initially more concerned with mastering the conventional techniques of draughtsmanship and composition before experimenting with form and subject.[173] It was once he felt assured in his mastery of the old traditions that Bomberg felt able to experiment with Cubism, Futurism and Vorticism, forming a distinctive artistic style which fused the Jewish themes of his impoverished childhood with, what Richard Cork has described as 'an alert understanding of the international avant-garde'.[174]

As with Figure 9, *Family Bereavement* (1913) explores Jewish mourning. Of Bomberg's greatest works, this one perhaps leans closest to the realist school of art, with the figures of the pencil sketch rounded and humanised. Moreover, for all his bravado and keenness to experiment after 1912, Bomberg's work was always informed by a deep-laid respect for the styles of the Italian Renaissance, something which he later attributed to Henry Tonks' teaching at the Slade.[175] This can be recognised in Figure 13, with the minimalist style humanising the otherwise sharp and geometric forms, whilst the perspective of the second room adds a further layer to the image. This is most notable in the posture of the central female figure, whose arms are angularly arranged whilst consoling another female figure. The sketch itself feels highly personal, with Bomberg illustrating a scene which had recently touched his life: family bereavement.

It was Bomberg's mother, Rebecca, who is attributed to having a great and guiding influence on his early life. Her death in 1912 meant the loss of the impassioned enthusiasm in his work, along with her maternal affections, which naturally left the young artist somewhat at a loss. It was after this that he entered his first most productive period of experimentation, adapting

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[172] Ibid., p. 16.

[173] William C. Lipke, *David Bomberg: A Critical Study of His Life and Work* (London: Evelyn, Adams & Mackay, 1967), p. 32.

[174] Cork, *David Bomberg*, p. 1.

[175] Ibid., p. 28.
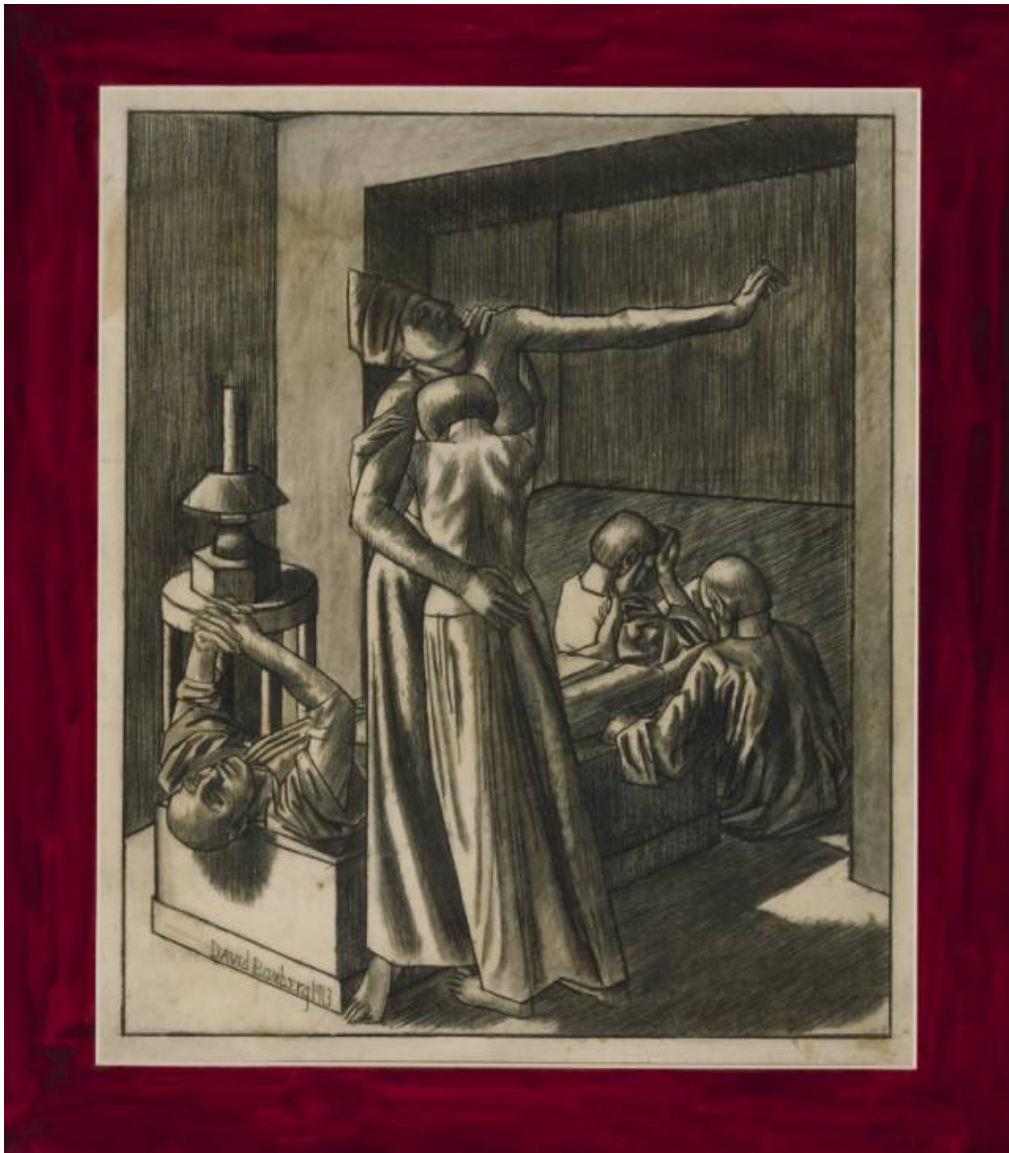
Figure 13: David Bomberg, *Family Bereavement*, 1913, Tate Collection

artistic styles from the continent for his own benefit.[176] Indeed, Figure 13 is but one image which Bomberg produced in the *Family Bereavement* series, with three drawings and a watercolour completed, revealing his desire to engage with this theme which deeply troubled him. Figure 13 is the only one dated, signifying that it may be the image which Bomberg himself considered to be the finalised drawing.[177]

Figure 13 is a remarkably simplified image. The figures are plainly clothed, with nothing but the bed, table and lamp present for décor. The family's heartfelt shared grief is apparent, with two pairs closely arranged, comforting each other. The final individual lays stricken on the bed, conveying a sense of pain and anguish. There is a sense of claustrophobia present in the drawing,

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[176] Lipke, p. 37.
[177] Cork, *David Bomberg*, pp. 37-38.

with the harshness of the lines behind the family creating a cramped environment. Furthermore, these lines have the effect of breaking up the private space in the image, dividing it into smaller segments. This is a trait which Bomberg often employed in his work to invoke different reactions from the viewer.[178]

Cork has asserted that Bomberg's recent anger and grief at his personal bereavement led him to depict the moribund figure as a male. This way he could explore family bereavement, whilst distancing himself from the scenes which had occurred at his family home in October 1912.[179] *Family Bereavement* as such can be recognised as communicating not only a clear impression of the harshness of immigrant life, but of the loss of life in general. The figures in the drawing are seemingly overcome by emotion, desolate and united by their grief for their stricken family member. However, they are united, and together can overcome this devastating hardship. Figure 13 therefore can be understood as a personal exploration of Bomberg's recent experience, in a way which the works of Rothenstein and Wolmark were not. Whereas their work depicted classical and stylised genre scenes, *Family Bereavement* contends with recent personal tragedy, and the realities of life.

Such personal exploration can also be found within another of Bomberg's famous works. *The Mud Bath* (1914) is unlike any painting previously discussed. Without the painting's title and an awareness of its subject, the image is difficult to decode. At a first glance no obvious representations can be ascertained, with the seemingly abstract figures offering no hint to the lives of immigrant Jewry. The painting, however, is not abstract. It instead represents a rejection of the Slade's traditional teaching, whilst remaining distinctive from the 'aggressive machine-shaped forms' of Wyndham Lewis and the Vorticists.[180] The centrepiece of his midsummer 1914 one-man exhibition at the Chenil Gallery in Chelsea, *The Mud Bath* was defiantly hung outside the Gallery, adorned with little flags around its borders.

A bold gesture, it received lofty praise from the poet and critic, T.E. Hulme, who remarked it was 'one of the best things Mr Bomberg had done'.[181] The rest of the English art world was far less complimentary. To them, art should be rooted in realism, with the artist an observer who faithfully records truths about the world.[182] It was this criticism and rejection of Bomberg's work which led him to muse: 'I am perhaps the most unpopular artist in England – and only because I

[178] *The Spectator*, 10 March 1967, p. 18.
[179] Cork, *David Bomberg*, p. 38.
[180] Andrew Causey, 'The Two Worlds of David Bomberg', *Illustrated London News*, 18 March 1967.
[181] Lipke, p. 43.
[182] Juliet Steyn, 'Realism versus Realism in British Art of the 1950s', *Third Text*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (March, 2008) p. 149.

Figure 14: David Bomberg, *The Mud Bath*, 1914, Tate Collection

am draughtsman first and painter second.'[183] During this period, Bomberg dedicated his approach to art as drawing solely for structure.

The painting is based on Schewzik's Russian Vapour Baths in Brick Lane which were frequented by the Jewish immigrant community from the 19th century. An important part of social and religious life, they were commonly used by men following work on Friday evenings to welcome the Sabbath, cleansing themselves before synagogue attendance and prayer. Far from being an institution exclusive for Jews, Schewzik's was open to the whole public, but Englishmen preferred to use the nearby Nevill's Turkish Baths which were generally more hygienic. This left Schewzik's essentially a Jewish space, where its users could enjoy common company and treats such as pickled herrings, beigels and lemon tea.[184] But *The Mud Bath* is not Bomberg's attempt to capture the 'Jewishness' of the steam bath, nor an attempt to showcase the simplified 'purity' of the baths patrons. Instead, it is a conceptual piece of artwork.

Bomberg's first wife, Alice Mayes, met him soon after *The Mud Bath* was completed. She believed that the inspiration for the painting came from Bomberg's curiosity with 'the attitudes of

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[183] David Bomberg, 'The Bomberg Papers', in D. Wright and P. Swift (eds.), *X, A Quarterly Review* (June, 1960), p. 184.
[184] London Jewish Museum, Interview with Louis Behr, cited in Cork, *David Bomberg*, p. 79.

the various figures as they clambered out of the baths and ran their hands along their bodies'.[185] More so than his previous experimental works, with *The Mud Bath* Bomberg was determined to completely streamline his figures, deconstructing them to their most basic form. Such a message was boldly proclaimed in his exhibition's catalogue: 'I APPEAL to a sense of Form… I completely abandon Naturalism and Tradition. I am searching for an Interior expression… where I use Naturalistic Form, I have stripped it of all irrelevant matter.'[186] For Bomberg, his art was less about representation and reality, but rather about exploring the essence of life and the basic, primal form of his subjects.

In pursuing this 'sense of Form' and 'stripping' his subjects, Bomberg was successful. *The Mud Bath*'s figures are not easily recognisable. Extremely simplified, they almost dance around the central pillar, with bodies overlapping in a confused and overcrowded mess. Some remain in the bath whilst others surround it. The usual descriptive and associative props of painting are absent, leaving the audience free to interpret the picture. Bomberg was confident enough in his own ability that his audience would have the capacity and patience to follow the logic of the painting, enabling them to understand it.[187]

The complexity of *The Mud Bath*, despite Bomberg's simplified shapes, was tantamount to a direct challenge towards expectations of what an artist should produce. In terms of representing immigrant Jewry and their interactions at the baths, it is an intriguing image. Whilst there is no obvious 'Jewish' subject matter on casual observation, the image's basis on Schewzik's Russian Vapour Baths suggests that it is still there as source material. As noted, the very notion of creating avant-garde art was far from a Jewish phenomenon in the prewar era, but Bomberg was a man formed by his context. Leftwich for instance, noted that whilst many of his fellow Whitechapel Boys wanted to revolutionise the culture of the period, partially due to their childhood experiences, Bomberg was 'very "blasty" – pugnacious is too mild a word. He wanted to dynamite the whole of English painting.'[188]

Furthermore, its subject matter is key. Considering the rising anti-Semitic feeling in Britain and the passage of the Aliens Act, it is possible that Bomberg was being intentionally provocative, using his marginal ethnicity as an inspiration to comment upon the world of art. Whereas 'classical' scenes of bathers would emphasise their natural beauty and cleansed form, *The Mud*

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[185] Arts Council of Great Britain, *Vorticism and its Allies*, p. 88.
[186] Anna Gruetzner Robins, *Modern Art in Britain 1910-1914* (London: Merrell Holberton in association with Barbican Art Gallery, 1997), p. 152.
[187] Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the Machine Age Vol. 1: Origins and Development* (London: Gordon Fraser Gallery, 1976), p. 208.
[188] Dickson and MacDougall, *Out of Chaos*, p. 162.

Bath featured the often mistrusted and derided Jewish bather, in a niche setting. Even the name signifies a challenge. This is not a cleansing bath, but a 'mud' bath. Moreover, this image was constructed in a challenging and avant-garde manner. Considering Bomberg's reputation for being 'blasty', it is possible that *The Mud Bath* was his challenge to both the art world, and society in general. Whilst such an assessment cannot be wholly verified, the contrast in meaning between the words 'mud' and 'bath' are interesting to consider in terms of the painting's context and add nuance to the artwork. Moreover, Bomberg intentionally selected a Jewish setting for this image, as opposed to a middle-class English scene, which he would have had access to due to his time at the Slade.

The Mud Bath was negatively received. Perhaps the best examples of the hostility Bomberg faced was the reception of an exhibition he helped organise, *Twentieth Century Art: A Review of Modern Movements*. Hosted in the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1914, the exhibition contained a subsection of art by Jewish artists. The *Jewish Chronicle* was indifferent, if not outright hostile to the modernist and avant-garde works of Bomberg and his contemporaries. It is notable that Wolmark's exhibited work (a self-portrait) received great credit for 'the fine vigour and directness of its touch'.[189] No such kind words were to be found for Bomberg.

The *Chronicle*'s reviewer took great measure to ridicule fans of his work, lambasting those 'ready to see the beauty in anything'. Bomberg's exhibited work was denounced, with his art judged to be 'merely a waste of good pigment, canvas, and wall space'; images which were 'hurtful to our reason and common sense'.[190] That artists such as Bomberg and the Whitechapel Boys had attended the Slade, been sponsored by the JEAS and mentored by case guardians such as Rothenstein (whose absence from the exhibition the review lamented) was lost upon the reviewer, who seemed to take the displayed art as a personal affront to Anglo-Jewish creativity.[191]

It was not only the *Chronicle* which misrepresented the exhibition in its negative tirade. Critics in newspapers across England mislabelled the exhibit as being 'Futurist' or 'Cubist'. This was despite out of 494 exhibits, only thirteen could be classified as being Cubist or Futurist. This did not stop the *Observer* from running the headline 'Futurist Art in Whitechapel' or the *Manchester Guardian* from claiming that the nucleus of Jewish art was Cubist, despite only Bomberg's work being stylistically similar.[192] The press reaction equated the 'Jewish' artists with Cubism and Futurism, modernist styles which clashed with the realist approach which many critics

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[189] *Jewish Chronicle*, May 15, 1914, p. 10.
[190] Ibid., p. 10.
[191] Tickner and Gross, p. 59.
[192] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, pp. 105-106.

believed good English art should ascribe to. Such venomous criticism must be recognised as being born of the wider context. The English art world had been 'invaded' by the latest fads in foreign art styles, most notably Italian Futurism. It was a sense of English decline both imperially and culturally which concerned members of the cultural elite. Indeed, there was a growing perception of England's cultural defeat to the Parisian cultural centre, inspiring many of the promising young English writers and artists to embrace Continental styles.[193] To liken and dismiss 'Jewish' artists to these other 'foreign' cultural movements was a carefully calculated move inspired by a sense of cultural inferiority. This experimental art was simply seen as alien and degenerate.

In experimenting, the immigrant Jewish artists had acted out against Anglo-Jewry's anglicisation measures, which aimed to mould immigrant Jewry into good Anglo-Jewish citizens and circumvent anti-Semitism by making Jewish difference negligible.[194] Instead, Bomberg and his fellow artists accentuated their differences, representing the Jewish immigrant experience in England to be different than that of their gentile neighbours. Consequently, they helped to realise the concerns of Anglo-Jewry in the cultural world. If Jewish artists could not be good English artists, then it could be logically argued that they could not be good Englishmen. Such criticisms and concerns seemed to have had little effect on Bomberg's self-confidence however. He remained convinced of his approach. 'Style is ephemeral – Form is eternal.'[195]

Similar sentiments were shared by Mark Gertler (1891-1939). Born in Spitalfields, he was originally named Max, only to be renamed Mark in 1899 by an English school official upon registration. In his unpublished memoirs, Gertler recalled that the official brashly declared that there was 'no such name in *this* country' and henceforth he was known as Mark.[196] The meek acceptance of the changing of Gertler's first name can be considered to be symbolic of the family's intention to settle into English life as members of the community, and not as foreign Jews, as trouble-free as possible.[197] That the anglicisation of the name 'Mark' had been imposed upon them must have had some bearing upon this decision. Despite the loud public profile of Bomberg and *Twentieth Century Art*, Gertler was the first of the Whitechapel Boys to study at the Slade, enrolling in 1908 and becoming the first working-class Jewish student of his generation to attend.[198] This was to prove a poisoned chalice. Marked out as a child prodigy from an early age, Gertler was always recognised as the poor Jewish boy from the ghetto who had earned his place

[193] Peppis, pp. 8-9.
[194] Tickner and Gross, p. 62.
[195] Bomberg, p. 187.
[196] Mark Gertler, 'First Memories, unpublished 1934 manuscript', in Noel Carrington (ed.), *Mark Gertler: Selected Letters* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965), p. 24.
[197] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, p. 116.
[198] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 34.

amongst the middle-classes at the Slade, with his early success becoming the yardstick to measure all future creations.[199]

Only able to enrol thanks to a grant from the JEAS, Gertler and the Whitechapel Boys were marked apart from their fellow Slade students by their poverty, an awareness expressed in Gertler's art. Gertler struggled to reconcile the dichotomy between his life in the Jewish East End, and the upper-middle-class life of the Slade, as evident by his letters. In an exchange with Dora Carrington, fellow student and his longstanding unrequited love interest, Gertler's anxieties about his developing social position are laid bare in 1913: 'I feel that I am far too vulgar and rough for you. But I am hoping through my work to reach your level.'[200] Whereas Bomberg's work can be seen to represent the duality of the complex, yet simple life of the Jewish East End, Gertler's work expresses the anxiety of an immigrant trying to define their personal identity, torn between two worlds. Another exchange with Carrington is telling in these regards:

> My picture is now finished. I finished it yesterday. I worked very hard at it indeed and I think that I've succeeded to get something good into it. Anyway, I've got the character of the woman and that's a great deal. I know it is not new, and our revolutionists would say of it that it was academic. I don't care. Newness doesn't concern me. I just want to express *myself* and be personal. When a bird is inspired it sings, it sings: it does *not* wonder if its manner of singing is different to a bird that sang a thousand years ago – it just sings. The more I see of life, the more I get to that realism is necessary.[201]

The two selected images reveal the transition which took place within Gertler's work, moving from the realist stylings of the Slade, to his 'Neo-Primitive' inspired figures. These sought to capture the simplicity of poverty, which Gertler believed had a beautiful simplicity which was to be 'envied'.[202] Always conscious of his Jewish immigrant background, Gertler's letters and art reveal a troubled individual who struggled to reconcile the hardship of his youth with the extravagant lives of the middle-classes, which his art granted him access to. Figure 15, *The Artist's Mother* (1911), can be recognised as a portrait in the similar tradition of works by artists such as Rothenstein and Wolmark, employing a naturalistic style. Great care and attention to detail has been made as Gertler faithfully recreated the image of his beloved mother, Golda. Out of his family, Golda looms largest in Gertler's work, being who he painted more than anyone else. Indeed, Gertler was very conscious of everything he owed his mother. She was a strong woman who held the family together when his father, Louis, had left them in Przemysl, Galicia, to

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[199] MacDougall, *Mark Gertler*, p. *x*.
[200] Mark Gertler to Carrington, October 1913, Carrington (ed.), *Mark Gertler: Selected Letters*, p. 57.
[201] Mark Gertler to Carrington, December 1913, Ibid., p. 60.
[202] MacDougall, *Mark Gertler*, p. 65.

Figure 15: Mark Gertler, *The Artist's Mother*, 1911, Tate Collection

establish a life for them first in the United States, and then England.[203] It was this respect and awe for his mother which Gertler wished to represent with *The Artist's Mother*, an impressive portrait which was accepted in 1911 for exhibit by the New English Art Club (NEAC).

The Artist's Mother is the first in a series of portraits which Gertler painted of Golda, with each painting becoming more simplified and abstract as his experimentation developed. This first painting, however, features the hallmarks of the portrait genre. His mother has been seated and posed to avoid the head-on stare, with her posture positioned to glance at the viewer at a slight angle. Rigid frontality was seen in portraiture to be a sign of a bluntness and a lack of awareness of a culturally unsophisticated class.[204] The upper-classes therefore posed themselves at a slight

[203] John Woodeson, *Mark Gertler: Biography of a Painter, 1891-1939* (London: Sidgwick, 1972), p. 72.
[204] Tagg, p. 36.

angle, to differentiate themselves from the masses before this style became vogue. Consequently, the woman in the portrait is not the archetypal 'Yiddishe Mama' nor an impoverished and struggling Jewish immigrant, but rather an accomplished woman.

Such messages are communicated by her clothes, that of fine clothing. Her hair has been neatly dressed as was the fashion, and she is wearing what appear to be pearl earrings and golden rings on her fingers. When one considers the typical clothing of the English working classes, Golda's dress code here appears to be out of place. Indeed, this is not the clothing of a ghetto-dweller, but rather middle-class finery. It is interesting that Gertler has seen fit to dress his mother in such a manner. Perhaps he felt that for the predominantly middle-class audience to respect his mother in the same way he did, she needed to be represented as one of them. However, there is a sense of unease about Golda being depicted this way. Juliet Steyn's assessment of this painting notes that contrary to Edwardian portraiture, the posture and form of Golda's body clash with convention. Her body takes up most of the picture, which suggests a struggle to not only establish a place in society, but also to be seen.[205] Furthermore, her clenched hands signify a sense of anxiety. Gertler's career, and both struggles with poverty and to find a place in society are made even more apparent in Figure 15, with his mother's concern for her son's uncertain future being revealed.[206]

This portrait marked both the pinnacle and end of Gertler's naturalistic style, with his quest for personal expression henceforth taking him down more experimental and Neo-Primitive avenues. The portrait received high praise and was sold at the end of the November exhibit.[207] *The Artist's Mother* is more than a mere portrait of Gertler's mother. It is a multi-faceted image, capturing both a dutiful son's admiration of his mother, and her anxiety for his future. Furthermore, it can also be seen to be a statement on the position of the Jewish immigrant in society. To be recognised and respected, the Jewish immigrant needed to observe to the expectations of Anglo-Jewry and English society, transforming into the very model of conformity. Such tensions of identity for immigrant Jewry are often overlooked by romanticised representations of the community's history.

Jewish Family (1913) was painted two years later and represents a very different style. Fry's 1910 exhibition of modern work was a revolutionary moment and left the Slade's teaching appearing as antiquated, with the school's teachers too old to compete with a complete

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[205] Steyn, *Assumptions of Identity*, p. 117.
[206] Dickson and MacDougall, *Out of Chaos*, p. 166.
[207] MacDougall, *Mark Gertler*, p. 56.

Figure 16: Mark Gertler, *Jewish Family*, 1913, Tate Collection

rethinking of all their artistic approaches and methods.[208] For Gertler, the effect was great. He

always strived to be the best, and the burgeoning artistic avant-garde's bombastic rejection of

realism threatened his sense of self-worth and artistic credibility. He had spent years mastering

the techniques of the Slade, and now it was threatened to be overshadowed by the 'new art' as

being dated. In his letters to Carrington in September 1912 he revealed how deeply this artistic

revolution had shaken his sensibilities, musing that he was dissatisfied with his work, and

seriously considered quitting and taking up a simple trade. After all, 'mediocre art is not only

useless, but *criminal*'.[209] John Woodeson has suggested that what helped to drive his new period

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[208] Woodeson, p. 93.
[209] Mark Gertler to Carrington, 24 September 1912, Carrington (ed.), *Mark Gertler: Selected Letters*, p. 46.

of creativity was his immigrant background. The hard-working atmosphere of Whitechapel, combined with the idea of being a mediocre artist, and drove Gertler's experimentation with modernist art.[210]

In *Jewish Family*, the figures are gathered around a seated elderly man. The painting is simplified, with the bold figures taking on a sombre tone. There is a curious sense of seriousness, with the figures appearing isolated and distant from one another, despite their proximity. The younger woman, presumably the mother, stands central, literally the focal point of the Jewish family. Interestingly she is depicted in more conventional peasant clothing, a radical departure from how Golda was dressed in *The Artist's Mother*. Conspicuous by his absence is her husband. Instead an elderly couple are present, although their relationship to the mother is impossible to decipher. The grandfather remains seated, wearing a downward gaze and appearing weary, emphasised by his tight grasping of his walking stick. Meanwhile the grandmother stands with her back to the mother, implying a fractured relationship.[211] The child meanwhile is unfinished, appearing doll-like and static. Perhaps Gertler intended to leave her as an unfinished character, suggesting the potential for growth and development beyond the immigrant ghetto – or maybe he simply never had time to finish the painting before exhibiting. Gertler was often unsatisfied by his work and repainted many of his finished works as he would find elements of them unacceptable in his pursuit of excellence.[212] Regardless, this facet is but one of the many ambiguities within this image.

The painting appears to confirm Gertler's desire to express himself in a personal work. Poverty, which he knew only too well, was hard. Indeed, the images which Gertler created were unsettling for some art connoisseurs. *The Star*'s reviewer complained that in *Jewish Family* the representation is 'occasionally pushed to caricature', with the seated old man appearing 'as

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[210] Woodeson, p. 94.

[211] Whilst one can only speculate at the potential cause of this fracture, it is possible that Gertler aimed to symbolise the classic struggle between Jewish mothers and mothers-in-law. In Eastern Europe, part of the *maskilim's* motives for reforming the tradition of arranged marriages was to escape the domineering clash between wives and mothers-in-law. With women traditionally the moving force behind the family, acting as the sole carer and breadwinner, it was often a cause of conflict between powerful personalities. See: David Biale, 'Childhood, Marriage and the Family in the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment', in Steven M. Cohen and Paula E. Hyman (eds.), *The Jewish Family: Myths and Reality* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986).

[212] A 1913 letter to Hon. Dorothy Brett reveals this practice. When discussing his artistic progress and financial struggles, Gertler wrote the following:
'It is very uncomfortable to have to worry, though, to have to worry over every penny one spends. I am working very, very hard, and yet – would you believe it – if you were to come back at this moment I would have *nothing* to show you! No sooner do I finish I picture than I paint it out. As I go on, I get more and more critical about my own work – nothing satisfies me. My people look upon me as a complete lunatic!!'
See: Gertler to *Hon. Dorothy Brett*, June 1913, Carrington (ed.), *Mark Gertler: Selected Letters*, p.53.

monstrously grotesque as a gargoyle'.[213] Many notable Anglo-Jewish individuals also found this new style disconcerting. In a letter to Dorothy Brett, Gertler revealed that his paintings of similar style, *Rabbi and his Grandchild* and *The Old Jew* were heavily criticised at the summer 1913 NEAC exhibition, where his 'types they say, are *ugly*':

> *The worst kind of person is the rich English Jew*!!! Ugh! those patronising horrors! Let me tell you what one lady of class wrote me a few days ago. She said she had seen my "New English" picture and that she thinks my eyes *must be wrong* to paint like that, and that I would do her a great favour if I would – at her expense – see an oculist! Oh, Brett! What do you think of that? That has settled my dealings with the upper-class Jew.[214]

Evidently, Gertler's new artistic approach was contentious. His artwork was challenging to interpret and many critics, especially those within Anglo-Jewry, preferred conventional scenes of beauty and comfort. This was because immigrant Jewry was criticised heavily by anti-alien demonstrators. Calling on the virtues of home and nation, family and respectability, fierce critics portrayed the sheer volume and lifestyle of immigrant Jews as both a challenge and danger to the sanctity of traditional English family values.[215] The figures of *Jewish Family* did little to dismiss such preconceptions. Whilst the works of Rothenstein and Wolmark championed the beauty and purity of Jewish religion, *Jewish Family* was concerned with representing the realities of poverty.

As noted, Gertler was a man caught between two worlds: that of beauty, and poverty. These personal tensions and uncertainties can be seen to be translated within the canvas of *Jewish Family*. The painting itself is inherently challenging to interpret, with no clear and defining message communicated. Whether this image celebrates or criticises the Jewish family unit can be debated. Moreover, the figures within the painting are provocative. The women stand firm, with an air of dignity about them. Despite their impoverished surroundings, there is a sense of simplicity and beauty to them. However, they stand apart, alienating one another. Meanwhile the grandfather's posture is broken, with life appearing to have taken a heavy toll upon his weary body. At the centre of this fragmented scene stands the mother, described by Lisa Tickner as being 'literally and emotionally at the centre stage'.[216]

Considering Gertler's affection and admiration for Golda, it should come as no surprise that his representation of a 'Jewish family' would place the mother as the centrepiece. Jewish mothers

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[213] MacDougall, *Mark Gertler*, p. 87.
[214] Gertler to Hon. Dorothy Brett, September 1913, Carrington (ed.), *Mark Gertler: Selected Letters*, p.54.
[215] David Feldman, 'The Importance of being English: Jewish immigration and the decay of liberal England', in David Feldman and Gareth Steadman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis – London: Histories and Representations Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 76.
[216] Tickner, p. 169.

were often the powerful moving force behind many immigrant families. Caring for children almost alone due to the long working hours of men at workshops, Jewish mothers were a child's sole point of contact as a provider, role model and manager of the household.[217] Furthermore, the absence of a father figure in Figure 16 could be ascribed to Gertler's own ambivalence towards his father. Louis was never more than a shadowy presence in his paintings, absent or eclipsed by Golda. Sarah MacDougall's biography has suggested that this was potentially due to Gertler's relationship with his father never truly recovering from their early separation.[218] Or perhaps in *Jewish Family* it is an indicative of the relative absence of fathers in the lives of many immigrant Jewish children throughout Britain.

It is interesting to note that in three of the discussed pieces of art from the Whitechapel Boys – Figures 13, 15 and 16 – the position of the painter's mother is key (although Bomberg changed her into a male figure, to emotionally distance himself). Such representations confirm the central and poignant role that the mothers of Bomberg and Gertler played in their formative years, and as such can be used to cautiously support popular representations of the central role of the Jewish mother in everyday life. Nevertheless, despite this *Jewish Family* is still a difficult image to decode. Whilst the mother is positioned stoically, the rest of the family appear divided. They are proudly and defiantly positioned, but there is a lack of warmth. Whilst the figures in *Family Bereavement* were united by grief, what appears in Figure 16 is a more functional family.

As alluded, *Jewish Family* is an image compounded by ambiguity and nuance. Whether this is a positive or negative representation of Jewish family life is entirely subjective. Whilst the strong position of the mother can be highlighted as a cause of celebration, the compartmentalisation of the figures on the canvas could be interpreted to symbolise a divided family. None of the figures are positioned together, all being on different levels within the image. Moreover, none of their gazes are consistent, with each figure looking in a different direction. Only the mother appears proud, meeting the viewer's gaze. Whether Gertler intended this to portray her as the lynchpin of the family, or as a potentially disruptive figure separating everyone from one another is unclear. It leads one to query, whether the family together by choice, or necessity? It is perhaps these uncertainties within the image, which although fascinating to Gertler, alienated some of his critics who found such ambiguity and openness undesirable.

There are many layers to be unravelled within *Jewish Family*. As observed, the painting could be perceived to represent generational tensions between mothers and mothers-in-law.

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[217] Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings*, p. 155.
[218] MacDougall, *Mark Gertler*, p. 9.

Conversely, the image makes tentative allusions to the Jewish principle of respect and caring for the aged. It was custom for families to take in and care for their aged, such as fathers- and mothers-in-law when they could no longer provide for themselves.[219] Such customs are often reflected in later memoirs following the 'memory boom', with some recalling the differing roles which their grandparents provided. Whilst it is true that older immigrants would have migrated with families, or even been sent for, the proportion would likely have been far smaller than the extent of young families migrating. Gartner's research into the origins of the Jewish immigration of the 1880s and beyond, posited that it was the poor quality of life and low life expectancy which prompted many families to migrate, not pogroms and persecution. The Jewish population of Eastern Europe was in Gartner's words, a 'typical pre-industrial society', whose high birth and death rate created a young population.[220]

Jewish Family accordingly is a complex image. This is perhaps best represented by the meeting of generations across the family. Whilst caring for the aged was regarded as a positive facet of Jewish tradition and charity, this element of the painting is another unresolved feature. The pairing of the elderly man and the child could posit a close family bond, and a passing of knowledge and tradition to the next generation. Alternatively, as observed the elderly man appears weary. Perhaps Gertler's intention was to symbolise the harshness of life, which has left this man weak and infirm. Just like the child, he too now needs to be cared for. As discussed, Bomberg's artwork was inspired by his explorations of 'true form'. Gertler, however, desired to develop his explorations of the reality of life. Nevertheless, these artistic experiments left him increasingly isolated. Few people truly liked his new work. It was too experimental for the mainstream of English art, as his letter to Brett illuminates. Yet it was too grounded in realism for the developing English avant-garde.[221]

Gertler was among the selected exhibitors at *Twentieth Century Art*, and even there his works met mixed critical acclaim. The *Jewish Chronicle* had been keen observers of his work for some time, singling his successes out for praise in a small article in 1910, listing his achievements at the Slade.[222] The reviewer of *Twentieth Century Art* for the *Chronicle*, whilst scathing of Bomberg's works, regarded Gertler's art as being 'singularly at variance with himself here'.[223] The more experimental works were dismissed, characterised as a simple rebellion against the training of the Slade, something which would hopefully pass. *Jewish Family* was praised, however, for

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[219] Black, p. 172.
[220] Lloyd P. Gartner, *American and British Jews in the Age of the Great Migration* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 23.
[221] Woodeson, p. 129.
[222] *Jewish Chronicle*, July 1, 1910, p. 28.
[223] Ibid., May 14, 1914, p. 10.

'conveying an inexpressible sense of homeliness' and the 'fine spiritualism' it showcased of the family.[224] Such remarks suggest Anglo-Jewry was not dismissive towards all forms of modernism in art, especially when it portrayed the Jewish family as they desired: a strong family unit. Works such as Gertler's could be used to combat the negative images propagated by anti-alienists. It was when art was experimental beyond 'reason and common sense' that closed mindedness revealed itself.

Whilst the artwork analysed so far has emphasised the maleness of religiosity and the female dominance of the domestic sphere, none have been constructed by a female creator. Clara Winsten (Née Clara Birnberg, 1892-1984) was the only female member of the Whitechapel Boys. As with many immigrants Birnberg's parents asserted that they fled their home in Tarnopol, Galicia, out of fear of the pogroms. However, it took the family over a decade to travel from Galicia to the East End, with much time spent in Romania, where their three children – Gizella (1884), Clara (1892) and Jonas (1894) – were probably born.[225] Like the rest of the Whitechapel Boys, Birnberg spent a large part of her childhood growing up in the East End, with her family struggling to make ends meet. Unlike Bomberg and Gertler, she did not gain the support of the JEAS, instead transferring her £40 scholarship from the London County Council to pursue her art as a trade, to instead a vocation at the Slade.

Birnberg's life was highly political and contentious. A committed vegetarian and member of the suffragette movement, she also was a pacifist during the First World War when her husband, Stephen, was imprisoned as a conscientious objector.[226] Together the couple embraced Quaker humanism and anglicised their names, taking on the identities of Stephen and Clare Winsten, relinquishing their Jewish roots.[227] Her early artistic career at the Slade was also marked by a sense of isolation. Whilst many students were female, they were not serious artists, with most being the daughters of middle- and upper-class parents who regarded the school as an institution for their daughters to continue their personal development before marriage. Birnberg found herself to be the only working-class, Jewish female student.[228] In many ways, themes of conflict and isolation are present in her artwork.

Attack (1910) is an intriguing image. Composed whilst Birnberg was studying at the Slade, it reveals a defiance towards the taught conventions. The dating suggests that Birnberg had been

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[224] Ibid., p. 10.
[225] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 100.
[226] Ibid., p. 99.
[227] Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall, 'The Whitechapel Boys', *Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2004), p. 34.
[228] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 101.

Figure 17: Clara Birnberg, *Attack*, 1910, Ben Uri Gallery

inspired by Fry's 1910 exhibition, transferring some modernist approaches into her watercolour. A landscape image, it conveys a sense of the struggles and chaos of life, with figures sprawled across the scene in a variety of poses. Despite the title there is no clear sense of conflict between the figures. Some are motionless, seemingly dead and defeated by the rigours of life. But many others are embracing and offering aid to each other. Perhaps this reflects positive portrayals of the Jewish East End as being a haven of mutual relief, co-operation and co-dependence. Indeed, it was this nature of the immigrant community which was highly praised by Charles Russell, when explaining the strength and resilience of the freshly arrived 'greener' over the native pauper.[229]

As a Slade student, Birnberg would have been familiar with the National Gallery. Consequently, it is possible that the composition was inspired by Paolo Uccello's *The Battle of San Romano* (c.1438-40). As observed by Sarah MacDougall and Rachel Dickson, both images share a similarly formatted landscape, with the battlegrounds dominated by a singular horse.[230] Whilst Uccello's figures were heroic soldiers on a battlefield, there is no sense of Birnberg's figures being soldiers. Partially inspired by the developing modernist movements which favoured simplification, the figures have been stripped down to their basic form. They appear naked, weak and vulnerable

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[229] Charles Russell and Harry S. Lewis*, The Jew in London: A Study of Racial Character and Present-Day Conditions* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900), p. 54.
[230] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 103.

in a cold and methodical world, as emphasised by the block-like nature of constructs such as the two carts in the background, and the imposing wall.

The harsh and divisive nature of the wall is enhanced by figures trying to escape the scene and scale it. One male figure struggles alone, whilst a couple work together to transport a child over. Such scenes represent an old world/new world dichotomy, with the desperation of the figures to escape their current setting, implying the offer of a better life on the other side of the wall. Whether this was Birnberg's representation of the life for immigrant Jewry in Britain, an artistic experimentation of a biblical scene, or a personal metaphor remains unclear. *Attack*, however, is notable for being one of Birnberg's more experimental works, with her career leading her towards sculpture and portraiture.

Whilst the Ben Uri Gallery holds some of her works, it notes that Birnberg generally did not explore or refer to her Jewish background in her art. Considering her rejection of her Jewish identity, this assessment does not appear unjust. Indeed, the Gallery notes that *Attack* is partially unfinished, and speculates that it was most likely a response to one of the Slade's competition briefs.[231] Consequently, perhaps the wall in *Attack* symbolises not only an escape from hardship, but also Birnberg's attempted escape from the perceived constraints of her lone female and Jewish identities at the Slade, which she viewed as hindering her efforts. Rather than representing her experience or her Jewish immigrant identity, she instead sought to escape such categorisation. She was an artist first, female and Jewish second.

Figure 18, *Vorticist Figures* (Untitled, 1911) reveals the height of Birnberg's experimentation. The colours of this canvas are striking and dynamic, but the figures are somewhat reserved and prevent the image's complete abstraction.[232] Whereas the Vorticist work of Bomberg in *The Mud Bath* broke the human figures down to their 'pure form', making them almost unrecognisable, there is still a clear human definition present here. Such reservations are perhaps the reason why Birnberg's work remains relatively unknown, overshadowed by Bomberg's bold art which took simplification to its purest form, and Gertler's which sought to convey the realities of poverty. *Vorticist Figures* therefore can be seen to be loosely inspired by the coalescing Vorticist movement, but even then, it stands apart, remaining too rooted in both reality and representation to be accepted by the movement. Between 1912 and 1915, the Vorticist style focused on analytically expanding the Cubist style, before abandoning

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[231] Ben Uri Gallery, 'Biography of Clare Winsten' *Jewish Artists and the First World War: London Jews in The First World War - We Were There Too* <http://www.jewsfww.london/jewish-artists-and-the-first-world-war-705.php> [accessed 29/11/2016].
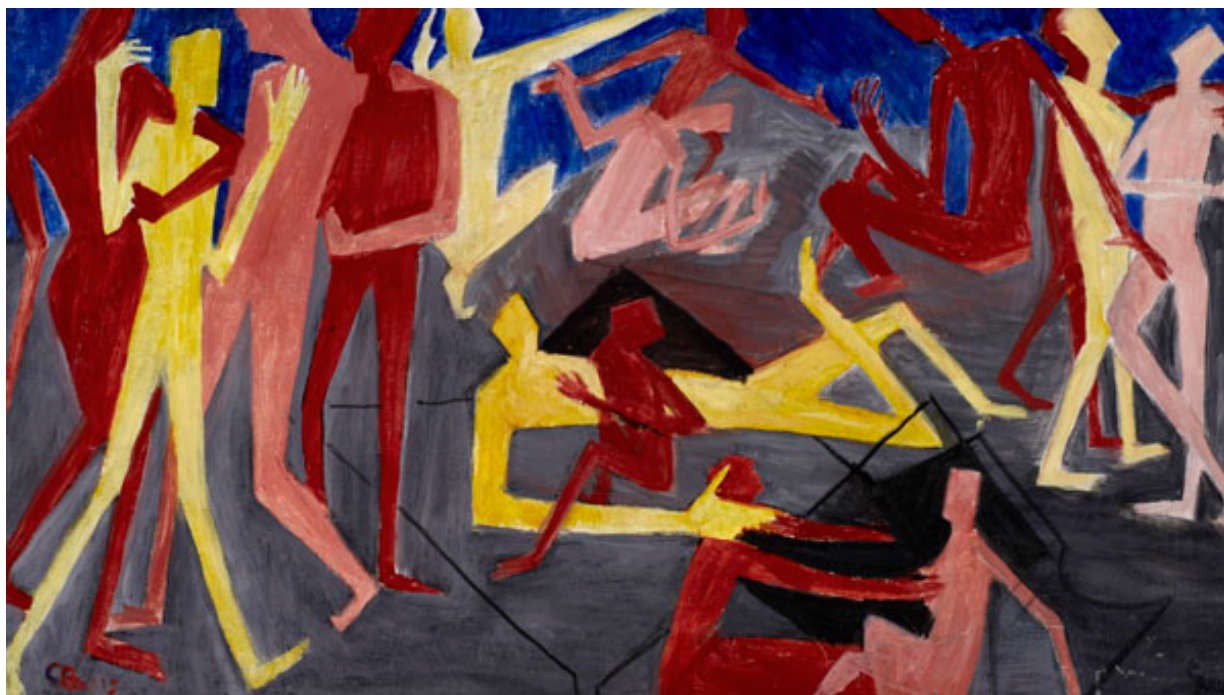[232] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 114.

Figure 18: Clara Birnberg, *Vorticist Figures (Untitled)*, 1911, Ben Uri Gallery

representation altogether.[233] In *Vorticist Figures*, despite their simplification the individuals are clearly identifiable.

As with *Attack*, numerous figures are present, spread out across a landscape. Rather than exploring conflict and despair, these appear jovial. Where they embrace they appear to be doing so out of affection and joy, rather than offering support and comfort. They are arguably all interconnected despite their singular nature, with the figures either embracing or overlapping. Due to their simplified nature, there are no identifying features which separate male and female figures. Instead they are all together as one happy communal mass, as signified by the warm colours to define their shapes.

The colourful forms share similarities with Bomberg and the Vorticists. During this period, Birnberg had a close working relationship with Bomberg. However, this relationship soured, with Birnberg later bitterly accusing him of taking 'her painting – freedom of mark and "inspiration"'.[234] Whether this was true or not has been contested, with her typescript manuscript regarded by historians as an unreliable account of the Whitechapel Boys.[235] Regardless, Birnberg's close working relationship with Bomberg means it remains possible that *Vorticist Figures* was a conceptual study, examining the forms of the people around her in the Jewish East End, rather

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[233] William C. Lipke and Bernard W. Rozran, 'Ezra Pound and Vorticism: A Polite Blast', *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer, 1966), pp. 202-203.
[234] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 105.
[235] Iain Sinclair, 'Rooms of Recovery', *The Guardian*, April 18, 2009.

than an exploration of Jewish identity. Consequently, the cluttered nature of the image, with figures sporadically arranged may not be a comment on overcrowding, but rather an artist trying to maximise the available canvas space and comment upon the masses of bodies before them. For the historian, the primary relevance of this image is that it was created by a Jewish immigrant and inspired by the busy and vibrant area, as opposed to be being a study reflecting the reality of life within the public sphere of the Jewish East End.

That *Vorticist Figures* was not exhibited at *Twentieth Century Art* may be down to selfish curating by Bomberg. Birnberg's work was shown in both the 'Jewish' section and the wider gallery. Her *Sketch for 'Fire' Composition* was displayed in the main gallery, between the works of two female artists, the Vorticist Helen Saunders and Amy Drucker. Meanwhile in the 'Jewish' section the more conventional *Study of Head* was displayed. It is possible that this measure was taken by Bomberg so as not to exhibit her more innovative work alongside his own, and to ensure his artwork stood out from the crowd.[236] Whatever the intentions behind the removal of *Sketch for 'Fire' Composition* to the main gallery and the exhibiting of more traditional artworks by Birnberg, it did her favours in terms of the critical eye of the *Jewish Chronicle*. Her work in the gallery only received one line in the review, but it was a positive one, praising *Study of Head* for suggesting 'fine delicacy and refinement of outlook' by the artist.[237]

A range of artwork has been considered in this section, to explore some of the tensions within artistic representations of both immigrant Jewry and the Jewish East End. As one would anticipate these images vary depending upon individual circumstance and temperament. The 'external' works – those of Rothenstein and Wolmark – are to a certain extent, genre scenes, constructed to depict the beauty of Jewish religious life and the immigrant's respectable nature. Such works were intended for public consumption and can be recognised to have been embraced and utilised by Anglo Jewry for their organised defence against the polemical accusations of the anti-alienists. By contrast, whilst the images created by the Whitechapel Boys are equally constructed, they are representations birthed from their artistic experimentation of the reality around them. Both what they seek to represent, and the form of this portrayal are as illuminating for the historian as what is omitted or artistically altered.

For instance, both Birnberg and Bomberg embraced the new artistic conventions of the day, moving beyond realism to studies of form. These were radical pieces of art which offended the established sensibilities of the English art world. Whether this radicalism was inspired by the

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[236] MacDougall and Dickson, *Whitechapel at War*, p. 104.
[237] *Jewish Chronicle*, May 15, 1914, p. 10.

youth and vigour of the artists, their status as an ethnic minority or class considerations, is something the historian can only speculate upon. Whilst Birnberg desired to move beyond gender and her Jewish identity in her art, both Bomberg and Gertler embraced their Jewishness. Indeed, Gertler was so notable for exploring Jewish themes, that his professors at the Slade advised him to concentrate solely on Jewish subjects.[238] It is evident consequently that the social backgrounds of these artists helped to inform their creations, with their Jewishness inspiring the subject, setting and forms of their art, whether directly (such as Gertler's *The Artist's Mother*) or indirectly (Bomberg's *The Mud Bath*).

Moving beyond extracting mechanical representations of immigrant Jewry and their lives from these works of art, one can gain some notion of the mentality of these young artists. They were experimental. They were defiant. They were concerned with their place in the world and challenged what was both socially and artistically acceptable. As with the nouveau riche photographs of the previous section, one accordingly can characterise these images to be the creations of the ambitious, socially mobile Jewish immigrant. It is by analysing how these contemporary works of art desired to portray the immigrant Jew and their position in British society, that one can recognise challenges to the negative contemporary and external depictions of the Eastern European Jewish immigrant, or 'alien': challenges which were born from a confluence of experience of the immigrant quarter, and the potential politicalised nature of the English art world which these artists had access to. Significant, therefore, is the varying responses and forms of self-definition which this access triggered within these artists.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the complexities and ambiguities of uncovering contemporary representations of immigrant Jewry, and particularly their experience of the Jewish East End, as authored by the immigrants themselves. Despite the array of literary sources discussing the 'alien', both in positive and negative terms, there are few written examples where immigrant Jewry represented their own experiences. Henceforth, this section turned to visual sources to examine how some of the first generation of Jewish immigrants portrayed themselves and the community. Indeed, these images have assumed a variety of forms and reveal the scope of differing representations which oppose the polemical images of Jewish immigrants, even if these creations were intended only for the private sphere.

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[238] MacDougall, *Mark Gertler*, p. 47.

As with any exploration of identity, these sources are limited by being the self-representations of those who were able to generate them. The examined photographs are primarily the creations of nouveau riche immigrants, those who managed success and prosperity, at least for a time. They are revealing in terms of what they sought to present: images of respectable, English citizens. That the Anglo-Jewish elite desired the swift anglicisation of their immigrant co-religionists is widely recognised. However, these photographs reveal that Jewish immigrants were not only the passive recipients of this programme, but they were active participants who desired to cultivate images of their 'Englishness' even for their own personal and private consumption. Such images accordingly reveal the early adoption and development of an integrated, 'English Jewish' identity amongst members of the first generation. Furthermore, the artistic creations of the Whitechapel Boys reveal the desires of the youthful, upcoming generation to be new and innovative. Some, such as Birnberg, shirked the Jewish aspects of their identity. Others, like Bomberg and Gertler embraced it, utilising their understanding of their 'Jewishness' as a mode of context to comment upon wider themes, and to pursue further experimentation within their art.

The visual sources examined, whilst revealing, create challenges for the historian seeking to understand personal, or communal mentalities. Indeed, they offer compelling counter-images to the hostile and negative portrayals of the inherent 'alienness' and 'unEnglish' character of immigrant Jewry, as circulated by restrictionists. This does not mean, however, that they fall under the purview of Anglo-Jewry's controlled message of the ordered and rapid embracing of 'Englishness' by their foreign co-religionists, particularly within the Jewish East End. The reality falls between such hard stances. Notably, the examined sources are indicative of revealing that there was not one stable 'community' within the Jewish East End, or even within English or British Jewry generally. Rather, Jews in Britain were a disparate collection of groups, sharing specific interests. Whilst the separation between Anglo-Jewry and immigrant Jewry is more abundantly clear due to differences of language, culture and customs, within the Jewish East End the immigrant community can also be divided in terms of class, religious observance, politics and general aspirations, as studies have revealed.[239] What these visual sources reveal is the early engagement by some sections of immigrant Jewry in shaping their identity, seeking to enter the host society not as outsiders, but as integrated members of society.

The examined visual sources offer personal understandings and representations of the Jewish immigrant experience. The task for the historian is to recognise the uniqueness of these images, whilst cautiously applying them to understandings of the community – a community

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[239] Bar-Yosef and Valman, p. 14.

which must not be considered to be homogenous, with different segments undergoing different experiences.[240] The best cultural history can do is to recognise these personal, and sometimes marginalised experiences and representations, which challenge the more powerful and dominant narratives and thereby offer limited agency to a disenfranchised class. Whilst these are personal representations which are specific to their creators, the very existence of them implies the potential for there to be similar examples within the community, examples which are yet to be uncovered, or sadly unrecorded. They reveal the multitude of experiences within the immigrant community, showing that there is not one, *definitive* experience, as prejudiced or sanitised contemporary accounts (and later memory) often suggested. It is the development and streamlining of the history of Eastern European Jewry and their settlement in Britain, in both private and popular memory which this thesis will now explore.

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[240] Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians*, p. 225.

Chapter Two: Early Engagement and the Second Generation of Memory

Second Generation Tensions

The passage of time has long been recognised to affect memory. Both physical and emotional distance from events can have subtle, or transformative effects on how the past is remembered.[1] Regarding representations of the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain, one would expect the perspectives of the second generation to differ from those of their parents. Separated from the initial period of settlement and the experience and memory of Eastern Europe by their youth, the recollection of formative years can be tinged with nostalgia, anger, or both, depending upon individual experiences and identity.

Contemporary representations of the immigrant experience, as authored by the immigrants themselves, can be difficult to pinpoint in written form. Accordingly, to explore the self-representations of the first generation, Chapter One examined a selection of visual sources. The defensive, 'English' photographic images of the nouveau riche immigrants were noted to offer a differing representation compared to the somewhat 'blasty', and outwardly challenging artistic creations of the Whitechapel Boys. These artistic images challenged not only the pretensions and expectations of the English art world, but also the desires of established Anglo-Jewry regarding how Jewish life in London's East End should be portrayed. Significantly, these sources revealed within the immigrant Jewish community both the multi-faceted nature of experience, and the various forms of desired self-representation present amongst this community, with each individual accentuating a different combination of themes. For instance, whereas the Perkoffs were keen to emphasise the socially mobile nature of immigrant Jewry, Gertler's *Jewish Family* highlighted the simplicity and 'beauty' of poverty. The children of those who immigrated, however, left a far more visible imprint on the English literary world, which will be explored within this chapter.

It is notable that both the terms 'East End' and 'Jewish East End' are literary constructions, with malleable and changing boundaries. During the 1880s and 1890s, the term 'East End' was used to suggest a world apart from that occupied by London's middle-classes. As the city grew

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[1] The revisionist and simplifying nature of personal memory was recognised by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson. A core part of personal myth-making, they noted that personal time and memory can often conflict with the public historical record. For a detailed discussion, see the introduction to Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990).

geographically, so did the East End. It was the influx of Jewish immigrants which also caused the *concept* of the East End to expand further in popular consciousness, as the boundaries of Jewish settlement expanded beyond Spitalfields, spreading north of Whitechapel Road and into Mile End Old Town and St. George's-in-the-East. By 1914 the area of settlement encompassed a region of two square miles.[2] As with any immigrant settlement, the area's crowded conditions encouraged aspirational families to relocate to suburban communities. Whilst historians debate the start of this outward migration, it is generally accepted that by the 1930s, those Jews which remained in the East End were largely the working classes, with an ageing community often overlooked and misunderstood by the Anglo-Jewish leadership, as the conflicting responses to fascism revealed.[3]

It was the socially mobile who managed to migrate out of the East End and assert control over the Anglo-Jewish leadership, and it was those individuals who authored the early history of the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain. Moreover, these individuals naturally strongly focused their narratives upon the largest visible settlement of immigrant Jewry, the Jewish East End. The decline of the old communal leadership and its succession by the children of immigrants was signposted as a landmark in not just Anglo-Jewish historiography, but also Zionism. Nevertheless, historians have critically re-examined this simplistic narrative. David Cesarani for instance, noted that Zionism was just one factor in a wider pattern of political and ideological change. The declining authority of the traditional leadership can be traced back to the pressures of the First World War, which opened communal self-governance to the middle-classes. This development then accelerated in the interwar period under the uncertain political landscape of fascism and socialism. That Zionism was ascendant was due to its ability to work within the established leadership's power structure, and its ability to offer middle-class Jews an ethnic identity which embraced both their host nation *and* Jewishness.[4] Indeed, many contemporary critics were willing to further bestow this identity upon the general body of immigrant Jewry and their children, with Henrietta Adler's 1934 survey on 'Jewish Life and Labour in East London' claiming a strong support from East London Jewry for Zionism.[5]

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[2] Vivian D. Lipman, 'Jewish Settlement in the East End, 1840-1940', in Aubrey Newman (ed.), *The Jewish East End, 1840-1939: Proceedings of the conference held on 22 October 1980 jointly by the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Jewish East End Project of the Association for Jewish Youth* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1981), pp. 33-34.

[3] Elaine R. Smith, 'Class, ethnicity and politics in the Jewish East End, 1918-1939', *Jewish Historical Studies*, *Vol. 32* (1990-1992), p. 355.

[4] David Cesarani, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914-1940', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) p. 140.

[5] Henrietta Adler, 'Jewish Life and Labour in East London', in Hubert Llewellyn-Smith (ed.), *The New Survey of London Life & Labour*, *Vol. VI: Survey of Social Conditions (2) The Western Area* (London: P.S. King & Son Ltd., 1934), p. 281.

Such identifying labels for East End Jewry should not be taken for granted. The East End of the 1930s and 1940s saw a whirlwind of conflicting political ideologies battle for popular support. Of keen significance for East End Jewry was the spectre of British fascism. To assert that the Jewish East End was overwhelmingly Zionist in response to this would be erroneous. Conversely, to suggest that it embraced Communism to combat fascism is also mistaken. As the memoirs and novels of the second generation reveal, the Jewish community of the East End was not homogenous in any sense: politically, religiously, economically or culturally.

As children of immigrants, this community was only partially integrated into society. English by birth, Jewish by family, culture and at times faith, these individuals walked an uncertain path between two cultural worlds. Despite the shared experience of poverty, unemployment and poor housing conditions, their parents, those who immigrated prior to the First World War, remained largely segregated in both their social and working lives from their gentile neighbours. Recognising their parent's marginal status, it was the second generation's acknowledgement of their unique group origins, history and customs, which helped to form a collective sense of Jewishness in the East End during the 1930s and 1940s, with individuals aligning their Jewishness with working class and political identities.[6]

Those Jews who remained in the East End created a small and relatively self-contained community. Rather than unified by religion, Elaine Smith asserts that social, political and working relationships and environments in the Jewish East End were based around a network of ethnic and class ties.[7] One would anticipate that similar networks existed amongst the smaller immigrant Jewish communities found throughout Britain. Consequently, the Jewish working-class community of the 1930s were not only separated geographically from middle-class Jewry, but also socially, economically and politically. The representations of this experience as authored by those who remained in these working-class Jewish communities, therefore offer a contrasting picture to those who moved away and penned their personal histories. Standing apart from mainstream society and without the memories of persecution, the politically conscious working-class community of 1930-40 were less cautious than the previous generation. Their combative nature and determination to stand up for themselves as English Jews is perhaps best demonstrated by the 'Battle of Cable Street' in 1936, which grew out of Jewish militancy and self-defence against anti-Semitism.[8] It is important though not to overstate this example and the extent to which this

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[6] Smith, 'Class, ethnicity and politics', p. 357.
[7] Ibid., p. 366.
[8] Tony Kushner and Nadia Valman, 'Introduction: Minorities, Fascism and Anti-Fascism', in Tony Kushner and Nadia Valman (eds.), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), pp. 17-18.

community secluded itself. The Battle of Cable Street was not just a Jewish anti-fascist movement: Irish dockers and ex-servicemen organisations also played vital roles on the day.[9]

The Challenges of Memory

Today, historians are faced with much complex material beyond archives. Memory sources such as autobiographical works or oral interviews have been growing in terms of popularity and usage, with both their creators and historians viewing them as invaluable tools which preserve some essence of both past and present identities. The difficulty of using such accounts, however, is in separating the embellishment or distortion of memory from the actuality of lived experience. Such problems come attached to any historical document, including official state documentation, but the complexities of memory and identity provide a set of unique challenges. As discussed, the issue of overcoming pre-existing historical narratives are commonplace within the history of Jews in Britain, with romanticised accounts being entrenched in popular memory. But it is the individuality of personal experience and recollection which can assist in cross-examining and illuminating how romanticised notions of the past have become central to modern conceptions of history.

Memoirs accordingly are an important source for the social historian, offering an individual and personal voice. Regardless of the author, memoirs grant access to the experiences of people and enable aspects of their lives to be reconstructed, whether they are the tales of an 'ordinary' or 'notable' individual. Even seemingly anecdotal stories provide a wealth of material. Paula Fass for example, has argued that even those memoirs which are least devoted to 'reconstructing social spaces' (that is, conveying some sense of the areas where people in a community would gather and interact with one another) still have great potential, with the author often describing long periods of time or emphasising their personal encounters. It is these passages which allow historians to access some sense of the lived past, something which other sources cannot provide.[10]

Nevertheless, one must proceed with caution when using memoirs as historical sources, with there being a multitude of challenges to consider in their usage. They are but one route into a personal social context, and not a complete or fully 'reliable' account of the past. The individual variation which exists in memory means that the different perspectives, experiences and worldviews of the author can combine to generate different versions of the past. The past quite

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[9] Elaine R. Smith, 'But What Did They Do? Contemporary Jewish Responses to Cable Street', in Tony Kushner and Nadia Valman (eds.), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), pp. 50-51.
[10] Paula S. Fass, 'The Memoir Problem', *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (March, 2006), p. 110.

simply is never truly recoverable, no matter how trustworthy or detailed the author. From memoirs, one can ascertain a *memory* of the past, rather than a realisation of the world 'as it really was'.[11] This observation of course can be made of any historical document. Regardless of the form or scope of a historical enquiry, the historian can never truly assert that they have categorically reconstructed a vision of past events which is steadfastly accurate and has been recounted with a level of pinpoint accuracy, as if the events were unfolding before them.

When analysing memory sources, such as memoirs, one must keep in mind the author's intent and agenda, alongside their intended audience. The author has selected parts of their life which they believe most fittingly tells their story. And as the author of the story, they are consciously or unconsciously bound to present themselves in the best light. Thus, certain aspects of their past may be emphasised or embellished, with certain small events presented as life changing moments or framed in a specific manner due to hindsight. Moreover, events may be removed entirely and ignored, due to querying the overall narrative, or simply forgotten as they were deemed superfluous. The challenge for the historian therefore is at a general level to subtly separate fact from fiction as accurately as possible within these sources, identifying the dynamics of memoirs and the politics of exclusion and inclusion when presenting personal stories. It is these decisions when representing the lives and experiences of Jewish immigrants and their children in Britain, which this chapter will examine.

This chapter accordingly will explore the tentative first steps of self-expression and representation by the children of immigrant Jewry. Primarily through the medium of memoirs, it will examine the pictures of immigrant settlement and assimilation which were authored from two very different social situations. The primary focus for this chapter will be of images created of the experience of the Jewish East End. This is due to the examined materials originating from that area of initial Jewish settlement, and henceforth utilising concepts of the Jewish East End as a signifier for the overall experience of Eastern European immigrant Jews in Britain. First and foremost, the memoirs of 'notable' individuals, those who 'escaped' the East End and were prompted to write down their life stories because they were people of public interest will be assessed. Such accounts will then be compared to the creations of those who remained in the area, through choice and class consciousness. It is believed that these differing backgrounds will reveal conflicting representations of both the East End and the experience of the working-class Jewish community, with contrasting political and social backgrounds generating divergent filters

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[11] James Olney, 'Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of Bios: The Ontology of Biography', in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 237.

through which they viewed both the area, and the very lives and existence of this class of people. The generally sanitised constructions of those which moved beyond the East End will be challenged by the overtly critical 'internally' constructed memories, which will show not just a contested community during the period of immigration, but one still in flux in the following years.

Unfortunately, in this chapter there are no female voices present, with the published memoirs during the period being totally male dominated. Despite this gender will still be an important theme, with many of the examined materials highlighting the importance of gender roles within Jewish households, especially the role of women as mothers and carers within the working-class Jewish community. It is particularly within this treatment of women that this chapter will explore the gradual adoption and acceptance of bourgeois English notions of gender and class roles by the community, a theme which will be expanded upon within Chapter Three.[12]

To supplement the examined material and following the interdisciplinary approach of Chapter One, this chapter will broaden the assessed mediums through which immigrant Jewish life was represented. To compliment the written record of memoirs, two popular working-class novels written in the period will be considered. These novels further highlight the tensions which were rife in the Jewish East End, tensions which existed not only in terms of class and ethnicity, but also in terms of how the area was perceived and represented. Moreover, the existence of these novels is significant in revealing the active engagement of members from the working-class Jewish community in not only identifying themselves, but also consciously seeking to represent their experiences to the wider, national community.

Furthermore, visual representations of immigrant Jewry and their children will be explored once more, primarily through photographs. Following the examinations of Chapter One, the inclusion of these materials will enable this study to assess the continuity and change regarding how the children of immigrant Jews were portrayed through visual mediums, before then considering the broader representations of this generation. The use of visual sources is not as extensive as the first chapter, out of recognition of the increased forms of self-expression available by this period. Popular working-class novels and memoirs for example offer readily accessible avenues for assessing popular narratives. However, the inclusion of visual sources in this chapter adds nuance and further layering to these literary accounts, revealing how both

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[12] One of the pioneering studies in this regard was conducted by Rickie Burman. Examining the oral testimony of Manchester Jewry, Burman noted how middle-class ideals of domesticity and gender roles had coloured testimony regarding women's roles in the household and workplace. See: Rickie Burman, 'The Jewish Woman as the Breadwinner: The Changing Value of Women's Work in a Manchester Immigrant Community', *Oral Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 27-39.

immigrant Jewry and their children would have been visually perceived in some quarters, both publicly and privately.

Using this increased range of source material, this chapter will thematically explore the engagement by the second generation in terms of representing their lives and experiences in Britain, as the children of Jewish immigrants. Six different themes have been identified: tales of origin, family and home, religious life, education, employment, and community. A thematic approach has been taken as it best enables this study to examine consistencies and changes in popular memory and narratives. Furthermore, this approach allows this chapter to make a comparison between British and American Jewish immigrant memory. Much work has been conducted outlining an American generational settlement model, detailing how the children of Jewish immigrants rejected their Eastern European heritage, fully embracing 'Americanism'.[13] This brief comparison will reveal the disadvantages of applying a generalised model to treatments of British Jewish memory, with representations and popular memory being more nuanced within this context, as both this and the third chapter will reveal. Consequently, by exploring and arranging these themes in this manner, this chapter will be empowered to trace the early engagement of the children of immigrant Jewry regarding their experiences in Britain. Triggered by the aftermath of the Second World War, this initial treatment of the Jewish immigrant past fostered the early memories and myths of Jewish migration, settlement and integration into British society.

I) Tales of Origin

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the selected literary materials for this chapter all detail to an extent both their experiences growing up as the children of immigrants, alongside their family origins. The space and detail provided for origin tales – that is, the experiences of their parents' and what drove them to leave Eastern Europe – vary depending on the author's motivations for writing. Indeed, at a crude level, the examined memoirs in this chapter can be separated into two categories: those of 'notable' public figures who 'escaped' the immigrant quarter of the Jewish East End, and those who remained. Between the two, significant differences can be found regarding how the authors portray the background of their parents' immigration.

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[13] For the basis of this study, two key works regarding the evolution of popular memory for both the Lower East Side and American Jewish memory have been consulted. Eli Lederhendler explored the adoption of early American settlement myths such as the pilgrims in a Jewish context, whilst Steven Zipperstein detailed how nostalgia for a lost-world following the Holocaust subsequently informed popular memory regarding Eastern Europe. See: Eli Lederhendler, 'Jewish Immigration to America and Revisionist Historiography: A Decade of New Perspectives', *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Sciences,* Vol. 18, (1983), pp. 391-410; and Steven Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

In similar vein to the American generational model, the prominent figures of the Zionist activist and mathematician, Selig Brodetsky, comedian and actor Bud Flanagan, and musician Samuel Chotzinoff, all concisely and powerfully paint the universal image of Russian persecution as being the cause of their family upheaval and resettlement. Whether direct or indirect, a combination of anti-Semitism, military conscription and most significantly, the ever-present threat of spontaneous violent pogroms are cited as the causes for Jewish families fleeing late Imperial Russia. By contrast, the other memoirs examined in this section reveal a different side to the great Jewish immigration of 1880-1914, a side often overshadowed by the settlement myths of the United States and Britain.[14]

One of the first memoirs to be published after the Second World War was Chotzinoff's *A Lost Paradise: Early Reminiscences* (1956). His memoir described a sense of insecurity as the primary factor which pushed his family away from their home in Vitebsk, White Russia, leading to them seeking refuge in the United States. His family arrived in 1906, where Chotzinoff went on to have a successful career in music as a critic, pianist and consultant to NBC.[15] His memoirs are noteworthy for describing the process of step migration. Originally intending to journey to the United States, or so he asserted, his family found themselves stranded in London's East End for a year. A teenager at the time, Chotzinoff admitted that he was not privy to his parents' discussions. Instead, he managed to piece together knowledge of their decision to migrate from overhearing their frequent conversations. Despite noting that his father's second cousin had previously migrated to the United States for financial betterment, Chotzinoff was adamant that this was not his family's case. Rather, they left Russia due to his father's desire to spare him and his brothers from being conscripted into military service. Such a fate would in his father's eyes, be harmful to their piety, with military service disrupting Jewish ritual life.[16]

The details of this narrative can be queried. Whilst the fear of military conscription is present in most memoirs of the children of Jewish immigrants, research has revealed that statistically, Jews were unlikely to be conscripted. During flashpoints, such as the Russo-Turkish or Russo-Japanese war, concentrated efforts were made to conscript all eligible. But outside of these periods the Russian army was shambolic, with recruitment officers corruptible and military service

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[14] Perhaps even more notable is Willy Goldman's 1947 memoir, *East End My Cradle*, which simply does not comment on the motivations of his parents' migration to London at all. His memoir detailed the hard life of growing up in the East End as a working-class Jew, and Goldman saw no value in explaining the presence of his family in the East End. This silence is revealing, suggesting that Goldman felt that he did not have to explain himself, and sets the tone for a confrontational account. See: Willy Goldman, *East End My Cradle: Portrait of an Environment* (London: Art & Educational, 1947).

[15] Phillip L. Miller, 'Chotzinoff, Samuel.' *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41521> [accessed 19/10/2015].

[16] Samuel Chotzinoff, *A Lost Paradise: Early Reminiscences* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956), p. 38.

easily avoided by bribery.[17] To be conscripted outside of these times, it has been asserted that one either had to be very stupid, or very poor. Such conclusions have been supported by Derek Penslar's study *Jews and the Military.* Penslar's work intends to rescue the history of the diaspora Jewish soldier from the historical margins, with modern Jewish history neglecting the plight of this soldier by deeming it as inconsequential, preferring rather to focus upon Israel's military struggle for independence.[18] Consequently, Russian and Polish Jewry's recollections of military experiences under the Tsar are overwhelmed by narratives of desperate escapes to avoid service. Absent are positive accounts, with myths of twenty-five years of harsh military service for Russian Jewry being embedded in popular memory, despite growing contrary evidence.[19]

Whilst popular memory remains rooted in tales of misery, research has revealed that life for Jews in Russian military service was not necessarily so repressive, suggesting that the fears of Chotzinoff's father were either misplaced, or distorted. There was no policy of coerced conversion, and from the 1870s Jewish communities were permitted to donate Torah scrolls to military camps and assist in building soldiers' synagogues. Furthermore, whilst Jewish soldiers were required to attend daily prayers and church services, they were allowed exemption from certain types of work on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays.[20] Notions of Jewish sons needing to flee Russia to remain true to their faith are overstated, rooted in representations of Russia as an archaic and backward nation.[21] And even whilst it is true that some Jews felt compelled to abandon their homeland to avoid military service, official reports compiled by the Russian government suggest this was a minority. About a fifth of Jews of age were selected by lottery for

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[17] David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, *Patterns of Migration 1850-1914: Proceedings of the International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England in association with the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996), p. 250.

[18] Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 2.

[19] Yohanan Petrovksy-Shtern sought to expose and challenge such myths in *Jews in the Russian Army: 1827-1917*. In the book, he reveals the enlightened tendencies of both the Russian army and Nicholas I in seeking to use the military to both Russify and absorb the Jewish minority into society. Unfortunately, such measures were blocked by the counter-reforms of the 1880s, spearheaded by the reactionary Alexander III. However, popular myths of Jewish suffering and persecution under the Tsars has led to 'life imitating literature', with keen memoirists accepting such myths at face value and incorporating them into their own accounts. This has further entrenched the representation into popular memory. For a more detailed outline of the formation of this popular myth, see; Yohanan Petrovksy-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827-1917: Drafted into Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1-23.

[20] Penslar, p. 30.

[21] Such tales caught the imagination of the liberal British press during the great immigration, with most newspapers quick to condemn the 'barbarianism' which Russian Jewry were subjected to, especially during periods of pogroms and violence. Some were quick to make hasty and passionate judgements against Russia without corroborating the story, leading to counter-arguments from Russian apologists about inherent British Russophobia. See: Greg Smart, From Persecution to Mass Migration: The 'Alien' in Popular Print and Society, 1881-1906, unpublished PhD Thesis (University of Southampton, 2008), pp. 94-97.

service, and the majority reported to recruitment centres. Cases of draft evasion were typically the result of bureaucratic error. With many Jews frequently registered in official records under multiple names – Hebrew, Yiddish and a Russian equivalent – the already chaotic bureaucracy of the Russian military created false instances of draft evasion.[22]

It is noteworthy, therefore, that despite the common wisdom of Russian military officials being easily corruptible, many Jewish accounts detailed military conscription as a cause for immigration. Brodetsky's *Memoirs: From Ghetto to Israel* (1960) told a similar tale to Chotzinoff. Brodetsky's family emigrated in 1893, settling in London's East End. Brodestky's life was highly successful, with his family's early struggles contrasting with his academic achievements which saw him win a mathematical scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1905. Further success soon followed with Brodetsky pursuing a career which was divided between academic work and public service. In 1940 he was elected president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which has been regarded as an iconic success story for immigrant Jewry in Britain, and to symbolise the passing of the torch of communal leadership from established families such as the Rothschilds, to the children of Eastern European immigrant Jews.[23]

Brodetsky followed the convention of presenting Jewish life in Eastern Europe as an overwhelmingly negative experience. Whilst the spectre of conscription is not ever-present, his memoirs framed violent anti-Semitic persecution and the potential outbreak of pogroms as intolerable burdens for Russian Jewry. Although not stated outright that they were the cause for his family's migration, Brodetsky made it apparent that the desire for liberty and safety prompted them to migrate to England.[24] Such sentiments are echoed in the contemporary words of John Alexander Dyche, who settled in the United States in 1900 after fourteen years in England as a trade union organiser. Dyche claimed that it was not personal, political or religious persecution which caused him to migrate to Leeds, but the continual news of fresh persecution and attacks on Jews, alongside the lack of opportunities.[25] Such accounts portray a continual sense of uncertainty as the cause for many Jews to leave their homes in Eastern Europe, seeking refuge in the west.

Brodetsky's memoirs outlined a desperate escape in 1894. This is even though his father, Akiva, safely departed a year prior to settle in London and establish a home for the family. This was a common practice among Jewish migrants who carefully planned their family's migration by having the husband travel first and establish themselves in the new country, before sending for

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[22] Penslar, pp. 30-31.
[23] Leon Mestel, 'Brodetsky, Selig (1888–1954)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32081> [accessed 06/03/2015].
[24] Selig Brodetsky, *Memoirs: From Ghetto to Israel* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1960), pp. 16-17.
[25] J.A. Dyche, 'The Jewish Workman', *Contemporary Review*, LXIII (1898), p. 50.

their wife and children.[26] In Brodetsky's narrative, his father migrated out of concerns for his family's safety, before sending for his wife, Adel, and their four children. It was only the corruption or kindness of a Tsarist police official which allowed them to follow. After being discovered whilst waiting to cross the border, Adel managed to convince the official that it would be foolish to send her back to Olivopol with her four little children.[27] Just what was said will remain unknown, but such an incidence can be seen to be a remarkable case of either police corruption, or humanity and mercy from the officer (if this incident happened at all). Regardless, what is notable is the heroic role which it created for Adel, a common strand in the memory culture of immigrant Jewry of the position of Jewish mothers. For the historian, it is intriguing that Brodetsky emphasised an 'escape' narrative for his family's migration. The split, staged nature of their migration appears more akin to conventional economic migration, rather than a desperate escape.

The final memoir from a 'notable' figure, is that of Bud Flanagan. It featured an even more dramatic tale of his parents' migration. *My Crazy Life So Far* (1961) is an account dedicated to Flanagan's exploits as a flourishing entertainer, with his Jewish past often being more of a side note, as opposed to defining feature. Nevertheless, he opened the first chapter with the remarkable tale of his parents' migration. No dates are given, but Flanagan narrated a frantic escape by his parents, Wolf and Yetta, on their wedding day in the small down of Radom in Poland, a place which he asserted was famous for two things: 'its chairmaking and its pogroms'.[28] During the ceremony news of a pogrom broke and the pair desperately rushed away in their wedding attire to Wolf's uncle in Lodz.

There, they approached a shipping agent who charged them £2 10s for a fare to New York – almost all their savings – only to soon discover that they had been duped. Instead they received a ticket for London.[29] It was his discovery of the cruel circumstances which had been thrust upon his parents which inspired Flanagan in 1910, aged just fourteen, to complete their journey. Leaving the family home in Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, he stated in his memoir that he walked to Southampton, where he gained employment on the *SS Majestic*, from which he then jumped ship in New York. Reviews noted that Flanagan's writing style was infectious, with his passion for his life 'from cradle to O.B.E.' being told 'with a natural enthusiasm which is irresistible'.[30] This

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[26] Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914, Third Edition* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), p. 45.
[27] Brodetsky, p. 16.
[28] Bud Flanagan, *My Crazy Life: The Autobiography of Bud Flanagan* (London: Frederick Muller, 1961), p. 17.
[29] Ibid., p. 19.
[30] *Jewish Chronicle*, October 20, 1961.

natural flair for writing makes one query the lines between myth and reality present within the text, with events seemingly embellished to tell a good story.

From the three assessed memoirs of 'notable' individuals, there evidently are similar tropes employed when representing the origins of their family's migration. Authors such as Brodetsky, in a similar vein the American generational model, were keen to cultivate the image of a close escape from intolerable persecution. It was the realisation of an avoided fate, coupled with the joy and successes which he enjoyed in England, which prompted Brodetsky to fervently praise his adopted nation. Whilst there are elements of truth in terms of the palpable fear and risk involved, such tales are essentially narratives constructed after the event. The Jewish economic structure in Russia was unbalanced, being heavily dependent on petty trade, whilst Jews were kept out of new economic ventures. Life expectancy in the Pale of Settlement was low, with the 1897 Russian census showing that no more than 5.3 per cent of Jews reached the age of 60. Recognising this, from 1882 the Russian government unofficially allowed the departure of millions who quietly crossed the borders.[31] Such realities contradict the heroic escape narratives of the Brodetsky and Flanagan families, tales which helped to classify immigrant Jews as refugees, and not economic migrants.

By contrast the memoirs of those 'ordinary' individuals who either remained within the immigrant quarter of the Jewish East End, or did not necessarily become famous public figures, challenge these migration myths. The closest to the conventional tales of daring escape comes from Edward Good, who was born in Poland. He first arrived in the East End in 1903 and after four years as a watchmaker returned to Poland. It was not for long, however, and he returned to London, this time to trade in antique watches and cameo brooches from his newly-established shop, Cameo Corner in Museum Street, Bloomsbury. There his business bloomed and attracted distinguished clientele such as Queen Mary. Under the Yiddish pen name Moshe Oved he wrote several books, with *Visions and Jewels* (1952) being a memorable autobiography for containing both reminisces of his life, and imaginative tales.[32] Good's memoirs are highly self-aggrandising, telling a 'rags to riches' tale of a poor boy from Poland who seized his chance to run away with his friend to England in pursuit of a better life. A dramatic first escape is detailed where they bribe a German police official to board the ship to England, before Good leads a life of charm and good luck for four years, bouncing from job to job and refining his craft as a watchmaker.

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[31] Lloyd P. Gartner, *American and British Jews in the Age of the Great Migration* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 23.

[32] William D. Rubinstein, 'Good, Edward', in William D. Rubinstein, Michael Jolles and Hilary Rubinstein (eds.), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 352-353.

Homesick and lonely, he briefly returned home in 1907. However, the threat of military conscription soon loomed and forced Good to make a hasty return to England. His plan of bribing the military doctor was foiled when a new man was brought in on the eve of inspection, and Good was pronounced medically fit.[33] Consequently he initiated a second daring escape, being smuggled across the border in a cart which contained raw leather hides, which he hid beneath whilst the cart crossed the Polish-German border. The inspection at the border was briefly detailed by Good and appears to have been far from thorough. Stopped at the border, the Jewish driver of the cart was asked by a Russian soldier if he was smuggling anything. The driver simply replied, 'No. Nothing.' And then was told to drive on.[34] Considering all the horror tales of bribery and desperate escapes from Tsarist Russia, it is a surprise therefore that someone as seemingly self-aggrandising as Good downplayed this seemingly crucial element in his tale of his second escape from Tsarist Russia.

It is noteworthy that all the discussed memoirs have represented Jewish migration from Eastern Europe to be remarkable stories of escape. But the recently published manuscript of Jack Bourne offers a startlingly different narrative, and one closer to the pattern of economic migration. Written in 1944, Bourne's *A Jewish Childhood* (2005) remained unpublished until his son uncovered the unfinished manuscript nearly 60 years later.[35] Bourne's memoirs are of great use to the historian, describing in vibrant detail a world of Eastern European Jewry which is sadly lost. Born in 1893, Bourne's father vanished suddenly in 1905, not saying a word to the family and leaving his mother with just a few roubles to care for them. A fortnight later Bourne's mother received a letter from his father explaining his disappearance. Having arrived in London, he had taken 500 roubles with him to establish for them a new home, recognising that his business venture of running a factory making boots for the Russian military was failing.[36]

What follows is a long tale of migration from Warsaw to London, with Bourne's mother admirably leading her children through an exhausting journey. After crossing the Polish-German border by deception, the family slowly travelled between Berlin, Cologne, Aachen, Rotterdam and then finally, London, using the local Jewish emigration aid boards. A long, arduous, but civilised journey is described, with the family being treated with brisk and at times cold efficiency by the

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[33] Moshe Oved, *Visions and Jewels: Autobiographic in three parts* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952), pp. 48-49.

[34] Ibid., p. 50.

[35] Sandy Bourne, 'Preface', in Jack Bourne, *A Jewish Childhood, 1893-1911: From Tsarist Poland to London's East End* (London: Tree Press, 2005).

[36] Jack Bourne, *A Jewish Childhood, 1893-1911: From Tsarist Poland to London's East End* (London: Tree Press, 2005), pp. 55-56.

boards. In fact, the journey was so draining that Bourne recalled that upon first setting gaze upon the chimneys of London he felt a spate of depression, with the city appearing 'dull and drab.'[37]

Considering the context within which these memoirs were created, the position of the authors in society is significant. The 'notable' figures of Brodetsky, Flanagan and Chotzinoff seemingly embraced the Jewish migration myth, mirroring the wider trends within the American generational model. Whether intentional, the result of misinformation, or wholly accurate, these authors all subscribed to the triumvirate of conscription, anti-Semitism and pogroms as being the prime cause for both their, and general Jewish migration. Yet such narrative commonalities have been revealed to be based in myth. Facing an increasingly hostile social and political landscape in Britain, immigrant Jewry between 1880 and 1914 found it advantageous to be recognised as refugees fleeing intolerable situations, as opposed to economic migrants. Indeed, the benefits of such a status was formally recognised by the Aliens Act, with a clause added to the final Act which automatically granted asylum to those fleeing from religious or political persecution.[38]

The social questions of the late 1880s led to many explorations of London's own impoverished classes. Consequently, the prospect of pauperised Jewish economic migrants seeking a home in the crowded districts of East London generated much concern and hostility, with many fearing their presence would lead to an increased social burden for society to bear.[39] Considering this, the first generation of immigrants were keen to stress that they were refugees as opposed to migrants: an image which their children sought to maintain against the rising xenophobic intolerance of the 1930s and 1940s. Against this increasing hostility they confidently asserted their identity as English citizens, having been born or raised in this country. Henceforth, the myths of origin for immigrant Jewry were created. The community's utilisation of this myth and its repetition eventually led to it being accepted as actuality, embedded in the very identity of modern British Jewry.[40]

The examination of Jewish testimony created in the years following the Second World War thus reveals the vital role of the author's sense of identity in their treatment of not only their family origins, but also the very presence of Jews of Eastern European origin in Britain. As Brodetsky's narrative showcased, an almost hesitant and defensive sense can momentarily be

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[37] Ibid., p. 78.

[38] Bernard Gainer, *The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1972), p. 196.

[39] David Feldman, 'The Importance of being English: Jewish immigration and the decay of liberal England', in David Feldman and Gareth Steadman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis – London: Histories and Representations Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 64.

[40] Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins', p. 252.

found within his treatment of his family origins, with the general Eastern European Jewish presence in Britain being justified and framed, as the result of persecution across the channel in Europe. It was the liberal and tolerant shores of especially England (an image English society itself fondly cultivated) which offered these persecuted Jews not only a haven, but also previously undreamt-of opportunities. Brodetsky mused that all of immigrant Jewry were grateful for the liberty which they enjoyed in England and were eager to both embrace 'Englishness' and contribute to society: something which in Brodetsky's own case, had been achieved with some aplomb.[41]

Furthermore, it was the very sense of embracing Englishness (or in Chotzinoff's case, Americanism) as an identity which inspired these 'notable' accounts to both foster and embrace the myths of Jewish origin as a cornerstone in the creation of their personal identities. Of significant importance to these identities was the simplification of the past into a streamlined, easily digestible narrative. It is this process of simplification which caused many historians to overlook memory as a viable historical source, with the often singular, narrow and predestined focus of such narratives leaving them free of any ambiguities which would detract from the memory's flow.[42] It is this sanitisation of memory which creates popular myths, narratives which are loosely based upon historical fact.

The memoirs examined in this section reveal that these myths of origins were not absolute amongst the children of immigrant Jewry, those who created the second generation of memory regarding the experience of immigrant Jews in Britain. Whilst the 'notable' accounts were keen to justify, however briefly, the Jewish presence in Britain and accordingly follow the predefined model, those authored by less publicly recognised figures do not. As marginalised individuals, their voices were not heard by the mainstream of society. Thus, they were either unafraid to challenge the accepted narrative, or not privy to it. Of further interest is the very identities of these authors. Of the two that comment upon their origins, their identities as integrated 'Englishmen' are far less secure.

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[41] In his brief discussion of anti-Semitism in British Society before 1940, David Cesarani mused upon the contradictions within Britain's open-door policy. Far from an expression of the selfless and truly 'liberal' attitudes of society towards both prospective immigrants and refugees, it was a policy partly born of Britain's dislike of foreigners. To prove British moral and political superiority over competing European powers, the nation extended sympathy towards those departing their shores. By acting with dignity and compassion towards immigrants and foreigners, Britain accordingly was seeking to besmirch her imperial rivals. See: David Cesarani, 'An Alien Concept? The Continuity of Anti-Alienism in British Society Before 1940', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (November, 1992), pp. 25-47.
[42] Nils Roemer, 'Memory', in Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman (eds.), *Routledge Handbook to Contemporary Jewish Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 167-168.

The eccentric Good employed a dramatic escape chronicle as part of a good story but admitted that his motivations for travelling to London in the first place were economic. Similarly, Bourne's family relocated to London following his father's seemingly unplanned but economically motivated migration. Indeed, this narrative broadly fits with the academic research which recognises the great Jewish immigration, in the words of Eugene Black, as being 'rational economic choice accelerated by irrational politics'.[43] Neither account though, strives to emphasise their 'Englishness', nor feels pressured to justify their presence within society. It is curious therefore that the memory culture created following the 'memory boom' came to accept the earlier escape narratives of 'notable' figures at face value, immortalising the myth in personal and historical accounts. As this chapter will explore, it is not only within this facet of the Jewish immigrant experience where the lines between myth and actuality have been blurred.

II) Family and Home

As with tales of origin, the daily life of the Jewish family has been enshrined in myth. Nostalgic images remember a warm, supportive and nurturing environment, protecting young Jews from hostile external forces.[44] Consequently, certain tropes are common in recollections of immigrant Jewish families in Britain. At the centre stands the 'Yiddishe Mama', a strong and self-sacrificing woman who put the needs of her children, husband and home above her own. By contrast, the father figure is more divisive. Often a peerless orthodox Jew, he struggled to support his family by labouring at the sweatshop, whilst somehow continuing to devoutly observe the Sabbath and religious traditions. However, the memoirs created prior to the 'memory boom' reveal that personal experiences colour whether these characteristics were regarded as positive, or detrimental to family life. By once more separating the memoirs into the noted categories, this study reveals the formation of popular myths surrounding the working-class Jewish family of Eastern European descent, whilst the marginalised voices offer dissenting versions of the family.

The positive, romanticised representations are not merely the nostalgic creations of people remembering their youth. Outside Jewish and non-Jewish contemporaries during the period of great Jewish immigration were also quick to lavish praise on the immigrant Jewish home. Whilst Gartner's *The Jewish Immigrant in England* was keen to note that it is troublesome to generalise upon the character of domestic relations, he still proposed that the observation made by the communal worker Harry S. Lewis in 1900 to be most apt, revealing the extent of how ingrained these images are:

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[43] Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 4.
[44] Paula E. Hyman, 'Introduction: Perspectives on the Evolving Jewish Family', in Steven M. Cohen and Paula E. Hyman (eds.), *The Jewish Family: Myths and Reality* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), p. 3.

The conjugal relations of the foreign Jews present some difficult problems, but they must be pronounced to be generally satisfactory. The Jew is a born critic, and he seldom finds fault with his wife, and he is, as a rule, blessed with domestic happiness. The Jewish husband spends most of his leisure at home, and, possibly owing to this fact, his wife's advice and influence count for much with him.[45]

Considering the hostility towards 'aliens', it is significant to note that Anglo-Jewish commentators were eager to stress such positive images. The immigrant Jew was characterised to be family-orientated, leading a peaceful and law-abiding life. Such representations ran contrary to the criticisms of anti-alienists, who warned that the assimilation of Jews and 'aliens' would harm society. A pertinent example would be the words of William Ward, the Earl of Dudley. In an 1898 discussion of the Aliens Bill in the House of Lords, he warned intermarriage and absorption of foreign Jews would lower the 'whole moral and social standard of the population and those districts in which they settle'.[46] In the defensive Anglo-Jewish model of history, such subversive tales are overlooked in favour of mythical conceptions of the Jewish family. It is a myth which has become so ingrained that renegade stories of Jewish criminality have been marginalised, although this is in part due to the limitations of sources.[47]

The familiar representation of the close-knitted, immigrant family surviving in tough conditions is present in the early part of Brodetsky's memoirs. Before his family were fortunate enough to generate more substantial funds through his father's lottery ticket sales, Brodetsky recalled they lived in a selection of small rooms throughout the East End.[48] His memoir depicted crowded conditions prevailing throughout his early life, especially in their first East End home. Merely a simple small room in a house just off Brick Lane in Whitechapel, it functioned as the family's living room, kitchen and bedroom. As with other poor families in the East End, they had

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[45] Charles Russell and Harry S. Lewis, *The Jew in London: A Study of Racial Character and Present-Day Conditions* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900), p. 186; and Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 167.
[46] Earl of Dudley, *Hansard* 4S H, (58) 274, 23 May 1898. For comment, see Juliet Steyn, *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 66.
[47] Colin Holmes, 'East End Crime and the Jewish Community, 1887-1911', in Aubrey Newman (ed.), *The Jewish East End, 1840-1939: Proceedings of the conference held on 22 October 1980 jointly by the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Jewish East End Project of the Association for Jewish Youth* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1981), p. 118.
[48] Since Akiva Brodetsky did not arrive in England until 1894, the Census records do not indicate where the family initially stayed. Indeed, his father's first entry in the Census comes in 1901, when the family had achieved some measure of success and managed to move to 42 Dunk Street, Mile End New Town. The house was remembered by Brodetsky to be spacious, consisting of six rooms, but still with no bathroom. In fact, it was too spacious for the family of eleven. Despite having seven children, Brodetsky recalled they did not need the whole house to themselves, so his father rented the top floor out to a tenant. The 1901 Census indicates it was let to a Mr Cohen, who along with his wife and sister, occupied the floor with two children. See: *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, RG 13/303*, Kew, Surrey, The National Archives of the UK, 1901.

no access to a bathroom until they were wealthy enough to pay to use the public baths, which cost twopence.[49] Regardless of these challenging conditions, there is no overarching impression of crippling poverty cultivated by Brodetsky. He was eager to present his parents in positive terms:

> I remember that even later, when we were 'rich', our house-keeping was at the rate of sixpence a head per week for food and other small outgoings. In the days of our poverty it must have been much less. Yet we were never hungry or ragged. There were no school meals in those days, and we went home for every meal; but at the Jews' Free School we got a glass of milk every morning.[50]

In Brodetsky's narrative the combined hard work of his parents provided a warm and comforting home. Indeed, one can see present in this account the early stages of the Jewish immigrant settlement myth which has romanticised subsequent images of the era: that of a determined and united family rising above the impoverished conditions of the time, whilst providing the platform for their children to move into society's middle-classes. Nonetheless, such images are not universal. For instance, whilst Chotzinoff's memoirs follow a similar framework to Brodetsky – that of an immigrant son integrating and becoming successful in a new society – it is only his mother who emerges as the central and heroic figure, who drove her family to safety.

After being duped into purchasing tickets to London as opposed to New York, the Chotzinoff's were left penniless and reliant on organised Jewish charitable aid. Chotzinoff's father is portrayed in the memoirs as offering little of value to the family, other than a vague assertion that his Aunt Rivka's son-in-law's brother left their hometown of Vitebsk some 25 years ago and may have travelled to London.[51] What follows is a remarkable tale of his mother's persistence and determination. Whilst his father was more concerned with upholding his piety and attending synagogue three times a day, Chotzinoff's mother worked endlessly to support the family by shopping, cooking, scrubbing and washing. In what little spare time she had, she was on the streets asking passers-by about a relative called Horowitz, who immigrated some time ago to the district. And by luck after some six weeks of searching, she came upon the man she was looking for. No longer calling himself Horowitz, he had anglicised his name to Harris. Upon learning of their identity and the extent of her hunt to find him, Harris took the family into his home, delighted to have been provided with a set of kinsfolk.[52]

Chotzinoff's narrative is but one exceptional account of the strength of the immigrant Jewish mother, a trope which has been entrenched into popular memory. It also is notable for

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[49] Brodetsky, p. 26.
[50] Ibid., p. 32.
[51] Chotzinoff, p. 46.
[52] Ibid., pp. 50-52.

emphasising the religiosity of his father. In many reminiscences, such expressions of piety were celebrated. For Chotzinoff this was not the case. His memoirs were noted at their publication to be damning of his Jewish heritage. A contemporary review observed that all the familiar patterns of 'immigrant life' from the period emerged in his writing, with a warm, resourceful and loving mother, being set against a reserved and aloof father, concerned only with orthodoxy and authoritarian discipline. It was such attitudes which drove Chotzinoff away from Jewish values, with the cold and 'artistically insensitive' nature of his father instilling a rebellious and ambivalent nature in his son towards Jewish learning.[53] Regardless, it is significant that both Brodetsky and Chotzinoff shared similar sentiments of their future successes as being keenly inspired by the determination and support of their mothers. As with the American generational model, it was their mother's passionate desire to succeed in the new world which inspired self-sacrifice on behalf of their children, to embrace the opportunities which Britain and America provided.

Such images are not absolute within the examined record of materials created following the Second World War. Indeed, cracks in the universal myth of the Jewish family can be found to be fully exposed by the writings of Willy Goldman. The earliest memoir examined, *East End My Cradle* offers a highly confrontational image of the Jewish East End and its community. Whereas one can assert that the motivations behind the memoirs of Brodetsky and Chotzinoff were of recounting their successful life stories, Goldman's were political and ideological. Part of a small group of proletarian writers who emerged during the 1930s, Goldman was encouraged by left-wing literary operators to showcase the marginalised, socialist aspect of the Jewish experience. First published in 1940 by Faber & Faber, the book detailed the hardships of Jewish working-class life, an impoverished and tough existence, with men at the mercy of sweatshop bosses and the fluctuations of the garment industry.[54]

Of the array of proletarian literature which was published during the 1940s, *East End My Cradle* is one of the few to survive in print. Furthermore, it is often considered to be the most successful attempt to capture the 'essence' of the period in writing, as it was happening.[55] In his survey of leftist popular writing, Ken Worpole praised the narrative thrust of Goldman's writing. As an aspiring author, *East End My Cradle* revealed Goldman's sense of alienation from the pressures of family and community, who expected him to conform to tradition. It is the journey from ghetto to published author which the memoir tells, framed around the clash between a

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[53] Hilda Pinson, 'Review of Chotzinoff, Samuel, *A Lost Paradise*. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. 1955. Pp. 373', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (October, 1955), p. 354.
[54] Valentine Cunningham, 'Obituary, Willy Goldman', *The Guardian*, 6 July 2009 <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jul/06/obituary-willy-goldman> [accessed 21/10/2015].
[55] Ken Worpole, *Dockers and Detectives: Popular Reading: Popular Writing* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 102.

budding chronicler and the culture he was rejecting, by standing outside and capturing its intricacies for a wider audience.[56]

The conscious effort to capture the cultural and political clash of his upbringing and contemporary period is ever-present in Goldman's narrative. Whilst this means he avoided the romanticisms of later memoirs, there is subsequently a highly confrontational tone which seeks to represent the Jewish East End as a barren land of creative culture. Any creativity was stifled for the needs of sweaters and workshops. This is best symbolised by the tragic tale of his boyhood friend Wise, whose family in the latter part of the memoir denounce him and his ambitions to become a painter. Without any support, Wise was unable to afford his tuition fees and soon was found broken on the streets, where he passed away suffering from mania and exhaustion within a year.[57] Considering such depictions of reality, there is a clear desire in Goldman's writings to denounce the Jewish East End, and both religious culture and capitalism. By revealing these ugly truths, Goldman hoped to stir the reader into feelings of disgust and sadness, and perhaps inspire a socialist worldview of the community. Indeed, these negative sentiments towards the Jewish East End never subsided and prevailed throughout Goldman's life, as noted by Cesarani in a 1998 interview with the author.[58]

Most strikingly, Goldman portrayed his parents in a pathetic light as the victims of the sweatshop system which he abhorred. Living initially with his parents and widowed grandfather, Goldman depicted his home life as being typical of the Jewish East Ender, orthodoxy without passion. He was not what Jewish parents called a 'good son'. He refused to speak to his parents in Yiddish, instead making them muster what little English they could to communicate with him. And even worse; following his *bar mitzvah* he stopped accompanying them and his grandfather to their local synagogue in Brick Lane on the Sabbath. This was much to his grandfather's chagrin, who denounced him as a 'Yiddisher Goy!'[59] Interestingly Goldman stressed that he was not alone in this, with his youthful contemporaries equally shunning Yiddish and religious custom by the 1920s. Subsequently, Goldman portrayed the youthful, second generation of East End Jewry as

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[56] Ibid., pp. 103-104.
[57] Ibid., p. 104.
[58] In an interview for the *Jewish Quarterly*, Cesarani noted how Goldman's worldview had always been pessimistic, even from an early age. Goldman himself stated that he was always looking for the 'maggot in the apple' when it came to life. In the introduction to the article Cesarani described how Goldman was 'unquestionably shaped by the immigrant experience', but that for Goldman, this was far from a positive occurrence. Rather, Goldman's memories of his family life, the closed-mindedness of the Jewish East End 'community', and the oppressive nature of the workshop trades still evoked deep-rooted feelings of 'anger and bitterness'. See: David Cesarani, 'Willy Goldman: Looking for "The Maggot in the Apple", interviewed by David Cesarani', *The Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (Winter, 1988-9), pp. 23-25.
[59] Goldman, p. 12.

turning their back upon the 'old world' customs of their parents, instead seeking to embrace English secular culture.

Such a portrayal of family life clashes significantly with Brodetsky's narrative. Brodetsky was born before Goldman, and recollected Yiddish being his mother tongue and happily conversing with his parents in it. Whilst his narrative too emphasised the anglicisation of East End Jewry, it takes a far more gradual and accommodating form in his account. For Brodetsky, his 'ghetto life' was surrounded by the dominant national culture, in which he and many other Jewish children spoke gradually improving English amongst themselves but retained Yiddish to speak to their parents and friends.[60] Perhaps crucially, there is a decade of difference between the memories. It is possible that within this time the youth of the East End transformed from the tolerant and transitional generation of Brodetsky, to the confrontational and challenging youths like Goldman. But perhaps a more pertinent explanation comes from their differing political attitudes. Brodetsky was an English Zionist and Anglo-Jewish communal leader, whilst Goldman was a socialist who rejected the Jewish world of his youth. It is not surprising that they generate vastly differing representations of the lives of immigrant Jewry.

Regardless, Goldman still echoed to an extent the trope of the strong Jewish mother, who was the dominant force in the family. Accordingly, Goldman reserved special criticism for his father's failings, such as revealing a scathing view of his inability to adapt not just to English culture, but also English dress. Goldman's father is portrayed as a simplistic buffoon. Since coming to England, he could not get over the wonder that was a pair of trousers, which along with caps were the only articles of clothing he could be persuaded to replenish. A shirt was only worn as a gesture to society, something which caused both Goldman and his mother great grief.[61]

A similar tale of internal familial struggle comes from Bourne's memoirs. As with Goldman, Bourne's account can be characterised to be that of a marginalised voice. Henceforth, there are no personal benefits to be reaped by cultivating the burgeoning narrative of the warmth and supportive nature of immigrant Jewish families in Britain. Whether he intended his memoirs to be published is unknown, but what his son released contains a powerful description of the hardship which families endured. Bourne provided many details of his two-year stay, with his family of five renting a room in a house in Samuel Street, at 7 shillings a week. He noted that his mother was extremely unhappy and sorry that she had come to London. Here, she was a stranger

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[60] Brodetsky, p. 30.
[61] Goldman, p. 142.

with no friends or family, could not speak the language, and lived on the edge of poverty, with her husband struggling to find steady and reliable employment.[62]

Indeed, Bourne's account is notable for the attention he provided on the death of his sister, Anne (or Chaya, as she was known before migration). After catching a cold she was laid up with a high temperature for a few days. Without the money to pay for a doctor to visit, a neighbour advised the family to approach the parish doctor. His visit was brief: with great urgency he had Chaya moved to London Hospital, where it was revealed that she was suffering with pneumonia. She remained there for seven months, until she passed away:

> My mother took my sister's death terribly to heart. My father was also badly shaken but he tried to bear up. During the seven days of traditional mourning we had many visits. According to Jewish custom people come to console you and they often bring food, fruit and all sorts of other things. So, in that week, we were not short of anything, but my mother didn't leave off weeping. All this was the final blow to her misery in London.[63]

Such tales of infant mortality were not uncommon. It remains, however, that the romanticised images of the success of Eastern European immigrant Jewry in Britain have seen such incidents often overlooked or forgotten. This is partly because amongst Jewish populations in Britain the levels of infant mortality were comparatively lower than that of the native working classes, but still relatively common. In recognition of these statistics, the Jewish mother became regarded as a model to others.[64] Subsequently, tales of infant mortality regarding the Jewish immigrant experience have often been made peripheral to the main narrative. Unfortunate tales of poverty and hardship being insurmountable for some families simply does not fit with images cultivated by successful individuals, such as Brodetsky and Chotzinoff: that of a resourceful mother providing her children with the platform to succeed.

As with tales of origin, the self-defined identity of the authors is significant regarding how their experience of family and home are represented. At a crude level the identity of the 'notable' memoirs examined, is that of an anglicised (or Americanised) Jew, fully integrated into society. These tales of success require solid foundations and accordingly both Brodetsky and Chotzinoff emphasised the key role that their mothers played upon setting them on the right path. Such narrative tropes are commonplace within representations of the general Jewish immigrant experience of both the Jewish East End and the Lower East Side, the main sites of Jewish memory

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[62] Jack Bourne, p. 86.

[63] Ibid., p. 101.

[64] Lara Marks, 'Carers and Servers of the Jewish Community: The Marginalised Heritage of Jewish Women in Britain', in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 107.

in their respective nations. Central to these narratives are Jewish mothers, with powerful images of the strength and resolve of Jewish women in caring for their family and providing the opportunities for their children to succeed, being at the core of many stories of Jewish assimilation.[65] The foothold of this image in popular memory will be further explored in Chapter Three. Indeed, both accounts originate from highly successful individuals, and only tentatively engage with the realities of poverty and hardship. Consequently, the tough conditions for immigrant Jewry and their children are largely glossed over or only briefly hinted at, but nevertheless portrayed to be surmountable by 'good' Jewish families who adapted to society's expectations.

Once more these are highly simplified narratives. More detail can be found within the more 'marginalised' memoirs. Goldman's memoirs for instance, is detailed with many intricacies about his family home and their relationships, whilst Bourne's memoirs offer insight into a highly polarised version of the Jewish mother. Perhaps key to these revelations is that both Brodetsky and Chotzinoff, on a comparative level only fleetingly existed in this world of hardship before pursuing their path to success. The counter-narratives found within Goldman's and Bourne's narratives, however, are specifically framed around hardship. Goldman's socialist-inspired writing sought to illuminate the ugly truths of the Jewish East End and the lives of his exploited working-class brethren, a stance informed by his politically inspired identity as a working-class Englishman. Accordingly, this was not a story of immigrant Jewry, but rather of socialism in the East End Jewish community. The motivations behind Bourne's account are less apparent, with his unpublished manuscript being found years later. Whether this was a personal project or intended for wider consumption accordingly cannot be known, but it provides depth lacking elsewhere, with his narrative outlining how his family departed London after a challenging first attempt at settlement.[66]

The identity of these authors accordingly is key in terms of how the immigrant Jewish family has been represented. Whilst the marginal voices have their own motivations which shape

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[65] In the American context of the Lower East Side, Hasia R. Diner noted how the area has been remembered by American Jewry as a site of rebirth, with Jewish sons and daughters seizing upon the opportunities afforded to them by self-sacrificing parents to move into society as doctors, lawyers etc. See: Hasia R. Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), Chapter One: The Lower East Side and American Memory.

[66] In a footnote, his son Sandy described his father's first stay in London as a 'venture', which lasted from the spring of 1905 to early 1907. Sandy recalled how his father later sadly described this time as a period of poverty and a succession of failures, which ultimately resulted in the death of his younger sister, 'a catastrophe about which he felt unable to express himself'. Despite this anguish, Jack, who would have been aged 14 at the time, still resolved that London was where he wished to live. And so, at his first opportunity as a young man, Jack returned to London in 1911. See: Sandy Bourne, 'Afterword', Jack Bourne, *A Jewish Childhood, 1893-1911: From Tsarist Poland to London's East End* (London: Tree Press, 2005).

their engagement with the family home, the 'notable' figures are to put it bluntly, more concerned with 'how I got from there to here'. In recognition of the tensions within English society following the Commonwealth migration, Brodetsky for example was keen to represent the best possible versions of himself and his family. His memoirs accordingly depict them as model citizens of both Jewishness and Englishness, safely reconciling both identities into a modern conception of Anglo-Jewry. Indeed, one can recognise the cornerstones of contemporary myths within this narrative, with the subsequent generation of memory created by the 'memory boom' following this example (partly due to their less impoverished experience) when seeking to preserve their past and engage with community history.

The representations found prior to the 'memory boom' consequently are not homogeneous. Whilst the 'notable' accounts can be recognised to follow similar tropes to the American generational model, the existence of counter-narratives reveal that simplified images of immigrant Jewish family life in Britain are deceptive. From these narratives, personal tales of dissent, hardship and tragedy reveal the darker side of life experienced by immigrant Jewry and their children. Facets which have been to an extent, whitewashed out of popular memory by the prevalent romanticised depictions of the strong Jewish home and community as one of the defining features of the Jewish experience. These marginalised narratives are pertinent reminders that there is not one, all-encompassing 'experience', but rather different, personalised experiences which share commonalities. Narratives which despite commonalities, contest the nature of 'everyday' life for Britain's growing Jewish community.

III) Religious Life

Unlike the previously discussed themes, religious representations of the lives of immigrant Jewry and their children are varied in popular memory. Such conflicts can be traced back to the 1920s, when Anglo-Jewry's hopes of imposing a religious identity upon their working-class co-religionists was challenged by these communities. To defend against anti-Semitic charges of Jewish national and political separatism, Anglo-Jewry sought to foster a purely religious identity for all of Britain's Jews. Anglo-Jewry, it contended, consisted of loyal British citizens of Jewish faith.[67] The cultivation of a secular Jewish identity was damaging in this respect, with the upcoming Jewish youth instead linked with socialist political groups, which established Anglo-Jewry feared would damage general Jewish standing in society, by linking 'Jews' with subversive political activity, in the mind and imagination of the public.

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[67] Smith, 'Class, ethnicity and politics', p. 358.

The tensions between images of the immigrant Jew as either the steadfastly devout Jew, or wholly indifferent towards religious custom can be found within the testimony created prior to the 'memory boom', and especially within memory and representation pertaining towards the Jewish East End. The reality, however, falls between these two emotionally charged portrayals of immigrant Jewry. Whilst the East End was home to a vast assortment of synagogues and small houses of worship, attendance levels were declining even during the period of mass immigration. Furthermore, despite there not being sufficient seats in places of worship for the estimated number of East End Jewry, as early as the 1890s synagogues were complaining about empty seats.[68] Whether it was due to the rigours of work or declining orthodoxy, contemporaries recognised the falling levels of not only synagogue attendance, but also Sabbath observation. Charles Russell for instance, when discussing the 'Jewish Question' asserted:

> It is moreover, generally recognised that the foreigners themselves are less strict observers of their religion than was the case ten years ago; and this is doubtless due to the number who have become acclimatised to English habits in the meantime.[69]

Although it was recognised that synagogue attendance was declining, the extent was not agreed upon.[70] However, commentators noted that even if East End Jewry were not devoutly orthodox, they still observed the religious rituals centred around the home, with the majority committed to keeping the Sabbath, albeit with differing levels of observance.[71] Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* reflected this shifting attitude towards piety amongst his character portraits. In the novel Hannah, the daughter of Rabbi Reb Shemuel, falls in love with David Brandon, a non-observant Jew, and begins to defy her father's wishes in pursuit of love. Early in the book David revealed his indifference to Jewish custom, stating that his life did not depend upon religion, and that he would only eat *kosher* meat only when he can get it:

> Of course it's absurd to expect a man to go without meat when he's travelling up country, just because it hasn't been killed with a knife instead of a pole-axe. Besides, don't we know well enough that the folks who are most particular about those sort of things don't mind swindling and setting their houses on fire and all manner of abominations? I wouldn't be a Christian for the world, but I should like to see a little more common-sense introduced into our religion; it ought to

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[68] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 192.
[69] Russell and Lewis, p. 96.
[70] In the same work, *The Jew in London,* a contrasting account of Jewish religious observance was offered by Harry S. Lewis. He passionately argued that claims of declining observance were grossly exaggerated, citing the fact that over half of those employed in the 'Jewish trades' of tailoring and boot-making abstained from work on Sabbath, as evidence of continued religiosity. See: Russell and Lewis. p. 199.
[71] Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 88.

be more up to date. If ever I marry, I should like my wife to be a girl who wouldn't want to keep anything but the higher parts of Judaism. Not out of laziness, mind you, but out of conviction.[72]

The second generation of memory regarding immigrant Jewry can be taken to support such sentiments as posited by Zangwill a few decades earlier. For most families it appears that keeping a Jewish house meant being at home in time for Friday night supper, and observing the various rituals associated with certain stages of life, such as circumcision, the rites of puberty and wedding rituals. The wellspring of religious fervour around Jewish High Holidays confirms that regardless of growing religious indifference in terms of formal ceremony, the community remained attached to the general concept of their Judaic faith, despite the efforts of Christian missionaries and radical organisations.[73] The extent to which immigrant Jewry moved away from religious orthodoxy consequently must not overstated, as evident by the common practice of theatres, school halls and meeting places being rented out to accommodate the thousands who attended services on the High Holidays.[74]

Whilst Chotzinoff's experience of the East End may have been brief, his overall impression of the area was of its continued religious observance. Scant detail was provided of his personal experience, but his aggressive attitude towards his father's orthodoxy noted the ease of which he found 'a synagogue nearby of proper denomination' to attend three times a day.[75] As discussed, this was pursued instead of assisting Chotzinoff's mother to find his distant relative, which subsequently contributed towards Chotzinoff's negative framing of his father's piety. Regardless of circumstance, this brief anecdotal comment helps to affirm an image of the Jewish East End as being a highly religious community, being a land where an immigrant possessing little command of the English language could easily find a suitable haven to observe his faith.[76] Comparatively, the impression created by Brodetsky was less ambiguous:

> The East End was religious. It was religious in the way of the ghetto, with many ghetto customs brought from Russia.[77]

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[72] Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto: A Study of A Peculiar People, 3rd Edition* (London: William Heinemann, 1893), p. 109.

[73] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 197.

[74] David Feldman, 'Jews in London 1880-1914', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity: Volume 1* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 221.

[75] Chotzinoff, p. 50.

[76] Selma Berrol's comparative study of the Lower East Side of New York and the East End noted that amongst the Jewish population of Eastern Europe, the East End was regarded as a stronger Jewish religious community than New York. Indeed, the *treyfene medine* (infidel land) of New York was of greater attraction to the economic and less observant immigrant, where the size of the settlement offered greater scope for immediate social betterment. An interesting note, considering Chotzinoff cited commitment to religious orthodoxy as the reason for his family's immigration to the United States. See: Selma Berrol, *East Side/East End: Eastern European Jews in London and New York, 1870-1920* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994), pp. 10-11.

[77] Brodetsky, p. 32.

Considering his role as one of the established leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community, it is not surprising that Brodetsky emphasised the religious nature of the Jewish community found within the East End. In the pages that follow this extract, he portrayed a settled Jewish community which longed for the religious life of *der heim*. Interestingly, he noted that whilst dissenting voices existed, such as the Jewish socialists and anarchists who angered the orthodox majority with their militant atheism and disregard for custom, overall the community retained its faith. Indeed, Brodetsky mused that the *Shabbos-goy* was a feature of life, with gentiles often being either employed, or kindly spirits volunteering to enter Jewish homes to carry out the tasks which pious Jews could not on the Sabbath, such as putting out lamps and candles on the Friday night. Furthermore, he fondly recalled the Yiddish sermons on the streets of Whitechapel, where *Maggidims* attracted large crowds.[78]

The desired respectful, religious image of the Jewish community which the 'notable' accounts sought to promulgate was not unchallenged. As noted, popular memory of the religious observance of the working-class Jewish community which developed from the first generation of immigrant Jewry, is less consistent than with tales of origin or images of the Jewish family. Counter-images exist, ones which posit an increasingly secular community, shedding religious customs for socialist political involvement or embracing English secular culture. One of the most influential challenges to such representations was the novel, *Jew Boy* (1935) by Simon Blumenfeld. Blumenfeld's novel reflected the more secular world of the second generation, a world where young men and women walked between the lines of the faith of their parents and the secular world of work and leisure of Englishmen. One of the supporting characters in the novel, Dave, is highly dismissive of his parent's orthodoxy. He does not observe the Sabbath and is more interested in chasing various girls, or 'Janes'. Despite this behaviour he is soon betrothed to the daughter of a highly orthodox family, something which Alec, the novel's protagonist bitterly muses as being the 'easy way' out. Dave was highly likely to get married, raise a strictly orthodox family from herein and probably end up as president of his local synagogue, all despite his youthful rejection of Jewish principles.[79]

Well-received upon publication, Blumenfeld's uncompromising world of *Jew Boy* was praised for accurately recreating the conflicted battleground of the Jewish East End, even if his socialist message was at times too strong for middle-class Britain.[80] Yet, *Jew Boy* can be taken to

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[78] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[79] Simon Blumenfeld, *Jew Boy* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1986, first published, London: Cape, 1935), pp. 94-95.

[80] Vera Coleman, 'Simon Blumenfeld', in Glenda Abramson (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Modern Jewish Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 114.

attest for the declining levels of religiosity which encircled second generation East End Jewry, whereby many came to distance themselves from the singularly religious identity which Anglo-Jewry sought to inculcate for Britain's Jewish community. Considering the dual nature of modern recollections of the East End, it appears that such challenges were successful.

A key element of religious life for Jewish youths was the *cheder*. Usually a simple room in a house, a *cheder* classroom would typically be nine by nine by seven or eight feet high. Here, between five or fifteen children would be seated, attending what has often been characterised as the 'formless' lessons of the *Melammed*.[81] These teachers came from all walks of life. Some were religious functionaries seeking to improve their income, whilst others were elderly men, unable to earn a living via any other form of work. Despite the proliferation of the *cheder* across the not only the East End – but also other Jewish immigrant settlements in Britain – and their contemporary popularity amongst immigrant parents, they are almost universally remembered negatively.

Like Brodetsky, Israel Cohen was a leading Zionist figure. Born in 1879 to Polish-Jewish immigrants in Manchester, Cohen's youth was spent in the city. In his memoirs he vividly recalled the structure of the *cheder* which he attended as a child in the 1880s, and this class appears remarkably like those which have been recollected in the Jewish East End of 1914 and beyond. A small room, it could only be reached by passing through the *Melammed*'s bedroom. Plainly furnished, two long tables were flanked by a couple of benches, whilst the walls were all bare except for two items: a Hebrew document in a glass frame, and a stout, black leather strap with a set of tails. Such an intimidating environment was designed in Cohen's view to act as a reminder and deterrent to any offender of poor discipline, or poor Hebrew.[82]

It is noteworthy that despite the fondness and respect that accounts such as Cohen and Brodetsky confer upon the religiosity of first generation immigrant Jewry and their parents, there is a humility and sense of shame for some of the seemingly archaic practices which they had brought with them from Eastern Europe. Brodetsky merely remarked that he attended one of the larger *cheders*, the Brick Lane *Talmud Torah*, the 'most important Orthodox *cheder* in London'.[83] There is no sense of fond nostalgia for this institution, with it being overshadowed by other aspects of his youth. Furthermore, it is striking that within the examined memoirs, any mention of the *cheder* are negative in character when briefly expanded upon. For instance, Flanagan's lively

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[81] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 231.
[82] Israel Cohen, *A Jewish Pilgrimage: The Autobiography of Israel Cohen* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1956), p. 10.
[83] Brodetsky, p. 28.

memoirs featured scant mention of the *cheder,* but what little mention he made is wholly negative (if humorously so):

> If he was reading from the Book and you weren't listening, bang; if you couldn't answer the questions, bang. I learned more about how to throw a right hook from him than I did Hebrew. For this privilege we paid a shilling a week.[84]

There is equally no sense of reservation in Goldman's critique of the *cheder*. In damning fashion, he asserted that following one's *bar mitzvah*, their knowledge of Hebrew was quickly forgotten. In an emotionally charged and scathing assessment he remarked:

> It was usually a cellar-kitchen or disused workshop where the tutor, a bearded, unkempt, smelly old man in his dotage, mumbled at you for hours on end out of a large book. You had to repeat his mumbles after him. When you mumbled wrong or took a slight rest from mumbling you received a clout across the ear. It was calculated that being mumbled at for several years would by some mysterious process turn you into an enlightened and pious Jew.[85]

Despite these critical representations, the *cheder* was an integral part of the lives of immigrant Jewry and their children. Their prevalence was born of the immigrant desire to ensure that their children received the same level of religious instruction as they had back in their homelands. Contrary to popular belief, Jewish parents had no strong preference for Jewish schools over the state system regarding the general education of their children. Indeed, Gartner asserted that who made Englishmen of their children was of no real concern.[86] What mattered was ensuring that they did their utmost to ensure the continued observance of Jewish tradition by their children, and in this foreign land they reverted to the education methods with which they were familiar.

The overtly negative representation of the *cheder* within second generation memory can be attributed to the anglicisation of the authors. Considering the public personas of both Brodetsky and Cohen, both men adopted Jewish identities which were influenced by the reformed practises of their Anglo-Jewish forefathers. Consequently, in similar vein to the American generational model, their narratives worked to simultaneously praise the anglicisation of their Judaic faith, whilst rejecting the 'old world' of Eastern Europe which their parents fled from. To this end, an impression of immigrant Jewry and their children as being religiously observant is an image to be cultivated, with respectful religious fervour and tradition being something to be remembered. However, the darker, 'old world' practices of the *cheder* are

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[84] Flanagan, p. 11.
[85] Goldman, p. 23.
[86] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 231.

portrayed as a regrettable hangover from Eastern Europe, one which thankfully was replaced by the more enlightened religious instruction of the centralised *Talmud Torahs*. Henceforth in the narratives of Brodetsky and Cohen they briefly remarked upon the archaic and 'alien' religious instruction of their parents, a tradition which as first generation British citizens they had grown beyond, managing to reconcile their Jewish faith with their status as Englishmen. They were modern Anglo-Jewry: that is, Englishmen of the Jewish faith.

Such narratives are heavily contested. The dissenting narrative of Goldman, along with Blumenfeld's novel suggest that neither immigrant Jewry, nor their children were part of a community wholly organised around religion. Whilst one can assert that these images are more concerned with the contemporary world of their youth, they nevertheless challenge romanticised notions of Britain's working-class Jews being committed to religious observance and help to explain the growth of socialism during the 1930s amongst the Jewish working-classes. Nonetheless, it is important that historians do not overemphasise these images of dominant secularism. Whilst Jewish socialism and trade unionism are factors which contribute towards explaining declining levels of orthodoxy, it is significant to note their minority status, particularly within the Jewish East End of the 1880s-1920s.[87] Indeed, a study on Christian missionary medical missions in the East End by Ellen Ross revealed the practice of Jewish women 'playing deaf' to the overtures of Christianity, with women strongly dedicated to 'domestic Judaism'. Whilst many gave the missionary doctors a fair hearing in return for medical care throughout the 1880s-1920s, very few genuinely converted or engaged with Christianity. Rather, the practice was important in terms of exposing these women and families to the English world outside of Judaism, acting as a peculiar form of acculturation.[88]

Once more, the identity of the authors can be recognised to influence their representations of Jewish religious orthodoxy. All these accounts have been created by individuals who regarded themselves as 'English'. Significantly, the 'notables' – Brodetsky and Cohen – regarded themselves as English Jews. Henceforth, they celebrated the orthodoxy of Britain's Jewish community, a religious orthodoxy which was wholly compatible with notions of British society and 'Englishness'. By contrast, both Goldman and Blumenfeld created narratives from the perspective of English workers who happened to exist and belong to the Jewish community of the Jewish East End. It is this self-imposed distance, particularly with Goldman, which inspired his unreserved criticism of Judaism.

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[87] David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 145.
[88] Ellen Ross, 'Playing Deaf': Jewish Women at the Medical Missions of East London, 1880-1920', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 13 (2011) <http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.622>.

Moreover, despite their differing assumed identities, all concurred that the *cheder* was archaic. What differs though, is the motivations behind such condemnation. Whereas Goldman desired to denounce the Judaic faith and tradition altogether, Brodetsky and Cohen sought to highlight the abandonment of the 'unEnglish' aspects of their faith. It is the commitment to being Englishmen which further informs other aspects of representations of the Jewish immigrant experience, such as schooling and employment, created during this period of memory. Furthermore, this desire has persevered in shaping both the subsequent modern conceptions of Anglo-Jewish identity, and the community of Britain's Jews.

IV) Education

A vital aspect in the creation of an 'Anglo-Jewish' identity was schooling and education. A much-discussed contemporary issue during the period of mass immigration, social critics often questioned the extent to which the children of 'aliens' could truly become English citizens. Therefore, it was of great concern for both the communal Anglo-Jewish leadership and the London County Council school boards, that the second and third generation of immigrant children were swiftly anglicised through their secular education. Consequently, in the years preceding the Aliens Act, much of the Anglo-Jewish pro-immigration 'defences' commented that Jewish children were all 'desirable citizens', possessing great intelligence, physicality, and love for the English nation.[89]

It is revealing to note that these sentiments were overwhelmingly echoed within the memoirs created following the Second World War by the children of Jewish immigrants which passed through the schooling system. This positive representation was spearheaded by Brodetsky who keenly emphasised that his strong sense of 'Englishness' was realised over the course of his education. A typical example of his attitude is as follows:

> In other countries such educational facilities are available only for the children of citizens, not for aliens. In England there was no such restriction. Examinations were usually held on Saturdays, when the candidates did not have to go to school. In London there were special examinations for Jewish candidates on Mondays. I felt grateful to England for her humane and liberal attitude.[90]

Brodetsky's life and career has been championed as an Anglo-Jewish success story.[91] Considering this, his comments can be regarded to once more similarly follow the American

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[89] Feldman, 'Jews in London', pp. 214-215.
[90] Brodetsky, p. 40.
[91] A prime example of this approach to Brodetsky's career can be found in the whiggish representation of his life by the Jewish Historical Society of England. In an outline of his life and career, Bernard Silver remarked how in 1905 Brodetsky's leadership qualities were already apparent by his captainship of his school. All the

generational model, as his memoirs have previously done for most aspects of the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain. Recognising his position of great prestige, Brodetsky's words were naturally inclined to stress appreciation towards his adopted homeland. Whilst both Britain and the United States were regarded as 'happy lands of freedom', Brodetsky emphasised that Britain offered greater opportunities. Furthermore, he remarked that a former Jew, Disraeli, was even able to become Prime Minister in this land.[92] Brodetsky's memoirs henceforth can be taken to show his personal journey, following in these footsteps as a Jew who realised his potential in Britain.

Such conclusions are speculative. However, considering the treatment which Flanagan, another 'notable' memoir offers towards his schooling, they offer a revealing point of analysis. Flanagan merely succinctly stated that he attended a school in the heart of Petticoat Lane.[93] No details or insights into his schooling experiences are provided, with the opening chapters of *My Crazy Life So Far* merely offering a brief survey of his childhood in the East End before his journey to the United States. It is there which Flanagan's story truly begins, as he pursued the path which would lead him into the entertainment industry. As such, there is little room to comment on his youthful days at school where he did not academically succeed.

The vanguard of communal Anglo-Jewry's effort to shape immigrant children into good 'Englishmen and Jews' was the Jews' Free School (JFS) in Bell Lane. Regarded as a special charity by the Rothschilds who sponsored the school, it continually expanded during the period of great immigration, with numerous wings and annexes added. By the turn of the 20th century, it was the largest elementary school in England with around 4,300 children enrolled.[94] The JFS was a highly respected institution among the immigrant and poorer-classes of London. Brodetsky keenly noted this, remembering that it gave every pupil a suit of clothes and pair of boots each year. This was of great help to many immigrant families such as his, who had struggled with poverty.[95]

It was such charitable measures, alongside its status as a Jewish school which saw many immigrant parents before 1900 seek to ensure their children enrolled at the JFS, even if it meant removing them from a nearby state school.[96] Despite its successes and the positive memories

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while, his keen interest in both Jewish and world affairs saw Herzl's formation of the first Zionist Association amidst the continuing Russian pogroms make 'a tremendous impression on him, encouraging still more his Zionism'. See: Bernard Silver, *Three Jewish Giants of Leeds: Professor Selig Brodetsky, Sir Montague Burton & Jacob Kramer*, (Leeds: Jewish Historical Society of England (Leeds Branch), 2000), pp. 7-8.
[92] Brodetsky, p. 19.
[93] Flanagan, p. 21.
[94] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 222.
[95] Brodetsky, p. 28.
[96] White, p. 164.

Figure 1: Jews' Free School Boys, September 1931, London Jewish Museum

which Brodetsky held of the JFS, it is interesting that he still described it as a 'ghetto school'. With all its teachers and students Jews, it was not until he entered the Central Foundation School for Boys in September 1900 – which was just 15 minutes' walk away from his home – that he 'suddenly emerged from the ghetto into the City of London'.[97] Considering such comments, it appears that Brodetsky regarded the JFS as a stepping stone in his anglicisation. It was only when he left the Jewish immigrant quarter of the East End, that he could integrate fully into English society as a 'Englishman and Jew'.

Figure 1 showcases the image of the 'good Englishman and Jew' which the Anglo-Jewish leadership and the JFS wished to cultivate. By its date of creation, 1931, the process of anglicising the second and third generations of immigrant children was regarded as a successful endeavour by the Anglo-Jewish community. The photograph itself is typical of what is conventionally recognised as a school class photograph. A class of 33 boys are arranged for the image, with two rows seated in front of two standing rows. The boys are smartly dressed in their uniform, with blazers, shirt and tie, trousers and black shoes all worn. They have been posed with their arms crossed, to create an image of calm sophistication amongst the young men. With the photograph

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[97] Brodetsky, p. 41.

taken in a well-lit courtyard, there is a sense of respectability about the pupils, who wear a variety of expressions, as expected from such a staged photograph. Some appear genuinely enthused by the experience whilst others wear stern and serious expressions, as if to match the sense of seriousness and respectability of the occasion.

The photograph is coded with various meanings. For the boys and their families, this was a proud occasion showing what fine young men they have become. For the JFS the photograph was a measure of success, confirming an earlier mission statement. Indeed, a 1907 supplement in *The Sphere* was headlined '*The largest of our elementary schools. Where Russian Jews are made into Good British Subjects*.' In this special edition, the article emphasised the speed of which foreign-born or foreign-parentage children soon became indistinguishable from English-born, rivalling them as 'good, honest and patriotic citizens'.[98] Such messages were still an issue of contemporary significance in the 1930s, with the presence of the British Union of Fascists threatening to import Nazi-style anti-Semitism to the streets of London. Consequently, it was of great importance for the JFS to ensure its students were recognised as good Englishmen, who had cast off any hangovers from their parents' 'old world' traditions to embrace the social modernity of Britain. Henceforth this photograph suggests that the positive representation of the JFS as making good 'Englishmen' of the children of immigrant Jewry was well-earned and valid.

Despite these intentions to portray the students of the JFS positively, the photograph provides scope for querying its message. Whilst the boys are all smartly dressed, the mismatch of colours undermines their overall presentation. For most dress codes of middle-class schools, the colour of blazers, ties and trousers would have been matching as standard. Whilst one could tentatively suggest that such differences in terms of dress were due to some being prefects, the back of the photograph reveals not only the names of the photographed boys, but additionally who were prefects. From this information no apparent pattern can be recognised. Consequently, one can draw comparisons between Figure 1 and some of the earlier, critical photography of Jewish children which highlighted the poorer quality of their clothing.

The mismatch of uniforms affirms that this was still a 'Ghetto school' as claimed by Brodetsky, with the children still aspiring to become complete Englishmen like their middle-class, Anglo-Jewish peers. Such criticisms were often levied against the JFS, with it being often claimed that despite its modern buildings and infrastructure, the school could not escape its squalid East End surroundings. Many students who attended the JFS recalled that up until the start of the

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[98] Gerry Black, *J.F.S.: The History of the Jews' Free School, London Since 1732* (London: Tymsder, 1998), p. 149.

Second World War, the JFS was surrounded by dirt and noise – despite the positive recollections that the school helped to shape them into good Englishmen.[99]

Such conclusions are hypothetical. The constructed nature of Figure 1 obscures the ability of the image to reliably confirm or refute assessments of the JFS. Being a staged class photograph, this image can neither wholly confirm whether this depiction is entirely a work of aspiration and construction, or a true confirmation of the Englishness and middle-class transformation of the young men. Indeed, it is unclear as to whether these boys were always dressed in such a smart manner, or how they behaved and carried themselves. This photograph is but a mere snapshot of time. A carefully negotiated one, and one behalf of the JFS. Moreover, the very expressions of the pupils can be queried. Rather than all agreeing on the value of being photographed, it could be concluded that the pleasant and happy expressions are of those content with the situation, whilst the sterner expressions were worn by those who felt the exercise was pointless and wished to rebel against the situation, and indeed mainstream English society.

The JFS was not the only Jewish school in the East End. As the number of second and third generation Jewish children grew, it increasingly made little difference to Jewish parents which school their children attended. Accordingly, the Jewish East End of 1880-1914 saw schools with continually expanding Jewish populations, so much so that many schools soon only held a small minority of Christian children. Consequently, Board schools found themselves obliged to observe Jewish holidays and closed early on winter Friday afternoons for the Sabbath.[100] Such incidences were confirmed at the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. Francis Butcher, headmaster of the Christian Street Board School for Boys revealed that his school closed on Jewish holidays, as it was a 'Jewish school'. This was not due to the school being exclusively for Jewish children, but due to the nature of the neighbourhood it resided within. Of 348 boys enrolled in the school, Butcher revealed to the shock of the Commission that just three were Christian.[101] Within the memoirs created prior to the 'memory boom', many authors, such as Bourne affirmed such images.

Only a fleeting mention of schooling life is made in Bourne's memoirs. Along with his younger brother and sister, he attended the recently opened Blakely Street School. Whilst the teachers were Christian, most students were Jewish. Indeed, whilst Bourne's school days were cut short due to his family's financial struggles, he offered a revealing insight into the ad hoc management of foreign students. After a brief examination by the school's headmaster where he

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[99] Ibid., p. 114.
[100] Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London: 3rd Edition, Third Series – Religion, Volume 2: London: North of the Thames: The Inner Ring* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1903), p. 4.
[101] Francis Butcher, 18793, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration with minutes of evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II*, Parliamentary Papers [Cd. 1742] (1903).

phonetically attempted to read an English script, he was placed in the Standard IV purely due to his age and size. However, he could not understand the lesson at all, despite the efforts of the teacher to place him next to a boy from Warsaw who had arrived a year prior. The boy offered Bourne no help whatsoever, and Bourne mused that he either did not understand English himself, or that he simply ignored him. Despite this alienating experience, Bourne remarked that he liked school, and expressed regret at being removed from the experience after such little time.[102]

Such recollections convey the sense of alarm which many young immigrant children must have experienced upon entering an English school, with no grasp of the language. Unlike Bourne's account, many later representations created following the 'memory boom', that of the third generation of memory convey an image of a warmer, more supportive community, with the anglicised children often willing to help their recently arrived co-religionists. The lack of warmth in Bourne's narrative accordingly, could be attributed to it being created before the acceptance of popular myths regarding immigrant Jewry. Myths which tend to portray schooling as being of paramount importance to the anglicisation, economic and social mobility of immigrant Jewry.[103]

Moreover, Bourne's experiences were far from unusual. At the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, W.A. Nugent, the headmaster of Betts Street School, St. George's-in-the-East, confirmed that freshly arrived immigrants were immediately placed into English classes. Some landed one day and were in the school the next. Accordingly, they were placed in an English lesson where they would quickly learn the language thanks to their ability to swiftly adapt. Hosted entirely in English, the teacher would use the blackboard 'very largely' and illustrate the lessons.[104] Bourne's account testifies to the swiftness upon which immigrant children were placed in the classroom. Similarly, Brodetsky remarked upon the emphasis placed upon English lessons at his first school, the Hanbury Street School, with these lessons compulsory for all students.[105]

The all-encompassing nature of anglicisation as such is strongly conveyed in the first wave of testimony created regarding the lives and experiences of immigrant Jewry. The active role of the Anglo-Jewish leadership in this process is revealed by Brodetsky's account. He noted that in 1898, Lord Rothschild wrote a letter to the parents of children attending the JFS, warning them

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[102] Jack Bourne, pp. 91-93.

[103] A key point in many later memoirs, and indeed early historical studies, is an emphasis upon the central role of schooling in the successful assimilation and upward mobility of Jewish immigrant children. Whilst it was an important factor, Selma Berrol posited that time was a more poignant and significant factor in both American and English Jewish success, in her comparative study of the East Side and East End. See: Selma Berrol, 'Introduction', *East Side/East End: Eastern European Jews in London and New York, 1870-1920* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994).

[104] W.A. Nugent, 18710, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II.*

[105] Brodetsky, p. 27.

not to send their children to the *Talmud Torah* or the *cheder* after school hours, as it would undermine their health.[106] Whether or not such a warning was truly altruistic cannot be deciphered from merely reading Brodetsky's memoirs, but one would suspect that this letter was partly motivated by the desire to gently speed up the breakdown of Jewish immigrant culture by decreasing the amount of time children spent in the *cheder* being taught in Yiddish. For instance, at the JFS measures were taken to deter the use of Yiddish, with children punished for speaking Yiddish whilst in class by being made to stand on a stool in the centre of the classroom.[107]

By contrast, the overtly political memoirs of Goldman oppose positive images of English schooling as being both effective and enjoyed by Jewish children. The common theme throughout his memoirs is one of despair and hopelessness being all-encompassing in the Jewish East End. An impression henceforth is created of vulnerable individuals being overwhelmed from every direction, whether at *cheder*, school, or work, as the following extract reveals:

> The *Kheder* was, after all, only the counterpart to school. The method of disseminating culture was identical in both: it was based on the superiority of the cane to the text-book. Each was a miniature model of an Empire outpost.[108]

Such a narrative is motivated by what Worpole identified as the 'Keatsian' image of the writer as a hero, during the time of *East End My Cradle*'s publication: the idea of the doomed hero, fighting against all odds and often in detriment to his own health and welfare in pursuit of the truth.[109] In his narrative, Goldman is the hero who has endured torment from every possible outlet in life, to rise and embrace his talent and calling as an author. The extent to which this informed his portrayal of his schooling experience can accordingly be questioned. Whilst it is likely that other accounts, such as Brodetsky's and subsequent later testimonies have been rose-tinted through nostalgia, the strength of Goldman's condemnation is significant. Indeed, it would be easy to dismiss such representations as the politicised agenda of an ardent socialist, intent on challenging the system, when compared to the other examined memoirs which comment on schooling in some detail. Such a dismissal would be mistaken.

As observed, representations of education found within the testimony produced before the 'memory boom' are overall, consistently positive. School life and anglicisation are conveyed to be both successful, and beneficial to the lives of Britain's expanding Jewish population. It is only

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[106] Ibid., p. 39.
[107] Anne J. Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, 1666-2000* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 141.
[108] Goldman, p. 27.
[109] Worpole, p. 105.

the counter-narrative of Goldman which conveys a sense of bitterness over English teaching methods and discipline. However, it is key to note that Goldman still considered himself to be an Englishman (something explored more in other sections of his memoir), implying that the overall goal of education is regarded by him to have been successful, even if the teaching methods were barbaric. Furthermore, it is key to note that the programme of anglicisation did not exclusively target Jewish children, with the entire English school system between 1880 and 1920 being structured to inculcate in all the nation's children a 'proper sense of patriotic moral responsibility'.[110]

That the Jewish children who passed through the English school system felt themselves to be 'English' is apparent from the memoirs examined. Despite the conflicting motives between Brodetsky's 'Anglo-Jewish' and Goldman's 'working-class' accounts, both embrace English identities. Anglicisation can in fact be considered to have been too successful, contributing significantly to the secularisation of the second and subsequent generations. This is evident by the shifting concern of the Jewish communal leadership following 1918, to promoting the 'Judaisation' of Anglo-Jewish youth.[111] Regardless, these memoirs once again reveal the divergent narratives within these representations. Brodetsky's account can be regarded as representative of the 'notable' individual and conforms to the expected tropes of the American generational model. His account is keen to emphasise the success of anglicisation, and his gratitude towards the host society for affording him such great opportunities. Meanwhile traditional learning such as the *Talmud Torah* was minimised, placing a distance between Brodetsky and his Eastern European heritage, akin to second generation American testimonies.

Once more, counter-narratives exist. Whilst Goldman and Bourne do not offer extensive detail about their schooling, their accounts contrast with the overwhelmingly positive pictures of Brodetsky. Goldman's brash account represents the easy transition which the children of immigrant Jewry made from Eastern European to English culture and customs, but the impression created is that this transformation occurred in spite, as opposed to because of his schooling. Moreover, Bourne's recollection provides an interesting caveat against romanticised images of the warmth and togetherness of children within this community, and the extent to which Jewish immigrant parents embraced the educational opportunities on offer for their children. Such memories reflect the common tug-of-war which often took place between school and home,

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[110] Brian Doyle, 'The Invention of English', in Robert Colls and Phillip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 90.
[111] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 240.

whereby struggles against poverty and economic prosperity all too often took precedence over educational potential, especially in the years before the First World War.[112]

These early counter-narratives are important when tracing the formation of specific tropes in the overall narrative of the Jewish immigrant experience, which is often keen to stress the emphasis which Eastern European Jewry laid upon schooling as their point of access to the middle-classes; myths which are as distorted for Britain and the East End as they are for the Jews of America and the Lower East Side.[113] Education was a significant factor but its key role in early life was often overshadowed by the struggles of the first generation to survive, leaving its full potential underutilised until later, more established generations.

Within the examined representations of this generation of memory, once more one can regard the identity of the authors as being significant in terms of their treatment of schooling. Whilst Brodetsky presents a simplified narrative, from 'alien' to 'Englishman', neither Goldman nor Bourne's marginal narratives require a defensive justification. Consequently, overlooked facets in terms of schooling are revealed, ones which add personal context to representations of the lives of immigrant Jewry and their children, particularly those who lived in the Jewish East End. Indeed, the more assured and established identity of authors following the 'memory boom', as explored within the next chapter, will reveal a more confident and consistent representation of education's place within the Jewish immigrant experience.

V) Employment

Compared to the insights which these memoirs can reveal of other facets of the Jewish immigrant experience, the representations of immigrant work during the period of mass immigration are curious constructions. Due to the age of the authors, most accounts are a hybrid of learned recollections (that is, second-hand memories shaped by the experiences of others) and imagined experiences. With detailed personal recollections of working life typically emerging from beyond the First World War, the memory found within these memoirs are accordingly the sparse memories of children recalling an absent parent at home, regarding the experiences of the first generation. Consequently, similar tropes can be observed within the representations found within the second generation of memory, with authors keen to adhere to the Jewish settlement myths of swift assimilation and upward social and economic mobility, enjoyed by immigrant Jewry in Britain. Such narratives are not consistent, however, with divergent counter-narratives once again emerging within this generation, challenging romanticised depictions of the immigrant trades.

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[112] Gerry Black, *J.F.S.*, p. 131.
[113] Berrol, p. 146.

The 'notable' memoirs of those who escaped the Jewish immigrant quarter of the East End, are not overly concerned with accurate recreations of their parents' world of work. Instead, such tales of struggle tend to be regarded as either a minor footnote to personal success, or a backdrop to which they and their family managed to overcome. Brodetsky, for instance, only briefly remarked upon his father's employment struggles. After an early venture to deal in cheap clothing collapsed when his capital turned to debts because customers could not afford to pay him, Akiva eventually became a *shamas* at the Sephardic Synagogue in New Court, Fashion Street. This was still poorly paid, and Akiva supplemented the family's income by selling lottery tickets. Indeed, it was his good fortune in selling several winning tickets which enabled him to take a cut, and therefore move the family to more agreeable accommodation.[114] Meanwhile, whilst Flanagan's memoirs offer a lively account, they provide even less detail regarding the typical modes of immigrant employment. Flanagan only fleetingly mentioned that his father was taken to be a bootmaker upon arrival, despite having been apprenticed in chairmaking in Poland.[115]

That Brodetsky and Flanagan do not provide much insight into the working experiences of their fathers can be attributed to several factors. Significantly, these authors presumably had little direct experience of these workplaces. Perhaps more crucial is that focusing upon their father's work, symbolic extensions of the 'old world' of Eastern European labour, could counteract the central narrative of their memoirs. Brodetsky won a scholarship to Cambridge and became an iconic modern Anglo-Jewish figure, whilst Flanagan travelled to the United States to pursue his dreams. Neither account can be regarded as 'typical' of the experiences of Jewish East Enders, and neither author focused heavily upon the facets of life which detracted from the 'wonder' of their stories. What remains henceforth is a matter of fact description, concisely describing the working world of their parents. Descriptions which insinuate that conditions could not have been truly abject since the authors emerged from them to lead highly successful lives.

Much research has confirmed that the lines of employment open to first generation immigrant Jewry were highly restricted. With few of the new arrivals possessing the education necessary to climb the social ladder, they were confined to employment in manufacturing consumer goods. Accordingly, the so-called 'immigrant trades' of tailoring, boot-making, furniture making and so on attracted much of Eastern European Jewry, who preferred to work in familiar trades. Furthermore, even if they aspired for alternative employment, native discrimination and the immigrant fear of the potential hostility of the non-Jewish world saw most seek employment

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[114] Brodetsky, p. 36.
[115] Flanagan, p. 103.

and safety within a comforting Jewish environment.[116] The white-collar professions such as law, pharmacy or teaching were closed off from the first generation, with such vocations becoming the preserve and goal of the second generation and beyond, with mixed levels of success.[117]

Considering the gulf in personal experience and memory of the immigrant trades which exists in many Jewish memoirs, one needs to consider the context and images which their representations were informed by. Whereas many memoirists who commented upon the working lives of their parents in the tailoring workshop may not have possessed direct access to their parents' experiences, they grew up in communities, such as the Jewish East End which saw the same trades still prevail. Interestingly, a common belief can be found within many memoirs that the immigrant trades such as tailoring and cabinet-making, developed little between the start of the century and the mid-1930s, seeing individuals subsequently believe their experiences were akin to those of their parents.[118]

Romanticised pictures of life in the immigrant trades were informed by images such as Figure 2. A photograph taken between 1926 and 1929, the image shows the staff of the Harris & Woolf workshop posed outside the shop. Little information about the photograph is available, other than it was taken of the staff in preparation before a group outing. Indeed, it is noteworthy that all appear to be dressed in fine, smart attire for the occasion, with both the men and women wearing full suits and hats. A sense of a close community is present in the photograph, with the staff all posed closely. Furthermore, there appear to be two boys present and seated at the front. Whether they were fellow workers, or the sons of the master tailors is something which can only be speculated upon. Even so, the inclusion of these young men conveys a sense of warmth and togetherness. Such notions reflect the often remembered close-knitted nature of the immigrant workshop during the era of mass immigration, with the hierarchically structured workforce often united by ties of religion and kinship. It was such relationships which saw hands and masters invite each other to their son's *bar mitzvah* or daughter's wedding, with class boundaries blurred

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[116] In his *Economic History of the Jews in England*, Harold Pollins noted that it is difficult to truly gauge statistically the numbers of Jews in these trades. Due to official figures not classifying Jews or foreign Jews as unique categories, no exact figures exist. Indeed, much of the existing data is reconstructed and extrapolated from alternative statistics. For instance, Pollins posited that one can construct a general picture of the immigrant trades from the Census figures. If it is assumed that much of the recorded Russians, Russian Pole and Romanians were Jews, the 1911 Census figures reveal that around 50 percent of immigrant Jewish men worked in clothing trades, whilst 10 percent worked in furniture trades. See: Harold Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), pp. 142-145.
[117] Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews in Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 264.
[118] Perhaps the best example of this comes from the memoir of Cyril Spector. His description of his father's work characterised the 'timeless' nature of the immigrant trades, asserting that little changed over 50 years. See: Cyril Spector, *Volla Volla Jew Boy* (London: Centerprise Publishing Project, 1988), p. 8.

Figure 2: 'Harris & Woolf' Tailoring Workshop, c. 1926-1929, London Jewish Museum

by communal ties.[119] Even more so when the employer-employee working relations were based around family ties.

Figure 2 was created to mark the occasion of this work outing. Unfortunately, being a lone photograph, no further context exists to answer pertinent questions about the occasion. Was this a regular occurrence or one of a kind? One can postulate that the photograph was taken to mark this as being a significant moment for both the workers and the workshop. Furthermore, the posing of the workers outside the shop not only identifies them as working for Harris & Woolf, but also conveys a sense of pride over their profession and employers. As the photograph was taken during the day, the cleanliness of the street is apparent to the casual viewer, affirming the pride of the photographed subjects.

During the period of great immigration tailoring workshops were often criticised for their poor conditions, with overcrowding in decaying, desolate workshops causing numerous health hazards. Shoddy workplaces were at great risk of fire, with the heat or flames of press irons easily setting fire to cloth or the rotting floor and dry wood structures in the cramped conditions.[120]

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[119] Anne J. Kershen, 'Trade Unionism amongst the Jewish Tailoring Workers of London and Leeds, 1872-1914', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 40-41.
[120] In his survey of life in the East End during 1888, William Fishman noted that 'ghetto streets' were at even greater risk of fire, with them fairly commonplace. The worst incidence took place on 18 October 1888, where a five-floor warehouse at 25 Commercial Street caught fire late at night whilst hands were still working. See: William Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* (London: Duckworth, 1988), pp. 178-179.

Figure 3: 'Harris & Woolf' Tailoring Workshop, 1930, London Jewish Museum

Such facets of first generation immigrant working life is commonly overlooked by romanticised narratives, narratives which have been greatly influenced by positive images such as Figure 2.

The very 'timeless' nature of life in the immigrant trades is seemingly confirmed by Figure 3. Taken in 1930, this photograph depicts life within the Harris & Woolf workshop. Once more the purpose of the photograph is shrouded in mystery, with it seemingly taken to capture the positive and heathy working environment of the firm. Indeed, the sense of 'timelessness' communicated by the photograph shows men and women employed in the tailoring trade, following in the tradition of their parents and grandparents in the Jewish East End. Accordingly, a sense of respectable tradition is communicated, with the 'sweated' trade of tailoring appearing an organised and time-honoured craft. The above workers are at ease, with the casual nature of their poses conveying a sense of comfort at being photographed in this moment.

The unknown purpose behind the creation of this photograph adds complexity. Whilst the nature of a constructed image can be analysed and interpreted, conclusions cannot be truly verified without this important piece of context. This lack of information creates ambiguity within Figure 3. If this was a publicity photograph, then it stands that this image has been constructed to portray the enterprise in the best possible light: as a positive, yet productive working environment. Alternatively, this could be a spontaneous snapshot, offering a glimpse of the true working conditions and lives which the staff at Harris & Woolf enjoyed. Indeed, it is by ascertaining the purpose of this image which informs one's interpretation. As a visual source, a photograph can reveal much. However, the photographer dictates and controls what has been shown, consciously or otherwise. In many circumstances, what has not been shown is equally as

significant as what has been shown. Nonetheless, by examining the seemingly staged nature of the scene constructed in Figure 3, one can tentatively conclude that this photograph was created with a public audience in mind.

Such images of 1930s tailoring contrast markedly to the experiences of 'greeners' during the late 1880s. As noted, Jewish workers in the East End struggled to find steady employment in an over swollen labour pool, with masters hiring and firing at their digression and in accordance to seasonal demands. With new immigrants continually arriving and the labour unskilled, there was little need to retain a permanent workforce, keeping wages low and employment uncertain.[121] Such concerns are far from present in this 1930 photograph which is a world removed from such hardships. However, it was images such as Figure 3 which has informed popular representations of the immigrant trades, with contemporary images filling in the gaps in the imagined world of their parents' working experiences.

As noted, Jewish workshops were often criticised for their poor working environments during the 1880s. The workshop in Figure 3 is distant from such distress. This is a spacious environment, and whilst many bodies are present, there is room available for people to move around should they need to. Whilst the floor is slightly messy, it helps to communicate a sense of this being a 'worked in' environment, adding authenticity. Furthermore, the stages of work are presented. A pile of materials has been placed in the foreground on the worktop, workers are paused whilst creating clothing, and a finished product stands proudly at the centre, mounted on a dummy. The presence of the dummy suggests the planned nature of the photograph, with the master-tailors presumably wanting to capture their staff hard at work, whilst displaying the final product.

Such perceptions reflect the growing recognition that immigrant Jewry had in fact created the cheap, mass-produced and ready-made section of the tailoring market. For instance, a gentleman's suit which cost £2. 10s in 1880 could be purchased for £1. 10s in 1911, thanks to the cost-effectiveness of immigrant production methods, with sub-division replacing the English, 'one man, one garment' principal.[122] It is such positive facets of the immigrant trades which celebrations following the 'memory boom' sought to cultivate, when representing not only their personal working experiences of the 1930s and beyond, but also back-dating such positive representations to also encompass the working lives of their parents. Consequently, it is the

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[121] Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 135.
[122] Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 131.

adoption and continuation of this narrative, and its application to modern, popular representations of the story of immigrant Jewry in Britain, which Chapter Three will explore.

Whilst the memoirs discussed so far explored Jewish employment outside of the immigrant trades, the remaining memoirs all feature a strong reference to them. Chotzinoff's account, for example, noted that after meeting Mr. Harris his brothers were soon employed in his hat factory, whilst his sisters were placed in work at a tobacconist's shop nearby.[123] Unsurprisingly, the memoir which focused the most on the tailoring workshop is Goldman's *East End, My Cradle*. Indeed, his account revealed his father's insistence on plucking him away from his childhood and educational prospects, insisting Goldman left school at fourteen to enter the tailoring workshop. Here, he encountered what he recalled as the barbarity of Jewish-master tailors, which inspired him to flee and attempt to find work at the docks. Since they were non-Jewish, Goldman hoped they would provide a less repressive world than that of the Jewish East End. No such conditions were found, and it was only his self-education at Whitechapel reference library which enabled him to embark on a literary career in the 1930s – one which 'saved his soul'.[124]

Goldman was born in 1910, meaning his experiences strictly fall outside the period of mass Jewish immigration, but he was, nevertheless, the second generation. Despite this, and in line with the political motivations of his narrative, Goldman keenly portrayed the sense of abruptness in which one transitioned from childhood and school, to the working man's world. No consideration was taken for the impact that suddenly entering the world of work would have on a child's mentality, with the fourteen-year-old child expected to change their mindset over-night. Goldman's description of cramped workshop conditions paints a bleak picture, which contrasts markedly from that of Figure 3:

> The 'sweat-shop' was supposed to clinch the matter. For anything more discouraging to the free play of a child's instincts it would be hard to conceive. Working for twelve hours daily in a back room under the constant glare of an electric light, in an atmosphere that was thick with cigarette-smoke and the dust raised by treadle-machines, a room inhabited by people with crooked bodies and crooked minds, whose language was a kind unheard of in any schoolroom and in no way toned down in consideration of a child's presence – here, by some paradoxical process, you were supposed to grow up into a fine, respectable citizen and a credit to the nation.[125]

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[123] Chotzinoff, pp. 53-54.
[124] Cunningham, 'Obituary, Willy Goldman', in *The Guardian*, 6 July 2009.
[125] Goldman, pp. 60-61.

It was these experiences which Goldman asserted increased the generational gap between immigrant parent and child. Whilst parents saw nothing unnatural about fourteen-year-old children entering the workshop, their anglicised children had vastly different expectations. In his account, Goldman captured the sense of disillusionment and amazement which many Jewish sons must have felt. Born English, they did not share the experiences of *der heim* and the recognition of needing to supplement the family's income as early as possible. Goldman accordingly felt he had been the victim of a huge hoax. To him, for all their time and money spent to improve their lives, his parents might have well remained where they were. After all, if a father spent his time sitting in a Russian workshop, his son was not much better doing to the same in an English one.[126] Moreover, such a bleak assessment can be recognised to have been shaped to align with his socialist agenda. From the sampled memoirs, the lives of Brodetsky and Flanagan would not have been possible had their families remained in Eastern Europe, and perhaps even Goldman's literary career.

This critical counter-narrative is not the lone construction of Goldman. Bourne's memoir confirmed the unsteady life of immigrant youth, which could see young boys plucked from schooling and sent out to work. With his family struggling for rent, his sister in hospital and his father pursuing various failed business ventures, the breadwinning burden was soon extended to Jack. A chance encounter at the hospital with a family friend set Bourne on the path to leaving school early:

> Mrs Aryah was very sympathetic but she said why doesn't my mother take me away from school, so I would be able to get a decent job? She advised her that as I was born in Poland and had no birth certificate she could say I was 14 years old. All she would have to do is go to a magistrate and swear an affidavit and then I could leave school. My mother took her advice and within a week I was out of school.[127]

Soon Bourne was apprenticed into the fur trade, where he earned half a crown a week whilst being taught the trade for six months. Following this period, he was promised a wage increase in recognition of his status as a first-class cutter. It was equally into this labour market of differentiated wages which Goldman stepped into at the age of fourteen in 1924. A system designed to ensure that the owners of the workshops could produce garments at the lowest possible cost of labour, with differing levels of competency and job status dictating the level of pay. The pay of pressers and machinists for instance, was too high to trouble them with details

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[126] Ibid., p. 62.
[127] Jack Bourne, p. 99.

which cheaper labour could perform.[128] Such menial tasks therefore were handed down to sub-machinists and assistant pressers, which were usually learners: either freshly arrived immigrants with no trade who were to be taught, or young apprentices like Goldman entering the industry. This division of labour and wages is affirmed by the novelist:

> You start work at a very low wage. It is supposed to be a concession to the boss for teaching you the trade. I began, I believe, with what must be the world's record in low wages. I got sixpence a week. The boss was a relative of the neighbour of ours and considered he was doing my people a special favour in having me work for him. Because of this I wasn't made to carry parcels to the shop. It was supposed to be 'degrading'; but he didn't think it correspondingly degrading to pay me sixpence a week in wages.[129]

This extract reveals Goldman's class-conscious writing. Goldman found the structure of tailoring sweatshops to be miserable, designed to crush out the individualism of men in pursuit of prosperity. Such strong affirmations contrast with the contemporary record during the period of mass Jewish immigration. For example, Beatrice Potter's study noted that in the tailoring industry Jews commonly ascended to the rank of master, establishing their own workshops thanks to the cheapness of setting up a small shop in their own home. It was not uncommon for immigrant workmen to rise and fall up the social scale, with it being left to the newcomers, or 'greeners', to take the worst paid work, in the 'most dilapidated workshop' and with 'the dirtiest lodgings'.[130] It was such tales of immigrant prosperity and determination to raise themselves up the social ladder which contemporary social critics emphasised, and in turn have been embraced by popular conceptions of the Jewish immigrant tailor. Indeed, to return to popular images of Jewish East End workshops in the interwar era, many emphasise worker-employer divisions. However, a common trope in novels such as Simon Blumenfeld's *Jew Boy* was of the ultimate compliance of the Jewish worker in a system designed to exploit them.[131] Many workers were either complicit, or willing to work within the system hoping for eventual financial security.

Once more, one must recognise that the authors' identity is vital in influencing how they frame the working experiences of their parents. That a uniform image does not exist within these

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[128] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 86.
[129] Goldman, p. 85.
[130] Beatrice Potter, 'The Tailoring Trade', in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London: 3rd Edition, First Series – Poverty, Volume 4: The Trades of East London Connected With Poverty* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1902), pp. 61-62.
[131] After helping to lead workers to lay down their tools to join in a popular demonstration against the Nazi persecution of Jewry, the novel's protagonist, Alec, finds himself marked for dismissal. None of his fellow workers protest his latter dismissal, which causes Alec's predisposed revolutionary bitterness to eventually lead him into the arms of Communism. See Blumenfeld, *Jew Boy*.

testimonies is apparent if the examined materials are crudely separated into 'notable' and 'grassroots' accounts. The two highly public figures of Brodetsky and Flanagan offer the historian little specific detail in terms of the working lives of their parents. Whilst Brodetsky concisely remarked upon his father's employment and early struggles, detail is lacking, and Flanagan merely stated his father's trade. Indeed, one must consider not only the identity of these two, but also their motivations for writing. Both authored their memoirs to share their personal life story, tales of success. The working experiences of their fathers, or family, are not central to this narrative. Moreover, along with their identity as 'Englishmen', such facets of life are not only undesirable to focus upon, but also marginal to their personal narratives of success. The significance is the fact that it was from such a humble immigrant background, that they managed to prosper so greatly.

For the generation of memory created prior to the advent of the 'memory boom', one must therefore consider the visual record as represented in the work photographs analysed in this chapter. As stated, many children and grandchildren of the first generation have characterised the immigrant trades to be 'timeless'. Lacking direct experience of the working world of their parents, they consequently extrapolated their own personal experiences to that of their fathers. Such an act has played a significant role in shaping romanticised representations of not only the Jewish East End, but also the general experience of immigrant Jewry in Britain. With many recalling the more spacious and positive situations which they enjoyed, tales of great success of Jewish workshops have arisen, with many recalling the 'Jewishness' of the trades and fine craftsmanship. However, such images can be seen to be challenged within the early testimony of the memoirs of the 'marginal' figures examined here.

The identity of the authors is of great significance to informing these counter-images. Whilst Goldman's narrative is informed by his identity as an English socialist, it reveals the danger of unreservedly romanticising an assumed past. Indeed, his critical recollections of the harsh nature of the Jewish tailoring workshop clash unreservedly with the warm images as seen in Figures 2 and 3. Whilst the motivations behind Bourne's narrative are harder to decipher, they offer a seemingly neutral perspective compared to the class-conscious writings of Goldman and Brodetsky's personal success story. Of great interest, however, is how this neutrality enables the historian to tentatively use Bourne's narrative to explore the transition of young children from a schooling environment to the world of work, with Bourne's account being valuable in restoring the marginalised history of immigrant Jewry's struggles to the forefront of English history.[132]

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[132] In *Englishmen and Jews*, David Feldman noted how the segregation and neat categorisation of the history of the immigrant Jewish community had led to many aspects of their history being misrepresented.

The challenging narratives of Goldman and Bourne henceforth, serve to dispute popularised and romanticised representations. Embraced by popular history, many have preferred to focus upon the positive facets of the Jewish immigrant experience, such as the 'timeless' nature of the immigrant trades and their eventual commercial success, especially in the fashion industry, as Chapter Three will explore. That representations of the working experiences of immigrant Jewry were contested can be recognised within the disputed external images which were created during the discussion of the 'aliens' question. As noted though, the emphasis on the history of modern Anglo-Jewry is one of swift and steady progression. Such a tale is surrounded by myths; myths which similarly to American narratives, are designed to reveal how the children of Eastern European immigrants effectively used education to enter England's middle-classes.

Many young Jewish boys never realised the potential for utilising the opportunities of education for personal and social development, and instead were sent out by their parents into the world out work as soon as possible. For example, surviving records reveal that the between 1896 and 1914, 96 percent of Jewish children in attendance at the Berner Street School were discharged at the age of fourteen. Regardless of the number of grades completed, age was the determinant factor in children leaving, and entering the workplace.[133] Within the representations of the workplace found within much of Jewish testimony regarding the lives of immigrant Jewry, one would rather anticipate the opposite to be true, with immigrant Jewish parents embracing the educational possibilities on hand for their children. Significantly, this is not the only facet of the experience of immigrant Jewry in the employment market which has been overlooked or marginalised by the second generation of memory and the subsequent accounts which followed these established tropes. The infamous *khazer mark* (pig market) on the corner of Goulston Street is absent from such narratives, where numerous 'greeners' huddled waiting for employers to potentially take them on.[134] Such reminiscences do not neatly fit into the progression model of

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Radicalism and trade unionism in a 'Jewish' context was either downplayed or portrayed to be a futile endeavour, whilst any successes were absorbed and assimilated into the wider 'English' context. It was this recognition which inspired Feldman to call for historians to approach such history from new and fresh perspectives, recognising that the working experiences of immigrant Jewry cannot be confined within the limited historical orthodoxy. See: David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, pp. 144-146.

[133] Berrol, pp. 84-85.

[134] Whilst the *khazer* market may have been left out of popular narratives of the Jewish East End, Vivi Lachs' study of Yiddish songs revealed its persistence in song. *Dem Nayem Hashivenu Nazad* – The New 'Return Us Back,' was a Yiddish song about London which was found to be sung by people who had never even been to the city. Lachs speculated over the potential political and social origins of the song, which warns prospective immigrants about coming to the labour market, which was already overflowing with poverty-stricken Jews, struggling to find employment in the East End. See: Vivi Lachs, 'Singing in Yiddish about London: 1880-1940', *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Autumn, 2009), pp. 95-98.

Anglo-Jewish history, and subsequently have been left out of popular memory and representation, as the following chapter will further explore.

VI) Community

Whilst the memoirs created following the Second World War may not be able to directly comment upon the working experiences of the first generation of immigrant Jewry, they do generate firm impressions of the community. As the next chapter will reveal, many of the popular images created following the 'memory boom' are dominated by scenes of a working-class Jewish community. One which flourished from a formerly secluded immigrant community, united by Eastern European culture and religious customs. The origins of such images can be found to originate within some of the authoritative and highly publicised narratives which circulated before popular engagement with the immigrant Jewish past was encouraged.

Whilst the American generational model has suggested that the second generation emphasised their 'Americanisation' and shedding of 'ghetto' identities, the popular accounts examined in this section cautiously balance the two. Rather than stressing the swift acculturation of the community, as the 'notable' accounts did in terms of their treatment of schooling, individuals such as Brodetsky portrayed an image of a strong, supportive Jewish immigrant community, offering its children a safe-haven and stepping stone into English culture and society. However, as with other facets of immigrant life, such images are contested by not only marginalised voices, but also the critical, popular working-class novels of the 1930s which sought to challenge romantic images of not only Jewish, but also working-class communities. This section accordingly will examine how both the Jewish and non-Jewish community in Britain have been remembered and represented within early testimony and memory sources. Of great interest will be the exploration of whether the relative isolationism of the Jewish communities which developed from the first generation of immigrants in Britain was self-imposed, or whether this was forced upon them by a society hostile towards a foreign presence. Once more a strong reference will be made towards how the Jewish community of the East End was both represented and imagined, with the area being of specific importance nationally, as the largest visible settlement of Jewry, and as noted previously, as a site of keen interest for social investigators.

An interestingly nuanced image of the East End Jewish community can be found in David Bomberg's *Ghetto Theatre*. An oil painting, it was completed in 1920. Indeed, *Ghetto Theatre* is notable for its abandonment of Bomberg's more experimental and Vorticist style, as explored in

Figure 4: David Bomberg, *Ghetto Theatre*, 1920, Ben Uri Gallery

the previous chapter. Bomberg's return to a more representative method was partly inspired by the lack of enthusiasm and encouragement which he received – both publicly and privately – for his pursuit of pure form. However, this painting still embodies his geometric design as a basis for the image's structure and colouring. The sharpness of these lines ensures that the balcony's rail is imposed centrally, acting simultaneously to separate both the viewer from the audience and the audience members from each other, seemingly trapping them in their seats. Whilst the painting can be used to assert the popularity of the Yiddish theatre in the interwar era, the image itself is more concerned with Bomberg's artistic exploration of the connectivity of mass and weight.[135]

Whilst *Ghetto Theatre* could be used to positively portray the enthusiasm of Jewish East Enders for the theatre, its title is intriguing. This is not an 'East End' or 'Jewish' theatre. This is the *Ghetto Theatre*. Such titling suggests the painting's confrontational nature. Based on Whitechapel's animated Pavilion Theatre, the Yiddish theatre was well attended by East End

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[135] Avram Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj: Jewish Experience in 20th Century Art* (London: Lund Humphries, in association with Barbican Art Gallery, 1990), p. 54.

Jewry. An arena where classics such as *Hamlet* were performed in Yiddish for the pleasure of local theatre-goers, the Pavilion Theatre was the only place in London where the works of Gogol, Chekov and Tolstoy were performed. Such plays were marginal to the tastes of West End society, being foreign and 'alien' works which were also performed in Yiddish.[136] *Ghetto Theatre* therefore posits to reveal the existence of a seemingly hidden subculture amongst London's theatre-going community, one of the East End Jewish 'ghetto'. Whether such a counterculture is to be praised or a cause of concern is something which the painting does not engage with. Accordingly, there is a sense of ambiguity within the very title. Does one emphasise the 'ghetto' element of the title, focusing upon the marginalised and poor lives of the individuals? Or the 'theatre' element, implying the elevated cultural level of these people? Bomberg offers no clues in the painting, which rather contents itself with deconstructing the audience, moulding their physiques into complementary 'blocks' which combine to complete the image.

What remains is the acknowledgment of this Jewish world standing apart from mainstream culture, a community unto itself. Indeed, the formal wear of the figures appears to be hybrid of 'English' and foreign dress. The men seated below wear top hats, headwear associated with the upper-classes. Meanwhile, the men seated above appear to be adorned with trilby hats. These hats were regarded by Englishmen and those accultured to English culture to be foreign headwear, as revealed in Bourne's memoir. Upon his arrival in the East End, Bourne initially wore a trilby hat. Whilst his mother felt he looked 'grand', he soon discovered that other children were laughing at him, calling him names such as 'Dutchee-Dutchee'. Within a week, he had discarded the item.[137] The mixture of hats depicted in *Ghetto Theatre* as such can be recognised to communicate the mixed nature of the Jewish East End. As the image reveals, some theatre-goers have embraced 'Englishness' and the dress code of the top hat, but not all. Some have clung to their foreign traditions. The Jewish East End henceforth was a community in flux, where its inhabitants seemingly existed within two worlds. Whether the dual nature of this community was something to be celebrated or frowned upon is not something which the painting addresses.

The simultaneous positivity and negativity of *Ghetto Theatre* can be ascribed to have been shaped by Bomberg's wartime experiences. Personal encounters with the mechanical marvels used to bombard men into submission deeply shook Bomberg. Along with the death of his brother, this sense of dejection contributed to his abandonment of Vorticist styles.[138] Furthermore, with his experimental works unappreciated by the English art world, Bomberg

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[136] Ibid., p. 54.
[137] Jack Bourne, pp. 82-83.
[138] Peter Fuller, 'David Bomberg: Pre-Raphaelitism and Beyond', *Art Monthly* (June, 1987), p. 3.

attempted to re-engage with the lively world of the Jewish East End which once inspired his fascination of basic form. The result of this return, however, was the subdued image of *Ghetto Theatre*, reflecting Bomberg's personal disillusionment.

Painted on the eve of his departure from the East End, the painting possesses none of the excitement or vitality of his prewar studies. There is a lack of animation and energy, with the passivity of the blandly dressed audience seeing both rows almost merge into an unmoving mass. Moreover, the toll of life and hardship bears down heavily on the figures. This is most notable with the hunched male figure in the foreground, who tiredly leans on a walking stick. The figure can be taken to symbolise Bomberg's personal disenchantment with both the world and the Jewish East End, with the claustrophobic world of the *Ghetto Theatre* threatening to encircle both the male figure and Bomberg.[139] It was this community which Bomberg felt distant and separated from, inspiring his escape from the East End in 1923 when he accepted a post with the Palestine Federation Fund to paint naturalistic scenes of the countryside.[140]

Whilst *Ghetto Theatre* was created in 1920, and so strictly is before much of the material examined in this chapter, it is an important painting in terms of informing much of the latter representation of immigrant Jewry and the Jewish East End. Popular images of not only the Jewish East End, but also of Jewish communities in Manchester and Leeds, for example, typically convey not only self-contained communities like in *Ghetto Theatre*, but also self-sufficient ones. Whilst these communities may have been made up of foreign Jewry and their children, the testimonies created by postwar authors often present these Jewish communities as 'English'. One of the most striking examples of this comes from Brodetsky. In his memoirs, he specifically outlined one of his key childhood memories to be Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A momentous event, Brodetsky remarked that the entirety of East End Jewry rejoiced along with the whole nation. By this time his family had been in London for four years, and he fondly recalled sitting in Green Park for the celebration among with thousands of other children from London schools, all wearing patriotic badges.[141] Such images communicate the notion of the complete immersion of first generation Jewry and their children into English society, loyalty and tradition, despite the relative insular nature of the Jewish East End community.

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[139] Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall (eds.), *Out of Chaos – Ben Uri: 100 Years in London* (London: Ben Uri Gallery & Museum, 2015), p. 55.
[140] Richard Cork, 'Bomberg, David Garshen (1890–1957)', rev. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2012 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37206> [accessed 19/04/2017].
[141] Brodetsky, p. 30.

It is noteworthy that the memoirs of high public profile figures such as Brodetsky and Chotzinoff are remarkably consistent in their presentations. For Brodetsky, one can assert that his memory of the East End of his youth has been tinged by both nostalgia and convenience. Considering his prominent position as an Anglo-Jewish leader, it would have been beneficial for Brodetsky to cultivate the image of a unified and welcoming immigrant community, thereby helping to make the modern history of immigrant Anglo-Jewry more palatable to 1960s Britain. After the xenophobia and tensions of the 1930s and 1940s, it would be more convenient for all of society to iron out the unflattering creases in Anglo-Jewish history.[142] Indeed, one can argue that such measures still operate in popular memory today.

One defining feature of early postwar representations is the picture of the immigrant community and their children as being authentically 'Jewish' in terms of religious activity, whilst guarding itself from secularising forces. Indeed, whilst it was previously observed that the levels of orthodoxy vary within this testimony, amongst the memory sources created by the 'notable' authors, a picture of religious tradition emerges, both inside and outside of the home. For example, the Zionist Israel Cohen spent three years in Whitechapel during his student days. In his memoir, he too noted the sheltered nature of the community, who 'formed a very conspicuous and distinctive element' of the East End's population.[143] In a brief account Cohen portrayed the immigrant community as seemingly having one foot in the Eastern European ghetto: clinging to Yiddish, religious customs, and old social habits for years. Consequently, it was because of this resolute sense of togetherness and religious custom that the efforts of the Christian missionaries fell upon deaf ears:

> And if there was an unctuous missionary here and there who quoted the New Testament in Yiddish and sought to lure his hearers to apostasy, there were bastions of Judaism in synagogues and houses of Talmudic study, in little seminaries resounding with boyish voices chanting the Torah, and religious courts of judgement, which were impregnable against any attacks of missionary conversionists.[144]

As emphasised, in the immediate postwar period the communal Anglo-Jewish leadership sought to foster a purely religious identity for Britain's Jews to combat fears of Jewish separatism,

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[142] David Cesarani's study on anti-Semitism in British society before 1940 noted the rising anti-alienist sentiments of the 1930s. In a time of high unemployment, popular pressure increased on the government to find and isolate a scapegoat: immigrants. In response, measures were taken to reduce the flow of immigrants into the country, whilst notions of 'Englishness' and eugenics combined to validate and enhance such measures. See: Cesarani, 'An Alien Concept?', pp. 37-44.
[143] Israel Cohen, p. 22.
[144] Ibid., p. 23.

particularly within the nation's capital.[145] The inhabitants of the Jewish East End were Englishmen, who observed the Jewish faith. Such designs were fraught with difficulty though, with the declining levels of orthodox Jewish religious observance noted back at the time of mass immigration. Indeed, at the turn of the century a whole class of immigrant Jewry had been nicknamed as 'Yom Kippur Jews', with the only sign of their Jewishness being their religious observance and synagogue attendance on the Day of Atonement.[146]

Despite this, popular imagination has been captivated by images of the first generation of immigrant Jews who settled in Britain as being observant Jews, who clung to Eastern European traditions. Furthermore, the image of the community's strong charitability has been asserted to have arisen out of religious convictions. Such representations of the Jewish East End for instance, are akin to the American treatment of the Lower East Side, with the area's 'Jewishness' being immortalised as the area's defining characteristic. It is this sentiment of the Lower East Side as being more authentically Jewish than any other settlement in the United States, which has seen popular memory and reimagining depict the area as a place of Jewish religious piety, traditionalism and ritual, despite the area's rapid secularisation and acculturation.[147] Within the context of Britain, it is vital to note that whilst such romanticised images arise within the testimony which preceded the 'memory boom', dissenting voices can be found within the less popularised accounts.

Chotzinoff nonetheless affirmed the image of the religiosity and charitable nature of immigrant Jewry who inhabited the East End. His personal recollection of his family's experiences in Britain focused upon the aid which they received during their short stay. Having arrived in London with no money, the family initially survived on the charity of the Immigrant Aid Society. It was only their reconnection with a long-lost relative, Mr. Harris, which set them upon a stable condition. The theme of charity persisted even after meeting Harris, with him setting the family up in a four-room apartment complete with gaslight and running water, and further arranging for the schooling and employment of the family. It was only his father's poor health due to London's foggy conditions which saw the family complete their journey to the United States. And even then, Harris intervened to purchase the steamship tickets himself, to ensure that the family were not defrauded once more.[148]

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[145] Smith, 'Class, ethnicity and politics', p. 357.
[146] Russell and Lewis, pp. 123-124.
[147] Diner, pp. 58-59.
[148] Chotzinoff, p. 56.

That Chotzinoff was a professional critic should not be overlooked. Dual tensions are present within *Lost in Paradise*, with Chotzinoff expressing a curious sense of sentimentalism, whilst recognising the need to supplant his family's traditional religious values and language with American culture, his adopted home.[149] Consequently, an inherent distrust towards his father is present within the memoir, with him symbolising the negatives of dated traditions and suspicions. Despite his personal successes in the United States, Chotzinoff's father is portrayed as dislocating the family – not just once, but twice – in pursuit of completing a pilgrimage to the United States in the name of religious freedom. Furthermore, Chotzinoff's representation of his family's experiences can be recognised to almost be a quintessential example of the Jewish migration myth. All the tropes of Jewish migration are present: escape from Eastern Europe, followed by accidental migration to London, the presence of a structured Jewish community, and familial aid and support. His account accordingly can be seen to be generally representative of the American generational model, with Chotzinoff embracing Americanism and rejecting the 'old world' of his father's Judaism.

A flamboyant account of good fortune and charity can additionally be found in Good's memoirs. *Visions and Jewels* is but one of several books he wrote, and perhaps the most fitting description comes from the *Jewish Chronicle*'s review: he was not only a successful businessman, but also a 'poet, artist, and storyteller', whilst his memoir was praised as a 'good adventure story'.[150] The central focus of Good's narrative was his rise from pauper to entrepreneur. Despite the narcissistic tendency of his writing, he did briefly represent the supportive nature of the immigrant community when it was needed in his first few weeks in London. His Aunt Tsippa provided him with food for almost no cost, whilst a relative of his uncle granted him with somewhere to sleep for free.

More noteworthy is his presentation of his early employment ventures. After entering the employ of an elderly Zionist for a week, Good soon found out that the man had no money to pay him with. However, his employer endeavoured to help Good find a new situation. Fortunately for Good just as this conversation was happening, an elderly Jew entered the shop and caught the gist of the conversation. He then told Good to follow him and took him down to Hackney road into a well-off shop, where Good took a situation at fifteen shillings a week.[151] Whilst the expediency of the good fortune of this narrative can be queried, it is a further example of

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[149] Diane Matza, 'Jewish Immigrant Autobiography: The Anomaly of a Sephardic Example', *MELUS*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Ethnic Autobiography (Spring, 1987), p. 34.
[150] *Jewish Chronicle*, April 18, 1952, p. 10.
[151] Moshe Oved, pp. 42-43.

immigrant testimony affirming the supportive nature of the Jewish community towards fellow co-religionists.

Whilst the dominant representation of the Jewish community which developed from the Eastern European immigrants, is of one community, unified by the experience of migration and desire to settle in England, countervailing images can be found. It would be simplistic to accept the romantic and simplified representations, which portray the population of immigrant quarters across Britain as a homogenous mass. Indeed, a brief glance at the names of the friendly societies and *chevras* of the East End reveal the mosaic nature of the community, with organisations bearing the names of specific regions and towns in Eastern Europe.[152] The intentions of these organisations are clear: acting as beacons of *landsmannschaft* for men of similar ethnic backgrounds to gather around in mutual safety and cooperation. Many popular representations ignore this element of the community, preferring to remember the positivity of mutual aid. Considering the good fortune and positivity of Brodetsky, Chotzinoff and Good's experiences, it is highly likely that these events informed the simplification of memory and nostalgia, which tinted their preconceptions of the experiences of the preceding first generation. In their narratives, tales of internal community prejudice are detrimental to the images they wished to create.

The confrontational memoir of Goldman and his novel, *A Tent of Blue* (1946), build upon the overlooked tales of dissent and prejudice within the working-class Jewish community. The central protagonist of *A Tent of Blue*, Ben, comes from a relatively well-off working-class family. After accidentally getting his girlfriend Lottie pregnant, her parents hastily arrange for the pair to be married to avoid scandal. This caused Ben's parents great grief, who regarded Lottie's family as 'riff-raff who lived in the Alley'. They rented a home in the open street, and 'considered themselves miles removed, socially, from their new in-laws'.[153] Such prejudice was not confined to Ben's parents, however, with his in-laws equally finding fault with their co-religionist:

> 'The man's a Pollak, you can tell by his accent when he speaks Yiddish. We all know what Pollaks are.' That was the conclusive point for Mr. Blackman. He himself was of Rumanian origin and it happens that Rumanian and Polish Jews mutually regard each other as God's lowest creation.[154]

In his memoirs Goldman further argued that class tensions existed. Workers of different types were classes of their own. Market and sweatshop workers mutually envied the other out of dissatisfaction of their own plight and ignorance of the other's trade. In Goldman's view, master-

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[152] Eugene Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 99.
[153] Willy Goldman, *A Tent of Blue* (London: Grey Walls Press, 1946), p. 10.
[154] Ibid., p. 45.

tailors stood a class apart from regular workers. Indeed, just having one live on your street was regarded to give your neighbourhood distinction. Where he lived on Welk Street there was nobody of this calibre, but they had the nearest thing to it: Mr Svetchkin and his wife. They employed four busy hands in their parlour, running a small workroom. This granted Svetchkin an 'almost frightening respectability' amongst the local community.[155] In Goldman's reconstruction of East End Jewry, the community was far from one undifferentiated mass, but rather a variety of subsets which looked after their own first and foremost.

As with tales of internal prejudices and divisions within communities such as East End Jewry, images of British anti-Semitism are equally contentious in these early memory representations. With tales of migration depicting desperate escapes from brutal anti-Semitism and violence in Eastern Europe, many recollections are cautious in handling the issue of examples of *British* prejudice. Henceforth, authors such as Brodetsky preferred to focus on the liberty his family found in Britain. When anti-Semitism is discussed, it is the intolerance in Eastern Europe which is highlighted:

> Anti-Semitism was rampant at that time throughout Europe. There were the Dreyfus affair in France, the Hilsner blood libel in Bohemia, and in Vienna there was an anti-Semitic Mayor, Lueger. Rumania defied the decision of the Berlin Congress of 1878, dominated by Bismarck and Disraeli, that she must give her Jews citizen rights. Polish anti-Semitism was revived… Britain and the United States were the happy lands of freedom, especially Britain, where Disraeli was Prime Minister, and Moses Montefiore was a legendary figure in every Jewish home in Russia.[156]

Similar sentiments are found throughout the examined memoirs. In Brodetsky's case, his sidestepping of the issue could be partly attributed due to the status he had acquired in society. Naturally his memoirs reflected the comparative ease of which the Jewish immigrant could become 'English', with Brodetsky's personal story fitting the established Anglo-Jewish narrative of the toleration and liberty which welcomed the immigrant, enabling them to prosper. Brodetsky's silence implies that anti-Semitism was not a factor in his life. However, it is far more likely his later position meant that any instances have been omitted from his narrative, since it would contradict the popular Anglo-Jewish settlement account. Similarly, to the 'notable' authors who generally fit the American generational model, Brodetsky's modern identity was formed around his 'Englishness'. To this end, emphasis or tales of prejudice within the receiving society would dampen the positive image of both Britain and England as a liberal and welcoming host society. An identical approach is taken by Good. A 'rags to riches' tale, his account is keen to frame

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[155] Goldman, p. 150.
[156] Brodetsky, p. 19.

England as the land which made this possible, with the freedoms offered enabling him to prosper among the host society:

> I at once began to build up a strong friendship among the various classes of English people. My little business improved, along with my position. Every day of living was a joy.[157]

It is interesting that the only counter-narratives which note the existence of anti-Semitic feeling in everyday life, simultaneously downplay it. Goldman's critical account of Jewish working-class East End life defines the anti-Semitism of his childhood days as being a sense of Yids versus Goys on the street or playground, and never amounting to 'anything more serious than a kind of game'.[158] Essentially a pretext for staging battles between Jews and Gentiles, it consisted of boys separating themselves into teams, and throwing rubbish at each other from across the street from dustbins and the gutters, until ammunition ran out. Afterwards there was no ill-will. It was only in later years as an adult that Goldman faced a more serious type of anti-Semitism. Despite his assertions that this was the extent of anti-Semitism when he was growing up in the East End, Goldman describes there being an unspoken hostility between Jews and Gentiles. Indeed, the only violence which would ensue would be when the natives returned home, drunk from the pub at the corner of Welk Street:

> They would career noisily up the street, hurl abuse at the Jewish houses and occasionally send one of their 'empties' through a Jewish window. We sat silent and watchful behind our doors. It was a reminder to us that pogroms had not died with the Russian Tsar. We were contemptuous rather than afraid: we knew the Gentiles couldn't do very much to us in a free country like England. We waited patiently for the storm to pass; 'They don't know any better,' my mother explained sadly. 'They're only Goyim.'[159]

Considering his rejection of Judaism, the differentiation between 'Jew' and 'Gentile' in Goldman's account is ethnic. The reasons behind this latent prejudice is never explored, with Goldman accepting his mother's words that such prejudice against Jewish peoples was simply part of life. In a later interview Goldman elaborated on his experiences of anti-Semitism in the East End and British society, citing it as a form of 'rejection' from mainstream culture, a sort of 'white noise' which was accepted as the background to life for Jewry.[160] From examining contemporary anti-alien arguments, one could suggest that this inherent hostility was born of the visibility of immigrant Jewry and their children. With the social questions of the era being concerned with

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[157] Moshe Oved, p. 51.
[158] Goldman, p. 17.
[159] Ibid., p. 18.
[160] Cesarani, 'Looking for "The Maggot in the Apple", p. 24.

cultivating patriotic identities, the charge of Jewish separateness often went in hand with arguments of Jews being a separate social entity.[161] A Jew could never be an Englishman, according to many critics. Such sentiments are prevalent in Blumenfeld's *Jew Boy*, where the protagonist, Alec, expresses his outrage at the disparity of wealth between the working- and middle-classes to an Englishwoman:

'Now you're talking like a Jew', she answered icily. 'One who has no country.'[162]

The native prejudice which exists within these early memoirs is a sense of hostility towards the Jewish immigrant minority. A certain picture emerges of this Jewish community living in a relatively self-imposed isolation, and away from an undercurrent of hostility towards their presence in Britain. Flanagan for instance remembered that he grew up in a 'hub' in the East End. Once outside this Jewish settlement, one entered a different world. Such an image is conveyed in his early memories at school, where he delighted in playing for a cricket team. Matches were played against other schools at Victoria Park, which was two and a half miles away from his school and located in part of Bethnal Green which was to Jewish boys a 'hostile, different world, Gentile and very anti-Jewish'.[163] Apart from briefly mentioning street battles between Jewish and non-Jewish schoolboys on their way to school cricket matches, Flanagan resisted expanding on such expressions of hostility. The nature of anti-Semitism in Britain consequently is left open to interpretation.

The early representations found within memoirs of the community which immigrant Jewry and their children in Britain created are therefore contested. Whereas the American generational model proposed that the second generation rejected Eastern European customs and rather embraced American identities, the British context differs. Here, both the 'notable' and 'marginalised' voices cautiously noted the persistence of both worlds, especially amongst the Jewish East End. Where inconsistencies are present, they can be explained by the differing prevailing identity of the author. The Anglo-Jewish identity of Brodetsky for example, carefully reconciled both the 'Jewish' and 'English' worlds of his youth, taking great care to portray both as warm, and comforting environments.

It is the overtly confrontational nature of Goldman's equally 'English', but more politically informed identity which challenges such images, outright pointing to communal ethnic subdivision and prejudice. Whilst he shared a sense of 'Englishness' with Brodetsky, his socialism

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[161] Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1979), p. 48.
[162] Blumenfeld, *Jew Boy*, p. 255.
[163] Flanagan, p. 22.

meant that Goldman regarded facets of his 'Jewishness', such as cultural and religious customs as unwanted hangovers from the 'old world'. Customs which he gladly pointed out the inherent flaws within, as made evident by ethnic and social divisions. In the British example, such ethnic divisions were not as well developed in the main Jewish settlement of the East End, as they can be recognised to have been within the Lower East Side of New York. There, the heart of the Jewish quarter was divided into Hungarian, Galician, Rumanian, Levantine, and Russian sub-ethnic districts due to the relative newness of settlement.[164] Regardless, in the popular myths and narratives of Anglo-Jewry, the influential accounts by famous individuals such as Brodetsky provided the foundations for popular memory to remember positive facets of communal self-aid and organisation, marginalising stories of prejudice to footnotes and anecdotal minor incidences.

Regarding the Jewish East End, it is interesting to note how these authors represented the position of this community within society. The narratives analysed concur that the area was relatively isolated and that this was self-imposed due to mutual bonds and culture. The omission of external prejudice and anti-Semitism within this testimony is only partially surprising. Brodetsky circumvented the discussion by focusing instead upon Eastern European troubles, and further comment is minimal in many other narratives. Unexpectedly the bombastic and 'marginal' account of Goldman also sought to downplay the extent of anti-Semitic feeling, although he did cautiously acknowledge its existence.

For Goldman it seems that anti-Semitism was a feature of later life, once beyond the Jewish East End. It is key to note that this experience of prejudice would have occurred outside of a heavily working-class culture. Considering Goldman's ardent socialism, it is possible henceforth that tales of earlier prejudice within the East End have been downplayed or omitted. This is because tales of internal, working-class struggle and strife would contradict images of the solidarity of the proletariat. Akin to Brodetsky therefore, examples of prejudice may have been downplayed to fit the desired narrative. Consequently, there is a sense of what David Cesarani once described as the 'apologetic tradition' of Anglo-Jewish history present within these memoirs. The peril and effects of such prejudice was largely characterised as being minimal compared to that suffered by Jewry on the continent, and barely worth commenting upon.[165] With the experience of prejudice seemingly being pale in comparison, such tales are accordingly sidestepped within these engagements with the Jewish past.

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[164] Berrol, p. 17.

[165] David Cesarani, 'Introduction', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 7.

Such treatment is not limited to the early published memoirs of famous individuals, with Anglo-Jewish engagement with anti-Semitism being highly cautious. Indeed, in the East End of the 1930s and beyond, the Labour and Communist parties focused on framing both 'Jewish' issues and questions of anti-Semitism and fascism as wider, universal problems for society at large, to avoid bringing attention to the East End's Jewish populace.[166] Considering this context, perhaps the negligible space allocated to tales of prejudice should be less surprising, with the notions of Britain's liberal and welcoming attitude to people of all creeds, instead being cultivated by all segments of society. The inconvenient truth of xenophobia has consequently been marginalised by not only 'English' history, but also by the second and subsequent generations of East End Jewry, and indeed Jews around Britain who experienced such attitudes. It is the task of the historian to carefully engage with traditions of British intolerance, recognising the engagement, and at times exchange between English liberalism and anti-Semitism throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.[167] It is only by the recognition of the existence of such currents in society, which will enable more detailed understandings of the Jewish experience in British society, enhancing studies of group identity.

Conclusions

This chapter has broadly examined the early memory representations of immigrant Jewry and their settlement in Britain, as authored by the children of first generation immigrants. This engagement has been defined as the second generation of memory regarding the immigrant experience, being the testimony created prior to the 'memory boom'. Whilst Chapter One was limited in terms of literary sources authored by immigrant Jews, within the chronology of this chapter, the start of a flourishing array of literary material can be found. To continue with the themes of the preceding chapter, visual sources have also been utilised, reflecting the increased avenues for self-representation enjoyed by the second generation.

On a basic level, the sampled literary materials of memoirs and working-class novels have been separated into the narratives of 'notable' individuals, and the more 'ordinary' or 'marginal' authors. This approach was taken to demonstrate the divergent narratives which arise within second generation memory, showing that the less specialised, American generational model cannot easily be applied to the British context. Whilst similarities are apparent between the model and the recollections of highly public figures such as Brodetsky, as this chapter has

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[166] Smith, 'Class, ethnicity and politics', p. 359.
[167] Bryan Cheyette and Nadia Valman (eds.), *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture 1789-1914* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004), p. 22.

revealed, they are consistently challenged by the less well-known authors. The existence and prevalence of such counter-narratives authored from *within* Jewish working-class communities, such as the Jewish East End reveals that these early engagements do not neatly conform to one general narrative, with nuance and complexity arising depending upon the identity of the author.

Consequently, this chapter proposes that it is the very identity and self-definition of the authors which has shaped their narratives and representations of the Jewish community and experience in Britain. Indeed, in *Englishmen and Jews*, David Feldman urged historians to recognise the different identities and social categorisation of Jews, with individual behaviour and attitudes of Jewish workers, bankers, or women for example, differing according to how they categorised themselves.[168] Whilst Feldman was discussing a rethinking of how Anglo-Jewish history should be framed and approached (particularly regarding Jewish trade unionism), a recognition of the developing personal and group identity of individuals discussing a community history, such as the Jewish East End for example, is of utmost importance in a generational study of the area.

From the narratives explored, one can recognise the roots of modern myths regarding the transition of immigrant Jewry from foreigners, to proud British citizens. Daring tales of Jewish families escaping Eastern Europe and romanticised images of both the supportive nature, and 'Jewishness' of their early communities and settlements can be recognised within the narratives of the more widely influential authors. Brodetsky, particularly, offered a compelling narrative which neatly reconciled his immigrant Jewish heritage, whilst fully embracing 'Englishness' and the customs of his adopted homeland. Many comparisons can be drawn between this narrative and modern romanticism of the Jewish East End, with the confidence of established English Jews in their identity enabling them to fondly reflect upon the Eastern European customs and traditions of their parents and grandparents.

The undercurrent of dissent which is present within the memoirs created in this generation of memory reveals that this modern identity was not yet complete at this time. Whilst Goldman abandoned his 'Jewishness' in favour of a secular, working-class English identity, Bourne's identity is less easy to decipher, even if his 'Jewishness' was still central. As with the preceding chapter and the first generation representations examined, what these sources reveal is a community still negotiating its wider identity within society; a community which was far from homogenous and united. Of deep importance, however, is the shared general emphasis on the acceptance of English custom and tradition, reflecting the early trend of Anglo-Jewish history to

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[168] Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, p. 7.

portray immigrant Jewry as straightforwardly and single-mindedly marching onwards toward assimilation: a process whereby the general isolation and negotiated identity of the first generation was blurred with the images of the successful, notable few and the successive generations.[169] As Chapter Three will show, representations following the 'memory boom' are less consistent in this regard, at times emphasising first and foremost the 'Jewishness' of the working-class Jewish communities throughout Britain, partly inspired by their desire to 'preserve' the unique histories of these fading communities as distinctive entities.

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[169] Ibid., p. 144.

Chapter Three: The 'Memory Boom' and the Third Generation of Memory

The Rise of History from Below, or Nostalgia?

The American generational model consists of three stages in the evolution of Jewish identity. The first generation were keen to celebrate their new homeland, embracing American custom and tradition. Their children, regarding themselves American, rejected their Eastern European Jewish heritage to embrace this identity. It was the third generation who cultivated a return towards perceived Eastern European roots. Following the Holocaust, American Jewry were moved to reconfigure their understanding of their grandparents' homelands, motivated by a sentimental desire to preserve some essence of this destroyed Jewish world. Indeed, Steven Zipperstein noted that the Jewish past was often used as a counterweight to contemporary American life and culture, with the bygone simpler lives and values contrasting with an increasingly materialistic culture.[1] To this end, the Lower East Side became the site of American Jewish experience.

The Anglo-Jewish experience can be seen to follow a similar, if distinctive, model. Early memories and representations emphasise a sense of 'Englishness' and gratitude towards the host society (although as noted counter-narratives challenged this orthodoxy). The positive re-engagement with the Jewish immigrant past following the 'memory boom', the third generation of memory regarding the immigrant experience, offers a similarly nostalgic turn towards their Jewish heritage. However, this nostalgia remains rooted in Britain, seeking to recapture the essence not necessarily of an authentic Eastern European Jewish culture, but rather of the early immigrant settlement and community which the authors and their parents grew up in. This nostalgia is informed by notions of the liberal tradition of Britain, which regards the country as welcoming immigrants. Such myths consequently posit the existence of Jewish 'ghetto' communities across Britain, which operated as havens from which their inhabitants in time ventured into society.

Inevitably, these romanticised myths have been challenged by academic studies. John Garrard has drawn parallels between English hostility towards Eastern European Jewish and Commonwealth immigrants. Parallels which he remarks reveal an 'underlying ambiguity in British

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[1] Steven Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 29-30.

attitudes towards immigrants', as opposed to straightforward tolerance.[2] Such conclusions have been shared by other historians of Anglo-Jewry. Bill Williams, David Cesarani and Tony Kushner for instance, posited that the English acceptance of both immigrant and native Jewry was subject to their conforming to certain societal expectations, as laid out by the state.[3] Such tensions are, however, largely absent from both the comparatively recent popular history and the deep-rooted Anglo-Jewish historical models, which were concerned with presenting Anglo-Jewish history in an apologetic and rose-tinted light.[4]

It is significant that the popular historical movements which created the opportunity for 'ordinary' people to tell their stories, served only to romanticise representations of working-class immigrant settlements such as the Jewish East End and affirm popular myths. Key to this was the development of 'history from below'. Moving focus beyond politics and notable figures, this new approach sought to place people at the forefront of history, with popular politics, religion and culture all studied.[5] Such developments resulted in history's popularisation, broadening the audience of historical works and more importantly, restoring history to social groups whose history was previously marginalised or thought lost.[6] It was this expansion which prompted the growth of grassroots history societies in Britain during the 1960s and beyond, whilst working-class history became recognised as a genre of study, one which flourished with the development of memory studies.

Academic historians once rejected memory-related sources as unreliable. Many regarded the inconsistencies and flaws within memory too problematic when reconstructing the past. Following the 'cultural turn', many came to regard memory as an invaluable tool, on par with 'history'.[7] Far from only helping the historian to engage with previously marginalised minority histories, the cultivation of memory studies also assisted in history's 'deprofessionalisation'. Community history, popular autobiography and working-class writing all flourished, and alongside

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[2] John Garrard, *The English and Immigration: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Influx, 1880-1910* (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1971), p. 7.

[3] 'An Anglo-Jewish *Historikerstreit*', '"England, Liberalism and the Jews"', *Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 33-38.

[4] Todd Endelman, 'Anglo-Jewish Historiography and the Jewish Historiographical Mainstream', in Tony Kushner and Hannah Ewence (eds.), *Whatever Happened to British Jewish Studies?* (London; Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2012), p. 32.

[5] The actual date of origin for 'History from Below' is contested. Whilst many historians date the phenomenon to the 1960s, Jim Obelkevich has argued that the movement has its roots in developments a decade prior. See: Jim Obelkevich, 'New Developments in History in the 1950s and 1960s', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter, 2000), p. 128.

[6] Jim Sharpe, 'History from Below', in Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives in Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 36.

[7] Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, 'Collective memory – what is it?', *History & Memory,* Vol. 8, No. 1, (Spring-Summer, 1996), p. 33.

the growth of oral history, they gave history 'back to the people in their own words'.[8] However, as noted previously, the unchallenged utilisation of memory is fraught with difficulties, with memory's simplification often constructing sanitised and romanticised images of the past.

In terms of the Jewish East End, the impact of the 'memory boom' is most evident with the creation of a museum dedicated to the area, if not located in it.[9] Founded in 1983 as the Museum of the Jewish East End, the Museum grew out of the recognition by both Jewish residents and institutions during the 1980s of the need to recover and preserve the area's history. With the Jewish Museum's collection policy not permitting the acceptance of items less than 100 years old, the social and cultural history of Eastern European immigrants in London's East End was perceived to be at the risk of being lost.[10] The early efforts of the Museum therefore contended with recovering documents and materials pertaining to the Jewish East End, with emphasis placed upon the recording of oral interviews with past residents and the gathering of photographic images. Set up at Manor House Centre for Judaism in deeply suburban Finchley, north London, the Museum initially featured a permanent exhibition, 'tracing the history of Jewish London, with reconstructions of a tailoring workshop, an immigrant home and an East London bakery' alongside temporary and travelling exhibitions.[11]

The founding of the Museum can be regarded as a self-conscious attempt following the 'memory boom' to not only record, but also preserve memory of the Jewish East End and Jewish immigrant past. The Museum itself, has its roots in the Jewish East End Project (JEEP). Founded by William Fishman and amateur enthusiasts, the movement had limited funding. In 1980 JEEP organised the Jewish East End festival to focus upon the 'rich Jewish culture that evolved in the East End'. Consisting of exhibitions and recreations, the festival showcased the social and economic life of the area up to 1945 and was attended by over 1,200 people.[12] Shortly after this

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[8] Popular Memory Group, 'Popular memory: theory, politics, method', in Richard Johnson (ed.), *Making histories: studies in history-writing and politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 223.

[9] The name of the Museum has changed a few times over the years. Founded as the Museum of the Jewish East End in 1983, the name was changed in 1990 to the London Museum of Jewish Life, to reflect its broadened scope. This name remained until it amalgamated with the older, Jewish Museum in 1995, to become the London Jewish Museum. This thesis will use the identifying name used by the Museum at the time when discussing its activity in the chapter.

[10] Rickie Burman, 'Transforming the Jewish Museum: The Power of Narrative', in Tony Kushner and Hannah Ewence (eds.), *Whatever Happened to British Jewish Studies?* (London; Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2012), p. 357.

[11] London Jewish Museum, 17/05/2011/Archive of the London Museum of Jewish Life (incorporating the Museum of the Jewish East End) 1983-1995/I. Unidentified/Unidentified Report by Rickie Burman, Curator, date unknown.

[12] Tony Kushner, 'The End of the Anglo-Jewish progress show: Representations of the Jewish East End 1887-1987', in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 92.

successful event a large conference was held: 'Jewish East End: 1840-1939'. Despite the involvement of the Jewish Historical Society, the impetus once more came from JEEP. Well attended, the conference featured a mixture of academic historians, such as Fishman and Vivian Lipman, along with amateurs. Aubrey Newman heralded the conference for bringing them all together, whilst revealing there 'was scope for a great deal more work to come out of the area'.[13] It was from this environment which the Museum of the Jewish East End was born, taking over from JEEP as the basis for organising research, preservation and archiving for the community.[14]

Considering the popularisation of history, those seeking to engage with their Jewish immigrant past could express their memory and interpretations through a variety of mediums. This chapter will follow the same structure of Chapter Two, breaking down its exploration into six different themes; origin stories, family and home, religious life, education, employment and community. In recognition of the increased forms of media available and in line with the focus of this study, this chapter will expand the range of source materials explored. As noted, the 'memory boom' created more opportunities for individuals to engage with their personal histories. Regarding the Jewish immigrant past, many individuals and descendants from dwindling communities such as the Jewish East End were inspired to record and engage with community history. This thesis accordingly acknowledges this increased public engagement and posits that by assessing this wide range of sources, greater depth of analysis will be achieved regarding the development of both identity, and representation of the lives and experiences of immigrant Jewry and their children in Britain.

Furthermore, by examining a variety of different forms of source material, greater nuance will be added, revealing how different forms of media add different layers to both popular memory and representation. Due to the nature of the materials examined, a blurring sometimes occurs when sources could be products of either the second or third generation of memory. For this chapter, however, all sources are analysed in terms of how the third generation of memory, that is the engagement following the 'memory boom', have engaged with them, utilising these 'texts' to create or enhance specific narratives regarding both the Jewish immigrant past and the subsequent history of working-class Jewish communities in Britain.

Memoirs will once more be examined, revealing a more self-assured tone. Whilst the memoirs previously examined in Chapter Two were divided between the 'notable' accounts which

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[13] Aubrey Newman, 'Introduction', in Aubrey Newman (ed.), *The Jewish East End, 1840-1939: Proceedings of the conference held on 22 October 1980 jointly by the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Jewish East End Project of the Association for Jewish Youth* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1981), p. 1.
[14] Aubrey Newman, 'A Note on Recent Research on the Jewish East End of London', *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (December, 1985), pp. 135-139.

broadly and succinctly summarised their Jewish past, and the more 'marginal' narratives whose treatment varied, the memoirs created following the 'memory boom' are more searching in their exploration and celebration of Jewishness. Both the accounts of public figures and the popular history of the 'typical' working-class Jew tend to provide details about their family history, upbringing and the nature of immigrant Jewry. These narratives will be supported by oral history, a further source of memory created by the desire to preserve the history of the Eastern European roots of much of Britain's Jewish community. Many interviews were conducted by the London Jewish Museum of residents from both the East and West End, as well as work by the Jewish Women in London Group which reflected upon the diverse experience of Jewish women around Britain. Once more the identity of the authors will be considered, allowing this study to ascertain whether a more uniform representation arises from this generation of testimony, or whether counter-narratives persist from certain voices. Comparisons will again be drawn with the example of American Jewish memory, revealing both similarities and differences.

Additionally, this chapter will consider how Jewish communities, particularly the national 'hub' of working-class Jewry, the Jewish East End, has been publicly and popularly remembered. Visual sources will be surveyed, including photographs but also representations on film and television, along with how this community was remembered and represented by galleries held by the London Museum of Jewish Life. This will enable a comparison of public and private representations, permitting the thesis to trace the acceptance of popular myths, such as the cause of Jewish immigration. It will additionally reveal the acceptance of notions regarding not only the identity of the Jewish immigrant, but also the role of wider society in embracing them. From this, not only how the Jewish East End, but also how the immigrant experience has been sanitised in popular memory will be explored, with immigrant Jewry recognised as a 'model' group, who, along with the Huguenots, should be emulated by future newcomers to Britain. From this wide range of sources, this chapter will be able to explore not only the cultivation and development of popular myths and memory, but also the publicised nature of how a diverse community history has been neatly packaged to fit a generalised model, akin to memory of the Lower East Side.

Key to conceptions of the Jewish East End and indeed the experience of immigrant and working-class Jewry in Britain are specific sites of memory. 'Sites of memory' is a concept introduced by historian Pierre Nora, and encompasses both physical spaces, such as museums and memorials, and those which are not, such as holidays and public festivals. What links these 'spaces' is how individuals and groups interact with them, believing that they provide some access

to an authentic experience of the past.[15] This chapter will navigate these sites, exploring how following the 'memory boom' many individuals have fondly remembered both the Jewish East End and other Jewish communities in Britain, creating palatable constructions of these areas and histories to be celebrated. Consequently, it will showcase how academic and popular history can generate vividly different images of the same period of history.

Tolerant Britain?

The existence or otherwise of intolerance is a contentious subject, especially at a national level. In Britain there is generally a longstanding assumption that society has long prided itself on a reputation for tolerance and liberty. This has been extended not only to citizens, but also to immigrants and refugees seeking safety upon British shores. Broadly, such images have often been supported by contrasting the historical experiences of ethnic minorities in Britain with those of other nations, such as Tsarist Russia, Nazi Germany and even the United States.[16] Indeed, these contrasts have permitted Britain to praise itself on its tolerant tradition, with minority history either then subsumed into the mainstream tradition, with individual stories of success highlighted for celebration, or marginalised and overlooked.[17]

Images of universal toleration within British society are, however, rooted in myth. Moreover, to assert that Britain has always been overtly hostile towards all minority groups would be equally distorted. Rather, studies of minority history have revealed the complexity and nuance of British responses towards newcomers. Far from consistent, reception has varied due to a multitude of factors. Immigrants in some cases were perceived to be 'model' citizens, with Italians in the postwar era praised for their hardworking nature and quiet family life, which made the Italian community largely invisible.[18] Other immigrant groups, though, were not regarded with similar warmth or a belief of their desirability. The short-lived history of the German gypsies who were despatched from Britain between 1905 and 1906, only to suffer atrocities in Nazi-controlled Europe, testify to this process of intolerance and exclusion.[19]

In studying Britain and immigration, Colin Holmes concluded that one significant factor in determining the reception of ethnic minorities was their willingness and ability to adapt their

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[15] Barbara E. Mann, 'Space and Place', in Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman (eds.), *Routledge Handbook to Contemporary Jewish Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 192.

[16] Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), pp. 294-295.

[17] Colin Holmes, *A Tolerant Country: Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain* (London: Faber, 1991), pp. 1-2.

[18] Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, p. 247.

[19] Holmes, *A Tolerant Country,* p. 19.

cultural customs to assimilate into society. Those who were perceived to be able to conform more readily to expectations of 'Britishness' were embraced, and in turn have produced histories of British toleration and acceptance.[20] Oft-repeated narratives, these have reinforced popular assumptions of British liberalism towards immigrants and refugees. Such images were prevalent within the materials examined in the preceding chapter, whereby the narratives created by highly publicised, Anglo-Jewish authors such as Selig Brodetsky championed England's liberal tradition. It was the less publicised, marginalised testimonies which provided an undercurrent of dissent, illuminating the harshness of integration and settlement.

The narratives created in what this thesis has defined as the third generation of memory, were born into a very different political and social context than those of the aforementioned authors. The early postwar period saw Britain face a chronic shortage of labour. This shortage was addressed by permitting the migration of a variety of groups, such as refugees, displaced persons, prisoners of war and workers from Europe. Crucially, Britain also had an alternate source of labour: people from its colonies and ex-colonies in Asia and the Caribbean.[21] However, it is important to note that the British government by no means actively encouraged all forms of non-white migration. Measures were taken to discourage general migration from the Commonwealth, with colonial governors in the largest West Indian islands instructed to dissuade would-be-settlers from heading to Britain.[22] It was only in certain sectors where labour shortages were prevalent, such in London Transport, healthcare and the hotel industry, which saw immigration left to be influenced by demands of the labour market.[23]

The 1950s, moreover, can be characterised as a period of rising tensions. Two significant events are often heralded to mark the transition of Britain's attitude from one of universal acceptance of immigration, to regulated restriction: the 1948 arrival of the *SS Windrush* (often symbolised to represent the start of mass Commonwealth migration to Britain), and the 1958 race riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill.[24] Indeed, the 1950s saw the government cautiously discuss the issue of immigration restriction, whilst simultaneously managing the retreat from empire and careful management of the Commonwealth.

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[20] Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, p. 271.
[21] A. Sivanandan, 'Race, class and the state: the black experience in Britain', *Race and Class*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring, 1976), p. 348.
[22] D. W. Dean, 'Conservative Governments and the Restriction of Commonwealth Immigration in the 1950s: The Problems of Constraint', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (March, 1992), p. 178.
[23] Sivanandan, 'Race, class and the state', pp. 348-349.
[24] Dean, p. 171.

This can be seen within the workings of the Ministry of Labour. Despite having little enthusiasm for black colonial labour, these concerns saw much hesitation regarding implementing their restriction. Consequently, in 1955 the Ministry found itself acting against employers who discriminated against ethnic minorities, despite its desire to restrict colonial labour.[25] It was this reluctance to appear reactive to contentious issues regarding race and immigration, which also saw the Conservative government slowly respond to the 1958 race riots, whilst condemning the violence as an aberration in a nation which had always been 'the very cradle of liberty and tolerance', in the words of one Conservative MP.[26]

Following these developments, tensions and questions circulated regarding not just class, but also race. In academic circles, particularly sociology, much debate took place over the next two decades regarding race and racism. The 1969 British Sociological Association Conference focused upon the issue of 'Race Relations', with the intention of redressing the balance of previous studies which had been largely a-theoretical and a-historical. The conference saw sociologists emphasise the need to connect contemporary issues to their historical context. Significantly, Sami Zubaida argued that the racism and discrimination suffered by ex-colonial groups in Britain did not develop spontaneously but were rooted within 'the historical development of capitalism and colonialism.'[27]

Much of the conference featured discussion of the infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech by Enoch Powell in Birmingham on April 20, 1968. Whilst some academics believed that Powell's rhetoric could not be defined as being racist due to featuring no use of biological arguments, others felt that the discrimination and scapegoating of ethnic minorities due to contemporary social and economic strains, represented an inherent form of racist bias.[28] At the crux of Powell's ideology, was the inherent incompatibility of certain classes of immigrants with English society. In his 'Rivers of Blood' speech, Powell stressed that it was the duty of the government to act against 'preventable evils'. To Powell, the ongoing rate of Commonwealth migration to Britain was such an evil, which threatened the 'total transformation to which there is no parallel in a thousand years of English history', whereby people of Commonwealth descent would come to outnumber native Englishmen.[29]

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[25] Ibid., p. 180.
[26] Holmes, *A Tolerant Country,* p. 15.
[27] Sami Zubaida (ed.), *Race and Racialism* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), p. 4.
[28] For examples of these two contrasting approaches, see: Michael Banton, 'The Concept of Racism', in Sami Zubaida (ed.), *Race and Racialism* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970) and John Rex, 'The Concept of Race in Sociological Theory', in Sami Zubaida (ed.), *Race and Racialism* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970).
[29] Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood Speech', *The Telegraph*, 6 November, 2007 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html> [accessed 15/04/2018].

Despite this speech striking a chord with certain segments of society, Powell was forced out of the Conservative Shadow Cabinet. However, this speech firmly captured the attention of the media, with similar ideas soon being associated under the banner of 'Powellism'.[30] As for Powell, he remained relatively quiet on the matter, until a speech to the London Rotary Club in Eastbourne on November 16, 1968. He noted that although he had been the recipient of 'endless abuse and vilification', he felt reassured by the 'relief and gratitude' that people from all areas of the national community had passed onto him. Controversially, Powell discussed the matter of repatriation as a solution to the immigration problem. For Powell, the issue of numbers was at 'the very heart of the matter', as the following extract makes evident:

> The truth is the opposite. The West Indian or Asian does not, by being born in England, become an Englishman. In law he becomes a United Kingdom citizen by birth; in fact he is a West Indian or an Asian still. Unless he be one of the small minority – for number, I repeat again and again, is of the essence – he will by the very nature of things have lost one country without gaining another, lost one nationality without acquiring a new one. Time is running against us and them. With the lapse of a generation or so we shall at last have succeeded – to the benefit of nobody – in reproducing 'in England's green and pleasant land' the haunting tragedy of the United States.[31]

It should be stressed, however, that it was not only the Conservative party who favoured a hard-line stance on immigration. Despite their ardent criticism and objection to the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, the newly elected Labour government in 1965 moved to tighten immigration controls. The previously introduced voucher system for Commonwealth workers was reduced to apply only to skilled workers or immigrants who were guaranteed employment in Britain.[32] Indeed, the 1960s has been characterised as a period of redefinition of the British nation, whereby Britain repositioned itself from a 'civic' to an 'ethnic' nation. Facing economic and geopolitical decline and confronted with fears of a huge wave of post-colonial immigration, both the Conservative and Labour governments of the 1960s gradually redefined membership of the British nation to be defined by birth and ancestry.[33] Such measures were further enhanced by the Immigration Act of 1971, with the 'patrial' clause stipulating the right to residence as being linked to a prospective migrant as having at least one British grandparent: that is, a person born in Britain who had resided there for five or more years. This controversial

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[30] John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain, 3rd Edition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 62.
[31] Enoch Powell, 'Speech to the London Rotary Club, Eastbourne, 16th November 1968', <http://www.enochpowell.net/fr-83.html> [accessed 15/04/2018].
[32] Holmes, *A Tolerant Country*, p. 54.
[33] Christian Joppke, 'Multiculturalism and Immigration: A Comparison of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (August, 1996), p. 477.

measure was designed to differentiate between citizens of Britain, and undesirable Commonwealth migrants based on race and incompatibility.[34]

This undercurrent of hostility towards specific ethnic minorities within Britain can be seen to be confirmed by the ascendancy of the Conservative Party, whose policies regarding immigration and race relations have been summarised as seeking to resolve tensions by reducing the number of 'coloureds'. This was perhaps best reflected by Margaret Thatcher's January 1978 speech, which asserted that her party would 'see an end to immigration' to preserve the British way of life, so the nation was not 'swamped by people with a different culture'.[35]

It must be noted, nonetheless, that despite rising calls for the restriction of immigration throughout the period, Powellism and fears of the incompatibility of immigrants within the social milieu of Britain were not unchallenged. Despite the Labour government of 1965 tightening immigration controls, their Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins is often regarded as being at the forefront of redefining the state's approach to immigrants, along with other liberal measures on abortion and sexuality.[36] Jenkins' famous 1966 speech on integration has been appraised as establishing the guideline for British immigration policy, defining the process as: 'not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.'[37]

This approach to integration has been labelled as the basis of multiculturalism in Britain. For many critics, the main site where multiculturalism has operated has been within the educational system, and was formalised by the 1985 Swann Report, 'Education for All'. Originating from concerns regarding the underachievement of black pupils of West Indian origins, the report identified 'institutional racism' and the general negative attitudes of many teachers, whether conscious or not, towards black and Asian pupils.[38] Central to the report, was the belief that all children, irrespective of ethnicity or religion, should have access to a good education which not only developed their abilities, but also instilled a sense of belonging in Britain.

A key component of the report critically appraised the experience of ethnic minorities in Britain and highlighted the sense of isolation which many communities felt from the white majority. 'Education for All' proposed to update British education, reflecting the pluralist,

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[34] A. Sivanandan, `From Immigration Controls to "Induced" Repatriation', *Race and Class*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1978), p. 78.
[35] Ibid., p. 76.
[36] Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2007), p. 257.
[37] Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 217.
[38] Joppke, p. 482.

multicultural society of modernity. Far from forwarding a view of Britain and society focused upon the past and heritage of the white majority, the report favoured providing all pupils a 'good, relevant and up to date education for life in Britain and the world as it is today', where distinctive ethnic minority communities could maintain their distinct identities, within a 'common framework' of an inclusive British society.[39] In this respect, immigrant and ethnic minority groups would be 'here but different'.[40]

Jenkins' view of mutual tolerance was not unchallenged in official quarters. Despite the desire for integration, both Labour, and then Conservative policy-makers operated a two-pronged policy towards immigration and ethnic minorities. This approach is best summarised by Labour MP Roy Hattersley, who famously remarked in 1965: 'Without integration limitation is inexcusable; without limitation, integration is impossible'. Without 'integration', it was feared in policy-making circles that the next generation of black and ethnic minorities would pose a threat to social order and political stability. But to achieve this integration, restrictions were needed on numbers before this group of people became unmanageable.[41] And so an uncertain and seemingly contradictory policy of restriction, integration and race relations unfolded in Britain.

It was into this turbulent political and social climate which the third generation of testimony regarding the Jewish immigrant experience was created, with nostalgia for a dwindling minority community protected by the very Englishness or Britishness of the authors. As explored in Chapter One, the debate surrounding the character of the Jewish immigrant during the period of mass migration revolved around their 'alien' and clannish nature, and whether they could integrate into society. As discussed, from the 1960s onwards, race played an increasingly significant part within political debates and governmental policy, further determining the 'alienness' of migrant groups. The ethnicity of immigrants, and indeed specific communities within Britain were perceived as important issues pertaining to questions such as housing, employment and policing. This was due to their supposed impact on Britain's cultural and political values. Moreover, for many politicians and sections of the national press, direct immigration control was a necessity to protect the very fabric of British society and identity, a view which became widely circulated.[42]

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[39] *The Swann Report: Education for All: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups* (London: HMSO, 1985), pp. 5 & 315.
[40] Ralph Grillo, 'Backlash Against Diversity? Identity and Cultural Politics in European Cities, Working Paper No. 14', *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society* (University of Oxford, 2005), p. 5.
[41] Richard Jenkins and John Solomos, *Racism and Equal Opportunity Policies in the 1980s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 37.
[42] Solomos, p. 9.

By using race as a category to identify and distinguish groups, certain historic traditions and behaviours were bestowed upon broad and divergent groups of people, purely based on their ethnicity. Such categorisations were not static though and were frequently reinvented to fit their contemporary context.[43] Whilst certain beliefs were not monolithic, shared by the entire nation, the creation and re-creation of certain stereotypes could filter throughout a society's consciousness. Such examples can be found in Britain's response to the question of immigration during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite far from unanimous views on both the black community and other ethnic minorities, both the press and many academics concluded that it was the 'race' of the immigrant minorities which was the trouble, rather than any intolerance or racism of the majority.[44]

The spectre of British intolerance towards minorities was recognised in academic circles. As discussed earlier, John Garrard's comparative studies on English reactions to both the Jewish and Commonwealth immigrations drew parallels between the ambivalence and hostility which greeted the immigrants of two different eras. Comparing political and cultural responses to immigration, Garrard concluded it was 'undeniable' that these two groups shared a 'unique sociological position' in that they were both regarded to be physically distinguishable from native peoples and endured a sense of hostility which was 'quantitatively and qualitatively different' from that experienced by other immigrant groups.[45]

Both the Jews and Commonwealth migrants were highly visible upon their initial settlement, congregating together in 'ghettoised' immigrant quarters. This concentrated settlement lent itself to both real and imagined grievances against these groups, with accusations of them 'swarming' or 'invading' the nation heightened. Central to these complaints were images of a 'golden age' which predated their arrival, with the English way of life under siege by the problems which accompanied the settlement of these immigrants.[46] In fact, Britain's overall immigration policy in response to these social problems has been characterised and criticised by some academics to be highly reactionary in nature. Rather than the result of long-term planning,

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[43] For example, before the influx of Commonwealth migrants, Irish immigrants to England in the nineteenth century were often caricatured to be ape-like creatures who were inferior to good Englishmen. See: Charles Husband, 'Introduction: 'Race' the continuity of a concept', in Charles Husband (ed.), *'Race' in Britain: Continuity and Change* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 11.
[44] Ibid., p. 21.
[45] Garrard, *The English and Immigration*, p. 3.
[46] John Garrard, 'Parallels of Protest: English Reactions to Jewish and Commonwealth Immigration', *Race,* Vol. 9, No. 1 (July, 1967), pp. 49-50.

new policies were often designed to confront the social tensions which arose from past immigration flows, by restricting prospective future immigration.[47]

Much discussion has unfolded regarding Britain, immigration, and black citizens. In an overview of governmental responses between 1962-79, Gideon Ben-Tovim and John Gabriel concluded that despite the government gradually stripping away the enfranchised position of Commonwealth migrants, by equating 'blackness' with a second-class and undesirable immigrant status, there was no overriding economic rationale for these restrictive controls.[48] Rather, they were born out of the social grievances of the period, with competition for employment and housing provoking hostility among the native population towards these highly visible newcomers.

Moreover, the 1960s have been identified as the crucial decade in which political responses to immigration from the Commonwealth were shaped by a multitude of local, grassroots pressures. Holmes highlighted how local concerns regarding the collapse of the social fabric of both the local and national community, influenced popular responses and attitudes towards ethnic minorities throughout Britain. This can be seen in the result of a Gallup Poll in May 1961, whereby 73 per cent of those interviewed were in favour of immigration controls, feeling that migrants from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent were an economic and social strain on Britain's limited resources.[49]

However, it should be emphasised that both the British government and people were not wholly captivated by restrictionist fervour. Influenced by the civil rights movement in the United States, the 1960s also saw a wide selection of individuals and organisations operate who staunchly opposed both racism and racist bias, whilst supporting immigrants. The focal point was the Institute of Race Relations, which along with these smaller bodies, guided liberal opinion in what was referred to as 'the race relations industry'.[50] Indeed, such popular sentiment is considered to have influenced the policy of the government which created the Race Relations Act of 1965 and 1968, which were designed to end discrimination in Britain based on ethnicity through legal sanctions and public regulatory agencies, dedicated to promoting equal opportunities.[51]

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[47] Tom Rees, 'Immigration Polices in the United Kingdom', in Charles Husband (ed.), *'Race' in Britain: Continuity and Change* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 95.
[48] Gideon Ben-Tovim and John Gabriel, 'The Politics of Race in Britain, 1962-79: A Review of the Major Trends and of Recent Debates', in Charles Husband (ed.), *'Race' in Britain: Continuity and Change* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), pp. 146-147.
[49] Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, p. 261.
[50] Holmes, *A Tolerant Country*, p. 59.
[51] Solomos, p. 80.

That these Acts accompanied increased legislation restricting immigration, though, meant that for the ethnic minorities they were supposed to support, their impact appeared highly limited. In a characteristically fiery assessment of the Race Relations Act, A. Sivanandan criticised the weakness of the measure, asserting that it was not designed to 'chastise the wicked or to effect justice for the blacks', but rather in his Marxist view, acted as an educational tool for 'lesser capitalists' in their approach to cheap, immigrant labour.[52] Regardless of the limitations or otherwise of these Acts, they reveal the complexity of British responses to immigration and ethnic minorities during the period, with a multitude of forces for restriction and toleration strangely converging, both influencing and shaping responses of policy-makers in government.

A central tenet to social concerns regarding immigration was the very 'foreignness' of the migrants. As with the Eastern European Jewish immigrants preceding the First World War, Commonwealth migrants were regarded to be different from Europeans. The period between the 1948 Nationality Act and the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, saw the principle of free entry for British subjects significantly amended to restrict black immigration. Whilst often considered as a long debated, slow moving process which arose with great unwillingness on behalf of the government, this was not the case. The debate on race and immigration became increasingly politicised following the 1958 race riots. Indeed, rather than condemn the hooliganism and racism of the attacks on Britain's black populace, many commentators instead used the riots to reveal the 'problems' which emerged from an unchecked and expanding black population.[53] It was their foreignness and alien nature which had exacerbated social tensions. And by reducing their number, logically the problem would be alleviated.

What this brief survey has aimed to illuminate is the complexity of analysing Britain's attitudes towards both immigrants and ethnic minorities. From a perhaps a more pessimistic viewpoint, one can trace the continual question of numbers across four decades. Whilst politicians in the 1950s discussed immigrants 'pouring' into Britain, many years later in 1978 Thatcher referred to Britain being 'swamped' by them.[54] Indeed, such hyperbolic rhetoric can still be found to be in common use to this very day.[55]

Despite this, it is significant to note that although incidents such as Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech and Thatcher's 1978 promise seem to confirm a trend of British attitudes hardening towards immigrants, Powell was removed from the Shadow Cabinet, and once the election was

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[52] Sivanandan, 'Race, class and the state', p. 362.
[53] Solomos, pp. 53-55.
[54] Holmes, *A Tolerant Country*, p. 83.
[55] Kenan Malik, 'Racist rhetoric hasn't been consigned to Britain's past', *The Guardian*, 4th March, 2018.

won, Thatcher largely avoided publicly discussing race relations and immigration.[56] Furthermore, measures can be seen at both popular and governmental levels which show resistance to outright xenophobia, with the movement towards a multi-cultural society through education, revealing the government seeking to integrate minorities, and not change them. It is indicative of the nuances in British attitudes towards immigrants that despite the creation of a firm system of immigration control, an active and ambitious (although contentious) framework dedicated to harmonising 'race relations' was created.

It was into this unsettled social and political climate which the third generation of memory regarding Eastern European immigrant Jewry was authored, with their children and grandchildren seeking to reconnect with their Jewishness. As noted, key to discriminatory practices in both Britain and England was the question of Britishness and Englishness. By this period, however, these British Jews had mostly reconciled their Jewishness and Englishness. To be Jewish was no longer a sign of alienness in the East End, or other regions throughout the country. With ethnicity and race the focal point of exclusionary politics, groups which had minimised their differences to adhere to the prevailing notions of Englishness were overall, accepted and tolerated. Indeed, responses towards migrants and refugees cannot be simply defined and categorised. Rather, they were a complex series of responses, possessing much ambiguity and variation depending on the individual social, political and geographical context. Whilst numbers and different cultures influenced the reception which different ethnic groups received, migrants were far more likely to be tolerated if they were not perceived as a threat socially or culturally.[57]

By the start of the 'memory boom', the British Jews whose families had migrated during the period of great Jewish migration had been a feature of British life and the East End for over 75 years by this point. They had been accepted into the social fabric of both England and Britain. It is this evolution of identity which this chapter will explore, with the Englishness of British Jewry enabling a reconnection and celebration of their Jewishness, despite the uncertain cultural climate of Britain post-Powellism.

I) 'Myths of Origin'

As analysed in the previous chapter, the early memoirs relating to the experiences of Eastern European immigrant Jewry offer differing representations regarding the cause of Jewish migration. 'Notable' figures such as Brodetsky and Chotzinoff subscribed to the popular myths of intolerable conditions in late Imperial Russia as forcing their parent's migration. Yet such images

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[56] Joppke, p. 479.
[57] Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, p. 314.

were not absolute. Counter-narratives exist, with the more marginal voices suggesting a greater confluence of classic 'push' and 'pull' factors as inspiring Jewish immigration. By contrast, the representations found within the third generation of memory appear to have accepted the overarching escape narrative as the *de facto* cause of Jewish immigration. The few accounts which do not attribute fear of pogroms, persecution or military conscription as the cause of their parents' or grandparents' immigration are framed as exceptional stories, going against mass experience.

The adoption of this dominant narrative can be attributed to the words of Herbert Gladstone, who informed the House of Commons in 1906 that he had instructed immigration officers to grant the 'benefit of the doubt, where any doubt exists' when appraising refugee status and whether individuals could land in England.[58] Consequently, it was not merely convenient, but also beneficial for immigrant Jewry to cite stories and fear of pogroms as the cause of their immigration. Britain's liberal tradition postulated the country's moral and political superiority over her continental neighbours by leaving the borders open to refugees, even despite growing concerns surrounding the rising numbers of immigrants.[59] That the 'myths' of origin were embraced by latter generations rather than revoked, is something this section will explore.

Israel Sieff was an influential businessman and Zionist. In his *Memoirs* (1970), Sieff significantly also explored his friendship with fellow businessman, Simon Marks. Simon was the son of Michael Marks, the famous Jewish immigrant who co-founded Marks & Spencers.[60] Sieff's own father, Ephraim, was also of immigrant origin, having been born in Lithuania. The story of both families is remarkably similar, with them both eventually settling in Manchester and establishing highly successful businesses. Their experiences therefore can be framed to present a

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[58] The full speech goes as follows: 'Finally, I have issued to all the immigration officers instruction that in all cases in which immigrants coming from the parts of the Continent which are at present in a disturbed condition, allege that they are flying from religious or political persecution, the benefit of the doubt, where any doubt exists, as to the truth of the allegation must be allowed, and leave to land must be given.' Understandably, this application of the Aliens Act was highly unpopular with ardent restrictionists, such as William Evans-Gordon. See: *Hansard HC Deb* 12 March 1906 vol. 153 cc. 917.
[59] David Cesarani, 'An Alien Concept? The Continuity of Anti-Alienism in British Society Before 1940', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (November, 1992), p. 27.
[60] In its review of Sieff's memoirs, the *Jewish Chronicle* applauded the dual nature of his life. Evaluating the man, the paper regarded Sieff as ultimately 'belonging' to both Britain and Israel, with his name to be honoured in both nations for years to come. Such an outlook is highly reflective of Anglo-Jewry's apologetic stance, with the paper feeling the need to ensure that despite his Zionist work, Israel Sieff was still championed as an 'Englishman'. See: *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1970.

classic 'rags to riches' tale, with both rising from humble and impoverished immigrant stock to become integrated and prosperous Englishmen.[61]

In his *Memoirs*, Sieff cited the familiar fear of pogroms and persecution as the cause for his father's and Michael's immigration. Significantly, there is a tentative sense of caution when relaying the source of Michael's departure, one which betrays the inconsistencies in the often-relayed narrative:

> Michael Marks must have been one of the very first Polish Jews of the new diaspora precipitated by the assassination of Alexander II in 1882. What little we know indicates that he had left by 1882, when he was nineteen years old. He made straight for Britain because he understood that his elder brother Barnet had already gone there, but when Michael arrived he found that Barnet, after a short stay, had left again for the United States.[62]

In terms of representation, this vague account fits with the established narrative: Michael Marks was a refugee fleeing Russian persecution. Research, however, highlights some inconsistencies. Firstly, there appears to have been no pogroms or violence in Slonim during this period. In his exploration of the 'Myth of Origins', Cesarani also pointed to the awkward presence of Michael's brother, Barnet already having settled in England. Either both men were remarkably quick to recognise the potential danger and fled late Imperial Russia immediately, or the pogrom myth was an element later incorporated into the Michael Marks' story.[63] Whether it was Sieff himself who introduced the myth, or if it was already integrated by the time the story was relayed to him is something which cannot be deciphered from the passage. Yet his full acceptance of the pogrom myth can be found within his treatment of his own father.

Like Michael, Sieff noted his father was forced to leave his homeland due to the pogroms. Although he escaped, Ephraim was emotionally scarred by the anti-Semitic violence he endured, leaving him haunted by an inherent distrust of 'people', defined as anyone outside of his family or synagogue congregation:

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[61] The acceptance of this 'rags to riches' narrative in the personal, and public history of the Sieff family still resounds today. In their obituary for Lord Sieff of Brimpton, Israel's son, the *Telegraph* described him as 'the grandson of two penniless immigrants from Poland'. See: *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 February, 2001.
[62] Israel Sieff, *Memoirs* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970), p. 52.
[63] David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, *Patterns of migration 1850-1914: Proceedings of the International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England in association with the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996), p. 250.

They were the potential aggressors, the anti-Semites, the xenophobists, the strangers to his speech and upbringing. Deep down within him there lurked always the fear of the pogrom.[64]

As with Michael Marks, the historical record reveals that there were no pogroms which Ephraim witnessed or faced. The Jews of Lithuania never suffered any pogroms during the age of migration, not even during the revolutionary chaos of 1904-05.[65] Whether Sieff wove the tale of his father's emotional scarring into his account for dramatic effect, or simply misinterpreted the cause of his father's nervous nature is something the historian cannot recover. As with his representation of Michael Marks, it *is* possible that Sieff simply accepted at face value his father's tale of migration as being caused by anti-Semitic violence. And then by presenting this story to others, he himself solidified this 'myth of origins' for both Ephraim Sieff and Michael Marks. In this representation found within his memoirs, the 'old world' is portrayed as a sinister world of Jewish persecution. However, it is key to note that this is something which was not personally experienced by Sieff. The nature of this memoir has constructed a narrative of both Marks and Sieff being refugees, embracing such myths – myths which have become entrenched within the histories of these individuals, as many have uncritically consulted Sieff's memoir for the story behind these two successful men.

This broad acceptance of the 'myth of origins' as the quintessential backdrop to the Eastern European Jewish immigration of 1880-1914 is found throughout popular engagement with the Jewish immigrant past, as inspired by the 'memory boom'. No longer the preserve of the 'notable' figures, familiar tropes are found within much of this self-expression. As noted, the popularisation of history saw the experiences and life stories of the working classes and 'ordinary' people deemed valuable and worth recording. And amongst the examined memoirs of this type, similar assumptions regarding the cause of Jewish migration can be found.

The pocket-book memoir of Sam Clarke, *An East End Cabinet-Maker* (1982) was published by the Inner London Education Authority. Part of a range of books, they sought to rescue the forgotten and fading elements of London's past. A short publication, consisting of no more than forty pages, it detailed Clarke's experiences as a craftsman in the East End. Due to the publication's remit, little attention was paid to Clarke's Jewish origins, with his parents' migration

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[64] Sieff, p. 23.

[65] Shlomo Lambroza, 'The Pogroms of 1903-1906', in John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (eds.), *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 218. Despite such studies, the popular myths of pogroms being the cause of Jewish migration during this period stand firm. A comparatively recent piece in the *Guardian* on Montague Burton, the Jewish tailor who established one of Britain's largest chains of clothes shops, celebrated his 'remarkable story'. Born Meshe David Osinky, Burton is remembered for fleeing the pogroms in Kovno in 1885, arriving in Yorkshire alone, and without a word of English at the age of 15. See: *The Guardian*, 16 April 2016.

only fleetingly mentioned. Described as originating from a 'pretty village near the Polish border', Clarke concisely stated they were forced to leave due to persecution.[66] As with Sieff's account, Clarke's parents therefore are represented as refugees who fled intolerable conditions and anti-Semitism. Moreover, it is interesting to note, that despite having no direct experience of his parents' home village, it was still described as 'pretty.' Indeed, such a description is reminiscent of a memory forged by storytelling and repetition, with Clarke presumably told by his parents of the life they were forced to abandon. This is one of the most powerful forms of mythmaking, with its foundational nature as a personal story for Clarke, informing his relationships with his parents and the wider community, whilst also influencing his understanding of his personal identity.[67] Here, historical truths have been outweighed by personal memory and nostalgia.

Similar themes are prevalent in Cyril Spector's treatment of his parents' migration. *Volla Volla Jew Boy* (1988) was published by the Centerprise Publishing Project. Founded in 1971, the Centerprise was a community centre in Hackney which hosted a variety of work revolving around oral history, literacy, local history and life story writing.[68] Spector's memoir focused upon his experiences growing up in the Jewish East End of the 1930s and can be recognised as a product of the Centerprise's mission to publish working class history. As with Clarke's account, Spector's recollection of his parents' origins was sparse, a tendency which is prevalent in much of the testimony created following the 'memory boom'. Whilst most avoid commenting upon this absence, Spector was self-aware of this gap of knowledge. In his memoirs, he expressed sorrow that his mother never spoke to him of her life before marriage and was equally disturbed by knowing very little of his father's history. Such sadness was inspired by his perceived lack of family history, particularly as a child. Whilst his friends had parents and grandparents who were firmly rooted in 'the contemporary cultural climate', Spector felt alienated by his lack of not only an 'English' family history, but one in general.[69]

Like Sieff and Clarke, Spector stated that he only knew fragments. His father was conscripted, and somewhere during his service he met Spector's mother. Falling for each other, they decided to marry and escape, fleeing the humiliations which his father suffered for his Jewish birth. The story then followed the familiar tropes of Jewish immigration of the period: his father deserted, and they travelled from Germany to England with the intention of journeying to the United States. However, after settling in London to work to save for the fare to New York, for one

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[66] Sam Clarke, *Sam: An East End Cabinet-Maker: The pocket-book memoir of Sam Clarke, 1907-1979* (London: Inner London Education Authority, 1982), p. 10.
[67] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 15.
[68] *Hackney Citizen*, 12 September 2013 <http://hackneycitizen.co.uk/2013/09/12/centerprise-history/> [accessed 21/11/2015].
[69] Cyril Spector, *Volla Volla Jew Boy* (London: Centerprise Publishing Project, 1988), p. 5.

reason or another, they never managed to depart.[70] Beyond this, little was known by Spector, with the year 1902 roughly estimated for their settlement in Bethnal Green.

As noted, the concept of immigrant Jewry not intending to settle in Britain is another common theme. Whilst the early testimony created by individuals such as Bud Flanagan were flamboyant in providing the backdrop of failed step-migration, the representations found during this period are more subdued. There is often a matter of fact nature within these narratives, repeating the stories which their parents told them. This legitimised the 'myths of origin'. Whereas earlier recollections were sensationally represented, the revelations are normalised within these more recent narratives. Ian Mikardo, the British Labour MP for instance, stated that his father was tricked into travelling to London, rather than New York. Indeed, he apparently was in London for four months before he even realised.[71] Within the third generation of memory, many similar instances of this can be found.[72] Whilst the wide circulation of such stories are regarded as being highly dubious by many historians, they have become entrenched in popular memory of the Jewish immigrant experience in both Britain and the United States.[73]

When considering representations of tales of migration, the historian faces the challenging task of separating myth from actuality. Whilst the earlier narratives relating to Jewish immigration are perhaps simpler to query, the nature of this latter testimony poses unique challenges. To take the incorporation of the pogrom narrative for example, historians such as Lloyd Gartner have confidently challenged such myths. Whilst during flashpoints of violence Jewish migration would indeed have risen, and the general conditions for Jewry were poor, Gartner noted that to claim all

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[70] Ibid., p. 3.

[71] Mikardo himself noted that this sounds incredible, but he revealed that he met many Jewish men in his teenage years who agreed that they had also been duped in this manner. See: Ian Mikardo, *Back-Bencher* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), p. 17.

[72] Similar events are described in the unpublished memoir of Billie Isaacs. Isaacs cited 'bitter pogroms' as the cause for her father's departure from Odessa in 1912. Whether it was fear of potential further pogroms or the experience of actual violence in 1905 is not detailed. Regardless, Isaacs also remarked that her father arrived in Southampton, and he too mistook the dock for the United States, his intended destination. Before even learning of his mistake, he sent for his wife and children, who left Russia in May 1912 for England. See: London Jewish Museum; 2008.7 / Times past, times remembered by Billie Isaacs/ memoirs c. 1983, p. 1.

[73] Perhaps the best example of this scepticism comes from Selma Berrol's comparative study of New York's Lower East Side and London's East End. She highlighted the probably 'apocryphal' tale of villainous guides, who were paid to escort Russian and Polish immigrant Jews to New York, and instead duped them and abandoned them in London. With the immigrant usually possessing little knowledge of New York, these agents could discard them in London by offering a quick tour of the city where they pointed out the English street and store signs as proof of arrival in New York. In their puzzlement and disorientation, the busy and bustling nature of the Jewish East End and its own *chaser* (pig) market on Petticoat Lane could easily be passed off as being the Lower East Side and Hester Street. Such acts of cruel foul play certainly were carried out, but whether they occurred to the extent which the historical record of second and third generation testimony suggests is something which can be queried. See: Selma Berrol, *East Side/East End: Eastern European Jews in London and New York, 1870-1920* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994), pp. 23-24.

Jews emigrated due to the pogroms during this period is simply untrue: many emigrated out of economic deprivation.[74] However, it is key to note that myths are often grounded in reality. What can appear to be either an over-inflated story or a fictional account can often have roots in actual events. When discussing such myths, Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson noted that the significance of these types of myths comes not from the described events, but rather the narrative's symbolism. Often, they operate as signs of a shared sense of injustice, or pride in having overcome hardship.[75] Applying this understanding to the pogrom narrative, one can recognise the key role it plays in not only East End Jewry, but also modern British Jewish identity.

Consequently, the pogrom narrative is more intriguing within the memory accounts created following the 'memory boom', with its mythical nature identifiable, yet hard to qualify. Anti-Semitic violence was a real threat within certain areas of late Imperial Russia. As observed, authors such as Sieff attested to their parents' as directly experiencing such persecution, even during periods and from areas where it was absent. It is possible that Sieff and many others misinterpreted their parents *fear* of pogroms as having directly suffered them: or that at some stage, this fear was distorted for actual experience to fit the wider narrative and to cultivate a refugee status for all of immigrant Jewry. By the time of popular engagement with the Jewish immigrant past, the actuality of these myths was no longer significant.

As posited by Cesarani, such myths were the building blocks of the 'social fabric' of the Jewish community which developed from these immigrants. The creation, cultivation and retelling of such myths were important to forming a sense of community, within communities across Britain such as Jewish East End, one which was supported by the integration of these myths by popular culture and lore. Indeed, they were so often repeated that they became accepted as the truth by the progenitors themselves, whose self-identity came to be formed by the blurring of popular myths and reality.[76] These myths became so powerful that life soon began to imitate literature, with memoirs and popular fiction being littered with the harrowing tales of Jewish suffering and escape which they had read elsewhere, incorporating them into their personal narratives.[77]

A prime example of this myth adoption in action can be recognised in Louis Teeman's *Footprints in the Sand* (1976). Self-published, Teeman's memoirs were authored to educate his

[74] Lloyd P. Gartner, *American and British Jews in the Age of the Great Migration* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), pp. 21-22.
[75] Samuel and Thompson, p. 19.
[76] Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins', pp. 252-253.
[77] Yohanan Petrovksy-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827-1917: Drafted into Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 2.

grandchildren about their Jewish heritage. Much to Teeman's regret his son married a Christian Englishwoman and they moved to Cornwall, where they brought the children up with her faith. This perceived loss of Jewish heritage deeply moved Teeman, who responded by writing a 768-page memoir. More than his life story, the book ranged from surveying general Jewish history, the history of the area of Leeds where he grew up, alongside personal anecdotes. *Footprints in the Sand* accordingly can be regarded not only as an educational tool, but also Teeman's personal expression of situating his life within the historical Jewish experience.[78] Teeman's memoirs therefore can be viewed to mirror the general pattern of the American generational model. Motivated by a sense of nostalgia, Teeman created a memory source of 'authentic' Jewishness to act as a signifier of this identity for both himself, and successive generations.

   Footprints in the Sand henceforth also operates as a general historical record of Jewish history. 1881 is widely recognised as the turning point for Russian Jewry, with Alexander II's assassination and the following pogroms considered as the prime factors behind mass Jewish immigration. Teeman also highlighted the year of vital importance for his family history, with the chaos and pogroms forcing his parents to join the mass of Jews fleeing Russia.[79] Due to his writing style, it is uncertain as the whether the detailed journey is that of Teeman's parents, or a symbolic, generic representation of the Jewish immigrant experience. Accordingly, it can be suggested that this memoir is an example of life imitating literature. Rather than his parents' personal tale, Teeman instead explored the horrors of 'Mother Russia', where 'seldom has a mother been so cruel, so repressive'.[80] This memoir was concerned with representing the resilience of a people oppressed in every way imaginable, economically, physically and spiritually. It was these people which Teeman desired his grandchildren to know they were descended from. Far from a simple memoir, *Footprints in the Sand* is consequently an emotional account of Jewish history, informed by popular myths.

   Whilst the narratives created following the 'memory boom' largely follow established popular myths, as with earlier testimony, counter-narratives have been produced. The most easily identifiable exist within the accounts created by oral testimony. Whilst also a memory source, the nature of the oral interview differs greatly from the act of written testimony. The text created can be altered by many variables, such as its setting, time and the identity of the interviewer. One could conduct two different interviews with the same person, regarding the same matter but changing any of these elements could produce two varying accounts. It is this subjectivity which

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[78] Gemma Romain, *Connecting Histories: A Comparative Exploration of African-Caribbean and Jewish History and Memory in Modern Britain* (London: Kegan Paul, 2006), pp. 100-101.
[79] Louis Teeman, *Footprints in the Sand: An Autobiography* (Leeds: L. Teeman, 1976), p. 42.
[80] Ibid., p. 34.

has long caused the caution of historians to engage with oral sources, with the tensions between memory and history needing to be carefully navigated. Indeed, the product of oral history can be far more impressionistic than a written source, with the final product being both what a historian *hears* as well as what they say or *write*.[81] Whereas written testimony is a measured, controlled and conscious process, the resultant testimony of oral history can be more spontaneous. Interviewers can take a more passive or active role in the interview, guiding or surprising the interviewee into exploring certain facets of their past.

The interviews conducted by the London Jewish Museum between 1976 and 1994 offer an interesting alternate source of memory. Whilst the examined memoirs are authored by a mixture of 'notable' and 'ordinary' individuals, they are consistent with having been written for a reason. The oral interviews by contrast are an example of conservation history in action. Arising out of the outreach programme of the then named London Museum of Jewish Life, the oral interviews are a by-product of the institution's proactive approach to recovering and preserving the Jewish heritage of the East End, which promoted the popularisation of Jewish history through initiatives such as Research Group sessions, walking tours and public talks.[82]

The interview with Wolf Kossoff for instance, is notable for highlighting the previously marginalised experience of left-wing, politically active Jewish East Enders. Interviewed in 1977 by David Jacobs, the interview provides great context of Kossoff's immigrant background. Born in Ukraine in 1893, Kossoff described his childhood in Povoloch before his migration to England in 1908. The interview is led by Jacobs, with him asking questions which prompted Kossoff to engage with his past. In a notable exchange, Jacobs asked if there were any problems for Jews in Povoloch. Kossoff recalled that his Jewish neighbours lived challenging lives and that they did not 'know any better', but that in his town they did not experience a pogrom. Rather, they heard of incidents throughout Ukraine such as in Kishinev in 1903, or the violence which flared up in 1905 after the failed Revolution and the Russo-Japanese War, where the Jews were scapegoated.[83]

From Kossoff's testimony therefore, a clear climate of fear for the Russian Jewry is present. However, he did not recall a personal experience of violence as being the cause of his migration. Whilst this example could be tentatively used to challenge the established 'myths of origin', that Kossoff noted an atmosphere of fear in fact supports such narratives. Life in late Imperial Russia was uncertain for Jewry, so they fled its borders. The accounts which asserted that their parents

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[81] Alessandro Portelli, 'Oral History as a Genre', in Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (eds.), *Narrative and Genre* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 23.
[82] Burman, 'Transforming the Jewish Museum', pp. 357-358.
[83] London Jewish Museum, Tape #05, Interview with Wolf Kossoff, 16/06/1977.

fled due to pogroms subsequently could be as noted a misinterpretation: they fled out of fear, not direct physical harm.

From the surveyed materials following the 'memory boom', only one direct counter-narrative stands apart as an exception. Lew Grade's memoirs, *My Story: Still Dancing* (1988), provides an account which is striking in its representation of Jewish life in late Imperial Russia. Whereas the explored memoirs of this chapter have described intolerable living conditions and fear of pogroms (direct or general) as the cause of migration, Grade's memoirs differ. Curiously, Grade admitted that he was never too concerned about his family history, so his recollections of life in Tokmak, a small village near Odessa, are far from comprehensive. In 1912 Grade's father left Russia for England. Although he would have been unaware of the political situation at the time, being just five years old, Grade did not recall his family ever being physically attacked. If his parents suffered mental anguish regarding their situation, they never let it show. In fact, Grade's sole recollection of their migration is that one day his father packed his bags to go for a long journey across the sea.[84] Three months later he sent for his family, and so they travelled to England.

The only hint of distress is the tale of his mother's three brothers, who three years earlier decided there was no future for Jews in Ukraine, and so emigrated to London where they became cabinet-makers, with two being very successful.[85] It is unclear as to whether this was purely an economic move, since these men saw no future financial success due to their Jewishness, or that they departed in fear of future pogroms. Either way, Grade's account is perhaps what Gartner would expect to be the most 'typical' example of Jewish migration in the period: yet despite this, it is unique in being one of the few examined representations which does not cite pogroms, military service or persecution as the root cause for migration.

Grade's memoirs were a vehicle to showcase the behind the scenes workings of his successful career in the entertainment industry. His accounts of his life were widely regarded as being dull, with the excitement of his dealings underplayed.[86] Following on from this, one could speculate that Grade's low-key approach to narrating his life story, alongside the intention of his memoirs to shed light on his show business career, caused the need and desire for an 'escape'

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[84] Lew Grade, *My Story: Still Dancing* (Glasgow: Fontana Press, 1988), p. 20.

[85] Ibid., p. 21.

[86] Louis Barfe, 'Review of All My Shows Are Great: The Life of Lew Grade, By Lewis Chester' in *The Independent*, 23 October 2001 <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/all-my-shows-are-great-the-life-of-lew-grade-by-lewis-chester-1922856.html> [accessed 21/10/2015].

narrative to be overshadowed. Grade's memoirs were not about justifying his presence in Britain as a Jewish immigrant, but rather revealing the life of a successful businessman.

What emerges from the third generation of memory therefore, is an embracement of the 'myths of origin'. Whilst the dramatic escape tales which featured within earlier narratives may be absent, instead a matter of fact acceptance can be found. When the authors attempt to expand upon these narratives, however, tensions arise. Tensions which are often underlined by a caveat that the author does not know the entire story, but rather only possess an incomplete picture of their parents' or grandparents' past. Furthermore, these tensions are not confined to the written record, as oral testimony reveals, with many interviewees relaying vague details of the cause of their parents' migration, admitting themselves that they do not know the full details.[87]

What becomes apparent from examining the representations of tales of origin, as found within the third generation of memory, is that 'memory' sources cannot be relied upon as wholly accurate images of the past. This section has detailed how many accounts are constructions. Whilst they are based in the actuality of lived experience, the historian can recognise how many reminisces of Eastern European immigration have been entangled with myths: myths which have both personal and group importance, in terms of defining identity and heritage within modern Anglo-Jewry. The British treatment of tales of migration are similar to the American experience. In her study of the Lower East Side, Hasia Diner noted that the 'mythic dimensions' of the story of the Lower East Side in memory do not actually fit the history. However, the turn to embracing memory after the 1960s saw American Jewry define the area as the place of their memories, populated by the refugees from pogroms, the exploited workers who duly embraced the American dream and prospered.[88]

Whilst the American narrative may desire to 'protect' this history more and has defined the Lower East Side as the definitive site of American Jewish memory, the similarities with the nostalgic turn in British Jewish memory, and with areas such as the Jewish East End are evident. It was a nostalgia constructed upon the building blocks of identity for Britain's working-class Jews: refugees from Tsarist persecution, who embraced the opportunities and liberty of Britain. The importance of these images is that they have operated to portray both Anglo-Jewish and British

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[87] An example of this in action comes from Mark Fineman's testimony. When interviewed by the London Jewish Museum, Fineman could provide little definitive answers about his father's migration. His father arrived in London in 1902, and Fineman believed it was to escape service in the Tsarist army. That this happened, in Fineman's words, 'was never made quite clear, for obvious reasons'. As with the tale of Michael Marks, it could be posited that this escape narrative was retrospectively woven into the Fineman family narrative. See London Jewish Museum, Tape #050, Interview with Mark Fineman, 27/01/1986.
[88] Hasia R. Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 8.

history positively. Whilst the American narrative focused upon the 'authenticity' of a Jewish community, Anglo-Jewish narratives simultaneously fondly recalled a first stage of settlement and its closely bonded community, whilst also praising the liberal tolerance and acceptance found within Britain in offering a home to these refugees. Indeed, further warm recollections of the lives led by immigrant Jewry and their children in Britain can be found within popular treatments of the daily home life of Jewish families.

II) Family and Home

Popular memory of Jewish working-class families in areas such as the East End can be traced back to the warm depictions explored within the previous chapter. Prevalent were images of loving and supportive families. At the centre of these was the Jewish mother. Often stereotyped, popular images conveyed her ambitions as stretching no further than the home, taking great care to provide a comfortable household for her husband, and establishing the foundations for her children to enjoy a better life.[89] Whilst early narratives can be perceived to be distorted due the defensive nature of immigrant testimony in response to English hostility, the extension of such representations within the third generation of memory is revealing.

It has been proposed that the trend of praising Jewish women as good mothers above all else has been influenced by two factors. In terms of Jewish tradition, the successful rearing of children is of uppermost importance to the survival of the Jewish community. Furthermore, middle-class and bourgeois nineteenth-century ideals of 'good motherhood' have dominated subsequent English thinking, seeing women often consigned to the domestic sphere.[90] Anglo-Jewish conceptions accordingly saw women praised and valued as mothers first and foremost. Such attitudes saw the history of Anglo-Jewish women marginalised until the 'cultural turn' inspired the expansion of the historical record via new mediums such as oral history. Indeed, it was to challenge the romanticised and rosy images of the Jewish family and women's roles, which inspired the Jewish Women in London Group to conduct a series of oral interviews with women of all ages, interrogating the long-held myths surrounding the relative comfort of the Jewish immigrant family, whilst also offering agency to women in expressing their own history.[91] The extent to which these more diverse representations developed following the 'memory boom' will be explored below.

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[89] Jewish Women in London Group, *Generations of Memories: Voices of Jewish Women* (London: Women's Press, 1989), p. 6.
[90] Lara Marks, 'Carers and Servers of the Jewish Community: The Marginalised Heritage of Jewish Women in Britain', in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 107-111.
[91] Jewish Women in London Group, pp. 6-7.

Whilst the memory representations examined earlier of the Jewish family revealed divergent narratives between the 'notable' and 'marginal' authors, a far more uniform image is present within the most recently created testimony: nostalgia for a lost world. Such sentiments are perhaps best demonstrated by a brief excerpt from the unpublished manuscript of Jack Titton, *As I Saw It, 1894-1908*: 'what did I need to worry about everything I thought I needed was there'.[92] Both popular and private narratives following the 'memory boom' accordingly tend to convey every want and need of the Jewish child being cared for by their family – meaning their mother – enabling a happy and secure childhood. Such images contrast markedly to the historical record of Jewish children born to immigrant parents prior to 1900, whose school days were often cut short to supplement the family's income by being sent out to work.[93]

A defining feature of anti-alienist criticism of immigrant Jewry during the period of mass immigration, was of their tendency to overcrowd in specific settlements such as the East End, driving Englishmen from 'hearth and home' whilst pushing wages down due to their ability to work and live in impoverished conditions.[94] The testimony created following the 'memory boom' simultaneously confirms, whilst refutes these images. Grade's memoirs for example, confirm that initial immigrant housing was on the poorer side. His first family 'home' in Brick Lane was depressing compared to the large house and orchard they left behind in Tokmak:

> Brick Lane was bleak and rather dark, and so were the two rooms we lived in. There were two other families living in the same building, and I remember that, although we had a toilet, there was not bath. As for the furniture, to call it basic is an understatement. For the first time in our lives we were really poor, and, on top of this, I could barely make myself understood because all I could speak was Russian.[95]

Despite these early conditions, Grade recalled his family were far from impoverished. To call early immigrant life comfortable would be a distortion, but life was manageable, if challenging. Similar sentiments can be found within the memoirs of Bernard Homa, the grandson of the renowned Rabbi Aba Werner. Homa recalled his parents' early difficulties in finding suitable accommodation, which saw him sent to his maternal grandparents for a few months when he was four years old.[96] Once their condition stabilised, Homa returned to live with his parents, who rented four rooms above the Chaikin wine and spirit business which his father worked for, at 228 Commercial Road, Stepney. Homa remembered that living conditions were still cramped, with five

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[92] London Jewish Museum, 1985.113 / Titton, Jack / As I Saw it – Memoirs of J J Titton 1894-1908 / memoirs c. 1984.
[93] Berrol, p. 83.
[94] Garrard, 'Parallels of Protest', pp. 49-50.
[95] Grade, p. 22.
[96] Bernard Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time* ([s.l.]: Bernard Homa, 1990), p. 7.

children and his parents sharing the home.[97] Even so, such conditions were not intolerable, with the family recorded as still residing there seven years later in the 1911 census. However, by this time Homa's two elder sisters had moved out, leaving five in the household.[98] A romanticised image of how immigrant Jewry carefully navigated their initial settlement in Britain is often repeated within this generation of memory.

A significant influence on how family life is portrayed in memory sources is nostalgia. The interwar period is often regarded as a key moment in the social mobility of working-class Jewry, particularly for those who resided within the East End, with the established Jewish working-class being supplanted by a burgeoning middle-class of immigrant origin and native-born Anglo-Jewry.[99] With the Jewish working-classes dwindling and their ambitious children moving beyond the areas of primary settlement, many communities such as East End Jewry began to disappear, to be replaced by more recent immigrants. It was the recognition of a vanishing world and society which inspired many literary works during the 1970s and beyond, works such as Emmanuel Litvinoff's highly praised *Journey Through a Small Planet* (1972) and Harry Blacker's memoir, *Just Like It Was* (1974).[100] The latter was an account which was perceived as being *too* tainted by romanticism. Reviewing for the *Jewish Chronicle*, Charles Landstone remarked:

> Distance has coloured his spectacles, and the grim, poverty and the discomforts are all forgotten. We can, I think, overlook the fact that Mr Blacker is by nature a romantle [sic], and that wherever his youth had been spent – even if it had been spent in the Pale from which his parents had escaped – he would still have found a delight in recollecting it.[101]

Blacker's memoirs were highly anecdotal. A series of short stories of events from his childhood, they were arranged in no discernible order, chronologically, thematically or otherwise.

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[97] Ibid., p. 8.

[98] Homa's memoirs recalled that his family left the East End in 1913, based off his father's success in the wine industry. They moved above another wine shop in Dalston which had been absorbed into the family business of M. Chaikin and Co. Despite this they still regularly took long walks on Saturday mornings to the *Machzike Hadath* synagogue. See: *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*, Kew, Surrey, The National Archives of the UK, 1911 and Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 34.

[99] David Cesarani, 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Suburbs: Social Change in Anglo-Jewry Between the Wars, 1914-1945', *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June, 1998), p. 21.

[100] Litvinoff's work is rightfully regarded as a masterpiece. The opening page introducing the book features a quote from the *Times Literary Supplement*, praising Litvinoff for 'recreating the world of his growing up' with his childhood being 'raw, rich and wry.' As for Litvinoff himself, he described himself as a survivor. The flight of his parents from Russia saved him and his seven brothers and one sister from the 'holocausts of famine and Nazism'. These horrendously traumatic events are tragedies which Litvinoff described himself as being connected to with both the guilt and obsession of a survivor. Such identification is an intriguing one, with Litvinoff almost describing himself as a survivor of tragedy by his parents' early refugee status when fleeing from Russia in 1913. In the form of his parents being victims and refugees from Tsarist anti-Semitism, Litvinoff himself became a survivor of a far worse tragedy. See: Emanuel Litvinoff, *Journey Through a Small Planet* (London: Michael Joseph, 1972).

[101] *Jewish Chronicle*, November 29, 1979, p. 20.

As with Grade and Homa, Blacker affirmed the overcrowded nature and harshness of the Jewish East End, whilst simultaneously romanticising it. Bethnal Green was described as 'conglomeration of narrow, cobbled streets, terraced houses, cat-smelling tenements, and gas-lit cabinet-making workshops', but a keen sense of nostalgia is present within his narrative.[102] Jewish life was a 'struggle', continually building up to the Sabbath, the centre piece of his Jewish East End experience. And here, the warmth and love of his home reduced this hardship to mere routine. Central, stood the Jewish mother. Such images should not be surprising, considering the relative absence of fathers from Jewish homes due to long working hours. Children accordingly saw a lot of their mother, who often acted as the sole parental figure in the home.[103]

Many of the representations published following popular engagement with the Jewish immigrant past seemingly confirm the stereotyped role of Jewish mothers as being wholly true. Spector's dedicated chapter to his mother is a key example of such tendencies. Described as a 'typical Yiddishe Momma', she remained a little old, fat, grey-haired lady, who was humourless and complained of pains in her feet and legs. Interestingly, Spector regarded her as a 'prisoner of her time', lacking the strength, time and intelligence to break out of the role which Jewish society defined for her.[104] Furthermore, whilst many narratives are tinged with nostalgia and admiration for the selfless nature of their mothers, Spector's narrative is notable for being one of the few coloured by regret. Recognising the hardship his mother endured to support the family, the lack of opportunity in England for her and how the family took her for granted, saddened him. Whatever strength his mother once possessed seems to have been expended by her migration. It was an experience which 'drained all her personal initiative and individuality', ultimately leaving her 'unable to come to terms with her life in England'.[105]

Tales of immigrant women being denied education are commonplace. Compared to Spector, Chaim Lewis offered a more positive scene. Lewis was born in the West End, often regarded as an area of secondary Jewish immigrant settlement where the more affluent resided. In many ways, however, this Jewish community was a smaller version of East End Jewry. A writer,

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[102] Harry Blacker, *Just Like It Was: Memoirs of the Mittel East* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1974), p. 18.
[103] Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 156.
[104] Similar instances can be found within much of the oral history work which has been done on the Jewish East End. Jerry White's study of the Rothschild Buildings, low-cost model dwellings which were erected in 1887 featured an interview with Annie Kaplan. Kaplan's mother had been raised in a comparatively comfortable family, and as with the custom of the time her father prohibited her from learning a trade. This was because he believed the role of a Jewish girl was to marry and raise a family whilst her husband was the breadwinner, meaning no trade was required. When Mrs Kaplan was widowed in 1911, therefore, she was left to turn to charity not out of her unwillingness to work, but because circumstance and her upbringing had denied her the opportunity to learn a trade of her own. See: Ibid., pp. 158-159.
[105] Spector, p. 32.

poet and teacher, *A Soho Address* (1965) was written in memory of his mother. She commanded a great deal of Lewis's admiration and respect, whilst his father was portrayed as a more comical and flawed individual. Well-received upon publication, many critics praised the loving detail in which Lewis brought the people of his childhood *shtetl* to life.[106] Rather than decry the role which his mother had been cast into, Lewis instead fondly remembered the glee with which she worked, delighting as every maternal instinct was answered by caring for her husband and children.[107] Indeed, Lewis remarked that his mother saw no need to pursue education: her family was all she needed. Lewis contrasted her to his father to illustrate her fine qualities:

> No wonder her approach to living was so different from my father's. She was big town to my father's village hovel: she possessed all the sturdy characteristics of the Russian temperament. She was earnest, forthright, plain-spoken, proud and tempestuous. In manner and temperament she was Tchaikowski to my father's comic opera. Yet, for all her superior airs, she had no learning to speak of. Her early education was meagre by modern standards – not enough to provide an escape from the life of drudgery fate had in store for her. As the years rolled by, all that remained of her childhood literacy were the fading memories of the Russian spoken word – and of course the native Yiddish my parents conversed in.[108]

That Jewish mothers sacrificed so much for their family is a common trope found throughout popular images of immigrant and working-class Jewry in Britain. However, dissenting voices can once more be found. As noted, Grade accepted that his family were 'poor' in their early years. But, he was confident that his mother exaggerated the extent of their hardship later on, overstating the extent to which she borrowed money from relatives to afford the rent, and how often she would forgo food along with her husband, so the children could eat. Indeed, she told Grade that there were times when there was only an apple or a couple of slices of bread in the house to be shared among the family, and that she lost so much weight that she weighed only six stone. Grade did not recall such desperation. His own memory is that whilst the family were poor and never had money for luxuries, they never went hungry.[109]

As noted Grade's memoirs stand apart as an 'exceptional' account. Despite being the memoirs of a public figure, Grade's narrative is subdued. His representation of his childhood upbringing accordingly could be interpreted in two manners. It may indeed have been the case that his mother exaggerated the extent of their hardship, therefore making the success of Grade and his two brothers even more praiseworthy. Alternatively, Grade's memory itself could be

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[106] 'Chaim Lewis: Obituary', *Jewish Chronicle*, February 26, 2009.
[107] Chaim Lewis, *A Soho Address* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1965), p. 25.
[108] Ibid., p. 26.
[109] Grade, p. 22.

questionable, with his youthful experiences not grasping the nature of his family's hardship. Considering his young age at the time, it is not inconceivable that he was unaware of his family's potentially poor finances. Trying to ascertain immigrant Jewry's financial and social condition is an exceptionally challenging task, as the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration discovered in 1903. When asked if he could judge the condition of families based off their children, the headmaster of the Christian Street Board School for Boys curtly responded the 'children are certainly well fed'.[110]

As with all communities, different personal experiences and perspectives exist. Within the wealth of testimony which was created following the 'memory boom', some challenge the stereotyped image of Jewish mothers. One such notable example can be found within the memoirs of science-fiction novelist Ralph Finn. Born in 1912 to immigrant parents, his memoirs were written to recapture and preserve some essence of the East End. Although many of his memories fall beyond the First World War, his narrative provides an intriguing insight into the structure of immigrant families. His father passed away when Finn was just three years of age, leaving his mother alone to provide for the family and support her own parents. Far from the tightly bonded Jewish family, Finn depicted an estranged collection of individuals. Close only to his brother and grandfather, Finn's mother was as an aloof figure, whilst his grandmother was reduced to essentially becoming the family's maid. Such was regarded as the necessity for the family to survive, where despite hardship and hunger, the children never went without replacement boots and supplies. The family looked out for their own, despite their lack of warmth.[111]

Most narratives emphasise the centrality of mothers in the domestic sphere. Finn's mother though, embraced the 'male' breadwinning role. An educated schoolmistress, she had been unable to find employment in England and was instead forced into the pre-defined role of the Jewish housewife. However, Finn believed she always strived for greater things. As such her bereavement was treated as an opportunity to escape such confinements, thereby passing the archetypal role of 'Yiddishe Mamma' to Finn's grandmother, Booba. Described as Finn's second mother, Booba lived a hard life, being 'born to work and suffer and suffer'.[112] Echoing Spector's

[110] Francis Butcher, 18793, *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration with minutes of evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II*, Parliamentary Papers [Cd. 1742] (1903).
[111] Ralph L. Finn, *Time Remembered: The Tale of an East End Jewish Boyhood* (London: Futura, 1985, originally published as *No Tears In Aldgate*, London: Hale, 1963), p. 14.
[112] Ibid., p. 57;
A similar account of grandparents moving in with a recently widowed daughter and taking over the domestic duties can be found within Mark Fineman's interview. Fineman's grandparents moved into the family's home in Meredith Buildings in 1914 following his father's death. His grandfather brought devout orthodoxy into the home which the family then observed out of respect for him. Meanwhile, his grandmother did all the cooking and maintaining of the home, despite her back being slightly hunched and her leg gangrenous, which caused her to shamble about. See London Jewish Museum, Tape #050, Interview with Mark Fineman, 27/01/1986.

sentiments, Finn described her as a serious woman with no sense of humour, who despite her seemingly frail body, possessed bundles of energy and never sat to relax.

First up to prepare the morning meal, she was always last to bed, working tirelessly to ensure the family's every need was met. Essentially an 'unpaid servant', Booba was tasked with all the domestic chores which Finn's mother had no time for and regarded as the work of the stupid and ignorant. As with Spector's remorseful account, Finn admitted that he never questioned the family's treatment of his grandmother, and it was only in later years that he regretted how she had been treated. Far from a romanticising the 'Yiddishe Mamma', in this narrative the role is a thankless task. One his family thrust upon an elderly woman, who simply accepted it as her responsibility. Finn concluded: 'Booba deserved better things than were ever given to her, than she ever knew'.[113]

As previously outlined, few memoirs have been authored by women. But with the popularisation of history following the 'cultural turn', the rise of gender studies, feminist scholarship and the use of oral history, female voices were increasingly recorded. As noted, organisations such as Jewish Women in London Group launched projects to rescue female voices from obscurity. With the field of Anglo-Jewish history dominated by male voices, the Group found that the marginalisation of female perspectives was also internally managed. In a series of interviews, they discovered that many Jewish women had refused to talk to their children about their past, preferring to shelter their children from their personal suffering and pain, and instead focused on the link between present security and comfort in Britain.[114]

One of the women interviewed was Ena Abrahams. Born in 1924 in Stoke Newington, her parents were first generation immigrants who met in England. Both entered the tailoring workforce as children; her father for his own wage and her mother to supplement her own father's income. Part of a massive workforce, Abrahams' account is notable for highlighting the changing role of Jewish women and mothers. Millie, her mother, as a woman, was part of the 'unskilled' element of the garment trade, and so found it easier than her husband to find employment in the 1930s when Ena was growing up. She even remained working until she passed away at the age of 78.[115] Indeed, such an account supports research which reveals that many first generation immigrant Jewish women were actually quite likely to enter – and remain – in the workforce than is often supposed. Whether due to valuing their independence, needing to

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[113] Finn, p. 60.
[114] Jewish Women in London Group, p. 6.
[115] Ena Abrahams, 'I Had This Other Life…', in Jewish Women in London Group, *Generations of Memories: Voices of Jewish Women* (London: Women's Press, 1989)*,* pp. 77-78.

support their husband's income or solely provide for the family, the successful and significant contribution of Jewish women to a household's income is something which has long been overlooked and marginalised by popular memory and stereotypes of the Jewish mother's role.[116]

That her mother assumed the role of the family breadwinner was not regarded as being strange by Abrahams. Furthermore, she noted that her mother's life could have been quite different, if not for her family's early struggles:

> My mother got a scholarship to go to grammar school, but of course she could never go. In fact, it was only the younger members of the family that ever had any educational chances. My mother was *bright* but she didn't ever have any opportunities. She had to go out to work. It wasn't only that – first of all they lived in very bad housing conditions; secondly, of course, there were all these children coming along, and their father was also a semi-invalid, suffered with his chest, mostly because he became a presser over here.[117]

That Millie entered the workforce was portrayed as a simple fact of life. Furthermore, it was framed as a positive experience, helping prepare Millie for her life and control over all spheres of the Abrahams family home:

> They handled the family finances, besides all the responsibilities of child-bearing. Although the men worked very long hours, in bad conditions, in many ways I think they never suffered the same stress as women. I think women's lives were very hard, very, very hard indeed. Lack of domestic appliances, continuous childbearing, how to find the next meal on the table. Many of them went without adequate food themselves; they certainly fed their children first. There's a whole generation of women who didn't sit down and eat with their families, their families were so big. I never remember my mother-in-law sitting down and eating. She always served everybody.[118]

Interestingly, Abrahams did not regard this as a Jewish trait. Rather, the all-encompassing role of women as the guardian of the domestic sphere was a working-class attribute. In terms of the Jewish household, however, women became the commanding figure. This was because in Eastern European orthodox Jewish tradition, the wife's role was to manage the domestic and economic spheres, leaving the husband free to tend to the spiritual aspects of life.[119] Such attitudes were not wholly imported into immigrant families of the 1900s and beyond. Rose Kerrigan was also interviewed by the Group and described how her father was an 'intellectual', as opposed to religious. Despite his enlightened views on gender equality – he supported the

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[116] Rickie Burman, 'Jewish Women and the Household Economy in Manchester, c. 1890-1920', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 60.
[117] Abrahams, 'I Had This Other Life…', p. 79.
[118] Ibid., pp. 94-95.
[119] Burman, 'Jewish Women and the Household Economy', p. 62.

suffragettes, for instance – 'he never did a bloody thing in the house! The two things didn't equate'.[120]

Born in Dublin in 1903, Kerrigan's parents also were immigrants who met and married in Britain. The second of five children, Kerrigan's family settled in the Jewish community in Glasgow where her parents were engaged in the two 'immigrant' trades of the region of tailoring and cigarette-making.[121] Kerrigan's mother also was the central figure of her home and took special care to pass on her domestic skills to her sole surviving daughter. From her Kerrigan learnt how to recognise fresh fish and the names of parts of meat, along with how food was made *kosher*; important tasks which 'good' Jewish mothers were expected to carry out. Indeed, Kerrigan's account is significant in highlighting this passing down of knowledge, alongside the expectations placed on girls:

> I had to help with the housework. The Jewish attitude was that boys weren't asked to do a thing. The only one who helped me was Willie, who was younger than me, and then he would only help me to do the brasses […] and I had to clean them every Friday. How I hated the smell of Brasso! My mother was so ill that I had to clean the floor when I was six! She would sit on a stool and wring out the cloths and I would wipe the floor over. I did *all* the shopping.[122]

The oral testimonies of women are invaluable in revealing the different experiences of men and women, boys and girls in immigrant Jewish households. Whilst some written accounts, such as Finn's, reveal that women were not necessarily always consigned to the domestic sphere, this still was a male-generated perspective. The oral testimonies of Kerrigan and Abrahams are notable for shedding some light on what was behind the sacrifices which Jewish women made, or of the expectations placed on Jewish daughters, readying them for a life of domesticity after marriage. The binary stereotypes of Jewish women as either good mothers or immoral prostitutes which were cultivated during the period of study, have blinded popular accounts to not only the existence of women outside of these spheres, but also the very reality of the daily lives of women.[123]

In terms of popular memory, Jewish women accordingly are typecast as heroic, self-sacrificing mothers, who somehow managed to care for large families in challenging conditions. Women who accepted their role as the carer and maintainer of the home, whilst passing such values onto their children. And in doing so, the popular myth of women changing their context

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[120] Rose Kerrigan, 'We just want to get something for the Working Class…', in Jewish Women in London Group, *Generations of Memories: Voices of Jewish Women* (London: Women's Press, 1989)*, p. 55.
[121] Ibid., p. 48.
[122] Ibid., p. 56.
[123] Marks, p. 113.

and mode of working almost overnight, from Eastern European tradition to the domestic housewife of the 1920s became ingrained in popular consciousness. Indeed, Rickie Burman has theorised that the downplaying of the role of Jewish women outside the domestic sphere, can be ascribed to the integration and assimilation of the bourgeois middle-class values of English society; hence any instances of the prominent roles of women in supporting their husband's business, or working to supplement the family income have been reduced to merely 'helping out'.[124] Consequently the male figure's ego is preserved, whilst simultaneously the female figure adheres to society's expectations of a 'good mother'.

Compared to mothers, fathers are more mysterious. Most worked long hours due to employment in Jewish immigrant trades such as tailoring, cabinet-making and boot-making. Many children accordingly never saw much of their fathers at home. The experience of one interviewee can be assumed to be typical of the general experience, with one son of a cabinet-maker remarking that as a schoolboy he never saw his father 'cause he went to work in the dark and came home in the dark'.[125] For many children, especially those of orthodox Jewish homes, their only experiences of their fathers was of the absent worker, or devout orthodox Jew.

Such orthodox devotion comes across in many memoirs created following the 'memory boom', although not all authors were appreciative of such traditions. Lewis's father ran his grocery shop in Soho seemingly against all the odds, surviving despite himself and the repeated investigations and visits from sanitary inspectors. This was until 1959, when he was finally shut down and evicted. Lewis's father was impatient, hot-headed and argumentative. Whilst Lewis showed some level of respect for his father's ability to support his family despite his poor shop keeping, there is an undercurrent of discontent surrounding his father's inability to adapt to English culture. Whilst his mother was a heroic figure who adapted, his father never outgrew his early beginnings, and always appeared to be very old and difficult:

> Born into the primitive ways of life in the backwoods of Russia, he remained the backwoodsman for all the years he spent in the world's great metropolis… Put him back, at eighty, into the hovels of the Russian hamlet in which he was born, and he would miss none of the comforts of civilisation: he would be completely at home, provided, that is, he had his small congregation of Jews to pray and squabble with, and a Rabbi to revere. It was this indifference to time that made him the richest of characters but the most impossible man to live with. On the Sabbath day in the summer he was not the least embarrassed to take the air in fashionable Regent Street in a suit that was dandy in the wild days of his village youth in the 'eighties.[126]

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[124] Burman, 'Jewish Women and the Household Economy', pp. 60-61.
[125] White, p. 150.
[126] Chaim Lewis, pp. 21-22.

Anti-alienists often highlighted the secluded nature of the Jewish East End, complaining that it was a foreign ghetto, transported into the heart of England's capital. Such highly politicised anxieties were increasingly supported by theories surrounding race, which grew in prominence before the First World War. In an era of increasing uncertainty surrounding Britain's position as an imperial power, some sought to redefine the nation along racial terms.[127] The anti-English, alien 'other' therefore was the subject of much political hostility and public agitation. As explored in Chapter One, popular images cultivated by the nouveau riche immigrants focused on emphasising their 'English', settled and assimilated nature. That such images were embraced by the settled Jewish communities across Britain should come as no surprise, with the inherent English or Britishness of these communities adopted as the cornerstone of their identities.

A notable example of the preservation of such images in popular memory comes from the magnum opus of Boris Bennett. Originally named Sokhatchevsky, Boris was born in in Ozorkow, Poland in 1900. His photographic credentials stated that he worked in a photographic studio in Paris prior to emigrating to London in 1922, where he worked as an assistant in the Perkoff studio on Commercial Road.[128] After enrolling on photographic courses in Leeds and Glasgow, Boris returned to the East End in 1927 to open a studio at 150 Whitechapel Road under his own name. Great success followed and by the 1930s he was popularly regarded as *the* photographer of the East End. Highly efficient, Boris is remembered by his son, Michael, as photographing large numbers daily. A typical Sunday could see between 20 and 40 wedding parties photographed between eight in the morning and seven in the evening.[129]

In terms of his photographs of the East End community, his work has been characterised by Michael Berkowitz as helping to 'facilitate both the reality and the imagining of the transformation of Jews into Englishmen and Englishwomen'.[130] Whilst his photographs may generally be of second generation Jewry, the relatively recent rediscovery of his photographs is intriguing. The London Jewish Museum features a gallery of his wedding photographs to showcase Jewish wedding ceremonies, whilst his 'rediscovered' photographs have recently been repackaged and published. Titled *Vintage Glamour in London's East End*, the book originated from a local photographic group which collected black and white photographs. After Boris's son Michael

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[127] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: a European disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 215.

[128] Michael Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography in Britain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), p. 67.

[129] Michael Bennett, 'Boris: A Life by Michael Bennett', in Boris Bennett, *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* (London: Hoxton Mini Press, 2014), p. 12.

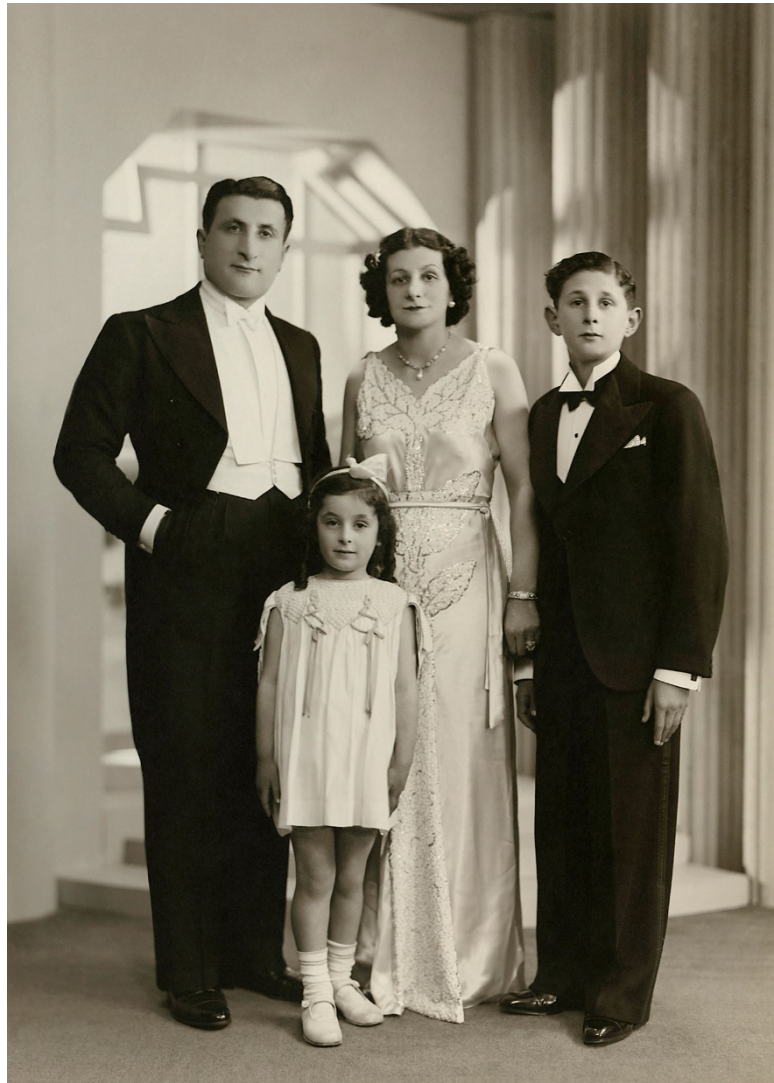[130] Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography*, p. 26.

Figure 1: Boris Bennett, Monty Hubbersgilt, c. April 1938 in *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* (London: Hoxton Mini Press, 2014)

attended one meeting, a four-year project was launched to collect as many of Boris's photographs as possible and publish them in a high-quality book, alongside an accompanying website.[131]

The collection's titling is noteworthy. 'Vintage Glamour' possess positive connotations, conjuring images of fashion, tradition and charm. The Jewish East End which is neatly packaged in Boris's photography and the book therefore, is a whimsical community, whose character should be celebrated. The book revels in nostalgia, with Greisman highlighting in the introduction the importance of publishing this 'unique collection' before the originals are lost, and for future generations to recognise them as an 'essential part of our shared Jewish heritage'.[132] The

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[131] Michael Greisman and Frank Harris, 'An Introduction by the Curators', <http://eastendvintageglamour.org.uk/about/> [accessed 19/05/2017].

[132] Michael Griesman, 'Intro', in Boris Bennett, *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* (London: Hoxton Mini Press, 2014), p. 5.

photographs within the book are therefore portrayed as being symbolic of the hope and aspirations of Jewish East Enders to move out of hardship, and into prosperity. Accordingly, the publication can be recognised as a product of the romanticising of memory following the 'memory boom'.

Figure 1 was a portrait commissioned for the occasion of the *barmitzvah* of Monty Hubbersgilt, in April 1938. Monty stands photographed with his sister Sylvia, and their parents, Alec and Rachel. The photograph has clearly been organised by Boris to capture the significance of the moment. As noted by Berkowitz, the photograph can be regarded as being expressive of the imagined transformation of immigrant Jewry into English Jews. After all, despite being taken to mark Monty's *barmitzvah*, an important coming of age ceremony, the family are not adorned in any traditional ceremonial wear. Rather, they are dressed as respectable Englishmen. Monty and his father are wearing suits, whilst his mother and sister wear matching white dresses. Such a dress code of English formal wear should come as no surprise. Boris was described by his son as 'an immaculate dresser', who demanded the same level of attention in those he photographed. His clients were instructed to look their best on 'the most memorable occasion in their lives'. Men for instance, were told that their cuffs were to be exactly one quarter of an inch below the cuffs on their jackets, whilst trousers were to have a sharp crease.[133]

The photograph of Monty's *barmitzvah* is revealing regarding how the community of the Jewish East End are remembered today. Rather than this religious occasion being captured at the synagogue, or the family in their traditional dress for the event, it has instead been portrayed as an occasion signalling the family's status as 'good Englishmen and Jews'. Significantly, this has not only been the photograph's subsequent public portrayal and representation. It also would have been its contemporary interpretation, with the Hubbersgilts choosing to embrace the photographic studio stylings of Boris. This aspirational snapshot of the family captures their idealised version of themselves: the socially mobile and unified family, joined together to mark Monty's special day.[134]

Furthermore, this photograph not only captured a specific moment of family history, but also created a cohesive image of the family's close bond.[135] Significantly to symbolise the passage

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[133] Bennett, p. 12.

[134] Indeed, the biographic description of the photograph confirms the relative well-to-do status of the family. Monty's father, Alec had been apprenticed in the cabinet-making trade by his father. By the time of Monty's *bartmitzvah*, Alec owned his own factory in Stamford Hill, with fifty people in his employ. See: 'Monty Hubbersgilt <http://eastendvintageglamour.org.uk/photoshoot/monty-hubbersgilt/> [accessed 19/05/2017].

[135] Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 7.

of Monty into adulthood, he stands in line with his parents. Alongside his mother and father, all three overlap, not only emphasising their physical and emotional closeness and bond, but also Monty's new mature position in the family. Meanwhile Sylvia stands close-centre to the image, the remaining child of the family to be cared for and protected.

The third generation of memory regarding the experiences of Jewish immigrants in Britain, and their daily family lives can be recognised to have been influenced by the preceding positive images. The established narrative of the united family nurtured and guided by the mother, has been embraced by those seeking to preserve a record of a Jewish working-class community which has since been transformed by both integration and modernity. However, in some instances, nostalgically informed memories are at risk of being overly romanticised. Litvinoff's *Journey Through a Small Planet* for instance, is a critical source for the social historian. Litvinoff was born in Whitechapel in 1915, the second son of immigrant Russian-Jewish parents. As a writer he became well-known for his novels, short stories, poetry and plays, and he was an active human rights campaigner. *Journey Through a Small Planet* is perhaps Litvinoff's best known work and has been described as a 'vivid re-creation of the variety and complexity of Jewish life in the East End during the interwar years'.[136]

In the book Litvinoff wrote in a blunt, dry and self-critical manner about his working-class Jewish childhood and early years in London's East End, as he attempted to find a place for himself in the world. Highly anecdotal, the memoir detailed not only Litvinoff's own experiences, but also featured seemingly imagined stories of his father's political activism and that of other members of the community. For instance, the opening chapter championed the political idealism and heroism of his father, with a vivid tale presented of him preventing a haphazard bombing attempt on Tower Bridge in 1914, orchestrated by a member of his small and incompetent revolutionary group. By contrast, the rest of the memoir featured a markedly different treatment. His father henceforth was represented as a distant, shadowy figure, who abandoned the family in 1916 to fight in the First World War in Russia, never to return. 'No father was more totally absent', Litvinoff remarked, with his early uncertainty over his name also being revealed: 'was it Max or Mark?' The picture of his father which hung on the wall of their small apartment in the Fuller Street Buildings is portrayed almost as a lingering, threatening spectre in the household. Meanwhile, following the established tropes, his mother was portrayed to be 'strong, clever and beautiful', protecting the family from the world.[137]

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[136] William Baker, 'Litvinoff, Emanuel (1915-2011)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/104147> [accessed 02/09/2015].
[137] Litvinoff, p. 26.

Whilst a lively and beautifully written book, *Journey Through a Small Planet* can be used to convey the dangers of nostalgia, particularly regarding the Jewish East End. Indeed, the Author's Note at the beginning of the book reveals the sentimentalism of the memoir:

> Until I was sixteen I lived in the East London borough of Bethnal Green, in a small street that is now just a name on the map. Almost every house in it has gone and it exists, if it exists at all, only in the pages of this book. It was part of a district populated by persecuted Jews from the Russian empire and transformed into a crowded East European ghetto full of synagogues, backroom factories and little grocery stores reeking of pickled herring, garlic sausage and onion bread.[138]

Litvinoff continued to reveal the inspiration for the memoir: a visit by the Swedish writer Alvar Alsterdal, who asked Litvinoff to show him around the Jewish East End. After visiting the area, Litvinoff found the Jewish East End of his childhood and imagination was gone. And thus, *Journey Through a Small Planet* was born, with Litvinoff recreating the Jewish East End of his youth in a sentimental account which revisits that which cannot be restored. The social historian accordingly must note that the community found within these pages are a literary construction. Many stories and anecdotes within the book are detailed too vividly to be purely shaped by memory, with scripted dialogue (especially during the first chapter) being the work of his literary talent. For the historian therefore, the content within this literary memoir needs to be carefully assessed when considering the lived experience of the Jewish East End, to identifying the plausibility within its stories, whilst separating the mythical and imagined facets.[139]

It is this entanglement of myth and actuality in memory which likens the Jewish East End to the Lower East Side. Whilst individual memories exist to add nuance to the overall narratives regarding the working-class Jewish family, these accounts have tended to be portrayed as exceptional instances, going against accepted societal norms. The overarching narrative is positive, with the warmth of the Jewish family sought to be saved for posterity. Indeed, this image bears similarity to the American treatment of the Lower East Side. Remembered as an authentic Jewish space despite the lack of affluence or privacy, the community was defined by its sense of fellowship. Close bonds, warmth and friendship began within the home. Such images were often contrasted with the increasing distantness of modern relationships.[140] This fond romanticism can be recognised within much treatment of not only the Jewish East End, but also of many working-class Jewish families across Britain. Many recall a shrinking local community which was shaped by the very intimacy of the Jewish family. Within both the Anglo-Jewish and British contexts

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[138] Ibid., p. 9.
[139] Jeff Peneff, 'Myths in Life Stories', in Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 45.
[140] Diner, p. 61.

accordingly, a sense of nostalgia for a more straightforward and comforting way of life can be identified. However, this treatment does not extend to all facets of the immigrant experience, with some elements such as religious custom receiving a less consistent treatment in memory.

III) Religious Life

Representations of religious life are varied, offering vastly differing accounts of personal experiences in both the home and wider community. From the oral interviews held at the London Jewish Museum alone, one encounters images at both ends of the spectrum. For instance, when Wolf Kossoff was asked if he came from an orthodox family, he answered 'I don't think that there was such a thing', before suggesting that people were religiously observant to varying degrees.[141] Mark Fineman, however, recalled that under his grandfather's influence, his family was '100 per cent orthodox in those days', with observance declining only once he had passed away.[142]

It appears that for many, romanticism of the Jewish immigrant past did not necessarily extend to memories of religious life, with secularisation leading many to embrace more cultural and ethnic definitions of a 'Jewish' identity. Indeed, the experience of the Anglo-Jewish leadership in battling rising Jewish religious indifference was by no means limited to the Jewish community: the expansion of opportunities enjoyed by many western cultures across the modern era resulted in increasing levels of secularisation.[143] The differing perspectives explored in this section consequently will reveal how the author's treatment of religion depends on their nostalgic imaginings of their *personal* versions of their childhood communities, such as the Jewish East End. As with earlier examples of memory testimony, the identity of the author is of great significance in informing both memory and representation.

A notable example of this can be found within Grade's account, which characterised his family's 'Jewishness' as revolving around the simple observance of the Sabbath. In his memoirs, he remarked that they were 'very much a Jewish family' despite not being particularly religious. The only festivals they routinely observed were the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement, and his mother always ensured they had the customary food for the Passover Seder. Other than that, their religious traditions revolved around his mother lighting the candles around their home on the Friday night.[144] Despite the reduced levels of devout orthodox tradition conducted by the Grade household, it is significant that he still considered his family to be religiously Jewish. This

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[141] London Jewish Museum, Tape #05, Interview with Wolf Kossoff, 16/06/1977.
[142] London Jewish Museum, Tape #50, Interview with Mark Fineman, 27/01/1986.
[143] David Feldman, 'Jews in London 1880-1914', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity: Volume 1* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 219-220.
[144] Grade, p. 27.

attitude can be attributed to his anglicisation, which would have reconciled both his 'Jewish' and 'English' identities. Just because he was not following the orthodox traditions of Eastern European Jewry, does not mean that Grade was any less Jewish in terms of his personal identity.

What is expressed in much popular testimony following the 'memory boom' is the widening generational gap between grandparents, parents and children in terms of religious attitudes. Many authors fondly remember the devout levels of piety of their grandparents. Finn, for instance, recalled his awe and admiration for his childhood hero, his grandfather, Zaida. He was a 'chunky, strong man with a magnificent grey-black beard' who possessed a wonderful sense of humour. Fantastically devout, he attended the synagogue every Friday night to welcome the Sabbath. Like many other memoirists, Finn recalled how when he was younger he accompanied his grandfather to these services with his brothers, out of respect and desire to please Zaida, rather than personal convictions. Not until his siblings were older did any dare to miss the Friday night gathering at home.[145] However, it is important to note that this account reflects the gradual generational move away from devout religious practice, with Finn's siblings using their newfound adult independence to later defy their grandfather's expectations regarding Sabbath observance.

Finn's treatment of Zaida is singular. His grandfather is mythologised, with his religious devotion described as going above and beyond a rabbi. Zaida lived for the synagogue, spending most of the Sabbath there. Indeed, Finn noted that on the Day of Atonement, when custom dictated that Jews fast, rabbis would sleep at least six or seven hours, but not Zaida. He fasted awake and would be on his feet for the full twenty-four hours from sundown on the eve of Atonement, to sunset the following day. Finn's admiration for his grandfather went further than most Jewish boys his age, with Finn extending his education beyond the *cheder* and enrolling into the *Yeshiva*, with his evenings and Sundays dedicated to learning Hebrew simply because it pleased Zaida.[146] Finn's writing career often was based around character sketches, and critics noted his tendency to romanticise those closest to him. Ken Worpole's analysis of popular fiction, *Dockers and Detectives* supports such assessments, concluding that whilst Finn's memoirs are valuable as personal testimony, they are nonetheless 'flawed by a terrible sentimentalism and retrospective moralism'.[147] Such criticisms can be levied upon Finn's treatment of his grandfather.

Despite his sentimentalism, Finn was not alone in emphasising the influence which parents and grandparents had regarding the maintaining of Jewish religiosity and custom within working-class Jewish families. The oral interviews held at the London Jewish Museum similarly confirm

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[145] Finn, p. 50.
[146] Ibid., p. 54.
[147] Ken Worpole, *Dockers and Detectives: Popular Reading: Popular Writing* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 113.

such trends, with many interviewees citing either the combined influence of their parents, or just their mothers in ensuring that their childhood homes remained religiously Jewish. David Ginsburg was born in London's East End in 1907 and grew up to work in the furniture trade. Interviewed in 1986, he described his childhood experiences growing up in a Yiddish speaking home and his mother's adherence to orthodox custom. Indeed, he remarked that she never went out to work, and was devoted to her role as a housewife. Everything in the Ginsburg household was performed to stringent religious standards, whilst 'everything was absolutely done *kosher*'.[148] In fact, his mother even wore a *sheitel*, a wig which was worn by orthodox married women, a custom which quickly subsided among Jewish immigrants in Britain.[149]

Similar incidences of Jewish women being the prime influence behind a family's continued religious observance is commonplace in the examined record. Nathan Zamet outlined the fading religious convictions of his father, who did not regularly attend a synagogue, but would go on Friday nights and during high festivals. That the house remained strictly *kosher* was down to his mother, whose efforts were simply accepted by his father.[150]A more passive reasoning for the maintenance of orthodoxy in the Jewish household arises from Sophie Stern's interview. Far from the determination of her mother, the household remained orthodox in terms of dietary habits simply because she did not know anything else.[151] For all the heroic tales of Jewish women as the perfect mothers and custodians of Jewish custom and heritage, one suspects that behind many tales are similar instances of continued *kosher* dining. Jewish women were often at the forefront of passing on the memory of the past and tradition, whether maintaining a *kosher* home, passing domestic knowledge to their daughters or ensuring the continued Sabbath observance. As the Jewish Women Group in London concluded, it was often women who passed on the sentiment of 'Jewishness' as being 'more than a religion, a nationality, a personal identity' to their children.[152]

As remarked, representations of Jewish religious life are influenced by their contemporary perspectives. Consequently, the East End presented by Homa is strikingly different from those previously discussed. Coming from a highly orthodox family, Homa not only attended the *Machzike Hadath;* his grandfather was the distinguished spiritual leader and founder of the

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[148] London Jewish Museum, Tape #82 Interview with David Ginsburg, 02/10/1986.
[149] Most self-authored accounts of the Jewish immigrant experience tend to not comment upon the *sheitel*. One of the few which commented upon the traditional wig at length was Louis Teeman's *Footprints on the Sand*, where he noted that his mother did not follow the custom. Despite the autobiography's nostalgic tendencies, Teeman remarked that they were unpleasant, and he suspected that his father would not have wanted his mother to wear one either. He concluded: 'Here was one custom, scrupulously observed for centuries, that was destined to almost disappear in our century and for which I certainly shed no tears.' See: Teeman, pp. 21-22.
[150] London Jewish Museum, Tape #320, Interview with Nathan (Nate) Zamet, undated.
[151] London Jewish Museum, Tape #091, Interview with Sophie Stern, 24/03/1987.
[152] Jewish Women in London Group, p. 7.

synagogue.[153] Established to oppose communal Anglo-Jewry, this synagogue enabled the community to embrace worship closer to what they enjoyed in Eastern Europe, moving away from the perceived laxity of the Anglo-Jewish establishment and the United Synagogue services.[154]

The services and nature of the *Machzike Hadath* became renowned. Homa's pride is evident, with him confidently stating that on Holy Days it was always full, and that the synagogue won great plaudits from distinguished Rabbis from the continent. One such Rabbi was *Ridvaz* from Safed, who remarked upon praying at the synagogue:

> I did not feel that I was in the capital City of London but I thought I was in the Jewish Community of Eisheshok, Wolozin or the like, a place where our forefathers would stand to pour out their words in prayer and in the song of the Torah at the same time.[155]

Both Homa's recollections and identity accordingly can be characterised to have been informed by his upbringing. Immersed in Hebrew and religious education from the age of seven, unlike others he wholly embraced this life. From 1911 onwards, he recalled his days were fully occupied: school in the morning and afternoon, followed by Hebrew tuition at home for an hour, before *Yeshiva* for two more. The rest of his day was taken up by travel, homework and meals.[156] As with other Jewish families, he noted that meal times varied due to family members having different routines and commitments. However, this did not apply to the Sabbaths or Festivals, which would always be at a set time and include the entire family for the meal and celebrations.[157] This was the time when in the Homa household, as with many other Jewish families, his mother's hard work was appreciated as all enjoyed the specially prepared dishes.

Memoirs, like other popular representations, are shaped and constructed by their authors. This can perhaps most notably be recognised within Homa's treatment of the Jewish East End community. Homa's childhood upbringing was highly religious and shaped his subsequent life. Indeed, Homa's uncompromising attitude towards his orthodoxy saw his life characterised by resignations from various Jewish communal and religious organisations – such as the Council of

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[153] The story of *Machzike Hadath* has often been cited as proof of the religious fervour of East End Jewry, with the synagogue arising out of a staunchly orthodox group of Eastern European Jews who clashed with Chief Rabbi over the ritual purity of meat slaughtered. Dissatisfied with the standards they broke away, denouncing the authority of the Chief Rabbi and establishing their own slaughterhouse, and financing the conversion of a chapel at the significant cost of £4,500. See: Feldman, 'Jews in London', pp. 217-218.

[154] David Englander (ed.) *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain, 1840-1920* (Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1994) p. 180.

[155] Bernard Homa, *A Fortress in Anglo-Jewry, The Story of the Machzike Hadath* (London: Shapiro Vallentine, 1954), p. 80.

[156] Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 21.

[157] Ibid., p. 23.

the Anglo-Jewish Association in 1946 and the Central Council for Jewish Religious Education and of the London Board in 1949 – as he stood firm against Reform Judaism which he fervently loathed.[158] Accordingly, Homa's representation of the Jewish East End of his youth emphasised the religiousness of the community, nostalgically reflecting upon a personal time of childhood contentment where he was surrounded by religious orthodoxy. The Jewish East End outside of his childhood sphere was not engaged with, henceforth constructing a sentimentalised representation of the community's religious ardour as being widespread throughout the East End.

Whilst the majority of narratives created following the 'memory boom' may not support Homa's conviction of the religious fervour of working-class, and especially East End Jewry, many concur that the Sabbath was a tremendous spectacle. Lewis described the transformation of his family parlour, with its shoddy table turned into a 'banqueting table of the gods'. The occasion's importance was not lost to Lewis, with it remembered as one of the few times when the entire family would be gathered around the table. It was this sense of family and togetherness which inspired many families to maintain the tradition regardless of their level of orthodoxy, helping to instil a sense of 'Jewishness' in the formation of 'Anglo-Jewish' identities of their children. For Lewis, the significance is remembered clearly:

> But given its Sabbath attire this table looked like a resplendent altar. The shimmering crinkly white of a table cloth replaced the washable weekday sheen of American cloth: two tall handsome brass candlesticks – a wedding gift to my mother – and a row of five miniature candlesticks each carrying its tiny paper presided at Mother's end of the table. My mother was not content to kindle two candles in honour of the Sabbath. She insisted that the sacred light life burning in every one of her family of seven should be symbolically represented on her Sabbath table by a spate table candle flame for each.[159]

The oral interviews conducted by the Jewish Women in London Group are noteworthy in revealing the gradual generational decline of the importance which families placed upon religious custom. The interviews with Abrahams and Adler both commented upon the tenuous position which religion played in both their childhood and their parents' lives. The earliest memories come from Abrahams, who was born in 1903. Her childhood experiences originate from outside the East End, with her family having settled in Glasgow. She recalled, however, that whilst religious belief was fast fading from her family life, tradition and custom remained pertinent influences:

> My father was a complete atheist. And my mother – how can I put it? They weren't religious, but of course, the religion determined the way in which we lived. All the festivals were kept up, we had a

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158 'Obituary: Dr Bernard Homa', *The Independent*, October 12, 1991, p. 48.
159 Chaim Lewis, p. 41.

kosher household, but it was mostly based on superstition, rather than an understanding of the ethics of the religion. We didn't ever discuss religion in our household. Except for my father to say that he believed it to be all hogwash. My mother didn't ever commit herself either way. As she got older, certainly after the war, and because she worked with non-Jewish people as well, she came further and further away even from keeping the festivals. They became much more token. But as I say, religion was a way of life. It affected us.[160]

One could posit that the smaller Jewish community which she grew up within accelerated the rate of both anglicisation and acculturation for her family, but similar tales can be found even within the prime settlement of the Jewish East End. Ruth Adler was born in 1912 and affirmed that Jewish families were 'religious'. Even though her parents had left their faith behind, the secluded nature of East End Jewry ensured that her parents maintained religious traditions, out of a sense of routine.[161] Tradition, festivals and prayer books were all synonymous with Jewish culture. A basic level of adherence to Jewish religious custom was regarded as an essential expression of a 'Jewish' identity. The testimonies of Abrahams and Adler therefore reveal the gradual development of a more nuanced understanding of 'Jewishness' and identity in Britain amongst the working-class community, with self-definition moving beyond simple adherence to religion as the primary identifier of Jewishness.

Established Anglo-Jewry valued religion as a cornerstone of their identity as 'Englishmen of Jewish faith' due to the respectability which they believed religious tradition bestowed. However, the immigrant working-classes and their children challenged such assumptions.[162] These challenges ranged from differing religious orthodoxy, such as the emergence of the *Machzike Hadath*, to outright rejection of Judaism. The English-born second and third generations increasingly found new and at times, subversive ways to reconcile self-definitions of what it meant to be Jewish and English. Indeed, it was the variance within these self-formed expressions of identity which has inspired drastically different interpretations of religious life and culture, with nostalgic recollections either emphasising, or downplaying the role of religious custom as per their contemporary outlook.

As the previous chapter explored, early memory narratives were critical of the *cheder*. Those which commented upon the institution were often negative, whilst many preferred not to mention it. Representations following the 'memory boom', however, offer more positive

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[160] Abrahams, 'I Had This Other Life…', p. 84.
[161] Ruth Adler, 'Woman of the Eighties', in Jewish Women in London Group, *Generations of Memories: Voices of Jewish Women* (London: Women's Press, 1989), p. 29.
[162] Todd Endelman, 'Liberalism, Laissez-Faire, and Anglo-Jewry, 1700-1905', *Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Winter, 1980), pp. 7-8.

interpretations of the method of religious instruction. Blacker's sentimentalised account supported many of the harsh images of the *cheder*, with it described as an overcrowded and poorly lit room, where 'short-tempered, yarmulke-covered rabbis would teach Hebrew, with a book in one hand and a cane in the other'.[163] Despite this harshness, Blacker was not wholly negative. Though the teaching was brutal, with many pupils suffering occasional thumps to the head or rapped knuckles, it was, he argued, efficient. Blacker fondly recalled all his classmates could read from the *Torah* with ease by their *barmitzvahs*. This redeeming feature caused Blacker to fondly remember his time at the *cheder*, with the extreme methods of teaching recalled as being effective.

Similar contrasting images of the *cheder* can be found within oral testimony. Mark Fineman could not remember how often he attended. Indeed, it is striking that despite the overtly negative images which previously arose regarding the institution, Fineman recalled little of his time there. He remembered that the fees were small and that it was a very hot classroom, with between forty and fifty boys in attendance, chanting in the ritualistic and traditional way to learn Hebrew. Furthermore, he recalled that his *melammed* was relatively well-known at the time, with all his friends and relatives also learning under the same tutor.[164]

That a good teacher could command respect and packed classes is something which Heimi Lipschitz confirmed when interviewed in 1976. Lipschitz himself later became a teacher and taught at the Jews' Free School (JFS). He also was a founding figure in the *Habonim* youth movement, a Zionist organisation. Lipschitz's father was a Hebrew teacher, and whilst there was lots of competition for students, with many *cheders* established, Lipschitz noted that his father had a great reputation for getting boys to learn and retain Hebrew. In this account, tales of harsh teaching methods are remembered fondly with a sense of nostalgia, with Lipschitz telling the interviewer that to this day, people still recognise him and look back with pride over how they have retained his father's teachings. There's even a slight chuckle in the interview when he remarked about people remembering his father tweaking their ear or pulling their cheek during the lesson when getting a passage wrong.[165]

Whilst such romanticism could be attributed to Lipschitz's father teaching Hebrew, the consistency of representations emphasising a 'tough, but effective' portrayal of *cheder* learning can be regarded as widespread nostalgia for a world lost. Whilst the critical earlier representations were keen to criticise the *cheder* as being symbolic of the 'old world' traditions,

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[163] Blacker, p. 21.
[164] London Jewish Museum, Tape #050, Interview with Mark Fineman, 27/01/1986.
[165] London Jewish Museum, Tape #04, Interview with Heimi Lipschitz, 11/10/1976.

traditions which like the *sheitel* would have been better off left behind in Eastern Europe, the widespread testimony which was generated following the 'memory boom' can be recognised as nostalgia for a fast dwindling Jewish community and way of life.

Parallels can be drawn with American Jewish memory, which nostalgically remembers an 'authentic' Jewish community. For example, Jack Titton's unpublished memoir was written to mark his 90th birthday in 1984 and is part of a collection of photographs and postcards regarding his life which were deposited at the London Jewish Museum. In the memoir, he unfavourably compared the youth of the 1980s to that of his childhood. In the concluding passage, he remarked: 'There is also the complete disregard for other people's property, and a total lack of respect by youngsters to their elders.'[166] That the youth of the 1980s could perhaps do with some of the harsh schooling of his youth is not outright stated, but one can infer that Titton would not have opposed the idea. After all, as with his contemporaries it did them no harm and helped instil a sense of respect in them, as represented in these accounts.

The changing emphasis on orthodoxy can be recognised within popular use of wedding photographs of the Jewish East End. Recollections of Jewish weddings during the interwar era remember them to be grand occasions, lasting the whole day. Men and women adorned their best attire, with clothing such as top hats and fine frocks worn which emphasised their Englishness. Furthermore, great efforts were made to ensure that weddings were momentous events, with many families accruing debt to pay for the best possible wedding.[167] The Jewish wedding, however, holds a curious place in memory and representation. Whereas one would anticipate the ceremony and day to be religiously Jewish in nature, subsequent images portray the occasion as a notable social and family occasion, which signified the secularisation of the children and grandchildren of Eastern European Jewish immigrants.

One can recognise this by returning to the 'rescued' photography of Boris Bennett. Figure 2 is the wedding portrait of Isabel 'Belle' Da Costa and Philip 'Tubby' Lolosky, taken to mark the occasion of their marriage on 8 May 1930 at The Great Synagogue in Duke's Place. Boris made his name courtesy of his wedding photography, with it popularly remarked by Jewish East Enders that 'if you haven't got a Boris wedding picture, you aren't married'.[168] Figure 2 can be regarded to be typical of Boris's photography. The photograph would have been taken after the couple were

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[166] London Jewish Museum, 1985.113 / Titton, Jack / As I Saw it – Memoirs of J J Titton 1894-1908 / memoirs c. 1984, pp. 17-18.
[167] Museum of the Jewish East End, *Boris: The Studio Photographer 1900-1985* (London: Museum of the Jewish East End, 1986), p. 30.
[168] Bennett, p. 12.

Figure 2: Boris Bennett, Isabel 'Belle' Da Costa and Phillip 'Tubby' Lolosky, 8 May 1930, in *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* (London: Hoxton Mini Press, 2014)

married, with weddings in the Jewish East End consisting of the morning ceremony before a visit to the photographic studio. Afterwards the newlyweds would join their guests at the reception, where they would celebrate long into the evening.[169] Figure 2 showcases Belle and Tubby, with the couple central to the image. To the left of the bride stand Belle's parents, Jacob and Rose Da Costa, whilst the groom's parents, Rachel and Barnet Lolosky stand to the right. All are posed with great pride and joy on their faces, with the widest grin being worn by Tubby.

Belle is central to the image and the only one seated, an implication of her central role in both the domestic and religious activity of her new household. With levels of orthodox observance declining amongst second and third generation East End Jewry, women and mothers were central to the preservation of 'Jewish' identities amongst families. In many cases this was simply the result of the overlapping of the domestic and religious spheres. With women tasked with lighting the Sabbath candles and ensuring the maintenance of a *kosher* home, many children

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[169] Museum of the Jewish East End, *Boris: The Studio Photographer 1900-1985*, p. 29.

considered their lives to still be that of a religiously observant family, despite the lack of traditional orthodoxy.[170]

As was the convention, the party have been photographed in front of a studio set, with the curtains in the backdrop and a classical scene used to cultivate an image of success and affluence to have been achieved by this union. Indeed, Boris's wedding photographs were widely regarded to communicate a 'strong sense of hope and compassion', with the happily married couple having a long, warm and loving future ahead of them.[171] With working-class living conditions seeing many families struggle during the interwar period, the photographic memories created by Boris's photographs operated as a form of escapism from lived reality. This escapism, however, has been embraced by popular memory as *the* image of the Jewish East End. In the introduction to *Vintage Glamour*, Steven Berkoff regards the repackaged photographs to capture 'an era that may never again be seen, an area of innocence and simplicity'.[172] Within such comments, the boundaries between constructed the images and actuality are blurred by romanticism and nostalgia.

Furthermore, there are no obvious Jewish signifiers present in the attire of the wedding party. With their respectable middle-class English dress, the escape from the negative image of the impoverished, Jewish pauper of the ghettoised East End is complete. The newlyweds which Boris photographed represented the diverse working world of the Jewish East End, with those of the traditional immigrant trades, such as tailoring and cabinet-makers, mixing with all different types. The caption for the photograph reveals that Tubby was a professional boxer who was also apprenticed as a process engraver. His boxing career spanned ten years; between 1925 and 1934, consisting of 37 professional fights, of which Tubby won 24. Belle performed as a dancer at the London Palladium and was one of the Tiller Girls, a popular dancing troupe. She also modelled hats and gloves.[173] A look at both of their working lives reveals the changing nature of lives which was enjoyed by the Jewish working-classes of the East End, with families in the interwar era taking opportunities to pursue new careers beyond the 'immigrant trades'. Reflecting their well-to-do status, the couple henceforth commissioned Boris to take their photograph, whilst making sure to wear their finest dress to mark the occasion. It was this commitment to contemporary fashion amongst his sitters which has seen the photographs taken by Boris recognised as offering an

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[170] Rickie Burman, ''She Looketh Well to the Ways of Her Household': The Changing Role of Jewish Women in Religious Life, c. 1880-1930', in Gail Malmgreen (ed.), *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 237.

[171] Steven Berkoff in Boris Bennett, *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* (London: Hoxton Mini Press, 2014), p. 5.

[172] Ibid., p. 5.

[173] Isabel 'Belle' Da Costa and Philip 'Tubby' Lolosky, <http://eastendvintageglamour.org.uk/photoshoot/isabel-belle-da-costa-and-philip-tubby-lolosky/> [accessed 09/06/2017].

unrivalled record into the fashions worn by the brides, husbands and attendants of the Jewish East End of London in the 1930s and 1940s.[174]

Figure 2's 'rediscovery' and modern usage is indicative of how the Jewish East End, and indeed the general experience of immigrant Jewry in Britain has been remembered. The use of Boris's photography, both in its publication as *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* and the 1986 exhibition, *Boris: The Studio Photographer 1900-1985* are reflective of a sense of Jewish religious identity being less tied to orthodox practice, and more to a secular identity. To many children and grandchildren of first generation Eastern European immigrant Jewry, what made them 'Jewish' was not the continued observation of religious customs from Eastern Europe. Rather, it was an ethnic, cultural and social understanding of Jewishness which informed their identities. To be 'Jewish' was to keep a *kosher* home and observe the high holidays, and perhaps more importantly, to recognise family history and heritage.

Moreover, by highlighting such anglicised images of East End Jewry as quintessential images of the Jewish experience, it affirms the romanticised image of the general community, with any negativity and alienation which individuals may have experienced due to their faith being marginalised in preference of images of assimilation. By selecting and celebrating such memories, the process of 'forgetting' the undesirable facets of the immigrant experience is increased, with omissions from the record being overlooked by popular memory.[175] Indeed, the utilisation of previously created images such as Figure 2, by authors captivated and inspired by the 'memory boom' to re-engage with the Jewish past is representative of this process. In this instance, by preserving and celebrating such images of 'glamour' as characteristic of the lives of Jewish East Enders, popular sentimentalised narratives of the Jewish East End are enhanced. Meanwhile, dissenting or critical accounts are confined to the margins of public history. As with Litvinoff's literary construction or Blacker's nostalgic reminiscences, the utilisation of Boris's photography within *Vintage Glamour* can be recognised to be equally manufactured to create a historical interpretation of the Jewish East End, rather than seeking to depict the complexity of the 'reality'. The process of omitting less 'glamourous' photographs within collections such as *Vintage Glamour*

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[174] Edwina Ehrman, 'Cinema, Fashion and Hope in London's East End', in Boris Bennett, *Vintage Glamour in London's East End* (London: Hoxton Mini Press, 2014), p. 15.

[175] Jonathan Boyarin's study, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory*, highlighted this process within the American memory of the Lower East Side. Although fondly remembered in popular memory, Boyarin posited that simultaneously, more has been forgotten about the Lower East Side than any other place or time in America. Romanticised images or certain facets of history have been preserved and recorded at the expense of many more memories. See: Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. 1-2.

has thus contributed to the creation of a sanitised and somewhat simplistic representation of the lives of immigrant Jewry and their children within Britain.

Moreover, it is notable that the Museum of Jewish East End emphasised the 'Jewishness' of the wedding photography of Boris, despite the anglicisation of dress of the couples and attendants. In their internal review of the exhibition, the Museum summarised upon its popularity and success as being because 'it touched the lives of so many people' who may have found their own wedding photographs, 'which aroused a considerable amount of nostalgia and emotion'.[176] Nostalgia is a key component of many narratives found within the third generation of memory, and can be recognised accordingly in many treatments of religious life during the period of mass immigration and beyond. For these authors, the simple continued observance of religious custom in the home shaped their self-identity and memory: identities which as the children of immigrant Jews were not only shaped within the home, but also by the external hands of secular schooling.

IV) Education

Considering the mixed attitudes which children often have regarding their education, one would anticipate personal reflections upon school days to be varied. Memory of one's childhood is often broken down into generalised positive or negative images, with the passage of time simplifying events into more palatable and linear narratives. Indeed, Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson noted the 'mythical' nature of memory, which often sees subtle, or at times radical revisionism of one's past when recounting personal history. Consequently, childhood events are often broken down into notions such as 'the good old days' where everything was better and carefree, or adversely into a time of hardship which one struggled to overcome.[177] Such diverse treatments of experiences of schooling as the children of immigrant Jews, can be found amongst the personal testimony of memoirs and oral interviews created in the aftermath of the 'memory boom'.

However, it is key to note that certain familiar tropes can be identified within these representations. Like the American generational model, an overall sense of nostalgia for a lost world can be recognised. But, the extent to which as the children of Eastern European immigrants they were accultured and transformed overnight into success stories, is significantly more muted within the narratives created in Britain. Popular memory of the Lower East Side often tells stories of families moving from a Lower East Side tenement to a Park Avenue physician's office within one or two generations, with the children of immigrants seizing American educational

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[176] Jay Heywood, *The London Museum of Jewish Life 1983 – 1988* (London: London Museum of Jewish Life, 1988), p. 12.
[177] Samuel and Thompson, pp. 7-8.

opportunities to become doctors and lawyers.[178] Embracing both the American dream and the founding myths of the pilgrims, the American Jewish experience has been both mythologised and 'sacralised'. Whilst the Lower East Side has been recognised to be a ghetto of hardship, it is regarded as a haven from which the children of immigrants embraced the opportunities America granted as the land of the free, with immigrant sons and daughters emerging as not only Americans, but as assimilated, middle-class and economically successful citizens.[179]

Whereas third generation American representations of the immigrant experience accordingly can be recognised to follow a linear, triumphant narrative of fast tracked social and economic mobility, there is less emphasis on class transformation within British Jewish representations. Rather, within these testimonies the emphasis remains on highlighting the anglicised and 'English' nature of the authors and their contemporaries, with their school days regarded as key moments in instilling this keen sense of patriotism. Indeed, whereas American narratives tend to focus upon upward mobility, such progression is represented to be a more measured and gradual process in Britain, with sons of immigrants being more likely to follow their fathers into the immigrant trades.[180]

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that whilst certain tropes are shared between popular memory and narratives of the two main sites of Jewish memory in the United States and Britain, the Lower East Side and the East End, there are more inconsistencies in the overall British narrative. Whilst many of the men and women who shared their life stories and experiences were keen to stress either their sense of 'Englishness' or 'Britishness', and that they appreciated the educational opportunities on offer, the extent to which their parents' shared these sentiments is more complicated. In contrast to American narratives which have tended to emphasise the self-sacrificing nature of parents to ensure that their children had the best opportunities to succeed, the attitudes of immigrant parents towards secular education in British Jewish representations are intensely varied.

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[178] Selma Berrol's comparative study of the Lower East Side and the Jewish East End, however, noted that whilst such stories are fondly remembered, they are essentially popular myths. Whilst the move out of the Lower East Side and to the suburbs was faster in New York, Berrol conceded that the process still was delayed by a generation or two, as evidenced by the changing occupational profile of Eastern European Jewry. Indeed, in 1908 an immigration report revealed that whilst 80 per cent of Eastern European immigrant Jews were still skilled workers, only 27 per cent of these skilled workers were immigrant sons. It was not until two decades later that a similar profile was found in London. See: Berrol, pp. 129-131.
[179] Diner, p. 20.
[180] A key example of this is Sam Clarke's pocket book memoir, *An East End Cabinet-Maker*. Clarke proudly entered the immigrant trade of cabinet making, and took great pride recounting his working experiences in the East End in this small educational publication. See: Sam Clarke, *Sam: An East End Cabinet-Maker*.

Like those preceding them, the accounts of school life found within those sources created after the 'memory boom' are keen to stress successful anglicisation. Whereas previous narratives often remarked upon secular education as helping to make the authors good and patriotic 'Englishmen', these latter authors were more confident in their inherent Englishness. Rather than justifying the extent to which their school days inculcated a strong sense of English identity in them, these accounts are more comfortable describing the 'Jewishness' of their school days, with schools crowded with Jewish children. For example, despite the East End's poverty, both her school and community were positively remembered by Adler:

> I went to Stepney Jewish School. We were a ragamuffinly lot, because it was the East End and there
> was a lot of poverty. Perhaps there was a little less poverty among the Jewish community, and this
> may be due to the fact that Jews, in those days at any rate, spent no money on drink.[181]

It is notable that although Adler remarked upon the impoverished condition of Eastern European immigrant Jewry and their children, she favourably contrasted their situation to the non-Jewish working-class community. Stepney, and indeed the Jewish East End were recognised to be a challenging area of austerity, but the positive inflection of the Jewish family looking after their finances and resources is a significant theme throughout many recollections of the immigrant Jewish past. Such sentiments often extended towards memories of schooling, with authors fondly remembering seizing the opportunities on offer for personal and social development. Such images can be regarded to have been born out of the defensive images which the first generation created to justify their presence in Britain, particularly in the visible settlement of the Jewish East End, with anti-alienist accusations of immigrant poverty, ignorance and clannishness being refuted by strong claims of the ambition and desire of immigrant parents and children to seize opportunities; opportunities which natives often wasted.[182]

Adler's experiences of the Jewish East End also inspired her semi-fictional memoir, *A Family of Shopkeepers* (1973). Although a novel, the book offers one of the few written accounts of East

[181] Adler, 'Woman of the Eighties', p. 31.
[182] The Royal Commission on Alien Immigration is one of the best examples of this defence in action. During the interview process, William Evans-Gordon and the Commission called upon experts to discuss 'alien' attitudes towards secular education. Instead of receiving condemning accounts of Jewish indifference to schooling and commitment to clannish habits of the 'old world', the Commission instead was met by six highly positive reports on Jewish attitudes to secular learning. Samuel Mather, the Divisional Superintendent of the Tower Hamlets Division of the School Board for London lavished praise upon East End Jewry, noting the anxiety of Jewish parents to get their children into schools. With there being 'no trouble in filling the new schools with Jewish children', he believed the Jewish children were great examples to native-born schoolchildren. See: Samuel Mather, 10275 *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol. II.*

End Jewry from a female perspective.[183] Widely heralded as offering unique insights into the lives of immigrant Jewry, the book's opening page emphasised that although some of the recounted material is fictional, the characters 'are in appearance and mannerism, drawn from life'.[184] In the novel, Adler's character, Miriam, experiences first-hand the resolute anglicising measures of school. During her first day, Miriam requires her friend Sarah to translate for her. Whilst Miriam unquestionably accepted the educational methods of her teachers, the tussle between anglicisation and her cultural heritage is evident in her father's reaction to her schooling:

> […] that first day at school not understanding a single word till Sarah translated, but she was glad to be at school like other children at last and the teacher said after a while that Miriam Samuels, if you want to learn quickly you must speak English read English and *dream* in English and she did; Daddy had thrown his head back and laughed out loud when she told him but he made her read the adverts in the *Tseit* out loud so as to not forget Yiddish.[185]

The compliance of many immigrant children in their education and anglicisation is confirmed in Adler's interview. Indeed, her personal experiences shaped Miriam's story in *A Family of Shopkeepers*, with the interview revealing that her experiences were not so different. She initially had her cousin accompany her to class, who sat beside her translating what the teacher was saying. After gaining some familiarity with the language, Adler's teacher gave her the same speech. Henceforth she spoke to her parents in English who replied in Yiddish, until parents finally followed suit and learnt the language.[186] Adler considered this situation to be typical of East End Jewry, something which recent studies have supported, with children's command of English exposing and teaching their parents the 'local' language.[187] More significantly, Adler's experiences reveal a generational and cultural tension which existed within many homes, with children far more willing to embrace English culture and customs.

Such tensions were not only reserved regarding language, as the case of Homa reveals. Homa's parents were highly religious and were unimpressed with the anglicising measures of the JFS. With most concern seemingly placed upon making immigrant children 'English' as opposed to good Jews, his parents opted against sending him there:

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[183] Susan L. Tananbaum, 'Biology and Community: The Duality of Jewish Mothering in East London, 1880-1939', in Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang and Linda Rennie Forcey (eds.), *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 328.
[184] Ruth Adler, *A Family of Shopkeepers* (Sevenoaks: Coronet, 1985, originally published as Ray Waterman, *A Family of Shopkeepers* London: W.H. Allen, 1973), p. 1.
[185] Ibid., p. 51.
[186] Adler, 'Woman of the Eighties', p. 31.
[187] Susan L. Tananbaum, *Jewish Immigrants in London, 1880-1939* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), p. 8.

[…] the view taken by many orthodox parents was that the kind of Jewish instruction given there was inadequate and that its policy was more concerned with anglicising the children of immigrants than with maintaining Jewish standards. However, in my case, as I would be receiving special Jewish tutoring, an alternative solution was found.[188]

Narratives such as Homa's are exceptional. Popular memory of the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain tends to be highly positive. Regarding the Jewish East End, most testimony emphasises both the 'Jewishness' and 'Englishness' of the area's inhabitants, without implying any contradiction between the two identities. In comparison to the American model, the British narrative emphasises the youth seizing educational opportunities to become assimilated into society, or to further realise their patriotic identities. This is significant as it reveals differences between British and American treatment of the East End and the Lower East Side as 'sites of memory'. As noted, the American narrative has shaped the Lower East Side to be the quintessential site of American Jewish memory. American Jews with no physical or emotional ties to the area are still drawn to it, recognising it as an 'authentically' Jewish space and an integral site in American Jewish history.[189] Such an emphasis is significantly more subdued within the British context, with the Jewish East End still regarded as an important site in British Jewish cultural and social history. Whilst dominant in popular memory, it is not the only 'Jewish' space within British Jewish history and has been popularly remembered more as a community and way of life, rather than representing the essence of 'Jewishness'. Such can be recognised within the romanticising of Jewish schooling in the East End, which fondly recollects how Jewish East Enders embraced both 'English' and 'Jewish' identities: identities which possess substantial variation for their authors.

An example of this romanticising of memory can be found within Celia Bloom's memoirs, *Seventy Years and Never a Dull Moment* (1980). Bloom's memoirs are a classic example of a publication created by the 'memory boom'. A small book, around 90 pages, Bloom's account is less focused and far more anecdotal than other such accounts. Published by *Exposition Press*, her book can be regarded to be part of the 'vanity publishing' industry which surfaced around the same time as the 'memory boom', whereby smaller publishers enabled aspiring authors to be published, normally for a fee.[190] Bloom's narrative henceforth can be adjudged to be a personal one, fostered by her desire share her personal life story in print.

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[188] Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time,* p. 8.
[189] Diner, p. 12.
[190] *Exposition Press* required their authors to pay for all the costs of their books, with their later payment supposedly coming from the royalties which they would generate following the successful sales of their book. See: Jonathan L. Kirsch, 'Vanity of Vanities: Subsidy Publishing after Stellema', *Loyola of Los Angeles Entertainment Law Journal,* Vol. 12 No. 2 (1992), pp. 285-286.

As noted, her account is relatively sparse in terms of specific details. Rather than focusing upon her life in a linear and comprehensive manner, her memoirs are built around anecdotal stories. For instance, Bloom's brief treatment of her time at the JFS succinctly summarised the school as being the one which all immigrant children attended due to language problems. Accompanying her two elder brothers, Harry and Jack, Bloom also attended so they could look after her, and they all happily worked together to learn English. Her time at the school is remembered fondly, with the teaching standard high, and the school supported graciously by Lord Rothschild who ensured that every child was treated according to their age, to either an annual party, toys, or a day trip and some pocket money.[191] The generational tensions which are present in Adler's memories are absent from Bloom's account, with her portrayal of schooling as the daughter of an immigrant being overwhelming positive, where she delighted in learning English, equipping her for life as a good English citizen.

Like American narratives which portray schooling in the Lower East Side as being a key transformative cornerstone in creating a class of American Jews who soon escaped the ghetto, popular narratives of the Jewish East End also nurture great praise for secular education in their assimilation. Whilst Bloom's account can be regarded as exceptional based on its publication history, her simplified narrative is widely shared amongst popular history. Consequently, representations of the Jewish immigrant experience tend to strongly convey a sense of immigrant parents holding the uttermost respect for secular education. Indeed, considering the high volume of children which entered both Jewish denominational or state-run schools, immigrant parents were regarded to embrace the anglicisation programme which secular education offered their children.[192]

Blacker's memoirs fervently supported the notion that the secular education of children was of paramount importance to Jewish working-class families. In his account, Blacker described how parents cherished the educational opportunities open to their children. Recognising that back in Eastern Europe these opportunities were denied to them, these parents consequently were willing to do anything to support their children's education:

> For this opportunity, the senior citizens were prepared to endure economic privation. The unbounded joy of having a potential doctor or teacher in the family made the loss of the few shillings he would contribute to the exchequer as a cabinet-maker or tailor, a sacrifice worth making.[193]

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[191] Celia Bloom, *Seventy Years and Never a Dull Moment: Memoirs by Celia Bloom* (New York: Exposition Press, 1980), pp. 3-4.
[192] Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914, Third Edition* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), p. 221.
[193] Blacker, p. 86.

Such positive images can once again be first traced back to the defensive portrayals of immigrant Jewry by Anglo-Jewish critics.[194] Blacker's narrative can be regarded as an extension of this, romanticising the role of schooling in family life. Whilst he recalled being initially reluctant to leave his mother, after the first couple of weeks he soon settled into routine along with his classmates, with them all settling down to achieve 'commendable results'.[195] Whilst this vague assessment is challenging to unpick, his description of the daily schooling routine implies that Blacker referred to both his teacher's ability to control and teach the mass of fifty children which constituted a class, alongside their swift learning and command of English. Indeed, in an anecdotal and flamboyant manner he detailed the 'daily torment' which his young self was confronted with for the first few months: learning the alphabet. Each child was handed a small wooden-framed slate and copied off the blackboard the shapes of letters. Then after the break the children were taught line by line and note by note, their first nursery rhyme. Prior to this, Blacker mused that the only children's poems he knew were in Russian, but by the end of the first morning at school he 'had mastered the saga of Jack and Jill, if not the music, at concert pitch'.[196]

Whilst the third generation of memory tends to praise early education as being of vital significance in teaching English and instilling a sense of national identity, once more counter-narratives can be found. Far from all immigrant parents wholeheartedly embraced this education, with some critical and opposing the anglicising measures. As noted, Adler's father was reluctant to support his daughter's acceptance of English as her first language, and along with his wife replied to his daughter in Yiddish for many years. Lewis's father, however, was entirely opposed to secular education:

> It was as well that attendance at school was compulsory. If my father had his way we would have been deprived of all secular learning. For him the only wisdom was fear of the Lord and obedience to His commandments, and such wisdom was to be sought only in Holy Writer and in the folio pages of the Talmud. All other learning was corrupting. In this unbending view he stood almost alone. Not that his compatriots were guilty of greater enlightenment: they were simply less faithful; they were unable to stand up to the pressures that beset them in their new environment.[197]

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[194] A typical example of such arguments can be found within Harry S. Lewis' essay on 'The Jew in London'. Rebutting the anti-alienist charges of Jewish immigrants being thrifty, insidious agents determined to undercut native English workers, Lewis stated that immigrant Jewish parents made 'every sacrifice' for their children's educational advancement, as part of their belief that a good education was valuable for its own sake. The ambitions of immigrant parents were for their children to have the opportunities denied to them in their homelands, and not to push them into higher salaried jobs to merely support their homes. See: Charles Russell and Harry S. Lewis, *The Jew in London: A Study of Racial Character and Present-Day Conditions* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900), pp. 182-183.
[195] Blacker, p. 38.
[196] Ibid., p. 41.
[197] Chaim Lewis, p. 11.

Within the narratives explored, Lewis appears to be in the minority. He admitted so himself, describing his father as a more devout man than most, immovable in his adherence to practising his faith. It was this reluctance to accept a way of life beyond religious ritual which caused much tension between Lewis and his father. Such tensions were highlighted in reviews of *A Soho Address*, and the *Jewish Chronicle's* reviewer remarked that the complexity of Lewis's feelings towards his father were the most revealing parts of the book, which at times sadly became impersonal in Lewis's desire to remain objective.[198] It was these conflicted feelings which occasionally lent themselves to a negative and critical tone which Lewis took towards his father, with him being treated as symbolic of the 'old world' and something to be challenged and modernised. Lewis's education emerged as just one of the methods which he personally pursued to escape the perceived backwardness and stubbornness of his father.

Part of Lewis's frustrations were because his father had no desire to become English. It was not until he was 70, after 50 years of living in London that his father decided to learn enough English to pass a basic language test and earn his naturalisation.[199] As these narratives reveal, language was a key facet to becoming English, but his father's stubbornness to pursue any activity which could detract from his faith saw him isolate himself from society. As memories of schooling reveal, command over the English language was believed to be a significant step in assimilating Eastern European children into the wider community. Such beliefs saw the teaching staff forbid children attending the JFS from speaking anything other than English during the period of mass immigration. It was a measure which was greatly praised by the *Daily Graphic* in 1895. The paper noted that whilst upon entry, students could not speak a word of English, by their graduation they all could 'speak English with a regard for grammar and a purity of accent far above the average of the neighbourhood'.[200]

Lewis was not alone in challenging romanticised narratives regarding schooling. Whilst most representations depict Jewish children as attending schools comprised almost wholly by Jewish students, for some they were the minority in English-populated schools. Sophie Stern was born in 1902 in Shadwell and attended the St. George's School near her home in the High Street. Whilst many recollections sentimentalise their childhood, in her interview Stern strikingly depicted a grim childhood, living in harsh, overcrowded conditions.[201]

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[198] *Jewish Chronicle*, April 16, 1965.
[199] Chaim Lewis, p. 73.
[200] Juliet Steyn, *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 29.
[201] When describing her first childhood home in Shadwell, Stern remarked to the interviewer: 'I don't know how we survived it, but I only know it was pretty grim. I still shudder when I think about it.' Considering the popular narratives which lavish great praise upon overworked mothers and fathers struggling to support

In many respects, Stern's recollections of her schooling can be described to be typical of Jewish immigrant children, especially those who resided in the East End. Her school was a short walk away from her home, meaning she would return home for lunch. Her teachers were supportive of her education and understanding of Jewish holidays. Indeed, Stern confirmed for the interviewer when asked that they were 'happy days', which points to the uniqueness of oral history and its capacity to be shaped by the interviewing process. However, she did note that the non-Jewish children could be very spiteful. Whilst violence was very rare, teasing often consisted of anti-Jewish songs such as 'The Pork on the Fork', an anti-Semitic nursey rhyme which emphasised Jewish aloofness and separatism.[202] It is notable that despite this, Stern followed the conventional narrative of positively remembering her school days. It is possible that this is the result of the simplification of childhood memories, or it could be Stern adhering to the popular images of Jewish East End life. One would expect more variance within individual childhood memories, as presumably not *every* East End Jewish child enjoyed their schooling experiences. While such counter-narratives are scarce, within the more marginalised testimony created following the 'memory boom' they can be uncovered.[203]

Moreover, whilst her father deeply craved to be assimilated, so much so that he regularly joined gentiles down his local pub, the Golden Eagle, Stern recalled that her parents were ambivalent towards her education. Although her mother had no time to take interest, her father was seemingly more preoccupied with his wish to become assimilated by mingling down the pub with Englishmen, drinking his pint and playing Billiards.[204] It would be incautious to use this single case study to disrepute the general trends of third generation representations. However, alongside other counter-narratives, accounts such as Stern's challenge the myths of self-sacrificing immigrant Jewish parents placing all concerns secondary to their children's education.

Far from following a single master narrative, representations of schooling reveal that for the children of immigrants, school life was not necessarily the 'good old days'. Similar to the American narrative, tales of self-sacrificing parents putting their children's educational needs above those of the household exist at the level of collective myth. Whilst in some cases parents

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their families, Stern's discomfort upon her childhood living conditions is noteworthy in its solemn tone. See: London Jewish Museum, Tape #091, Interview with Sophie Stern, 24/03/1987.

[202] Jonathan D. Sarna, 'The Pork on the Fork: A Nineteenth Century Anti-Jewish Ditty', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Spring, 1982), pp. 169-172.

[203] A notable example would be Jack Titton's unpublished typed manuscript memoir, *As I Saw It*. Written to mark his 90th birthday at his local synagogue, the memoir focused upon his childhood in the East End. Titton confessed that he was rebellious during his childhood, being equally disinterested in both his secular and religious education. Whilst not much remorse can be found regarding his academic attitude, Titton felt that ultimately avoiding his religious education was of great personal loss to him. See: London Jewish Museum, 1985.113 / Titton, Jack / As I Saw it – Memoirs of J J Titton 1894-1908 / memoirs c. 1984.

[204] London Jewish Museum, Tape #091, Interview with Sophie Stern, 24/03/1987.

may well have made great sacrifices, historical studies have revealed that in most cases this was not the reality before the 1920s.[205] As observed, examples which challenge romantic images of self-sacrificing parents are sparsely found in representations created prior to the 'memory boom'. However, such challenges are more readily found in this latter testimony. Mark Fineman's interview for example, followed Stern in revealing that tensions existed among families. More notable, however, was his sense of remorse over being pushed to make the 'stupid decision' to leave school when he was 14 years old. Academically he remembered doing well, but he was urged to follow his older brother in earning a living.[206]

Representations of school life for the children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants henceforth, are vague within the third generation of memory. Whilst similarities with the American treatment of the Lower East Side can be found, narratives within the British context, and particularly pertaining to the Jewish East End offer surprising contrasts. Following the images previously created, it is notable that the interviewees and authors have wholly embraced their identities as 'English' or 'British Jews'. Accordingly, most accounts detailed how their early school days helped to equip them with the necessary English linguistic skills and cultural awareness to join mainstream society. Whilst for some, such as Adler, this was an active transformative process, others such as Blacker unquestionably accepted their 'English' identities and regarded the educational programme as a simple facet of life in those days. Moreover, this acceptance led to the apologetic tendency which was uncovered in the narratives of the previous chapter, which sought to justify the Jewish presence in Britain, to be largely ignored. Rather, these popularly inspired narratives share the sentiment regarding Jewish life in education, as well in Britain to be perfectly natural. Consequently, these move beyond representing schooling as the process whereby foreigners became Englishmen of Jewish faith, instead viewing their Jewish faith and Eastern European ethnicity as defining factors of a distinctive social subgroup within society.

Furthermore, some of the mythical elements of the Anglo-Jewish narrative are challenged from within these memory sources. Romanticised tales of Yiddish-speaking parents going through great personal sacrifice, so their sons and daughters could escape the ghetto can still be found, as with popular tales from the Lower East Side. But counter-narratives are more prominent within

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[205] Lloyd Gartner's seminal study revealed the strategic role which primary education played in the lives of many immigrant families. When children were young, it was advantageous for immigrant mothers to keep their children in school not only because secular and religious education was important, but also since there was little else they could do during the day. Upon reaching the age of thirteen, however, children could be sent out to work and earn a small wage which could supplement and support a family's income. Accordingly, many children saw their education swiftly ended at this age, being sent into the workshop and apprenticeships with immediate effect. See: Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*., pp. 173-174.
[206] London Jewish Museum, Tape #050, Interview with Mark Fineman, 27/01/1986.

these sources. Tales of parents clinging to Yiddish and shunning the adoption of English, of children leaving school early, and of outright parental ambivalence towards secular education all arise, challenging popular myths regarding the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain.

Returning to a comparison with American Jewish memory, it can be argued that the exceptionalism of the Lower East Side arises due to it being characterised as a 'melting pot of ideas', with many different ethnic groups and ideas converging. The myth of America being the '*Golden Medine*' for Jewish migrants, the American dream of social and economic mobility, and the sacralisation of the Lower East Side, all combined to create a compelling narrative of the children of Jewish immigrants being fast tracked to great success. In simple terms, Eastern European Jewry 'made it' in America after a challenging initial settlement, becoming successful members of the community, and contributing to the nation as Americans.[207] In Britain, whilst the East End of London holds great importance as the primary site of Jewish settlement, communities in Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow have all been equally fondly remembered. Moreover, Eastern European Jewry in the British context had the model of the established Anglo-Jewish community to follow and are less regarded as Jewish pioneers settling in a nation for the first time. Indeed, memories of the Jewish East End and education accordingly are less concerned with detailing the 'Jewishness' of community culture, but rather with depicting how these immigrants integrated themselves into British society as Englishmen and Jews. This differing sense of nostalgia within the Anglo-Jewish context has seen different emphasis placed upon both schooling and the 'immigrant trades'.

V) Employment

Whereas the testimony created following the 'memory boom' can reveal many direct examples of the schooling experiences of Jewish immigrant children, representations of life in the workplace are more nuanced. Whilst general impressions can be ascertained from memoirs and oral testimony, directly accessing immigrant working experiences during the period of mass immigration are fraught with difficulties. Primarily due to the author's age, most did not enter the world of employment until the 1920s and 1930s. Henceforth, most of the memories available from these narratives are those of individuals recalling their parents at work. Accordingly, these images are the product of a confluence of factors. Fading or cherished memories of stories told by their parents and the extrapolation of their own latter experiences in the workplace have combined, creating the modern popular romanticism of the Jewish 'immigrant trades'.

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[207] Eli Lederhendler, 'Jewish Immigration to America and Revisionist Historiography: A Decade of New Perspectives', *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Sciences,* Vol. 18, (1983), p. 392.

As highlighted the American generational model reveals a different representation of the world of the immigrant workplace. With the second generation moving away from emphasising their 'Jewishness', the images constructed by the following generation represented a nostalgic return to the Lower East Side, perceiving it in sentimental terms as a reminder of the lost world of Eastern European Jewry following the Holocaust.[208] However, the area still had to serve the grand narrative of the successful assimilation of Eastern European Jewry into society. Accordingly, the Lower East Side became enshrined in memory as the world inhabited by the refugees from Eastern Europe, exploited workers who struggled daily to survive. Ultimately, they prevailed, saving enough to get by and to send and support their children in American schools, who then emerged as 'Americans' and escaped the ghetto.

The Lower East Side in this narrative serves as a nostalgic reminder of a society lost, a world occupied by the last memories of a Jewish community erased off the map. But also, it serves as a place of rebirth, whereby the sons and daughters of Eastern European Jews embraced the opportunities of America.[209] As noted, the Jewish East End does not serve as an identifying myth for modern British Jewry. Popular engagement with the area's history, and indeed the general immigrant experience, are less constrained by an overall narrative of transformation. Rather, the mythical treatment of the immigrant experience differs regarding immigrant work in Britain. Popular memory, rather than focusing upon the image of the 'immigrant trades' such as tailoring and cabinet-making as being gruelling work, have instead portrayed them as proud and noble vocations, with sons proudly following their father's footsteps into them. Whilst there are marginal counter-narratives and dissenting voices, at a general level popular memory is proud of the 'immigrant trades', emphasising the hard work and innovation of Jewish immigrant workers.

Consequently, there is a divergence between historical studies and popular memory regarding the 'immigrant trades'. Many detailed historical works have agreed with Gartner's assessment which highlighted the extreme subdivision of labour, particularly within Jewish tailoring workshops. With many hands performing different tasks pertaining towards a garment's completion, workers received different levels of wages corresponding with the skill level of their performed tasks. With employers able to spread out complex jobs between many unskilled hands, this 'sweatshop' system accordingly saw the expansion of the immigrant trades during the period of mass immigration in London's East End, despite the seasonal nature of the tailoring industry. With a continually refreshing supply of unskilled immigrant labour present, many were confined

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[208] Zipperstein, p. 29.
[209] Diner, p. 29.

to filling roles in cramped conditions, for long hours and low pay.[210] Such depictions are rarely found within popular memory. Blacker's romanticised account for example, decried the vanishing existence of the Jewish tailor. In the East End of his youth, 'almost everyone in the quarter had a landsman or relative who was a tailor'.[211] In Blacker's account, to be a tailor was not a life condemned to hardship and struggle, but rather was perceived to have been a noble Jewish profession.

Such sentiments can be found amongst the majority testimony and representation following the 'memory boom'. The popularisation of the concept of the Jewish East End as a signifier for the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain, has been extended towards images and memories of the immigrant trades. Many immigrant sons for instance, proudly recall following fathers into immigrant trades such as cabinet-making and the tailoring industry. However, this sense of nostalgia extends beyond those who worked in the trades themselves. Comparable to the romanticising of youthful experiences, there exists a firm sense of sentimentality for the trades themselves, with many possessing great pride for Jewish craftmanship and business. Kerrigan, for example, recalled her father's workmanship with fondness, whilst noting her father's acceptance of the sub-divisional nature of the trade:

> My father was a first-class hand tailor. There was bespoke tailoring, when a suit was ordered, and piece-work tailoring. My father did everything, but he didn't like making trousers, so he was considered a jacket-maker, ladies and gents. When he taught me some of the trade, I learned to make skirts and waistcoats – which I hated. I was never a good sewer, because I didn't like it! My mother never worked after she was married, except for one period in my life when I think things were very, very rough and she tried to go back to the cigarette-making. She got a job cigar-making for three weeks, but she really wasn't able to keep up with the speed of it.[212]

Kerrigan's account is further noteworthy for its brief treatment of her mother's foray into the employment market. As noted, the typical treatment of Jewish women within representations of both the immigrant experience and of working-class Jewry is of the 'mother' figure. A housewife by occupation, most narratives express the notion that a woman's purview did not extend beyond the home. Indeed, whilst much testimony and memory sources following the 'memory boom' are rife with stories of Jewish women as mothers, far less treatment exists which extends to their working experiences. Many, such as Kerrigan, neatly comment that women 'never worked' after marriage, upholding the British middle-class views and values of the time.

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[210] Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, p. 63.
[211] Blacker, p. 68.
[212] Kerrigan, 'We just want to get something for the Working Class…', p. 51.

With traditional Judaism dictating that a woman's responsibility lay within the family home, women were exempt from religious tasks, enabling them focus on their duties as a mother.

Such traditions combined with Victorian middle-class values to create certain expectations regarding the role of women in both the domestic and working spheres. Accordingly, much work which women carried out within their own homes was not considered to be 'waged' work by contemporary surveys, and much of the existing memory material related to married women's work is highly selective. As noted by leading feminist historians, the children of immigrants who grew up with British middle-class notions of female domesticity were less inclined to recall their mothers working.[213] Such silences have similarly been noted by Burman's study of Manchester Jewry, where she noted that in several cases interviewees noted that their mothers did not work, before later contradicting themselves by revealing that they had been economically active to an extent.[214]

Whereas the Lower East Side narrative portrays exploited workers enduring poor conditions so that their children could prosper, the images from British Jewish testimony rather emphasise the progression of former immigrants. Here, many accounts recall great successes in the immigrant trades. At the London Jewish Museum for instance, many of the oral testimonies held on record feature tales of successful Jewish East End tailors moving home and business to the West End. Savile Row featured prominently in an interview with Laura Phillips, who recalled the area of being full of trimming shops, tailors and everything needed for the industry, with 50 to 60 Jewish families from Poland and Russia living in Soho Square, creating a little community within a community.[215] One of the more notable success stories which arises from these testimonies, however, is the story of Ray Hille.

Hille was interviewed for the London Museum of Jewish Life in 1986. Her interview is notable for its directed and structured nature, with two interviewers asking specific questions about her life. Far from being passive participants, they consequently help to control the interview, prompting Hille to elaborate upon certain aspects of her life which otherwise may have been overlooked. Hille was born in 1900 in Slonim, Russian Poland. The interview begins with her

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[213] Marks, pp. 114-115.
[214] Burman provided an extract with one interviewee to exemplify this point. In the example, the interviewee asserted that his mother never worked, and was only a housewife. Later in the interview, though, he revealed that she was a dressmaker, occasionally working at home. This work, however, was characterised by the interviewee as being a 'side line'. Such an assessment lead Burman to conclude that for this generation, the supplemental work which Jewish women conducted at home or outside the household was regarded as not being 'proper work,' in order to adhere to societal expectations of a woman's role after marriage. See: Burman, 'Jewish Women and the Household Economy', pp. 61-62.
[215] London Jewish Museum, Tape #306, Interview with Laura Phillips, undated.

discussing her family's migration to London in 1905, which curiously both conforms to myths of Jewish migration, whilst at the same time challenging them.[216] Once the family had settled in London, her father, Salamon opened a furniture business, S. Hille & Co., which still exists today. No longer family owned, the company is best known for a stackable polypropylene chair, the Polyprop, which was designed by Robin Day and is the world's best-selling chair.[217] Hille discussed her later life in the interview, such as her service as Red Cross nurse during World War I, her work in the civil service, and when she took over her father's business in 1936.

The founding and running of S. Hille Furniture & Co. is characterised as a family affair. In a streamlined narrative, it appears that many details of the company's founding are either unknown by Hille, or perhaps were overlooked to enhance the image of a strong company rising out of humble origins. Present within the narrative are tropes such as her father having worked multiple jobs; he was initially a milkman, but hated getting up early in the morning, so he instead joined a wine company. His time there was also short-lived, with a disagreement between the two partners of the company spiralling out of control in 1906, causing Salamon to quit and pursue his main passion; furniture, whose interest he had maintained as a side line until this time.[218] However, the early years were challenging, and to overcome financial difficulties Hille's mother operated her own silk business, buying and selling silk cloths which provided the family's main income. Many Jewish women worked in the garment industry, running small businesses from home or working upon piecework to supplement low incomes.[219] What is particularly unusual in this testimony, is a memory source highlighting the leading economic role which a Jewish mother assumed for the family. Indeed, Hille's own experiences in taking over her father's business in 1936 can perhaps account for her willingness to portray her mother as an equally capable businesswoman to her father.

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[216] In many respects, her account followed the established narrative regarding Jewish immigration. Her father preceded the family to establish a home in Rutland Street, before sending for them. Their escape is recalled as being desperate, with the family having to bribe their way over the border whilst evading guards. Hille even believed that she momentarily passed away during the frantic escape, crushed beneath something, only to be revived. However, in other aspects, her story opposed the mythical narrative. Her father seemingly was an intelligent man, hailing from Slonim, a self-described 'university town'. Very capable and ambitious, he decided to follow others in leaving the town for the Western world, seeing great opportunity in London. Indeed, in the short while he was in London he managed to create the 'most beautiful home' for the family, complete with handmade furniture. Furthermore, Rutland Street was far from a pauperised area, being in the 'posh area' of Whitechapel, where the educated Russians resided. See: London Jewish Museum, Tape #053, Interview with Mrs Hille, 22/01/1986.

[217] Hille, 'History of Hille' <http://www.hille.co.uk/history> [accessed 16/06/2017].

[218] Hille noted that her father's main passions were architecture and history. When the family were in Slonim, he spent much of his spare time exploring London to get to know the city. He soon became entranced by the Royal Victoria and Albert Museum, which inspired him to get into the furniture making business. The early years of S. Hille & Co. consequently were dedicated to renovating and reproducing eighteenth century furniture. See: London Jewish Museum, Tape #053, Interview with Mrs Hille, 22/01/1986.

[219] White, p. 235.

Whilst the story of S. Hille Furniture & Co. tells of the great economic and long-lasting triumph of an immigrant family, it is important to emphasise that not all achieved such measures of success. For example, despite his latter fame and fortune, Grade's memoirs depicted his family's early struggles as being a combination of an overfilled labour market, low pay, and his father's flaws.[220] Indeed, the advent of oral history has revealed many different facets of the Jewish immigrant experience. Whilst many accounts conform to the romanticised narrative and representations of the immigrant trades, such as tailoring, some dissenting voices present counter-narratives, highlighting poor conditions and revealing an ambivalence towards them.

Ena Abrahams was born in 1924. Throughout her life, she only knew her father to be of poor health. He died in his early sixties from emphysema, and Abrahams recalled that he always said that he could 'never remember a time when he didn't have a very bad cough'. From an early age he was orphaned and was taken in at the age of ten years old by a group of tailors who let him sleep on rolls of cloth underneath the cutting table.[221] Living in these conditions, along with a life working in various immigrant trades was regarded by Abrahams as causing her father's poor health and early death. More generally, the poor working conditions of the immigrant workshops was something noted at the time, with the Jewish Board of Guardians recognising the risk of tuberculosis among Jewish workers and pioneering its treatment and aftercare.[222]

Popular memory often overlooks such hardships, preferring to focus upon eventual successes and pride of tradition. Within Chapter Two, the marginalised narratives revealed that some children were forced to leave their education early and enter the employment market, so they could support their families. Once more within the subsequent oral testimony, in amongst the mainstream positive narratives, similar dissenting voices can be found. David Ginsberg for example, never wanted to follow his father into the cabinet-making trade. He wanted to go into engineering but remarked that in those days one had to go into what you parents wanted you to. Interviewed in 1986, he contrasted the modern freedom of youngsters to those of his childhood, asserting that his generation respected their parents more. It was this respect which led him to a

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[220] After working several low paid jobs in the tailoring trade, Grade's father launched an ambitious business venture of servicing the leading sewing machine of the time, the Reece buttonhole machine. Indeed, Grade believed that the family would have 'managed well,' had his father had a better sense of business acumen, and resisted gambling so much money away. See: Grade, p. 24.

[221] Abrahams, 'I Had This Other Life…', p. 79.

[222] With Jewish immigrants in workshops often crowded in small, hot and cramped rooms for twelve or more hours a day, they were at great risk of tuberculosis. Often poorly ventilated work environments, workers inhaled and exhaled in a smoky atmosphere, which had long term negative effects to their health. See: Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant in England*, pp. 160-161; and Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 89-90.

career in the cabinet-making industry, a profession which he admitted his youthful ambivalence towards: it was the 'last thing' on his mind.[223]

It is not only tales of youthful ambitions being halted by parental guidance which have been omitted from popular memory. Alongside the influential work of William Fishman's *East End Jewish Radicals*, the rise of oral history has unveiled other marginalised facets of Jewish immigrant lives. For example, Wolf Kossoff's interview revealed that he had been politically active with Rudolf Rocker's Anarchist Club. A self-described 'red one', Kossoff recalled how the anarchists have been poorly represented, first by contemporary society, and then by history. Far from a group of radicals hell-bent on destroying the English way of life, they were just a 'group of intellectual people' who dedicated themselves to giving what they had, to the people who needed them. Rocker was described by Kossoff as a 'real humanitarian', and whilst Kossoff knew of him, he did not personally have the pleasure of knowing him.[224] The existence of the Anarchist Club and their activity is something which the romanticised narratives of both the Jewish East End, and the overall experience of immigrant Jewry in Britain largely excludes, with both public and private memory instead focusing upon the immigrant trades as a noble profession, without class conflict. Jewish tailors are instead remembered to have created the cheap, ready-made clothing market, with the immigrant sub-division production methods being more cost effective than the English principle of 'one man, one garment'.[225]

Whilst the majority ended up working in the cabinet-making or tailoring trades, not all Eastern European Jewish immigrants gravitated towards them.[226] Adler's semi-fictional novel is based upon her childhood experiences of the Jewish East End. In her interview, she revealed the humble origins of her family's shop. Her father's enterprising abilities were fondly remembered. Upon his arrival in the East End, he spent his 37 shillings on handkerchiefs. Adler recalled her mother later revealing that she was very cross with him for doing this, saying 'If you've got £2, you don't buy only handkerchiefs, you buy this, and that and the other'. Somehow, despite his lack of English he managed to sell them at the local market, and then used the money to buy other things.[227]

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[223] London Jewish Museum, Tape #082, Interview with David Ginsberg, 02/10/1986.
[224] London Jewish Museum, Tape #05, Interview with Wolf Kossoff, 16/06/1977.
[225] Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 131.
[226] Allowing for incompleteness, the 1911 census revealed a general picture of the majority being confined to these trades. Assuming men listed as Russians, Poles and Romanians were Jews, 50 per cent were recorded as working in the tailoring industry. A further 10 per cent were in furniture. Whilst these figures reveal that the majority worked in these industries, it is notable that many immigrant Jews would have found alternative employment. How permanent this alternative work was, however, is something which cannot be ascertained from the figures. See: Harold Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), p. 144.
[227] Adler, 'Woman of the Eighties', pp. 26-27.

As highlighted, following the 'memory boom', self-conscious attempts were made to record and preserve the history of the Jewish East End. One of the most praiseworthy outcomes of this movement was the establishment of the London Museum of Jewish Life. In the early 1980s at its site in Finchley, the museum exhibited a reconstruction of a tailoring workshop. Fortunately, photographs of this display remain in the London Jewish Museum's archives.[228] From these four photographs, one can ascertain some notion of what the reconstruction was like. Indeed, in terms of representing the working materials and layout of a typical East End tailoring workshop, the reconstruction appears to have been remarkably well presented. As with some of the earlier examined photographs within Chapters One and Two, there was a busy, untidy sense of the workshop. The reconstruction was crafted to convey a sense of work having been momentarily paused or abandoned, with the workers vacating the premises for the visitor to examine. A notable example of this presentation would be the small workbench with a sewing machine present. At this bench stood a stool slightly ajar, whilst a garment was mounted, midway through its work. An assortment of tools and workbenches were also present, alongside with dummies fitted with examples of clothing, in what appears to have been a relatively small room, conforming to reality of the often-claustrophobic workshop.

For all the attention to detail which was evidentially put into this display, the very nature and intention of the reconstruction lessens its impact. Around the room there were mementos and supplementary material to educate visitors. For instance, an English poster for the Tailors Society was framed and mounted on one wall, and to its left stood a brightly red coloured wall, displaying information about the Tailors Strike. Whilst one sadly is unable to view beyond the confines of the photographs, it seems likely that further information about the tailoring industry in general was displayed, as half of a black and white photograph can be seen in the image.

Furthermore, despite the reconstruction's attention to detail, it was displayed in a room with a large window, filling it with natural lighting. This, along with the bright red wall and the room's otherwise white walls strongly illuminated the reconstruction. Whilst ideal for enabling people to easily see the display, such a welcoming atmosphere is a far cry from the historical images conjured up by recent historians. Fishman, for instance, stressed that workers operated and breathed in an 'atmosphere already foetid with sweat of congested day workers and steam of press irons', with conditions hazardous.[229] This reconstruction accordingly can be recognised to be

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[228] The discussed photographs are held within the same collection as the previously cited unidentified report from the Museum's curator, Rickie Burman. They are stored in: London Jewish Museum, 17/05/2011/Archive of the London Museum of Jewish Life (incorporating the Museum of the Jewish East End) 1983-1995/E. Photos.
[229] William Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004, first published, London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 50.

partially the product of nostalgia and memory. To those who worked in the workshops and their children, the basic arrangement of the room could help to stimulate individual memory of the shared experiences of the Jewish East End and workshop. To those removed from these experiences, like with many reconstructions, this area was fraught with difficulties.

The celebratory nature of the Museum's treatment of the Jewish tailoring trade can be recognised in their 1988 exhibition, *Off The Peg: The Story of the Women's Wholesale Clothing Industry 1880 to the 1960s*. The introductory excerpt of the exhibition's catalogue described it as follows:

> *Off The Peg* tells the story of the Jewish contribution to the women's wholesale clothing industry. It traces the foundation and development of the industry from its workshop beginnings through to the factory floor and a scale of distribution undreamt of by the industry's founders.[230]

The introduction continued to note that the industry developed out of the 'hard work, long hours and perseverance of the Eastern European immigrants'. Though many of the early companies no longer exist individually, many became parts of large groups, and in some cases retained their individual identities. To convey the story of the industry between 1880 and the 1960s, a selection of materials was used, including interviews with Ada Bloomberg, Geoffrey Henry and Mick Mendel. Between these interviews, some nuance was added to the exhibition's catalogue, with Bloomberg's career in the industry, Henry's directorship of Ellis & Goldstein and Mendel's trade unionism offering a general overview of different facets of the industry. Accompanying these testimonies were a range of photographs and examples of the manufactured items of clothing.[231] The exhibition was a resounding success, with over 150 people attending its opening, whilst it was also recognised with an award under the Government's Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme. Press coverage was highly complementary, with the *Jewish Chronicle*'s review describing it as an 'unique celebration of the Jewish contribution to the women's wholesale clothing industry', whilst noting that the story told had largely been overlooked by fashion historians.[232]

The exhibition's catalogue featured three interviews, along with a 'Fashion Sketch' and overview of Jewish Mantle Making Trade Unions. Whilst the catalogue noted that the industry grew out of immigrant sweatshops, there was a triumphant tone. Far from only tracing the

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[230] London Museum of Jewish Life, *Off The Peg: The Story of the Women's Wholesale Clothing Industry 1880 to the 1960s* (London: London Museum of Jewish Life, 1988), p. 1.
[231] London Jewish Museum, 17/05/2011/Archive of the London Museum of Jewish Life (incorporating the Museum of the Jewish East End) 1983-1995/B. Exhibitions, 1983-1995/Proposal for *Off The Peg: The Jewish Contribution to the Garment Industry*.
[232] *Jewish Chronicle*, November 25, 1988.

involvement of Jewish individuals in the development of production methods and fashion, the catalogue's conclusion noted the influential modern-day role which Jews have achieved. Moving away from the workroom as a tailor or presser, from the 1980s and beyond Jewish involvement was now largely confined to the boardroom, which was 'in its way, as creative, vital and valid'.[233] Indeed, from the exhibition and its coverage, it appears that the suffering and hardship of the Jewish tailors, especially during the early days of the industry were largely overlooked. Whilst not ignored or underplayed, they were instead characterised as the foundations of the industry, laying out the starting point from which a highly successful industry flourished. Frank Russell, who was a co-sponsor of the exhibition, began his career as a child in the family workshop in Dalston, East London. Although the work was hard, he characterised those days as being full of 'happiness and humour'.[234]

As with memoirs, this exhibition constructed a specific narrative regarding the tailoring industry and the contribution of working-class Jews of immigrant descent. Not singularly created by glimpses of memory, as memoirs and oral history are, this exhibition was a composite text which featured many different memory and historical sources, ostensibly to contribute towards an informed wider appraisal. As revealed by assessing the catalogue, a positive, triumphant narrative of the contribution which immigrant Jewry made towards the trade was adopted. Accordingly, dissenting narratives which would detract from such positivity were downplayed. Whilst they were acknowledged, for this exhibition they were placed to the margins of the overall narrative. Henceforth *Off The Peg* depicted a vibrant and successful Jewish contribution in the tailoring industry, one which has moved from the workbenches to the boardroom. The success and critical acclaim of the exhibition reveal the public's acceptance of this representation. Furthermore, one could posit that the input of Russell's co-sponsorship of the exhibition, contributed towards the celebratory nature and sentimentalism of the exhibition's overall narrative. Subsequently even within a museum's exhibition, the intricacies of memory in highlighting and forgetting elements of the past can be recognised.[235]

Popular and public memory of the Jewish immigrant experience of working life accordingly can be characterised to follow a positive, triumphant narrative following the 'memory boom'. The enthusiastic response of British Jews regarding the forming and running of the Museum of the Jewish East End, reveal an acceptance of the need to conserve the 'heritage' of not only the area, but also of the immigrant Jewish past as a whole – a heritage which the opening of *Off The Peg*

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[233] London Museum of Jewish Life, *Off The Peg*, p. 69.
[234] *Jewish Chronicle*, November 25, 1988.
[235] Boyarin, p. 7.

revealed to be part of the cornerstone of the successes of the British Women's wholesale clothing industry. Whereas the American narrative has enshrined the Lower East Side and its workshops in memory as the site of immigrant Jewry's battle for rebirth and entry into society, British Jewish memory by comparison has nostalgically remembered the immigrant trades, such as the tailoring workshop, as sites of great achievement.

This memory has been informed by the gradual breaking down of the Jewish working-classes within traditional settlements such as the Jewish East End, where the interwar period saw much sideway migration away from the area.[236] Removed from these communities through time and geography, the hardship of the immigrant trades became subsumed as a necessary part of the industry. Without the early hard work of Eastern European Jewry, the great successes in cabinet-making and tailoring would never have been achieved. These success stories became part of the fabric of popular memory for immigrant Jewry in Britain, especially within the memory of the Jewish East End. As with the Lower East Side being regarded a transformative space whereby immigrant Jews became American, similarly the workshops of the Jewish East End have become regarded as the workplaces where immigrant Jewry made their mark upon British industry, as exemplified by the exhibition, *Off The Peg*. Despite the prevalence of the positive scenes created following the 'memory boom', counter-narratives are present within the third generation of memory. However, these private representations appear on the periphery of dominant popular narratives. Narratives which focus upon celebrating the once maligned professions of immigrant Jewry as establishing the foundations of success for the immigrant Jew in Britain.

VI) Community

Following the 'memory boom' there was mass public engagement with the Jewish immigrant past. Regarding the Jewish East End, many private and public memories were shared, with individuals seeking to reconnect with a distinctive, yet fading community. The founding of the Museum of the Jewish East End can be recognised as one facet of this memory, with the Museum's efforts to preserve the area's history contributing greatly to popular perceptions. With the explosion of popular history and interest, tensions between public and private memory became less defined. As this chapter has explored, certain mythical facets of the Jewish immigrant past became enshrined in popular memory. Many soon supported the dominant narratives, such as the first generation consisting of refugees from late Imperial persecution, or of the warm, loving and nurturing Jewish family. Indeed, with the broad acceptance of certain myths regarding the Jewish immigrant experience in public memory, and a growing chorus of private narratives

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[236] Cesarani, 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Suburbs', pp. 20-21.

supporting them, counter-narratives in private memory almost became stigmatised. For instance, popular 'agony aunt' Claire Rayner admitted to being confused by the popular images of the Jewish family, with her childhood being unhappy due to the volatile nature of her parents. It was only later in life that she realised this, and that she was not as her mother said, a 'problem child'.[237]

Whilst the Jewish East End became popularised as an influential site in the identity of Eastern European immigrant Jewry, unlike the Lower East Side it has not been recognised as *the* definitive site. The immigrant communities of Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow have all additionally been popularised in public memory. However, due to the sheer numbers of immigrants which made the East End their home, the area has emerged as a site of memory for Jews in Britain, like the Lower East Side has for American Jewry, and has been regarded almost as a quintessential site of the Jewish experience in Britain. With the children and grandchildren of Jewish East Enders moving away from the area, nostalgic recreations of the diminishing community became a vital link to the 'old world' community, and traditions of Eastern Europe.

Jonathan Boyarin's brief survey on the power of nostalgia in shaping popular memory and myth noted the dual, almost contradictory nature of nostalgia. In efforts to remember and preserve certain facets of the Lower East Side in memory, other elements were simultaneously forgotten, with a simplified narrative created.[238] Whilst the Lower East Side has become in American Jewish history the site of an 'authentic' Jewish experience, nostalgic representations of the Jewish East End instead long for the lost community. Rather than romanticising an 'authentic' Jewish environment, British Jewish popular memory instead focused upon the area as being a supportive and self-sufficient community. A sense of longing for a Jewish environment in terms of community, with a Jewishness which navigated both the traditional world of the Sabbath and the English world of dance halls, has been both romanticised and popularised. Furthermore, the very open nature of these images has enabled this section to explore sources beyond the private and public realm of the memory produced by memoirs and oral testimony.

Many public images of the Jewish East End have been created. Whilst artists such as the Whitechapel Boys constructed contemporary images, it remains a site of artistic interest, even for those who left the area and discarded elements of their 'Jewish' identity. One such individual would be the artist, Alfred Daniels, who was born in the East End in 1924. Daniels studied at the Royal College of Art in the late 1940s and was elected a member of the Royal Society of British

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[237] Claire Rayner, *How Did I Get Here From There?* (London: Virago Press, 2003), pp. 24-25.
[238] Boyarin, pp. 3-4.

Figure 3: Alfred Daniels, *The Gramophone Man in Wentworth St.*, 1950

artists in 1983. He regularly produced art throughout his life, routinely exhibiting at the Royal Society. Described as being 'outspoken', but with 'integrity and lots of humour', his obituary in *The Guardian* noted that his artwork was highly sought after by galleries.[239]

In a series of interviews with the anonymous blogger and author, the Gentle Author, Daniels revealed his ambivalence towards the East End and his Jewishness. 'I'm not really an East Ender, I'm more of a Bow Boy', Daniels remarked when asked about his family's origins, before elaborating that his paternal and maternal grandfathers were immigrants from Russia and Poland in the 1880s. His treatment of Judaism and his 'Jewishness' was even more dismissive:

> One good thing is, I gave up the Jewish religion and thank goodness for that. It was only when I was twelve and I read about the Hitler problem that I realised I was Jewish. Fortunately, we weren't religious in my family and we didn't go to the synagogue. But I went to prepare for my Bar Mitzvah and they tried to harm me with Hebrew. We were taught by these Russians and if you didn't learn it they bashed you. That put me off religion there and then. Yet when we got outside the Black Shirts

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[239] Simon Rodway, 'Alfred Daniels Obituary', *The Guardian*, 30 June 2015.

were waiting for us in the street, calling 'Here look, it's the Jew boys!' and they wanted to bash me too. Fortunately, I could run fast in those days.[240]

Despite seeming indifference towards the Jewish East End which he left in 1945, Daniels kept returning for his sketches and paintings. Figure 3, *The Gramophone Man in Wentworth Street*, is one of his earlier well-known works. A black and white painting, it was created when Daniels was on a field trip as student of the Royal College of Art. The painting focuses upon the titular character, the 'Gramophone Man'. To his left stands an interested listener, appreciating the music. The image's background features an assortment of people, primarily women, who appear to be gathered in front of a street seller. Despite his departure from the East End, when interviewed by the Gentle Author, Daniels revealed that he revisited Petticoat Lane and Spitalfields during the blitz, since it was the 'first place I experienced a sense of being part of a community, it was the Jewish community then'.[241] It is this conception of the area which is central to much popular imagery of the Jewish East End.

The Gramophone Man is a nuanced painting. As with its creator, the very 'Jewishness' of the image is challenging to detect. Indeed, one would posit that the Jewish nature of this image is in its setting: the Jewish East End. This is only communicated by the painting's title, however, and is not apparent within the subject matter. Accordingly, this version of the Jewish East End lacks any obvious signifiers of Jewishness. Considering the attitude of Daniels towards his Jewish heritage, this is perhaps unsurprising. The painting could be interpreted henceforth as Daniels recording the declining Jewishness of the area. Without firm visual identifiers of Jewish life and culture, the image betrays a vanishing Jewish community. This scene can be interpreted differently though. As opposed to depicting a dwindling community, the painting could purport to reveal the successful integration and assimilation of East End Jewry. Many children and grandchildren of Eastern European Jewry rejected religious orthodoxy and traditions like Daniels. However, they retained a strong sense of a Jewish identity, as emphasised by the predilection of the children of immigrants to marry fellow Jews.[242] The community remained 'Jewish'

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[240] Gentle Author, 'Alfred Daniels, Artist', January 27, 2012 <http://spitalfieldslife.com/2012/01/27/alfred-daniels-artist/> [accessed 17/06/2017].

[241] Gentle Author, 'A Return Visit to Alfred Daniels', February 25, 2012 <http://spitalfieldslife.com/2012/02/25/a-return-visit-to-alfred-daniels/> [accessed 17/06/17].

[242] Chaim Lewis for instance, remarked that elders were strangely obsessed with marriage, believing that there could be no joy until their children were safe and happily married. However, whilst Lewis regarded this as part of the sanctity of Jewish life and preservation, Cyril Spector instead viewed such expectations as being born of isolationism and prejudice. His mother's dismissal of intermarriage extended to exclude even Jews of different ethnic backgrounds, with only Jews of Russian origin being good enough for her children. See: Chaim Lewis, p. 81; and Spector, pp. 17-18.

consequently as the result of social and ethnic ties. Rather than revealing a fading community, Figure 3 could alternatively be interpreted to show one which had redefined itself.

The intention and meaning of *The Gramophone Man* consequently are shrouded in uncertainty. The significance of the titular figure is unclear. Was he representative of Daniels' Jewish East End experience? Indeed, it unknown whether Daniels' desired to complete a personal project to document this bygone Jewish community, or to celebrate the successful intermingling of this minority within British society. A merge which had been so comprehensive, that 'Jewish' subjects were now indistinguishable from 'native' Englishmen. Or perhaps this was simply intended to be a classic scene of a London marketplace. That it possesses any Jewishness is entirely circumstantial and informed by the viewer's interpretation.

Key to many conceptions of the Jewish East End are public market scenes, where women would gather to stretch the family income as far as possible, bartering down market sellers and hunting for bargains. This marketplace community, however, was endangered and disappearing. Such is reflected in Simon Blumemfeld's 1935 novel, *Jew Boy*, where the protagonist experiences first-hand the declining levels of trade.[243] *The Gramophone Man* accordingly could be perceived to be depicting the last vestiges of this community, where people gathered for both business and pleasure. Rather than any form of 'Jewishness', it could be this sense of community which Daniels sought to explore in this painting, being the form of Jewishness which he felt at ease with, as opposed to a religious identity. As Daniels himself posited, these people can be regarded more as East Enders, rather than simply Jews.

Another example of this form of nostalgia can be found within the paintings of John Allin. Born in 1934 in East London, Allin taught himself to paint whilst serving a six-month prison sentence for petty theft. Upon his release, he soon found a measure of success within the Folk/Outsider art movement, recreating the scenes of his childhood memories.[244] Notably, his artwork was neatly packaged in a romanticised visual memoir, *Say Goodbye, You May Never See Them Again* (1974). The book consisted of showcasing Allin's artwork, whilst a nostalgic conversation between Allin and the playwright, Arnold Wesker unfolded. Furthermore, the book was subtitled *Scenes from two East-End backgrounds*, with Wesker's Jewish heritage and upbringing being compared throughout to his friend, the non-Jewish Allin.

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[243] Simon Blumenfeld, *Jew Boy* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1986, first published, London: Cape, 1935), p. 306.
[244] Sarah MacDougall, Labels for 'Unexpected: continuing narratives of identity and migration', (London: Ben Uri Gallery, 2016).

Wesker was born in 1932. His family were immigrant Jews, originating from Russia and Hungary. Wesker grew up in the politically charged atmosphere of the 1930s East End, with his family being working-class Communists, who bitterly opposed Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. Often outspoken, Wesker was later characterised as being an inflammatory, socialist author, the '*enfant terrible* of the London stage' whose literary attacks had made him the hero of the anti-establishment left.[245] Wesker, however, was a committed social critic, who desired the cultivation of a 'socialism animated by the warmth of human feeling'.[246]

Alongside his socialism, Wesker was proud of his Jewishness, with many of his works containing autobiographical elements. The 'Wesker Trilogy' (*Chicken Soup with Barley*, *Roots*, *I'm Talking about Jerusalem*) traced the political, social and human situation of the English working class over a period of twenty years, from 1936 to 1956. Central to the overall narrative are the Kahn family. East End Jews, over the course of two decades their passionate socialist ideals and humanism are gradually eroded, whilst the family also become fractured. Whilst some critics proposed that *Chicken Soup* and the trilogy were designed to show the disillusionment of British Communists with the Russian centre, especially following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Wesker himself noted a different, central message of the play in a 1976 interview: 'you can't have brotherhood without love'.[247] It was this fondness for a sense of community and togetherness which inspired the creation of *Say Goodbye*, a visual memoir dedicated to remembering the East End.

The summary of *Say Goodbye* on the book's dust jacket revealed the publication's nostalgia. Allin was quoted decrying the condition of the East End and the area's renovation, exclaiming 'What they've done with the East End is diabolical, diabolical!' It was this recognition of a disappearing world which inspired the book, a conversation between the two East Enders celebrating their old home. Rather than a book of regrets, it was instead characterised as being a 'book of remembrances', which sought to the uncover the secrets which gave the East End its charm.[248] The book was predominately narrated by Wesker, who provided his personal recollections of the Jewish East End, its character and his family life, with certain tropes such as the strong Jewish mother present. One of Allin's text contributions, however, is noteworthy for revealing displeasure at the loss of a sense of community:

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[245] Abraham Rothberg, 'East End, West End: Arnold Wesker', *Southwest Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn, 1967), p 368.

[246] Karl-Heinz Stoll, Edward Bond and Arnold Wesker, 'Interviews with Edward Bond and Arnold Wesker', *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (December, 1976), p. 422.

[247] Ibid., p. 424.

[248] Arnold Wesker and John Allin, *Say Goodbye: You May Never See Them Again* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974).

Well, neighbours are just curtain-merchants aren't they? Followed the pattern of the war. After the war years faded away the hardness set in… People seemed to withdraw… into themselves, become more competitive. A change of quality come over the place, where people no longer brought chairs to sit on the pavement, or sat on the stairs of a summer evening with the kids having picnics in front of their own doorstep… started to disappear when I was about thirteen, or getting on for… to deteriorate…[249]

Within this book, the Jewishness (or not, in Allin's case) of the authors was irrelevant. As with Daniels, this was a celebration of the East Ender, or 'Cockney'. That a Cockney could be Jewish reveals the integration of East End Jewry into the wider community. Indeed, a confidence is often found within much memory material created following the 'memory boom' which pertains to the history of immigrant Jewry in Britain, with the sons and daughters of immigrant Jewry feeling self-assured regarding their identity and position in society. Memories and tales of Jewishness were regarded as being authentically part of both East End life, and indeed British life, with these Jewish communities recognised as being British. Henceforth, no contradiction was found regarding emphasising or downplaying 'Jewishness' when discussing areas such as the East End.

It was this integrated sense of nostalgia which was prevalent throughout *Say Goodbye* in both the text and visuals. An example of the artwork present would be Figure 4, *Whitechapel Rd.* Allin's style is intriguing, seemingly possessing intricate detail, whilst simplifying the scene. In *Whitechapel Rd.*, a vibrant and active community is portrayed, with many men gathered in the streets socialising. They appear to be in winter dress, wearing coats and hats where appropriate. There is a peculiar absence of female characters, with only one woman depicted in the lower left-hand corner with her partner. Despite this, there is a strong sense of community togetherness represented by Figure 4, with many figures interacting and presumably enjoying each other's company on this afternoon. When the image is contrasted with Allin's words above, it is evident that this is a nostalgic recreation of the East End, Jewish or otherwise, and not the contemporary area.

At street level the image is colourful, with the shop fronts neatly standing out from one another. Traditional businesses associated with the Jewish East End have been imagined, with either their trades, such as the men's tailoring shop 'Cecil Gee', or names, such as N. Steingold & Sons Jewellers and a sign for Black Lion Yard, signifying Jewishness. Like Figure 3, the composition of the image conveys a sense of nostalgia for a community slowly disappearing away from the streets, with the assorted colours of the inhabitants on the street fading away into the white sky.

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[249] Ibid., p. 17.

Figure 4: John Allin, *Whitechapel Rd*., 1974

As with the other sources analysed within this chapter, *Whitechapel Rd*. is the creation of memory. It does not depict the actuality of the East End Jewish community. Taken alone, the meaning of the painting is challenging to decipher, with it appearing to simply represent a community scene. It is only when the image is supplemented by Wesker's text that the true nostalgic nature of the painting is revealed. Remembering his father's struggle to keep a steady job as a tailor, Wesker recalled him travelling to Whitechapel Road, by Black Lion Yard every Sunday morning 'until quarter to one on the dot'. This was the 'chazar mark', or 'pig market', where men gathered in hope of being offered a job, or to argue politics.[250] It is noteworthy that Wesker's prose and Allin's image combine to romanticise the event, with Wesker sentimentalising his father's resentment of tailoring, and his great enthusiasm for arguing politics with his 'cronies'.

The background and context to the painting reveal the reason for the absence of female characters, with it being a male dominated space associated with work. Furthermore, it is notable that despite the historical representations of the 'chazar mark' as the exploitive system where unemployed workers were left at the mercy of employers, the image was chosen for the cover of *Say Goodbye*.[251] Along with Wesker's text, what was once regarded as a site of derision has been romanticised as one of the lost sites of a fading Jewish East End and is to be cherished in memory. As noted, however, this is a *nostalgic* scene created by memory and artistic license, and not a

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[250] Ibid., p. 9.
[251] In his case study of the East End in the year 1888, William Fishman quoted an extract from Myer Wilchinski's harrowing description of the 'chazar mark', an unofficial employment market, where men huddled together and were willing to work for any wage, such was their desperation. 'Half starved, helpless, hopeless human beings', the majority looked like 'unwashed corpses.' See: William Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* (London: Duckworth, 1988), p. 89.

depiction of the reality of Whitechapel Road on a Sunday morning. It is rather a sentimentalised image, fondly remembering a disappearing community. As with the photographs examined within Chapter One, the nostalgia in the painting, *Whitechapel Rd.* is affirmed by the accompanying text. With Wesker fondly recollecting his father's employment struggles, both the text and image complement each other in constructing a positive image of the Jewish East End community.

It is not only through artwork that the 'fading' community of working-class Jewry in the Jewish East End has been romanticised. Similarly sentimental representations can be found within film and documentaries made for television. One noteworthy example is the work of Robert Vas, and his 1962 twenty-minute film, *The Vanishing Street*. The film focused upon Hessel Street and its surrounding area, shortly before the shops and houses were due for demolition. Vas had previously directed *Refugee England* (1959), which examined the first day of a Hungarian refugee in London. Vas himself was born in Budapest in 1931 and came to England following the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. *Refugee England* focused upon the plight of a Hungarian immigrant, trying to understand and embrace the strange new culture and environment of England.[252] A Jewish immigrant himself, it is notable that his next project, *The Vanishing Street*, similarly explored a distinct and unrecoverable world, that of the older generation of East End Jewry. *The Vanishing Street* was first publicly shown at the *National Film Theatre* in November 1962 and attracted funding from both the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *BFI Experimental Film Fund*.[253]

The Vanishing Street accordingly can be understood to offer a sombre look at a dwindling and distinctive working-class Jewish community in Britain, that of the Jewish East End. With Hessel Street marked for redevelopment, the film preserved for posterity a look at the typical life of a self-contained Jewish community in 1960s Britain. Over the course of the feature, the street market, *kosher* food shops and synagogue all featured prominently, used as identifiers of the community's Jewishness. Shot in black and white, the film was not an informative documentary in the conventional sense. There was no presenter, nor did Vas utilise a narrator or interviews. Rather he allowed the images to speak for themselves, combining long shots of the street and close-ups on people and their daily activities, with emphasis placed upon close facial shots of elderly residents. A mixture of natural sounds, snippets of ongoing conversations and old Yiddish songs were featured throughout the film, helping to establish the mood for the onscreen images. The busy, bustling nature of the market was backed by a jolly, upbeat song, conveying the joys of

[252] Bryony Dixon, 'Vas, Robert (1931-1978)' *BFI Screen Online* <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/452750/index.html> [accessed 27/08/2017].
[253] Christophe Dupin, 'Vanishing Street, The (1962)' *BFI Screen Online* <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/439685/> [accessed 18/06/2017].

community life in Hessel Street. Conversely, the final shot of the bulldozers demolishing buildings featured only natural sound during the credits, emphasising the sense of loss.

One of the predominant themes throughout *The Vanishing Street* was the ageing nature of the community. The emphasis on the middle-aged and elderly inhabitants of Hessel Street, along with the film's title, communicated an impression that this was the final generation of East End Jewry. For instance, the film's cold open focused upon not only the people in the street, but also shop fronts. One firm which the camera lingered upon featured the proud announcement that it was established in 1913. Isolated, this image conveyed a sense of rootedness of the Jewish community of Hessel Street. However, the camera then cut to a modern tenement block, instilling a recognition of the creeping modernity which threatened the traditional way of life of the residents. Such sentiments were shared by the people of Hessel Street, as revealed in the final five minutes. In one of the film's usage of sound from the street, Vas lingered upon a small group of women who were discussing the area. The camera 'overhears' their conversation, where one elderly woman was discussing the old flea market. Forty years ago, she asserted that this entire area was a marketplace.[254] But now most of the people had moved away, leaving a dwindling population.

The message of *The Vanishing Street* is challenging to unpick. One interpretation would be to perceive the film as sentimental. Recognising the declining populace of the Jewish East End and that its buildings were due to renovation, some have argued that Vas was moved by the fading nature of the community and sought to preserve some record of it. David Robson in 2015 revisited the film and noted its relative unknown status. Described as a 'small masterpiece', Robson regarded the film as work of nostalgia, but not a sad one. Defining the East End as a haven for refugees throughout the ages, Robson noted the temporary settlement of Jewish refugees, who used the area as a foothold in their assimilation into British life. Now Jewish life in the area has been replaced by Bangladeshi life, with the old Jewish market stalls replaced by Bangladeshi ones, and *kosher* butchers by *halal* butchers.[255]

To Robson, *The Vanishing Street* was a celebratory look at the Jewish area of first settlement from which the children and grandchildren of refugees entered wider British society. That the Jewish community of the East End has by and large been dispersed across Britain is not a note for sorrow, but rather a sign of the successful integration of Jewish East Enders. Such popular representations can be seen to mirror the American narrative of the Lower East Side, which depict

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[254] *The Vanishing Street*, Dir. Robert Vas, BFI Experimental Film Fund, 1962, Film.
[255] 'Images from a Vanished Past', *Jewish Chronicle*, September 3, 2015.

the area as the site through which Eastern European Jews cast off old traditions to embrace American identities. The nostalgia for Hessel Street, like the nostalgia for the Lower East Side, can be seen accordingly as a sentimental reconstruction of these neighbourhoods as being more authentically 'Jewish' by the perceived continued conservation of Jewish customs and traditions by their communities, in a concentrated area.[256] Customs which have not necessarily been continued by the successfully assimilated British and American Jews of today.

However, *The Vanishing Street* is more than a nostalgic celebration of Hessel Street. Vas committed suicide in 1978. As both a filmmaker and individual, Vas has been regarded as a man plagued with existential and political ambivalences, in part shaped by his experiences in Hungary.[257] *The Vanishing Street* accordingly can be regarded to sombrely reflect upon a community, literally vanishing before his very eyes. Social mobility was one thing, with the children and grandchildren of immigrant Jewry relocating to the suburbs (a success story, as noted by Robson) but the remaining residents of Hessel Street were being brutally dislocated. Whilst most of the film focused upon the daily life of the community, the final five minutes predominately created an uncomfortable tone. As highlighted, Vas focused upon an elderly woman describing the old flea market. This was interjected between scenes which focused upon derelict buildings, shops with closing down signs, and most significantly, the demolition of old terraced houses. Whilst much of the film featured upbeat Yiddish music or the buzzing sounds of the community, these scenes were all edited with only natural sound. Apart from the demolition, these images appear onscreen with an eerie silence. A silence which communicated the notion that this was a community which was being actively destroyed. In a similar tone to the Author's Note of Litvinoff's *Journey Through a Small Planet*, these scenes conveyed a notion that this would be an unrecoverable past.

Georgia Brown's episode of *One Pair of Eyes: Where Are The Cockneys Now?* (tx. 1968), further emphasised the sense of East End Jewry's successful transition into British society. A series of monthly TV programmes, *One Pair of Eyes* was an anthology show, where notable public figures were approached to share their views on a subject close to their heart. A singer and actress known for her gravelly singing voice, Brown was born Lillian Knot in the East End. Best known for her breakout role in the 1960 musical, *Oliver!*, Brown performed on both the London and Broadway stage.[258] For her episode of *One Pair of Eyes*, Brown revisited her childhood home of Whitechapel. Noting the fading presence of the working-class Jewish community, Brown drew

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[256] Diner, p. 27.
[257] Andy Merrifield, *John Berger* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2012), p. 140.
[258] 'Obituary: Georgia Brown, An Actress, 57; Was in 'Oliver!'', *The New York Times*, July 6, 1992.

parallels between the experiences of East End Jewry, and that of the Bangladeshi community. For her exploration, Brown was joined by three other successful exports of the East End community: composer and songwriter Lionel Bart, writer and playwright Wolf Mankowtiz, and famous hair stylist Vidal Sassoon.

Unlike *The Vanishing Street*, *One Pair of Eyes* can be regarded as a more conventional example of the documentary genre. Brown was predominant throughout, with many scenic shots focusing upon her walking around the East End. Emphasis was placed upon the fading character of the Jewish community within the area, with Brown revisiting Hessel Street. As she slowly wandered down the street, her narration mused 'Hessel Street. This used to be a *kosher* market. Look at it now'.[259] Meanwhile, the camera focused upon *halal* meat signs. Whilst Vas focused upon the fading vestiges of the Jewish community of Hessel Street, Brown's documentary highlighted a lost world. No longer Jewish, Hessel Street by this time had been resettled by the Bengali community. However, in Brown's documentary this is not to be decried, but rather celebrated as sign of the East End's capacity for reinvention. Along with her interviews of Bart, Mankowitz and Sassoon, Brown also interacted with the present-day community at former 'Jewish' areas, such as her old school, and with various people throughout the marketplace. Whilst *The Vanishing Street* was an experimental film which sought to document and preserve the disappearing Jewish way of life of Hessel Street, *One Pair of Eyes* was a triumphant narrative of the transformative nature of the East End. 'That's what the East End is, a great big melting pot', Brown's narration proudly exclaimed.

The celebratory tone was established from the very opening scene. Seated in an open top car along with Bart, Brown was being driven to the East End. The song, 'Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay' played, whilst both Brown and Bart were glamorously dressed. There was a real sense of fun and good nature between the pair, with the cameraman joking that he was struggling to keep them further apart for the opening shot. Once the pair settle, Brown was asked why she decided to revisit Whitechapel. She neatly replied that the ongoing issues regarding immigration, and 'who should be allowed into the country, and who should not', sparked a realisation that she was first generation British. Born into an immigrant family, many others, such as Bart also shared her background, and she decided she would like to look back at where she came from, seeing the opportunities which were on hand for East End Jewry, compared to what opportunities exist for East Enders today. What followed was Brown's nostalgic walk around the East End, revisiting old sites of importance to herself, whilst engaging with the present community. Being born within

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[259] "Georgia Brown: Who are the Cockneys Now?" *One Pair of Eyes*, BBC, 17 August 1968, Television.

Bow Bells, she concluded that she was born a Cockney and will die one too and was grateful for the steely determination which the area had instilled within her.

Brown's representation was optimistic. A nostalgic exploration, through her commentary and interviews she presented a similar narrative: that of a strong Jewish community spirit, which endured both the hardships of immigration and integration into a new society. Within Brown's account, the accepted trope of Jewish immigrants as being a model for future waves of immigrants was utilised, with her focus upon the clubs and organisations such as the Brady Street Club highlighting them as bodies which offered great support and opportunities to the youth. However, Brown admitted that life for immigrant Jewry was not without periods of uncertainty and conflict. Rather than provide specific details or an overview, Brown only briefly remarked upon the presence of British fascism in the East End during the 1930s, with all other examples of hostility or prejudice omitted. Moreover, despite this lack of detail, she mused that the hostility towards the Jewish minority of the past should be learned from, to avoid subjecting the Bangladeshi immigrants to a similar experience.[260] As explored earlier in this chapter, the issue of race and belonging within 1960s Britain was one of great contention. For Brown, she therefore sought to emphasise how as the daughter of immigrants, she had managed to integrate into British society, as had immigrant Jewry. Most of all, however, this was a personal story of success, with Brown claiming that her career could not have been launched without the loving, supportive base of the Jewish East End community. It was this sense of community which she hoped the future youth of the area would enjoy.

With the prevalence of such narratives in the public domain, it should not be surprising that many private accounts have followed such representations. Removed from areas of early Jewish settlement such as the Jewish East End by geography and time, both private and public images have romanticised these communities. Throughout much of the material created following the 'memory boom', a general image arises of the Jewish East End as particularly being a supportive and close-knitted community. Its secluded and ghetto-like quality served to protect its inhabitants until they were ready to enter the gentile world, whilst also acting as a safe-haven for 'authentic' forms of Jewish expression. The world apart from the East End accordingly is often depicted as being drab in comparison. A pertinent example of this treatment can be found within Bertha Sokoloff's brief account of her own childhood in her biography of the social worker, Edith Ramsay.

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[260] John Garrard's comparative study of English reactions to Jewish and Commonwealth immigration noted the similarities between the groups. With both tending to congregate together in a 'ghetto,' the visibility of immigrants in a specific area lent credence to images of England being 'invaded' or 'flooded' by immigrants. In times of crisis or economic downturn, the visibility of immigrants created an easily identifiable scapegoat, with images of a 'golden age' before their arrival often being nurtured by opponents of immigration. See: Garrard, 'Parallels of Protest', pp. 47-66.

Sokoloff compared the lively, supportive and engaging Jewish East End of her youth, with present-day society:

> I moved from Whitechapel to a pleasant new out-county council estate in 1950 when my two children were aged two years and a few weeks respectively. My elder daughter now speaks of her clean, ordered later childhood as boring. Mine wasn't. I remember with great clarity the different families around and their characteristics. There were the Riscovitches, a very large family who lived right at the top of the buildings, with an ailing father and a working mother, brought up by an archetypal grandmother, straight out of Gorky, all wrinkles and smiles, borrowing from my Mum to buy potatoes and oil to make the umpteen kids a dinner of chips, which were then wrapped in paper and thrown down from the top landing to each child in turn. She could neither speak nor understand English, and it fell to me to describe to her in Yiddish the story of the film of King Kong.[261]

It is notable that Sokoloff's imagined childhood features certain narrative tropes. Most significant, is the simplification and application of the 'archetypal grandmother, straight out of Gorky', to one of her neighbours. The persistence and influence of certain aspects of popular memory of the Jewish East End mean that for reader, certain images are instantly summoned regarding this woman. This nostalgia by stereotype seemingly confirms that Sokoloff lived a quintessential East End Jewish life, with certain characters and people having been enshrined in myth as typical of the era. In this case, the 'archetypal grandmother' is blend between the elderly 'Yiddishe Mama', who is chosen to represent the 'old world' of Eastern European Jewish traditions and customs, and the revolutionary fervour associated with Maxim Gorky's soviet literature. Furthermore, one can draw similarities between Sokoloff's nostalgic recollection of the character of the Jewish community and Allin's artistic portrayals, with the vibrant and active nature of Sokoloff's childhood community being favourably contrasted to her daughter's 'clean' upbringing.

In many respects, the history of working-class and immigrant Jewry and the Jewish East End is malleable and fluid. Depending on the needs of the individual remembering, community life could be religious or secular, integrated or an isolated ghetto.[262] One image is consistent in

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[261] Bertha Sokoloff, *Edith and Stepney: The Life of Edith Ramsay: 60 years of Education, Politics and Social Change* (London: Stepney Books, 1987), p. 59.

[262] For an example of the drastically contrasting images which can be found of the character of the Jewish East End, the recollections of Bernard Homa and Ruth Adler provide an interesting case study. As noted, Homa was the grandson of the renowned Rabbi Aba Werner. In his memoirs, Homa fondly remembered the Jewish East End as a wellspring of religious activity, citing the religious fervour which would arise on the evening before Passover as a scene to behold. Conversely, Adler recalled her indifference to religion, a sentiment she passed onto her sons. They still regarded themselves as being 'Jewish,' but instead of being based on a sense of shared religion, their identity was based off a shared historical awareness. See: Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 16; and Adler, 'Woman of the Eighties', p. 40.

popular memory: that of a warm and welcoming community. As explored, Brown fondly recalled the clubs and societies which offered great opportunities to the youth. Similar charitable tales can be found within much popular testimony. However, counter-narratives are present, which suggest that the makeup of the immigrant mass and of East End Jewry, particularly, was not as homogenous as popularly imagined. Whilst the politically motivated memoirs of Willy Goldman as explored in the previous chapter emphasised class differences, there too exist within the third generation of memory counter-narratives which highlight ethnic divisions. One example can be found within Finn's memoirs:

> Above and beyond these localised divisions there were other vast cleavages of race, religion, colour and profession. The greatest difference lay between Jew and Jew. The foreign Jews, the more orthodox of the community, were called *Polaks*. Whether you hailed from Rumania, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Russia, Bessarabia, Lithuania or Latvia you were a *Polak*. And if you were the offspring of immigrants you were a *Polak* too. Those born in England and their children, second generation English were known as *Choots* (the "ch" rolled as in "loch"), *Choot* was a generic term for Dutchmen. Practically all Jews who were not immigrants had settled in England some fifty years before and had originated mainly from Holland, some from Spain and Portugal.[263]

Whilst Finn's account mostly applies to the Jewish working-class community following the aftermath of the First World War, these divisions were deeply ingrained, and not new. Indeed, their deeply entrenched nature was emphasised in Spector's account, where he mused that Jewish immigrants used ethnicity to classify each other as opposed to class boundaries. This was because everyone was poor, working long hours for small wages. Consequently, where families originated from became important. One can assert that this was a flip side effect of immigrant Jews gravitating towards *landsmen* and kinsfolk: it marked Jews from other regions as being different. The inherent nature of this attitude is best reflected in the following passage:

> My parents were at the top of the pecking order. They came from Russia, though I believe the Muscovite Jews were grander than those from Odessa and the Ukraine. Below them, came the Poles. My mother would spit out the word 'Pollack' when describing one she had encountered in a baker's queue. Below them were the Jews from the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia, and then Roumania, at the bottom of it all. My mother had set her heart against any of her children marrying any Jew who was not Russian in origin. How far prejudice can go![264]

Such representations have been marginalised by popular memory. Whilst it accepts the cultural gap which existed between established Anglo-Jewry and the developing working-class

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[263] Finn, p. 17.
[264] Spector, p. 17.

Jewish community, the recognition of the sub-divided nature of the East End community has been generally confined to historical studies. The positive elements of the *landsman* system have been embraced within popular memory, noting the supportive nature of immigrant Jewry and their children to others hailing from similar backgrounds. However, the intended consequence of this subdivision has been omitted from such narratives. Perhaps this is simply due to visibility, as whereas the Lower East Side was subdivided ethnically and settled accordingly, no such harsh divisions were present within the primary areas of settlement within the East End.[265]

It is noteworthy that within the representations of community life, very few examples of anti-Semitism or prejudice are present. Indeed, most accounts follow Brown's narrative, focusing only upon the battle against British fascism in the 1930s, with a triumphant story telling of how the British working-classes banded together with East End Jewry to repel the fascist advance in the East End.[266] The majority of popular testimony following the 'memory boom' consequently avoid the issue of British anti-Semitism in both contemporary society and during the period of mass immigration. When it is addressed, authors tend to approach the topic with great caution, and in an apologetic manner.

For example, Blacker echoed the tropes which were established within preceding 'notable' narratives. Britain was a land of liberty, full of chances for first generation Britons such as himself. It was the 'old world' of Eastern Europe which was sadly full of oppression. Significantly, it was the 'comparative freedom' of the immigrant quarter which granted children such as himself, 'opportunities undreamed of in the distant land of pogroms and anti-Semitism'.[267] Whilst Blacker followed Selig Brodetsky in championing society as granting foreign Jews great opportunities, there was a hint of hesitancy. That he stated, 'comparative freedom', as opposed to unreserved freedom is intriguing. Consequently, it implied that there was a glass ceiling of opportunity within Britain and the East End. Whether this was the result of hostility and anti-Semitic sentiment, or self-imposed by the Jewish community was left open to interpretation.

Representations of the history of immigrant Jewry in Britain, and the Jewish East End are carefully constructed narratives of success. They reveal nostalgia for the disappearing 'community', with the sense of shared identity across British Jewry being less visible in concentrated settlements. Accordingly, these narratives particularly romanticise the Jewish East End as a site of Jewish settlement and community, recognising that it has been lost due to both

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[265] Berrol, p. 17.
[266] David Renton, 'Docker and Garment Worker, Railwayman and Cabinet Maker: The Class Memory of Cable Street', in Tony Kushner and Nadia Valman (eds), *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), pp. 95-96.
[267] Blacker, p. 86.

the physical redevelopment of the area, and the success of working-class Jewry in migrating to the suburbs and the middle-classes. Where hardship is remembered, it is softened and framed through a rose-tinted lens, with accounts such as Wesker's fondly remembering around the reality. Furthermore, the supportive nature of the working-class community is almost universally remembered, with many following the image showcased by Brown in *Pair of Eyes* of East End Jewry as being a model example which future groups of immigrants should look to emulate.

As with American memory of the Lower East Side, the community of the Jewish East End has similarly been enshrined in myth. As a site of memory, it is equally regarded as representative of the 'old world', and the stepping stone from which East End Jewry entered British society. The narrative of the transformation from Eastern European Jew to Anglo-Jewish is more gradual than with American memory, however, which stressed the 'rebirth' and reinvention of the inhabitants of the Lower East Side, most notably the children of immigrants.[268] Whilst such noteworthy examples are present within the record of notable accounts of the successful exports from the Jewish working-class, such that of Brodetsky and Brown, the general image is more measured within the British narrative of the East End. As *The Vanishing Street* revealed, the community still existed in the early 1960s, although it was fast disappearing. Rather than longing for an 'authentic' Jewish experience, these representations following the 'memory boom' instead romanticised the sense of community and 'Jewishness'. This was not necessarily a religious sense of identity, however, but rather a sense of shared group consciousness and tradition, which fostered a strong sense of community spirit and rapport – something which is often regarded today as being lost by the dispersion of the community throughout the suburbs.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined a range of representations regarding the experience of immigrant Jewry and their children in Britain. It has followed the preceding chapter's structure, dividing the experience of the community into six themes. As highlighted, the publicised and popular nature of the Jewish East End within the imagination of British Jewry led to an increased level of engagement with the area's history, and a proliferation of representations across a wider range of mediums. It is this engagement which has been analysed, with the different forms of self-expression being utilised in ways unique to the forms of media explored. Whilst a museum exhibition or television documentary may appear more objective and 'factual', this chapter has revealed that the representations generated through these mediums have equally been constructed to adhere to and support popular myths and memory of the Jewish East End.

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[268] Diner, pp. 29-30.

Within this testimony created following the 'memory boom', there is a less identifiable separation between the narratives of public figures and working-class accounts, as highlighted. Within the narratives far more consistency is present. The 'myths of origin' have been embraced, consciously or unconsciously as foundational layer of immigrant Jewish identity. Images of self-sacrificing mothers at the centre of Jewish households are prevalent, albeit with minor variations, accepting a British bourgeois understanding of gender roles. And significantly, the 'immigrant trades' have been characterised as a timeless profession which sons gladly followed their fathers into. This thesis argues that the basis for the consistency of these images, is the integration and confidence of the authors and creators. No longer immigrants first and foremost, these authors are first or second generation British. They have reconciled their 'Jewish', 'English' and 'British' identities, with there no longer being an inherent contradiction with being Jewish and belonging in Britain.

Indeed, as showcased by the final section's exploration of the Jewish East End community, the extension of the 'Cockney' identity highlights the integrated nature of East End Jewry and their children. Georgia Brown's documentary and the artwork of Alfred Daniels can be regarded as celebrations of this successful integration. The sense of 'Jewishness' enjoyed by them both neatly combined with their English East End identity. So much so in Daniels' artwork, the 'Jewish' nature of his artwork is to be deciphered, rather than an apparent quality, such was his indifference towards this facet of his identity.

The confidence of these authors in their British identities has enabled both the engagement and embracing of the Jewish immigrant past. With this 'Jewishness' no longer regarded as an 'alien' element by British society, those with ties to this past felt self-assured that they could reconnect with this past and celebrate it. In terms of the American Jewish memory, this has been characterised by Eli Lederhendler as 'post-migration historiography'. With the third generation of American Jewry no longer bearing the burden of Americanisation and the need to integrate into society and culture, the previously marginalised and overtly 'Jewish' facets of American Jewish history of the Lower East Side were ripe for recovery and reintegration into the historical narrative.[269]

Similarities (as well as subtle differences) can be recognised within the British context. The devastation of the Holocaust and the rise of working-class history meant that the Jewish immigrant past was prime for 'rescue'. It was a recovery which was tinged with both myth and nostalgia, based upon the confluence of established narratives surrounding immigrant Jewry and

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[269] Lederhendler, p. 405.

Eastern European migration, and also the simplification and sentimentalising nature of memory for this community.

As noted, however, the British context and treatment of the Jewish East End differs from the American context and the Lower East Side. Whilst the Lower East Side has been sacralised in memory as an 'authentic' Jewish site, the Jewish East End has overall, tended to be celebrated more as both a working-class Jewish and an immigrant community. A modern success story, the community operated as a haven from which Eastern European Jewry could settle in Britain, acclimatising to society before their children and grandchildren fully integrated themselves. Following in the footsteps of the existing Anglo-Jewish community, the children and grandchildren of immigrant Jewry were wholly confident in their 'British' identity, as the examples explored within this chapter have revealed. In this respect the sense of 'authentic Jewishness' found within these memories and representations is but one, albeit significant component within the memory and identity of British Jewry. It is a component which has been fully integrated into the group's assimilated and integrated identity as British citizens, completing the process which began with the first generation of immigrant Jewry during the period of mass immigration.

Conclusion: Memory and Narrative

This thesis has examined the changing representations of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Britain during the period of mass Jewish immigration. To pinpoint key moments in the development of popular history and memory, a generational approach has been adopted regarding the assessment of source materials. To achieve this, these sources were separated into three distinct categories: contemporary representations, and the second and third generation of memory. By categorising and defining the vast range of source materials examined in this manner, this study has explored both the consistencies and transformations over time within private and public narratives. Moreover, this perspective has enabled this thesis to identify the generational divisions which has seen earlier facets of the immigrant experience repackaged for modern consumption. At a general level, whilst contemporary representations, and those of high public profile figures from the second generation marginalised the 'old world' aspects of Jewish culture, these have since been 'rescued' and romanticised following the 'memory boom'.

Furthermore, this approach has permitted this thesis to explore the development of identity within the working-class Jewish community of Britain, which flourished from immigrant communities, such as the Jewish East End. It was part of a process whereby 'Eastern European', 'Jewish' and 'English' identities were reconciled by the children and grandchildren of first generation immigrant Jewry. By offering agency to Jewish immigrants and their offspring regarding their experiences, this study has sought to offer a unique and fresh perspective to the history of the Jewish immigrant community in Britain.

To identify the examined source materials into the three defined generations, specific chronologies have been utilised. Contemporary representations were defined as images created prior to 1914, often heralded as the end of the period of great Jewish immigration. The second generation of memory included much written material which was created in the postwar era, along with visual sources from the 1930s which informed much of the subsequent thinking on the experiences of the working-class Jewish community in Britain. Finally, the third generation of memory was employed to encompass the greatest array of material, developed across a selection of different media, being the material created by the popular engagement with the Jewish immigrant past following the 'memory boom'. Hence, to reflect the increased forms of self-expression available across this period, the base of materials consulted in each chapter widens throughout the progression of the thesis. Accordingly, from the purely visual representations of photography and artwork explored in Chapter One, the final chapter navigates the much more

expansive and complex realm of memory, as constructed by both private and public literary accounts, oral history, museum exhibitions and television, as well as artwork.

It is this engagement with a multitude of source materials regarding self-expression that underscores the originality of this thesis, as it traces both the interchanging and carefully negotiated history of immigrant Jewry in Britain, along with the development of both personal and group identity of those who authored this history. By categorising these sources across three 'generations' of memory, this study has followed how certain myths regarding the experience of both immigrant and working-class Jewry have both been shaped and developed to dominate modern popular discourse. Of particular emphasis, has been how the Jewish East End has been utilised as a site of memory within the narrative of immigrant Jewry in Britain, with the identity of the area and its inhabitants continually redefined over the period of study. Far from static, general trends can be identified in terms of attitudes towards 'Britishness', 'Englishness' and 'Jewishness', both in regards of personal and communal understandings of them. By highlighting the fluidity of identity, this thesis has sought to offer a greater awareness of the position of British Jewish history within the broader context, with the community history of areas such as the Jewish East End of great significance to both specialised and general histories. Indeed, it is key to this study to show how images of immigrant Jewry have shifted in popular consciousness, with the modern, romanticised images contrasting markedly with the heavily contested images of the 1900s.

The story of the romanticising both the history of immigrant Jewry in Britain, and the Jewish East End in popular memory, is a study of personal and communal identity. As explored in Chapter One, expressions of identity created by the first generation are difficult to uncover within the contemporary literature which purported to examine the lives of immigrant Jewry within London's East End. Consequently, this thesis examined the self-created visual depictions of immigrant Jewry, accessing a carefully managed form of self-representation. Notably, these images revealed both a sense of conformity *and* defiance to English tradition and customs. The photographs of nouveau riche immigrants displayed the defensive and conformist tendencies of this aspirational class to portray themselves as adhering to 'Englishness' in both private and public images. Such images connote the conscious decision to abandon 'old world' customs, instead becoming as Claude Montefiore proudly asserted in 1908, 'Englishman of the Jewish persuasion'.[1]

This rejection of 'Jewishness' was not absolute. The artwork of the Whitechapel Boys reveals the tensions felt by the young, creative class of East End Jewry. Desiring to move beyond

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[1] Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 170.

the ghetto and into the middle-class world of English art, some, such as David Bomberg and Mark Gertler, retained their Jewishness to an extent, and utilised it as a point of reference for experimentation and self-expression (particularly evident in Gertler's case with *Jewish Family*, whereas the Jewish subject matter of Bomberg's *The Mud Bath* is not easily recognisable). Clara Birnberg, however, cast aside the 'old world', fully embracing a wholly English identity. Whilst the contemporary images are representative of a minority of Jewish East Enders, they reveal the early negotiated formation of identity experienced by immigrant Jewry in Britain. Far from a linear process, these individuals generally sought to minimise Jewish difference and 'alienness' by conforming to English custom. However, they also indicate the multi-faceted nature of this process and the experience of immigrant Jewry, as illuminated by the differing levels of engagement found within these visual sources.

The second generation of memory is significant for revealing the continuation of this engagement. Indeed, this study noted that the narratives found within the memoirs published prior to the 'memory boom' can be separated into two categories: the famous figures who 'escaped' the Jewish East End and working-class life, and the marginalised voices who remained. The defensive, assimilated narratives authored by the public figures are pronounced, and were observed to share many similarities with the American memory of the Lower East Side as a site of American Jewish memory. It is not until the third generation of memory that nostalgia truly arises throughout engagement with the Jewish immigrant past, born of a recognition of a world and community rapidly disappearing. Whilst David Cesarani once explored the formation of the 'myths of origin' regarding immigrant Jewry, this study has further explored his thesis through this generational model of representation and source material.[2]

This focus enabled this study to trace the development of myths, highlighted by not only the separation of narratives created before and after the 'memory boom', but also by the appraisal of the different types of testimony. The identity of highly public figures within the second generation of memory greatly contributed to the development of popular myths regarding the immigrant experience, with these individuals keen to cultivate 'escape' narratives and tales of

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[2] Cesarani's study focused upon interrogating the narratives of certain well-known individuals, such as Michael Marks. Cross-referencing the remembered tales of origin which have become ingrained within the Marks' narrative with the historical record of Slonim, Cesarani proposed that the pogrom narrative was later incorporated into the family history. Its repetition and acceptance assured its 'mythical' status, with successive family members repeating the often-told story as matter of fact. See: David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, *Patterns of migration 1850-1914: Proceedings of the International Academic Conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England in association with the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996), pp. 247-253.

swift integration and acceptance by British society. Whilst these were challenged by the more 'grassroots' accounts, such tropes were overwhelming embraced following the 'memory boom', consciously or otherwise. A keen example of this acceptance within the public sphere would be Georgia Brown's 1968 documentary for *One Pair of Eyes*, which succinctly stated how her grandfather fled late Imperial Russia in 1910 to avoid military conscription, catching the first possible ship abroad.[3] Within this representation no scope was left to query whether this was definitively true, with her grandfather's story assimilated into the accepted model of Jewish immigration, beyond reproach.

The emphasis which has been placed upon certain myths in popular memory, such as the origin of Jewish migration is significant. Parallels can be drawn between the combative attitude of British society towards the 'alien' presence in London during the period of mass Jewish immigration, and the subsequent Commonwealth immigration of the 1950s and 1960s.[4] Individuals such as Selig Brodetsky appear to have been keenly aware of Anglo-Jewry's continued minority status, despite their relative assimilation by the 1960s. Noting hostility towards the new immigrants, it accordingly became convenient for the children of immigrant Jewry to stress that their presence in Britain was natural, and the result of the nation's liberal attitude and safeguarding of the civil rights of political and religious refugees. As observed, this was an issue of vital significance by the 1960s in Britain, with definitions of the right of citizenship and 'Britishness', being at the heart of complex debates and responses towards immigrants and ethnic minorities and their impact on Britain, both economically and culturally.[5] In face of these anxieties, notable individuals such as Brodetsky helped to consolidate myths regarding the identity of immigrant Jewry as refugees, whilst accentuating gratitude towards Britain for allowing refuge and the opportunity to belong. A belonging then emphasised within these representations of the *English* identity embraced by these authors.

As with the American memory of the Lower East Side, the third generation of memory can be recognised to represent a nostalgic return. Also following the American model, the development of popular history following the 'memory boom', successful Jewish outmigration, and the collective mourning following the Holocaust are all considered important factors contributing towards this sentimental revisiting.[6] This study further concludes that a confidence

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[3] "Georgia Brown: Who are the Cockneys Now?" *One Pair of Eyes*, BBC, 17 August 1968, Television.

[4] John Garrard, 'Parallels of Protest: English Reactions to Jewish and Commonwealth Immigration', *Race,* Vol. 9, No. 1 (July, 1967), p. 47.

[5] Colin Holmes, *A Tolerant Country: Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain* (London: Faber, 1991), pp. 76-78.

[6] As discussed, the Lower East Side is an exceptional example in that it has assumed a status as *the* definitive site of American Jewish memory. The Jewish East End conversely is recognised as being but one significant

within personal and group identity contributed towards this nostalgia. With many authors being first or second generation British, an exploration and engagement with their Jewish immigrant past could be pursued from a position of relative security within society. It was an exploration which was informed by existing representations and narratives. By drawing upon these earlier images, popular memory populated the working-class Jewish settlements in Britain with refugees from Tsarist persecution, Eastern European Jews who graciously accepted the tradition and customs of their newly adopted homeland: myths which have been entrenched as the cornerstone of the community's identity.[7] Whilst some counter-narratives exist, they are portrayed as exceptional accounts, existing outside the 'typical' experience.[8] It is only when such narratives are further examined that inconsistencies are revealed, with their assumptions and vague assertions often hiding their mythical nature.[9]

The nostalgia present within the third generation of memory and their reconstructions of immigrant Jewish culture are, however, not consistent. Through a specific focus on the Jewish East End, this thesis observed that many public and private narratives created following the 'memory boom' are celebrations of the area, jovially recalling the once maligned facets of Jewish immigrant culture. But within the vast range of created media, a more sombre engagement with the past can also be identified. The documentary by Robert Vas, *The Vanishing Street* can be identified as a pertinent example of this engagement, reflecting upon a Jewish East End and community which can never be restored. Such treatment contrasts with the American narrative of the Lower East Side, which positively frames the area as a unique 'authentic' Jewish settlement. Indeed, much popular memory of the Lower East Side regards the settlement as a point of

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site of Jewish settlement in Britain, with the communities of Manchester and Leeds similarly acknowledged. In American memory, however, the 1960s saw the Lower East Side emerge as the main point of contact between American society and the 'old world' of Eastern Europe, with it sacralised in memory as the quintessential site of modern Jewish experience in America. See: Hasia R. Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 175-177.

[7] Sam Clarke's description of his parent's birthplace as a 'pretty village near the Polish border' is indicative of such myths. Despite never having experienced the village, he confidently described it as such in his memoir. This is a classic example of the Jewish migration myth in action, with the narrative of his parents passed down, and accepted unreservedly by Clarke. See: Sam Clarke, *Sam: An East End Cabinet-Maker: The pocket-book memoir of Sam Clarke, 1907-1979* (London: Inner London Education Authority, 1982).

[8] As discussed in Chapter Three, the recollections of Lew Grade and Claire Rayner were framed as exceptions to the general picture. Rayner, in particular recalled being confused by the positive portrayals of *all* Jewish families as being warm, loving and nurturing units, with her own experiences being to the contrary. See: Jay Rayner, 'Tales my mother never told me', *The Observer*, 2 March 2003.

[9] In his exploration of the American memory of Russian Jewry, Steven Zipperstein revealed the malleability of memory in his own personal experience. He remembered being told by his grandfather as a child that they fled to America from Lahishin, a small town which was soon destroyed after they left in 1919 or 1920. Sometime later Zipperstein glanced at a map of Belarus, only to discover that Lahishin still existed. He mentioned this to an uncle who had been born there, 'who smiled as if he wasn't much surprised.' See: Steven Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 11-13.

reference for a less diluted form of 'Jewishness'. Disregarding the area's wider history, much emphasis has been placed upon how even today, American Jewry can reconnect with veritable Jewish custom, essentially 'coming home', despite in many cases people having no physical or emotional ties to the area, and the area's identity having changed in the intervening period.[10]

As a site of transformation, the Lower East Side accordingly represents a connection to a Jewish identity, disentangled from Americanism. By contrast, in the British context the power of the Jewish East End as a site of transformation is marginalised and subdued. Here a more negotiated identity is fondly remembered, with immigrant Jewry and their children navigating a multitude of identities on their way to becoming proud British citizens. Indeed, the subdued emphasis on the Jewish East End as a site of transformation is exemplified by many narratives following the 'memory boom' proudly recollecting following their fathers into the 'immigrant trades'. Furthermore, the very 'Jewishness' of the area is also malleable. Whilst some authors, such as Bernard Homa characterised the Jewish East End as a hub of orthodox religious fervour (which had sadly diminished over the years), others disregard or deprecate the importance of Jewish religious custom within their memory. What is consistent, moreover, is the utilisation of the Jewish East End as a significant facet in shaping modern British Jewish identity, a point of origin for the entry of immigrant Jewry into society as citizens.

A further comparison with American memory can be made. The Lower East Side has been characterised as a 'place of forgetting', where harsh truths and blemishes of the past have been omitted for a favourable narrative.[11] With the area often regarded as a spiritual home for modern American Jewry, the Lower East Side is revered as *the* site of American Jewish memory. British narratives differ. The Jewish East End, though appreciated as a special settlement, is not landmarked as the exceptional site of Jewish memory in Britain, with both the Manchester and Leeds Jewish communities also fondly remembered. Furthermore, the Lower East Side is viewed as offering a unique portal through which the culture and legacy of the destroyed Eastern European Jewish communities can be appreciated.

By contrast, British narratives posit the Jewish East End first and foremost as a new home. Here, East End Jewry navigated both the worlds of communal Jewry and wider society, to great success, at least superficially. Moreover, despite the strong focus on the Jewish East End within this thesis, it must be noted that other working-class Jewish communities in Britain are equally regarded as important sites of memory. The broader scope of the experience of immigrant Jewry

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[10] Diner, p. 12.
[11] Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), Chapter One, 'The Lower East Side, A Place of Forgetting'.

in Britain accordingly has seen less emphasis placed on the Jewish East End as a sacred site for modern British Jewry, and rather has seen the area regarded as a site of entry for these individuals into society. Significantly, as observed in both academic studies and popular memory, the East End has been above all, a continual site of redevelopment for new groups of immigrants arriving in Britain, rather than a specifically 'Jewish' space. It is this perceived lack of ownership of the area as an essential Jewish space which has contributed to this different treatment of the Jewish East End and Lower East Side in popular British and American memory.

The successful outmigration of East End Jewry, and the East End's reputation as the site of first settlement for immigrants has meant that although the area is of importance to the history of British Jewry, it is further recognised and valued as both a site of minority, and English identity. Indeed, it is an area which has not only changed immigrants as they settled there, but conversely has also been shaped and coloured by those who call it home.[12] This study accordingly has sought to explore the duality of identity within the first generation of immigrant Jewry and their children and grandchildren. For British Jewry, much engagement with the immigrant past has reshaped such areas from the 'ghetto' of early Eastern European settlement, to a success story of integration. The intricacies and details of this success has been much debated by modern British historians. Far from unconditional acceptance, some have argued that British Jewry's place in society has been earned through conformity to certain expectations, rather than acceptance as a different social group within society.[13]

Such questions are not the only topic queried by this study. By examining the development of memory and representation of the immigrant Jewish past, the role and treatment of gender by working-class Jewry can be assessed. Despite the relative absence of female voices before the 'memory boom', one can recognise the acceptance and development of certain tropes regarding the roles of men and women within working-class Jewish households in Britain. Following the oral history work of Rickie Burman in Manchester, the contemporary context surrounding the creation of these memory sources can be seen to inform both the memory and treatment of women.[14]

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[12] Anne J. Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, 1666-2000* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 229-230.

[13] 'An Anglo-Jewish *Historikerstreit*', '"England, Liberalism and the Jews"', *Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 33-38.

[14] This thesis has been greatly influenced by Burman's studies on the role of Jewish women as breadwinners in Manchester. Informed by oral history, Burman noted how subsequent middle-class ideals of gender roles have shaped memories of Jewish women. As such, it is not unusual for the active role of women at work to be marginalised in memory, since bourgeois values regarded a working-wife as a sign of low social status. See: Rickie Burman, 'The Jewish Woman as the Breadwinner: The Changing Value of Women's Work in a Manchester Immigrant Community', *Oral Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 27-39.

Both private and public engagement with the immigrant past can be recognised to be informed and shaped by their social context, with Jewish women overwhelmingly portrayed in popular memory as mothers first and foremost. It is only within the wider engagement of memory material following the 'memory boom' that subversive narratives, challenging the dominant image can be identified. Contemporary social concerns colour the memories of Ralph Finn and Cyril Spector for instance, with both men feeling remorseful over the treatment and lives of their grandmother and mother respectively. These are isolated affairs, however, with much testimony following the established trope of Jewish women being mothers above all else. As with stories of origin, the very identity of the Jewish mother has been immortalised in myth, securing an image of the male-dominated Jewish workshop. By separating the examined materials into the distinctive generations of memory, the development of this facet of memory can be observed.

Furthermore, by categorising the memory sources examined by this study chronologically, the developing sense of identity for immigrant Jewry in Britain can be recognised. These sources reveal a community navigating differing spheres of identity, before seemingly finding a comfortable balance. Both historians and sociologists have often discussed what 'Jewishness' and 'Jewish culture' are, as concepts and identities. Whilst some have referred to Jewish culture as a singularly defined phenomenon, standing apart from the non-Jewish world, others have asserted that multiple forms of 'Jewishness' exist. Perhaps more pertinent in terms of this study though, is the comparatively recent problematisation of 'Jewishness' as an identity, which functions as a point of reference for individuals. As opposed to an absolute identity, it has been argued that it operates as a 'floating reference system' which is only called upon for specific moments.[15] From examining the artwork of the Whitechapel Boys, and the treatment of Jewish traditions such as the Sabbath and *Yom Kippur* within subsequent memory sources such as memoirs and oral testimony, this thesis highlights the fluid and transitional nature of 'Jewish' identity amongst immigrant Jewry and their children. This thesis accordingly is not solely a history of immigrant Jewry in Britain, but rather a study of how this history has been both engaged with and shaped by the contemporary identity and position within society of its authors and subjects.

By separating the source material into the three subsets, this thesis accordingly can trace this development. The influence of nostalgia and sentimentality towards the past has been revealed, particularly within the representations created following the 'memory boom'. As noted, equally significant in shaping these representations, is the very sense of the author's personal identity, alongside the surrounding context within which the material was created. The

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[15] Klaus Hödl, 'History', in Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman (eds.), *Routledge Handbook to Contemporary Jewish Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 88-89.

contemporary representations explored within the first chapter revealed how certain individuals both identified themselves with 'Jewishness' and British society. Within these sources, however, there was often a nuance and ambiguity regarding how they were observed and interpreted by an audience.

The second and third generation of memory, however, reveal a more controlled form of self-expression available to the children of immigrant Jewry. To take the example of the written memoir, these authors possessed the ability to document their personal life stories, framing and positioning themselves in society. As observed, this early engagement before the 'memory boom' was tentative, with the position of the author in British society dictating the final form of their engagement with the immigrant Jewish past as seen in Chapter Two. This engagement was resolutely enhanced following the 'memory boom', with an avalanche of popular participation with minority and working-class history enabling the previously downplayed aspects of the past to be celebrated.

Of uttermost importance in shaping these representations consequently, is the sense of identity of the creators. The identity for British Jewry was not static. Indeed, one can recognise a variety of different identifying labels for immigrant Jewry and their children across the examined period. One must recognise accordingly that the working-class Jewish community was fluid, being continuously formed and negotiated. The surrounding context, individual experiences, upbringing, political and religious beliefs are all significant factors in identity formation. As proposed, it was when these authors felt secure in their identity as British citizens that they felt empowered to rescue their 'Jewish' heritage and past. In *Englishmen and Jews*, David Feldman challenged the 'socialisation' and 'enlightenment' models in explaining the anglicisation of immigrant Jewry. Rather, he asserted that immigrant Jews were active participants in their anglicisation, ultimately engaging with society and entering the British political arena as both Jews and immigrants.[16] The negotiation between 'immigrant', 'Jewish' and 'English' identities can be seen to unfold within the memory sources examined by this thesis, with the earlier cautious public images explored in Chapter One contrasting markedly with the confident reconciled images of the third generation of memory. It is this confidence which allowed previously marginalised aspects of Jewish culture to be 'rescued' and romanticised, restored to the forefront of memory.

Nevertheless, despite this confidence, it is important to note that certain foundational myths have persisted in popular memory and imagination. Stories of daring escapes from Russia,

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[16] David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 382.

accidental migration and communal ties have been passed down from one generation to the next, as core facets of family history and Jewish identity. Described by David Cesarani as part of the 'social fabric' of immigrant communities, the telling and retelling of such stories are a vital part of the creation and preservation of a sense of community and shared memory. The extent to which these stories were 'true' does not matter. What matters is that they function as cornerstones of a shared sense of identity.[17] As noted, this study has contributed to this thesis by tracing the development and implantation of these myths into contemporary memory, by studying their complexity and evolution over a long-time frame and through a variety of genres.

Indeed, the representations explored within the first chapter reveal the foundational basis for the cultivation of an 'English' identity amongst Jewish East Enders. Far from a straight forward process which affected all Jewish inhabitants of the Jewish East End evenly, the examination of both public and private photographs revealed the origins of a carefully constructed sense of 'self' within the community. When compared to the artistic creations of the Whitechapel Boys, the subjective and personal rate of acculturation and identity was illuminated, with personal contexts influencing different engagements with English custom and the process of anglicisation.[18] Furthermore, one can recognise the early stages of the streamlined narrative of Jewish integration and success within these self-authored images, with the photographs particularly being keen to facilitate both public and private images of the Englishness of these individuals, as the examples of Perkoffs and Annie Schnabliner revealed. It is these early defensive and assimilatory images which sought to negate Eastern European Jewish difference which were further cultivated and developed by the early 'notable' authors. In turn, these were then embraced by the subsequent engagement of memory regarding the Jewish immigrant past.

Inevitably, as with memory, history simplifies the past. Complexities and contradictions are often overlooked, marginalised and left out of popular narratives. It is this simplification of both history and memory which has seen certain elements of the Jewish immigrant past become embedded in popular myth. Positive memories and recollections are repeated at the expense of less desirable memories and events, until all that remains is generally a romanticised version of the past. Indeed, the very repetition and acceptance of myths can seemingly offer direct access to past experiences. By enshrining certain events, groups and identities in myth, Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson observed that individuals feel closer connected to the past than they would simply through objective descriptions and purely factual accounts.[19] It is this desire to feel

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[17] Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins', pp. 252-253.
[18] Susan L. Tananbaum, *Jewish Immigrants in London, 1880-1939* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. 15-16.
[19] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 13.

connected to the past which fostered the development of the heritage industry in Britain. It is an industry which has particularly influenced representations of the Jewish East End through the desire to safely conserve and package a lost world and community, so it can be enjoyed by individuals who may have never had direct experience or access to it.[20]

By categorising the variety of media analysed into the three generations, this thesis has revealed the significance of physical and emotional distance, both in terms of time and actuality, regarding the development of historical nostalgia. Whilst the examined self-representations of the first generation were keen to downplay ties to the 'old world', and the widely publicised early accounts of individuals with high public profiles further distanced themselves from them, popular memory has embraced them. Tales of parents clinging to Yiddish, romanticism for the daily struggles to survive and warm memories of Jewish celebrations prevail throughout the narratives created after the 'memory boom'. As noted, the very sense of 'Britishness' of the authors is enhanced by a modern disconnect from past struggles and hostility. In this sense, areas such as the Jewish East End have become whatever the authors needed it to be, with them able to represent a long-lost and vibrant community, full of colourful characters with roots in Eastern Europe.

As revealed within Chapter Three, however, these images have been uniquely constructed by their genres. The triumphant narratives of Jewish success within business and society were at the core of popular representations found within both personal and public narratives. Brown's episode of *One Pair of Eyes* and the 1988 *Off the Peg* exhibition both subjectively approached the history of the Jewish East End by pursing a linear narrative from immigrant, to success. Whilst *Off the Peg* offered a more nuanced narrative, it still ultimately was a tale of success, detailing 'the development of a few who successfully reflect the Jewish contribution to the women's ready-to-wear clothing industry'.[21] Narratives which detracted from Jewish success henceforth were marginalised in this constructed reality of the Jewish East End. Such observations can similarly be made of the artwork of John Allin in his collaborative visual memoir with Arnold Wesker, *Say Goodbye*, with undesirable scenes of the East End omitted.

Accordingly, by engaging with a range of different sources and media, this thesis has illuminated the development of popular myths and memory regarding the Jewish immigrant past. As highlighted, different forms of media create different forms of representation and

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[20] Tony Kushner, 'The End of the Anglo-Jewish progress show: Representations of the Jewish East End 1887-1987', in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p 97.
[21] London Museum of Jewish Life, *Off The Peg: The Story of the Women's Wholesale Clothing Industry 1880 to the 1960s* (London: London Museum of Jewish Life, 1988), p. 1.

interpretation. Whilst a personal and controlled form of memory, such as a written memoir is a carefully measured construction, a certain level of uncertainty is present within an oral interview, with factors such as the setting, interviewer and time influencing the final testimony. This has been observed within Chapter Three, with some of the interviews featured being heavily shaped and directed by the interviewer, whilst others offer a 'freer' form of expression.

Of further significance is the shifting audience of these memory narratives. Focusing upon the scale of media created following the 'memory boom', one can recognise how the changing contemporary social landscape of Britain influenced the resulting representation. With 'Jews' no longer being synonymous with the 'alien' other, much private testimony such as memoirs, was permitted to focus upon and celebrate the very 'Jewishness' of the immigrant past. However, when one considers the more public representations found within television documentaries or exhibitions, the emphasis rather was on how this Jewish identity was reconciled and contributed to British society, embracing the multicultural ethos which prevailed following the 'memory boom'. This can be seen to reflect and support popular images of 'tolerant Britain', as circulated and cultivated by the nation. Indeed, Colin Holmes posited that such an image is often supported by comments made by successful and assimilated immigrant groups, further enhancing the image.[22] One would anticipate accordingly that the celebration of 'Jewishness' inspired by the 'memory boom' was favourable for the whole of society. Within these popular narratives, the Jewish immigrant past was celebrated, whilst Britain's tolerant tradition was affirmed, as evident by the successful transition of immigrant Jewry from foreigners, to patriotic and valued British citizens.

Regarding popular images of the experience of immigrant Jewry in Britain, the sheer scale of the different forms of media purporting to highlight this history can be recognised to have coalesced, forming a powerful and seemingly unshakeable narrative which draws heavily upon myths. It is this entrenchment of myth which has guided much of popular memory, with many personal engagements with the immigrant past, such as memoirs or oral testimony, accordingly advising that their parents or grandparents must have been refugees from pogroms. It is a conclusion, which is often supported by the images found within popular television documentaries such as Brown's *One Pair of Eyes* and public exhibitions which equally accepted these myths. In part due to their desire to appeal to their intended audience, this has created a self-perpetuating cycle whereby mythical facets of the immigrant past, such as the origins of Jewish migration, have been accepted as 'fact'. It is this development which has meant that

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[22] Holmes, *A Tolerant Country*, p. 99.

academic studies have often created views of this history which contrast vividly with that possessed by popular memory.

Much theoretical debate surrounds the discipline of history. Famously, the sociologist Peter Berger once remarked that the past is malleable, an ongoing reconstruction which can be redeveloped and reformed for contemporary usage.[23] Such an understanding posits that there is not one 'true' history or past, but rather as with memory, differing interpretations and meanings for different contexts. This can be recognised within the engagement and development of memory and representations of the Jewish immigrant past in Britain, where the identity of the creator is key to shaping the narrative. To make a general example, the 'Anglo-Jewish' Brodetsky depicts a patriotic Jewish community, keen to integrate with society.

Authors following the 'memory boom' appreciated certain elements of this narrative. But, other facets were deemed unimportant, unnecessary, or have been regarded as detrimental to their understanding of the community. Brodetsky's narrative is not *their* past. Henceforth, certain elements have been embraced, such as tales of origin, but others jettisoned in the process of forgetting and reimagining. As such, the historian can uncover vastly complementary and yet clashing images of the Jewish East End; with some authors emphasising the 'Jewishness' of culture and custom and overall togetherness of the community, whilst others portray it as a rapidly acculturing, secular working-class environment with ethnic ties of Jewishness. It highlights what is at the heart of this thesis: both the past and memory are ultimately fluid constructions.

Furthermore, the crux of this thesis has been regarding how representations of the Jewish East End as a signifier of the immigrant experience have been both developed and shaped by memory, and vice versa. Modern identity has been forged and shaped by collective history, popular myths and the early defensive images of the first generation of immigrant Jewry. The acceptance and adoption of identities based upon these sterilised versions of the past has contributed towards the popular narratives which can diverge markedly from that provided by academic studies. As with the Lower East Side, such representations have no 'need' to reflect the historical record: their significance and meaning is derived from what messages and sentiment they communicate with individuals seeking to reconnect with their past, myths which enable them to revisit the past and 'explore' personal experiences of community history.

The difference between the Lower East Side and the Jewish East End can be recognised within both the development and usage of memory. Perhaps most significant, is that this Jewish

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[23] Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 216.

community was situated within New York, during an era when America's largest city saw the producers of American culture, that is a broad range of writers, artists, scholars etc., participate in the production and veneration of the Lower East Side. A process whereby the Jews of the area became the most written about, observed, and photographed Jewish people in history, emerging in popular culture, in literature and most notably, films.[24] By contrast, the Jewish East End's celebration developed more gradually, with popular engagement more cautious and not truly being stimulated until the 'memory boom' prompted the preservation of working-class history.

Moreover, within representations of the Jewish East End, narratives of transformation are less dominant. Whereas the Lower East Side is remarked as an 'authentic' Jewish site whereby Eastern European Jews successfully then transitioned in 'Americans', such narratives are more subdued in the British context. With the existing Anglo-Jewish community and ingrained myths of the 'liberal tradition' of Britain, the development and gradual dispersion of the Jewish ghetto is more distinctive in its measured and carefully negotiated nature. Less emphasis is placed upon the 'Englishness' or 'Jewishness' of the community, with the mingling and relative harmony of these identities instead celebrated by the memory culture of the third generation. Indeed, such developments mean that whilst the Jewish East End is celebrated as a Jewish community in Britain, it is remembered as one, albeit significant community, and the first point of settlement for the Eastern Jewish immigrants of 1880-1914.

This thesis has engaged with the history of Eastern European Jewry in Britain and the development of myth, memory and identity. Through a wide range of different forms of media, spanning a period of around eighty years, this thesis has revealed how memory, history and media have combined to create the sanitised, popular narrative regarding the history of the immigrant Jew in Britain. Significantly, it has created a history which is able to be utilised and appreciated by both Jews and non-Jews alike, showcasing the tolerant tradition of Britain, and the uniqueness of a minority history. By seeking to define and categorise the breath of materials via three generational categories, this study has seen how early defensive images have been repackaged and refocused over the years.

By seizing upon such positive images to inform popular narratives, and by recycling and utilising them as the focus point for memory, the undesirable, negative facets of the immigrant experience have been omitted and marginalised from popular memory. It is this process of stripping down images which has seen certain, previously maligned facets such as the infamous *chazar mark* romanticised following the 'memory boom', with the negativity of this feature

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[24] Diner, pp. 14-15.

paradoxically forgotten by the process of remembering. Consequently, it is believed that the process of examining a range of equally imaginative sources, highlighting the differing forms of self-expression, would be of great value in other historical fields and topics when seeking to engage with the transformative process of memory and nostalgia.

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